

TEEN LIBRARIAN

Monthly

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January 2009

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of TLM for 2009! This month brings news of events happening in January and February including the Imagine Children's Literature Festival and the first (unofficial) Twilight fan convention to be held in the UK. The Prince's Trust study into young people's views brings some sobering news that Libraries may be able to contribute towards reversing.

Carl Cross from Derbyshire Library Services is running a survey on gaming in Libraries, when not leading the charge for UK Library Gaming at Lib-Gaming-UK discussion group (join here: <http://tinyurl.com/7lxtfw>) he is also one of *the* people to speak to with regard to organising manga groups in Libraries. With the news that Tokyopop's ReCons being put on hold, sharing practical knowledge on organising manga-related events may become more important.

The 19 under 19s campaign being run by the DCSF is also forging ahead successfully. There is a look at a book that focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and an explanation by the author about why she wrote it.

This month's *Eight Questions with...* interview is with Pauline Fisk, author of *Mad Dog Moonlight*

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Imagine - Children's Literature Festival

Thursday 12 – Friday 20 February
2009 Southbank Centre

Imagine, Southbank Centre's annual Children's Literature Festival, returns in February 2009, with an extensive nine-day programme of readings,

storytelling, poetry, stand-up comedy, exhibitions, dance and music across the site – making it the ideal offering to spark the imagination this half-term.

Featuring some of the UK's best writers for children, the Festival runs from Thursday 12 – Friday 20 February and is designed for ages 5 to 11 years, with some events for younger children. Headline performances include readings and music accompaniment from **Carol Ann Duffy**; a brilliant new poetry show with **Brian Patten**; the return of **James Campbell's** hugely successful *Comedy 4 Kids*; magic with **Paul Kieve**, who worked as the magic consultant on the film *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*; interactive poetry with **Murray Lachlan Young**, calypso-flavoured story-telling from **Jan Blake**; and readings from *Ginger Snaps*, **Cathy Cassidy's** new book.

To complement the ticketed events, there will be an exciting programme of free events, including a sing-along with folk super group and Southbank Centre Artists in Residence, **Bellowhead**; the opportunity to create stories through sound at **The Hayward**; a special *Imagine* Festival installation, including a **magical library**, on The Clore Ballroom in the Royal Festival Hall; an **exhibition of Portuguese children's book illustrations**; an **interactive trail** to explore hidden poetry across the site; **Kathak dance workshops** with Southbank Centre Artist in Residence **Gauri Sharma Tripathi**; opportunities to hear the **Gamelan**; **rapping** and **storytelling** with Apples and Snakes; **mask making** and a performance of *The Carnival Of The Animals*.

<http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/festivals-series/Imagine>

Prince's Trust study into views of young people in Britain

One in ten young people do not find life worth living, according to a Prince's Trust report published on 5th January.

The first large-scale index of its kind offers an alarming insight into an unhappy younger generation, with more than one in ten (12 per cent) feeling that life is meaningless. More than a quarter (27 per cent) of 16 to 25-year-olds admitted they are "often" or "always" down or depressed.

The Prince's Trust YouGov Youth Index, based on interviews with 2,004 young people across Britain, reveals the state of their lives today and how confident they are about their future.

More than one in four (29 per cent) say they are less happy now than they were as a child and one in five (20 per cent) feels like crying "often" or "always". Almost half (47 per cent) say they are regularly stressed.

The full report can be downloaded here: <http://tinyurl.com/8rpvfu>

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January Events that can be run with Teens in Libraries:

Holocaust Memorial Day 27th January

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) commemorates the tragic loss of life in the genocides of World War II, in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Darfur. HMD is held on 27 January, the anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) exists so that we learn the lessons of the past to build a better future now. <http://www.hmd.org.uk/>

Rabbit Hole Day

The 5th [Annual Rabbit Hole Day](#) is coming. Started on LiveJournal in 2005 to celebrate the birthday of Lewis Carroll (wrote about a girl who fell down a rabbit hole and found herself in a place where all the rules had changed) it has started spreading into

the offline world.

