

# TEEN LIBRARIAN

## Monthly

Vol. 1 No. 3

Editor: Matthew Imrie

July 2006

### Editorial

Time again for the Newsletter – the year really is flying! This month sees a new addition called 'Eight Questions with...' this will showcase local and international Teen authors – some new and other more established writers.

The first author to be featured is the reclusive E.E. Richardson a young (22) up and coming horror writer.

I was fortunate enough to meet her at a Random House book event (her first) along with Melvin Burgess and Dean Richardson. There is no website of the month this month as I did not come across any truly awe-inspiring examples. If you know of any site that deserves accolades please let me know!

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### Places to Visit

#### ***Bede's World in Jarrow***

Bede's World in Jarrow represents the extraordinary life of the Venerable Bede who lived and worked there 1300 years ago. He is well known as an author and scholar, whose best-known work, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*) gained him the title "The father of English history".

It is considered to be one of the most important original references on Anglo-Saxon history. It is believed to have been completed in 731, when Bede was approximately 60 years old.

The aim of Bede's World is to help bring to life the story of Bede and the Anglo-Saxon people of his time, the museum is designed to tell the story in a way that enables everyone, of any age, background or ability to enjoy their visit and leave feeling they have gained something from the museum. Next to the museum there is a working Anglo-Saxon farm called Gyrwe (pronounced Jeerwe, some people believe this was the Anglo-Saxon name of Jarrow), the farm is designed to recreate

life outside the monastery walls.

Gyrwe gives adults and children the opportunity to see rare breeds of animals and ancient strains of cereal and vegetables as close as possible to the breeds and vegetation Bede himself would have seen.

Historic re-enactments demonstrate how medieval villagers lived and dressed and family events and activities add a further dimension, with costumed characters and activities, including pottery and other crafts, for all ages.

Bede's World is at Jarrow in north-east England on the south bank of the River Tyne and close to the city of Newcastle upon Tyne. [www.bedesworld.co.uk](http://www.bedesworld.co.uk)

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### People

#### ***Baba Brinkman***

Baba Brinkman has been writing and performing original rap/spoken word poetry for eight years, earning himself a wide reputation as a thoughtful and engaging lyricist with a dedication to bridging the gaps between the worlds of rap music and literary poetry.

In 2004, he started the company Babasword Productions to create and promote educational literature-based entertainment; through that company he produced and distributed his debut hip-hop album *Swordplay* and created the first annual Rap is Poetry concert. Baba has toured his hit theatre show *The Rap Canterbury Tales* to seven cities around the world, including Prague, Montreal, Edinburgh and San Francisco.

Baba is currently in the UK and on the 17<sup>th</sup> July he will appear at Bede's World to perform a new adaptation of Bede's *Account of Caedmon* that he translated into rap at a special workshop with teenagers in the area that he attended. This will happen in the restored chapel that Bede himself worshipped in over twelve hundred years ago.

He will return to the UK in 2007, to find out more about him you can see his website at [www.babasword.com](http://www.babasword.com) and can be added to the mailing list to be notified ahead of time about his movements by e-mailing his UK booking agent Charlotte Dove at [charlotte@babasword.com](mailto:charlotte@babasword.com).

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## PopCulture Watch

### ***Sugar Rush*** **Julie Burchill**

*Sugar Rush* is the hit Teenage novel by Julie Burchill, it has been praised as a frank and well-written account of teenage trials and tribulations.

It has also been adapted for television and the second series is currently showing on Channel 4. I have watched most of the episodes of season two, and am trying to get a copy of the original series as it is well worth watching.

The show – like the book deals with relationships on a number of levels; from dysfunctional family relationships (a free-spirited mother who has run off with a younger man, a pedantic father and a confused younger brother) to friendship issues and coming to terms with ones sexuality. It does this in a way that is touching, comedic and realistic without being prurient. There are also scenes of drug taking, binge drinking and date rape.

*Sugar Rush* (both the book and the television series) would be invaluable to Teens that are trying to cope with relationship troubles or questioning their sexuality.

### ***The Rap Canterbury Tales*** **Baba Brinkman**

The Rap Canterbury Tales started in 1999 as an experiment, an attempt to adapt Chaucer's stories into a rap style to make them accessible.

It is designed to bring the Tales to a wider popular audience as well as assisting educators to communicate Chaucer's themes and narratives easily to students. The translations stay as close as possible to the tone and thrust of the original Tales, while completely updating the language into a lively hip-hop rhyme style.

