



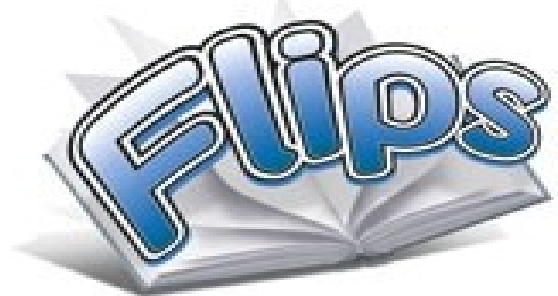
It is ten days to Christmas and time for The final TLM of 2009. I will kick off this month with a little snippet of information: did you know that nearly 2 million 8-11 year-olds in the UK own an NDS console? EA Games knew this and they have been working with some of the best-known publishers in the UK to bring out a new type of electronic books. Called Flips.

Following on from reading we go into writing with an article about the phenomenal Write Path project created by the terrifically talented Bev Humphrey, LRC Manager/Learning Gateway Coordinator for the Woolwich Polytechnic School. We then take a look at the 4YA Blog – an excellent resource for all who run programmes for Teens and Young Adults, even if you are not involved in the programming it is a site that is worth repeated visits as it is updated at a prodigious rate and has many interesting articles and links.

The Orange Prize is currently scouting for young people to take part in their 2010 Youth Panel, so if you know any keen, literate young folk between the ages of 16 and 20 point them in that direction – time is short as applications close on the 21st December.

ReadCloud is an Australian-based company that was founded in early 2009 to provide software solutions for schools confronted with the task of migrating to 'Education Based Around Digital Books'. Staying south of the equator we have a look at a positive project from South Africa called Learn the News aimed at interesting young readers in current events as well as introducing them to the basic concepts of journalism.

This month's author interview in the Eight Questions With... section is with Marcus Chown, the cosmology consultant of New Scientist and author of *We Need to talk about Kelvin* and several other books of a scientific nature. You can also find Marcus visiting the Teen Librarian site today and over the next few days.



FLIPS[™], an innovative new book range created for the Nintendo DS[™]. *FLIPS* has been designed to give children of all ages a fun new way to read their favourite books. EA has worked with some of the UK's leading publishers of children's books and magazines, including Egmont and Penguin Publishing, to bring modern classic titles from critically acclaimed authors such as Cathy Cassidy, Eoin Colfer, Enid Blyton and the various writers from the popular boys series, 'Too Ghoul for School' to the DS. Each *FLIPS* title features multiple books and the first four titles were released exclusively on Nintendo DS in the UK on 4th December 2009.

Titles include:

Enid Blyton (Egmont) - The Enchanted Wood®, The Magic Faraway Tree, The Folk of the Faraway Tree, Enchanted World® – Petal and the Eternal Bloom, Enchanted World – Melody and the Enchanted Harp, Enchanted World – Silky and the Rainbow Feather

Cathy Cassidy (Penguin)– Scarlett, Angel Cake, Sundae Girl, Shine on Daizy Star, GingerSnaps, Driftwood

Eoin Colfer (Penguin) - Artemis Fowl, Artemis Fowl and the Arctic Incident, Artemis Fowl and the Eternity Code, Artemis Fowl and the Opal Deception, Artemis Fowl and the Lost Colony, Artemis Fowl and the Time Paradox

Too Ghoul For School (Egmont) - Silent but Deadly, The In-Spectres Call, Ghoul Dinners,

The Bubonic Builders, Attack of the Zombie Nits, School Spooks Day, French Fright, Terror In Cubical Four

FLIPS uses the DS touch screen and stylus to enable children to read and interact by combining the world of storytelling with quizzes and references to characters, encouraging greater concentration and incentive to finish every chapter. Within the books, links appear to give the reader a unique way of interacting with the story and enhancing their experience. <http://bit.ly/8ZR1oM>

On the Write Path

October saw the second annual international collaborative writing project, the Write Path. Last year's event took place over 24 hours but this year so many schools wanted to take part we celebrated International School Libraries month over the course of a week, with 40 schools and local library groups participating. We approached 32 published authors, mainly children's authors, and luckily all of them agreed to write a first paragraph of a story for students all around the world to continue. Authors included Robert Muchamore, Julia Jarman, Chris Bradford and many more fantastic writers – one in particular we are very grateful to, Tommy Donvaband who writes the *Scream Street* series of books recorded his paragraph as a video so that we could run a video story. Three brilliant illustrators, Emma Vieceli, Andi Watson and Alex Milway drew us the first page of a comic each so that these could also 'travel the world' and be continued. A ning (or collaborative website) was set up so that stories could be worked on online; this made communication very easy and allowed people to upload photos and videos too.