When you wake up on the 27th, instead of writing about your usual work and school and politics and friends and news and stuff, experience life down the Rabbit Hole and write about the work, the school, the politics, the friends, the news, the stuff that you find *there* instead. Travel through time. Turn into an animal. Flee from assassins. Talk to your goldfish. Conquer Greenland. Sprout some extra limbs. Learn how to walk on water. Marry an insect.

Take a break from the Every Day and write about your Rabbit Hole Day. Your normal life will be waiting for you when you get back.

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Reading is the basics for all learning.
G.W. Bush

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Video Game Survey by Carl Cross

I am trying to get a very quick idea of how many UK libraries of all kinds are engaging with video games in some way. I am particularly interested in what formats you are circulating and especially which This-Gen console you have chosen to support, if any.

I have put together a very quick survey at <http://tinyurl.com/7u9xbf>. The survey itself should take you less than 5 minutes to complete.

If you have any problems email me at carl.cross@derbyshire.gov.uk and I'll send you a link.

Please respond by Friday 30th January.

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Eternal Twilight

Eternal Twilight is the UK's first 3-day unofficial convention to celebrate the world bestseller book series by author Stephenie Meyer, 'Twilight' and the upcoming movie due to be released in the UK in winter. This event will be held from **Friday 27th February - Sunday 1st of March 2009**. This unofficial convention aims to bring together fans of the books and movie from across the country to meet some the stars of the first movie and enjoy various events over the weekend.

There will be activities each day from the usual guest talks and photograph sessions to quizzes and late night parties and hopefully some book readings from the cast!

The current guests are: **Taylor Lautner** "Jacob Black", **Kellan Lutz** "Emmett Cullen", **Ashley Greene** "Alice Cullen", & **Justin Chon** "Eric Yorkie"

<http://massiveevents.co.uk/twilight/>

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Tokyopop ReCons

After the 300th Tokyopop ReCon event, the ReCons will be placed on indefinite hiatus. According to Andrew Whelan it will be at least a year before they are restarted and there is a possibility that they will not return.

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19under19



19 Under 19s is a campaign by the Department for Children Schools & Families (DCSF) aimed at revealing the true image of our nation's teenagers.

Local authorities and community groups were invited to nominate young people, aged 19 or under, who are making an active contribution to their local area and, crucially, a positive difference to their own lives. From these nominations, DCSF selected the most inspiring 19 to become the face of real youth in England.

Not only does each of these 19 Under 19s have a great individual story to tell, but together they reveal an important, but too-often overlooked, truth about today's teenagers.

Namely, that rather than hanging around on street corners or engaging in anti-social behaviour, the majority of young people are instead using their free time to get involved in a huge variety of positive activities.

These range from sports coaching, dancing and drama to vital roles in local youth groups and community action projects.

Through Aiming High for Young People and the work of the Youth

Taskforce, DCSF is investing a total of £679 million in creating opportunities for young people at a time and a place that suits them, including Friday and Saturday nights.

To find out about events and activities happening in your local area, visit www.direct.gov.uk/getinvolved

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Message in a Bottle by Valerie Zenatti



Although originally published in 2007, considering situation in Palestine and Israel this book may be more relevant than ever.

This is a letter written by Valerie Zenatti on why she wrote the book:

I started writing this book on 9 September 2003. That evening a bomb had gone off in a Jerusalem café I know well. A young girl of nineteen, who was to be married the next day, met her death there with her father, along with five other people.

Once again, lives mown down, lives ruined, just because someone was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

No-one seemed to realise this but 9 September 2003 marked the tenth anniversary of mutual acknowledgement between Israelis and Palestinians, a few days before the ceremony Bill Clinton presided over at the White House.

I was struck by this juxtaposition: man tends to want to progress from the worst towards the best, but in the

Near East the exact opposite had happened. In ten years, hope had given way to despair; the sensitive lyrical discussions between Yitzhak Rabin, Yasser Arafat and Bill Clinton had been drowned out by parents weeping as they buried their children in Tel Aviv, Jenin, Netanya, Naplouse, Jerusalem and Gaza.

It made me want to stop all that despair, to wring its neck and make sure it didn't have the last word. I tried to cross the border which separates Israelis from Palestinians with empathy as my passport. I wanted to bring them face to face with each other, and with each other's suffering, demands and rights, to say something which seems so obvious in our peaceful societies but which is so difficult over there: I'm a human being, you're a human being. I have a right to live and you have a right to live.