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*What king of medieval England was famous because he spent so many nights at his Round Table writing books?*

*King Author!*

## Teenage Reading Groups

# Unshelved™

by Bill Barnes and Gene Ambaum

## Book Club

*Unshelved* is the world's only daily comic strip set in a public library! Writer Gene Ambaum (the made-up name of a real-life librarian) and co-writer and artist Bill Barnes have been publishing since February 16, 2002. Some of the stories are made up, some of them are based on real life, and some are absolutely true stories. You can find Unshelved at: <http://www.overduemedia.com/>

In August 2005 they started producing a special Sunday Strip called the 'Unshelved Book Club', each week they take a book and have the Library staff discuss and describe it amongst themselves or with Library patrons.

They regularly (but not exclusively) feature books by Young Adult authors. I have included one of the Sunday strips as an example on page 4.

These strips can be used to promote certain titles to Teens; it is best to ask for permission before using them. The Unshelved crew can be reached via e-mail: [unshelved@overduemedia.com](mailto:unshelved@overduemedia.com)

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## Question time

**Feedback to: *What age range do you class as teens?***

Many thanks to all those that e-mailed with their views on Teens, and what age range should be classed as such.

A number of people have stretched the membership of Teen Reading Groups down to 11 in order to increase membership to sustainable levels. Most authorities seem to view the ages of 12 – 17 as Teens and label 18 – 21 as Young Adult. Part of the problem stems from labelling the age groups – Youth, Teens, Young Adult and so on. A few groups are not very strict about limiting membership and allow younger library users to take part dependent on their ability to join in and reading skills.

**New question:** I am hoping that by now everyone will have read through and thought about the Public Libraries: Destination Unknown report recently

released by the DCMS, MLA and Laser Foundation.

I am interested in hearing what people thought about it – both positive and negative views. All responses will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and no names will be used.

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## Adult Books for Teens

**Hot! From Pieces to Weight** by 50 Cent (Simon & Schuster, 2005)

Controversial? Maybe, but 50 Cent is still hot in hip-hop and one of the world's biggest music stars. Dealing with his tough start in life, this autobiography presents some hard-hitting issues and is only suitable for older teens. Slick presentation and compact size make this a rare opportunity to provide an attractive autobiography that's current enough to appeal to our younger customers.

**Hot! Mythology: The DC Comics Art of Alex Ross** by Alex Ross (Titan, 2005)

This lavish art book will grab the attention of creative teenagers or those that enjoy graphic novels. In fact this impressive, large format volume looks so good from cover to cover that it's hard to resist a sneaky peak at it when it's actually not on loan. Undeniably stylish, this book demonstrates a willingness to try something different.

**Hot! Cell** by Stephen King (Hodder, 2006)

Mobile phones and zombies – what other combo could get kids to grab a book this big? Add the clout Stephen King still carries as a world renowned horror author and you've got a great reason to buy an extra copy of this adult title for display to older teens.

## **Not! Dummies and Idiots Guides**

It's tempting to grab a book or two from the various highly branded ranges of beginner's guides out there. Especially when they cover such teen friendly subjects as online gaming, playing rock guitar and sports. Check with your younger customers before you buy any of these for them – you might find that the branding of these titles is a serious turn off!

**Transfer It! The Notebook** by Nicholas Sparks (various editions)

Got a copy of this that's not issuing in Adult Fiction? Well – transfer it to your teen's area where movie-loving kids, especially girls, will snap it up. The film version was a big hit on DVD and remains popular with a young audience who are propelling it towards becoming a cult romance of Dirty Dancing proportions.

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## BBC Teen Site rebranded

Taken from the (new)Slink site:

What we kept hearing about our old name 'Teens' was that though it did what it said on the tin, it wasn't very inspiring. You felt that you were being lumped into a category and labelled.

So we set about hunting down a new name. Have you ever tried to come up with a new name for something? Sooner or later they all come back to food or colours - try it. Finally we found one we loved - Slink. Hope you grow to love it too.

Boys, what can we say? It seems that you just weren't that interested in the Teens website. After much thought and tears we've decided to turn the online magazine over to girls. Which isn't to say you can't have a snoop around and there's loads of useful information.

