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Editorial

It is the 15th and again time for the latest edition of TLM. This month features the blink and you missed it Safer Internet Day that was held on the 10th; 17 Social Networking platforms signed a European agreement promising to safeguard the online experiences of under-18s (<http://tinyurl.com/bvy96z>). This follows on from research reporting that a quarter of British teenagers have been the victims of cyber-bullying.

We take a look at Twitter in the *Useful Technology* section of TLM and the TES Free Books for Schools project. I have included a promo of a reading group idea I have been tinkering with and links to two articles by well-known YA authors on Teens and reading are also included.

This month's *Eight Questions With...* interview is with well-known YA writer Graham Marks, author of *Radio Radio*, *Tokyo* and *Snatched*.

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Frank Cottrell Boyce: Our children won't succeed if they don't read books

"...the most effective thing you can do is share the pleasure of reading with them. Take them to the library."

"There's a feeling that books somehow 'can't compete' with computer games. Well, yes they can. I've done readings all over the country – frequently to huge crowds of discontented and distracted teenagers. Read them something funny for 10 minutes and they are yours. Obviously it's not always that easy when they get older. I can't read bedtime stories to my teens – they go to bed later than I do for a

start – but I still make a point of reading out the good bits of new books and of leaving books in the loo with the funny bits marked."

To read the entire article by Frank Cottrell Boyce follow this link: <http://tinyurl.com/c8oq24>

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¼BritishTeens cyber-bullied

According to research undertaken in support of Safer Internet Day (10th February) over a quarter of British teens have experienced online bullying. This article may be useful to keep in mind when discussing internet use with young people.

<http://tinyurl.com/ccoo5v>

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day was on February 10th 2009. Throughout Europe thousands of organisations, businesses, charities, schools, law enforcement agencies and government departments were involved in a variety of initiatives and events designed to help children and young people understand the risks online and take measures to protect themselves, whether from hackers, viruses, cyberbullies or online strangers that may want to harm them.

Think u Know?

Think u Know is a website run by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/>.

Broken down into five sections – 5-7, 8-10, 11-16, Parents / Carers and Teachers / Trainers it carries information on popular sites, mobiles

and new technology. It has resources that can be used in the classroom, at home or just to get with it. Most importantly, there's also a place which anyone can use to report if they feel uncomfortable or worried about someone they are chatting to online.

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

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Useful Technology: *Do you tweet?*

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that allows users to send updates or "tweets" to the Twitter website. It is very facebook-esque as the tweets ask you respond to the text prompt "What am I doing?" The tweets take the format of text messages, being limited to 140 characters. Your tweets are displayed on your user profile page and instantly delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. You can send updates to your profile on the Twitter website, via instant messaging or third party applications, for example, Twitterfic or Tweet dec. Users also receive their updates through the same channels. On Twitter you choose to 'follow' people. Obviously friends are the first people you track down to follow; this means you get to see their tweets as they post them. The big difference with this application is that other users can choose to 'follow' you without having to 'add' you or even being known to you; this means they can see your Tweets but you do not receive theirs.

You can use twitter as a simple communication tool to update members of a youth group with what you are doing dates of events and future plans. The instant messaging style is an easy and effective way of keeping in contact and does not rely on your audience having constant access to the web, as long as they have a mobile phone they will stay in touch with what's going on. You could also use it to ask questions of others and get quick succinct answers which may change the face of sharing best practice. The followers, however, are the key to taking advantage of Twittering. It has enormous potential in enhancing Internet exposure and can be used as a tool for marketing

and promotion. As there are so many thousands of people using Twitter already, the problem is it's hard to stand out in the crowd and get noticed. Providing your followers with something new and original is one way of doing this, which may in turn find you new followers. I am seriously considering starting to use Twitter as a branch library or borough to try to raise our profile and let everyone in Twittersphere know what we are up to. If you or your service can become somebody who goes beyond all the noise of the twittering, you may become someone that people seek out and want to interact with.