Each school or group worked with students in year 6 or 7 who worked in pairs on one story for one hour. Many schools had mini video conferences at the start or end of their time; these were mostly achieved using free Skype technology. Woolwich Poly boys took part on each day and the standard of their writing was superb, who knew they were so imaginative! The stories had more twists and turns than Hampton Court maze and it was wonderful to read them at the end of each day. Schools from all over the UK took part as well as young people in Louisiana, Australia, Brazil, Jakarta, Qatar, Guernsey,

Pakistan and Texas. Over 300 photos were uploaded to the ning as well as roughly 20 videos – even if schools did not continue the video story some filmed a brief 'hello' message to other schools. We set up a hashtag on Twitter so that people could follow the event and get regular updates as to each day's events. The boys and girls had so much fun and the question most asked was 'when can we do this again' – not until next year definitely!

At the end of the week all of the participants were invited to read the stories and vote for their favourite writers on the Woolwich Poly Learning Gateway and after the votes were counted a winner emerged – Elizabeth College in Guernsey will have received their trophy and medals by the time you read this and they were very thrilled to win (although I think everyone that took part is a winner – the writing was of such a consistently high calibre!). We will also be publishing the stories in a book so watch this space! If you would like to see the stories, photos and videos the Write Path ning can be accessed here: www.writepath.ning.com

Ning?

Ning is an online platform that allows people to build their own social networks. The word "Ning" is Chinese for peace.

<http://www.ning.com/>

Blogs and Sites to watch

The 4YA Blog

4YA is a blog for youth advocates looking for cool projects, creative inspiration and insight into the world of youth. By sharing great ideas we hope bring more teens to your organization and to strengthen youth advocacy.

Run and managed by Andrea Graham a Teen Services Librarian and Youth Advocate from New York, 4YA is a site that holds information from on subjects ranging from animation to zombies and how they can be utilised in working with young people. Mere words cannot do this site justice, it is well worth a visit and then staying to rummage around in the site itself as there are enough good ideas to run over a year's worth of teen events in any library. <http://www.the4yablog.com>

Orange Prize Youth Panel 2010

The Orange Prize for Fiction was set up in 1996 to celebrate and promote international fiction by women. It is the UK's only annual book award for international fiction written by a woman.

In 2010, the prize is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary and we are recruiting a youth panel of judges to read all previous fourteen winning titles and ultimately choose the "Orange Prize Winner of Winners."

If you are 16-20 years old, love reading and are confident about sharing your opinions about the books you read, then apply here: <http://bit.ly/8Ae9Mb> to be considered for the Orange Prize for Fiction Youth Panel 2010.

For more details on the Orange Prize Youth Panel 2010 follow this link:

<http://bit.ly/7ZZiq7>

ReadCloud

ReadCloud is the world's first social eReader software with built-in learning tools and a Digital Library Management system that works on any platform.

The immersive digital library system connects teachers, students and eBooks through online and offline social reading classrooms. ReadCloud facilitates classroom conversations embedded within eBooks through rich media such as comments, videos, pictures and sound bites.

Their technology mimics real life classroom discussions. ReadCloud provides a digital reading ecosystem for each school.

With ReadCloud eBooks become interactive as students can share their thoughts inside an eBook in real-time by posting annotations as text, links, pictures or video or by making direct posts to Twitter/Facebook.

<http://readcloud.com>

Africa's First Children's Newspaper

Learn the News is a news service aimed at school children and is Africa's first Children's

Newspaper. It is distributed via email free on Tuesdays and Thursdays during school terms. The teachers print out the publication on A4 or A3 paper and put it up in the libraries or information centres where the children can access it.