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## Website News

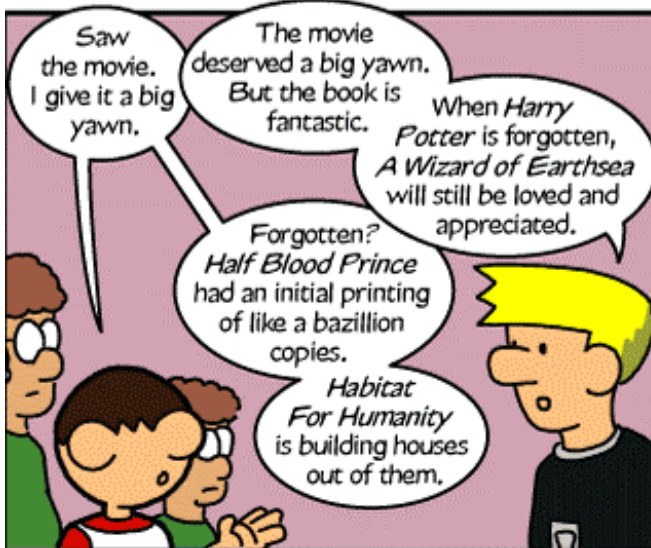
As most of you may already know the website is finally up and running at [www.teenlibrarian.co.uk](http://www.teenlibrarian.co.uk).

While the site is fully functional it is in a state of flux. I will be adding and revising a number of sections so that the information remains current. If anyone would like to contribute material to the site please feel free to contact me at [editor@teenlibrarian.co.uk](mailto:editor@teenlibrarian.co.uk) and we can discuss what you would like to help with.

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## Submissions

If anyone would like to submit an article or idea for inclusion in the newsletter, please send it to [teenlibraryservice@gmail.com](mailto:teenlibraryservice@gmail.com).



## Eight Questions with... E.E. Richardson

### **Q1. What made you decide to write for Teenagers?**

I started writing when I was still in school, so I wrote about teenagers because I was one. I've continued to write for the YA audience because it really feels like the best of both worlds. When you're writing for young people, the focus is has to be first and foremost on telling a good story, and I like that; at the same time, with teenagers you have a lot of freedom about the kind of content you can choose to tackle. So it's a wonderful age range to write for.

### **Q2. How do you get into the heads of your characters?**

I don't know that there's really a process for it. You just have to believe in them as people with personalities of their own, and write what rings true for that person. In a way starting to write a new character is like getting to know somebody; at first you're not really sure what they're like and it's all a bit awkward, but the more time you spend with them, the easier it is to tell what they'd do in any given situation.

### **Q3. Do you know instinctively what will appeal to Teens or is it more a hit or miss process?**

Well, I think trying too hard to write to some idea of 'what teens like' is always a big mistake. I think the best thing, and what I always try to do, is just to write the sort of book that you would have wanted to read when you were a teenager. If there are other people out there who think the same way you do, then you've found your audience. But if you approach it as if teens are some sort of separate species that you've got to find a way through to, then you're doomed to failure, because you're already setting yourself up as an outsider looking in.

### **Q4. What is the most satisfying part of the writing process for you?**

I suppose it's the first time I read through a novel after it's finished. Writing a book is a pretty slow process, and you can only work on it a bit at a time, so it's great when it's finally done and you can step back and see what the whole thing looks like put together.

### **Q5. Do you ever read the works of other Teen/YA authors? If yes what can you recommend?**

I do pick up fantasy or supernatural titles if they catch my eye. I just read and enjoyed "Incubus" by Nick Gifford, and I'm really looking forward to the third book in Joseph Delaney's Wardstone Chronicles.

### **Q6. Are any of your novels based on personal experiences?**

None of my stories or characters are based on anything from my real life. But I do think that whenever you write fiction, you draw from your personal experiences in one way or another. You may not ever have gone through the same things as your characters, but all the time you're relying on your own memories of what it's like to be scared or embarrassed or in pain or nervous to make the things they go through seem real.

### **Q7. What are you working on at the moment?**

I'm in the middle of editing my third book, which is again teen horror, due to be published in April next year.

### **Q8. Do you ever do Library visits to Teen Reading Groups? If yes, what is the best way to get into contact with your or your agent about it?**

I haven't done any before, but I'm certainly willing to start. It's probably best to get in touch with me through my publisher, Random House Children's Books.

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Contributors: Matthew Imrie, Paul Fisher  
With special thanks to Gene Ambaum & Bill Barnes of Overdue Media and E.E. Richardson for giving up her time to answer the questions.