Gemma Paterson

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Books for Schools

In case you are not already aware of it, the Times Education Supplement is committed to helping teachers, parents and children to gain access to some of the best books for young readers and to help spread the enjoyment of reading. They are offering every school in the country the chance to increase the number of books in their library – absolutely free.

The aim is to help teachers to encourage their pupils to read, giving them the chance to develop their imaginations and improve their literacy skills.

Each day during the school term in 2009, readers of The Times and The Sunday Times can collect tokens that can be redeemed for free books. With books available for as little as ten tokens, you could benefit from hundreds of books next year.

<http://www.freebooksforschools.co.uk/>

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Joe Craig (author of the Jimmy Coates books) has a question: what happens to children's creativity when they go to secondary school?

This article ties in with the current concerns with boys and reading and poses a challenge to recapture children's imaginations through reading and creative writing. To read the full article, follow this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/boj5z7>

Reading Group Idea

I recently had an idea for running a teen book group based on the *Twilight* novels by Stephenie Meyer. Rather than introduce a discussion of the books into an existing group I want to start a completely new group focusing on these novels.

I have already come up with a years' worth of meeting topics. These include: discussing one book per meeting, focusing on the various themes presented in the books including love, immortality, choices (who would the group members have chosen), who would rate as hotter on the thermometer of love - Edward, Jacob or any of the other characters? Comparing the films to the books which was better, did the film match up to what you pictured while reading? Who would win in a stand up to the death battle between werewolves and vampires? A creative writing session could also be set up for stories set in the *Twilight* world.

A comparison of classic Vampire stories in comparison to more modern tales can also be discussed. As can a history of vampirism and a multicultural approach to vampire myths (a la Bella's internet search in the first novel).

Once the *Twilight* topics have been exhausted the group members may be tempted by other writers that specialise in the Paranormal Romance or Urban Magic genres, these include Jim Butcher's Dresden Files series, the early Anita Blake Vampire Hunter books by Laurell K Hamilton (stop at book eight), Gena Showalter or any number of other authors.

Stephen King is not a *Twilight* fan

Sticking with *Twilight* for now, it transpires that horrormeister Stephen King is not a big fan of Stephenie Meyer's creation. He does admire J.K. Rowling's world creation though. For more information read this article: <http://tinyurl.com/dcg5ff>

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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

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Subscription to TLM

Subscribing to TLM is free, just send an e-mail to: editor@teenlibrarian.co.uk and ask to be added to the mailing list.

Editor: *Matthew Imrie*

Contributors: *Gemma Paterson & Matthew Imrie*

Special thanks to *Graham Marks* for giving up his time to answer the eight questions.

Eight Questions with... Graham Marks

Q1. What made you decide to write for Teenagers?

A story called *Radio Radio* decided that for me, or rather, the publishers, Bloomsbury decided that it was a YA book; they were right, because the characters had to be 17-18 years old or the whole scenario would not have worked.

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

Mediums and the like call it 'channeling', but what seems to happen to me is that, if I've done it right, once I've worked out who my characters are I can think like them and I know what they will and won't do; don't ask me how I do it...

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

It's more like I remember what it was like being a teenager, and what I *didn't* like, how I didn't like being treated.

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

Tough question to answer...writing 'The End', even though I know that it isn't and I have all the editing and re-writing to do...getting fan mail and knowing people are reading what you've written...having a 'light-bulb moment' and knowing you've come up with a great idea...

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

Occasionally, if I'm not writing something of my own (you don't ever want to think you may have nicked something of someone you know); I really like Cathy Forde and Meg Rosoff's work.

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

All of them, to some extent, have parts of me in there as I am the filter through which the story has to travel out onto the paper, but none of them are really autobiographical; the closest it got was *How It Works*, which in some ways is a bit like me having a conversation with my teenage self.

Q7. What are you working on at the moment?

I'm re-editing a book called *Haden's Quest*, which first came out in 1996 and will be republished next year by Catnip; I'm also working on the next title from Usborne, a spy novel, set in Constantinople in 1927, also out next year. No teen projects on the go at the moment.

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

I do lots of school and library visits all over the country, and the best way to get hold of me is by e-mail.

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