Schools are encouraged to print extra copies and send them to neighbouring schools that do not have access to the internet. Currently more than 250 schools in the country have subscribed to the website. It presents news in English, Afrikaans and isiZulu editions, in language that is easy for primary school children and others to read and understand. While it covers important news events, it leaves out the horror stories typically found in newspapers. Educational worksheets, based on the contents of the newspaper, are provided.

Learn the News aims to encourage reading, spark an interest in current affairs and promote general knowledge. It also extracts educational value from the news, introduces children to the basic principles of journalism, encourages thinking skills, promotes adventure, expands vocabulary, provides research material for projects and helps South Africans to learn one another's languages.

Community colleges around the country have welcomed the newspaper as a great medium for teaching children about the times they live in and also for teaching English literacy to adults.

For more information visit:

<http://www.learnthenews.com/>

Edited by: Matthew Imrie
Articles by: Bev Humphrey & Matthew
Special thanks go to Marcus Chown for answering the Eight Questions With... interview

All submissions of articles, reviews & ideas are welcome and can be sent to teenlibraryservice@gmail.com

Subscribing to Teen Librarian Monthly is free just send an e-mail to: teenlibraryservice@gmail.com

Eight Questions With... Marcus Chown

Q1 Which of your books would you recommend for teens and young readers?

For teens, any of my popular science books. When I was a teenager I used to read popular science books by people like Arthur C. Clarke and Carl Sagan. I write at their kind of level – in fact, I write for my wife, Karen, who has no science background. So, if I was a teenager today, I might be a reader of my books, if that makes any sense!

My most accessible books are *Quantum Theory Cannot Hurt You* and *The Magic Furnace*. In fact, several school science teachers have said they've given *Quantum Theory Cannot Hurt You* to their teenage pupils.

Did you know that there's so much empty space in matter that, if you could squeeze it all out, the entire human race would fit in the volume of a sugar cube? Did you know that a single atom can be in two places at once – the equivalent you being in London and New York at the same time? Did you know that you age faster on the top floor of a building than on the ground floor? All these things are in *Quantum Theory Cannot Hurt You*, which is about Einstein's theory of relativity too. All in less than 200 pages. Without an equation. And, hopefully, it won't hurt you (at least, not much!).

The Magic Furnace is the book of mine I like best. It's about the discovery that we are far more intimately connected to the cosmos than even the astrologers guessed. Want to see a piece of a star? Just hold up your hand. You are stardust made flesh. The iron in your blood, the calcium in your bones, the oxygen that fills your lungs every time you take a breath, all of these atoms were forged inside the furnaces of stars which lived and died before the Sun and Earth were born. The story of how we discovered this is the story of *The Magic Furnace*.

So much for teens, what about young readers? Well, there's *Felicity Frobisher and the Three-Headed Aldebaran Dust Devil* (www.felicityfrobisher.com). It's the book I had the most fun writing. Felicity Frobisher is quiet and polite and never gets into any trouble

whatsoever. Until the day she is visited by Flummff, a young Three-Headed Aldebaran Dust Devil (he comes down a "wormhole" from a dusty planet around the red giant star Aldebaran).

Flummff is very, very bad. He gets poor Felicity into all sorts of trouble at school. She gets chased out of a park by a fist-waving park keeper and accused of cheating in the school cross-country run. But, despite having the worst day of her life, she also gets to beat the school bully, and go down a wormhole to Hawaii, the International Space Station and Flummff's horribly dusty, horribly gritty home planet. *The Scotsman* newspaper called the book: "A thrilling, silly escapade among the stars." And that's about it. It was my chance to be really, really silly, which I don't ever get with my popular science books.

Q2 Do you ever read the works of other science writers? If yes what can you recommend?

When I was a teenager I used to read Arthur C. Clarke and Carl Sagan. But I would recommend anything by Simon Singh, because he's a good writer (and because he's my friend!). So *Big Bang* or *Fermat's Last Theorem*. Richard Feynman was an eccentric, bongo-playing Nobel-prizewinning physicist but he popularised too. His best book is *QED: The strange theory of light and matter*, which is about what he got his Nobel Prize for. That's small and without equations but demanding. But the books about his adventures such as *Surely, You're Joking, Mr Feynman?* And *What Do You Care About What Other People Think?* are great fun. (I was incredibly lucky to be taught by Feynman)

Q3 How did you become known as the Katie Price of Science Writing and who first gave you the nickname?

I have to admit I gave it to myself! I heard that Katie Price never gets any prizes but that one of her books outsold all 100 (I think) books on the Booker Prize long-list *combined*. I too never get short-listed for any book prizes or anything like that but readers seem to like my

books because they buy a lot of them. So I thought: I've got something in common with Katie Price. So that's why I called myself the Katie Price of Science Writing on my website (www.marcuschown.com). It's tongue-in-cheek, really. Just a bit of fun!

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

When the money arrives! No, I'm joking!

Actually, the best part is when your book comes out and you keep going in bookshops to see if it's arrived yet. I am very sad. I tend to get my wife, Karen, to photograph me holding up the first book in a shop! But it's great. The thrill never wears off. When I was at school, I liked English and writing stories. My absolute dream was to write a book and see it published and go into a bookshop and see it on a shelf. And, when it happens, it's just as wonderful and amazing as I imagined it would be.

Q5 I have recently acquired a copy of Felicity Frobisher & the Three-headed Aldebaran Dust Devil (an amazing title and even better story) – do you have any plans for a sequel or perhaps even writing similar books for older readers?

I am so glad you like my title – and the story! I really enjoyed writing it. I had never written children's fiction before and I had no idea whether children would like it. But I was overwhelmed by the response when I went into schools. And children keep asking when they can read more about Felicity Frobisher. I think children identify with Felicity because she isn't like the normal heroes of children's books. She isn't any good at school, isn't athletic, and she wears big glasses. Her mum and dad never notice anything about her. And she's being bullied by the school bully! And, if things could not get any worse, she is befriended by Flummff, an alien boy who is very, very bad. But, although he gets her into tons of trouble, he definitely gives her the adventure of her life. Definitely, the sort of thing most children would like to brighten up a dull, boring day at school

The good news about a sequel is that I am writing *Felicity Frobisher and the Newly*

Wedded Capellan Toast Weevil and also have a third book fully plotted. The bad news is that my publisher does not want to publish any more. So I will have to find another publisher. But don't worry. I will. I'm persistent!

As for writing similar books for adults, my wife is 50 and she loves *Felicity Frobisher*. So I think the book can be enjoyed by both children and adults.

Q6 Are there any novels that you have enjoyed that you could recommend for Teen readers?

I really liked Elizabeth Knox's teen novels *The Rainbow Opera* and *The Dream Quake*. She's one of my favourite novelists. I also really like Malorie Blackman's *Noughts and Crosses* about a world where black and white people have switched roles. I also liked her sequels, *Knife Edge*, and *Checkmate*. I liked Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines*, about cities that trundle across the planet, fighting and gobbling each other up. And, of course, I love *The Lord of the Rings*, which I first read when I was 18.

Q7 What can you tell us about Kelvin (that won't ruin the end of the book)?

It's about what every day things that tell us about the Universe. It's as simple as that. Every chapter starts with a familiar everyday observation – like the sky is dark at night or teacups break when you drop them – and leads on to the, often amazing, thing this tells us about the Universe. For instance, the reflection of your face in a window tells you about the most shocking discovery in the history of science – that the Universe is based on chance, the roll of a "quantum" dice, that ultimately things happen for no reason at all. The fact that iron is common – in the metal of cars, even in the blood coursing through your veins – is telling you that out in space there must be a blisteringly hot furnace at a temperature of at least 5 billion degrees. I finish the book with one everyday observation for which we don't yet know what the thing it is telling us is. If you see what I mean! The observation is that there are no aliens on Earth – not lurking on street corners, not floating angelically

overhead or beaming up and down like characters from *Star Trek*. It could be that we are the first intelligence to arise in our Galaxy. Or it could be it's so dangerous out there in space that any race that ventures out from its home planet gets wiped out. Or it could be anything else. In fact, this is case where your guess is as good as mine. Or the guess of the best scientists!

Q8 Do you ever visit School or Public Library Reading Groups or science classes? If yes, what is the best way to get into contact with you or your agent about it?

In the past, I have been to state schools. I have also given talks at events like the Cheltenham Literature Festival and the Edinburgh Science Festival. What I can do depends on what else I am doing at the time. But the best way to contact me is through my publisher, Faber & Faber.

Thank you! I've really enjoyed answering these questions!