My protagonists, the Israeli girl Tal and the Palestinian boy Na'im, have reached the age when, in the West, people launch themselves into life – while these two have to confront the eventuality of their own deaths from a missile or a human bomb. But still they have plans, and still they have dreams . . .

In the waves of discouraging news from the region, I think back to my protagonists, to the many readers all over the world who have taken them to their hearts and who, through them, now want a real solution for those two peoples. An end to the occupation of Palestinian territories, and an end to shootings and bombings in Israel. And that makes me think that fiction is necessary for reality. That it might, imperceptibly, be able to bring about change. That, whatever violent somersaults history goes through, the human race needs committed humanists – and they do exist in Israel and in Palestine - to believe in a better, fairer world. Not out of naivety, but out of lucid and generous-minded pragmatism.

'Peace comes from the mad,' say Tal and Na'im . . .

I would like to believe that. Because

history moves at a slower pace than our lives. Because it took Europe, where I live, many centuries to establish its borders and live in peace, so I want to believe that one day they too will succeed in calming their storms.

Valérie Zenatti
Paris, 22 June 2007

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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: Carl Cross & Matthew Imrie
Special thanks to Pauline Fisk for giving up her time to answer the eight questions.

Eight Questions with... Pauline Fisk

Q1. What made you decide to write for Teenagers?

I never made a decision to write for teenagers. It's a matter of writing about the things that interest me and using my 'voice' as a writer, which happens to be this sort of voice. The lives of young people and what they go through as they grow up are really interesting to me. It's the characters as much as anything that dictate who my stories will be for and what they'll be about. Which of course leads me to your next question...

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

This is an interesting one. Getting to know people in a story is no different to getting to know them in real life. To begin with, in a real life situation, one only knows superficial things about the people we meet - what they say or do, how they dress, what the expression on their face might reveal. But spend time with those people and you'll know so much more. And writing is no different in that respect. The company of your characters, over time during the act of writing, is what brings them to life.

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

There's certainly nothing hit or miss about the process. Having said that though, instincts are employed that are sometimes hard to explain. I have five children who have certainly acquainted me with what teenage life is all about. But mostly my stories aren't ideas driven. I don't start with 'this will appeal' or 'this is a worthy' theme. That comes later. The story - which will be very place and character driven - will come first, and the book's theme will grow out of it in a natural and organic fashion.

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

The final draft, when everything I've looked forward to and held in my head is finally realised and I'm writing the story that I've wanted all along but haven't until now quite been able to reach.

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

Susanna Clarke isn't a teenage author as such, but I think teenagers who enjoy long reads might well find themselves utterly captivated by her 'Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell'. I certainly was. Geraldine McCaughrean's a favourite writer. I loved Louis Sacher's 'Holes'. Katherine Paterson's 'Bridge to Terabithia' is a much better book than the film, and I love her 'The Great Gilly Hopkins.' Philip Pullman, of course - from the first paragraph of 'Northern Lights' I knew I could trust him to give me a good read. I could go on. Cornelia Funke's 'Inkheart'. Anything almost by Jacqueline Wilson, though I've got a particular admiration for 'The Illustrated Mum'. Oh, and David Almond. Him in particular. I really love 'Clay'.

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

Everything one writes is based on personal experience, which is an entirely different thing to saying it's based on one's life. All the places I've written about in 'Mad Dog Moonlight' - magical Plynlimon Mountain, the River Rheidol, dark and mysterious Devil's Bridge, the little inner harbour, known as the Gap, in Aberystwyth - are places I've visited and got to know. The storm which brings the mysterious sailors into young Mad Dog's life is something I experienced at first hand. Probably it wouldn't have been in the book if I hadn't happened to go to Aberystwyth on the right day, when waves were lashing the shoreline and to walk along the waterfront was to put oneself in risk of being blown away.

Q7. What are you working on at the moment?

A year ago, in order to do research for a novel for teenagers about the gap year experience, I visited Belize to explore the rainforest and meet some of the people who live in it. I'm now writing that novel. It's called 'In the Trees' and it's inspired by my son's gap experience several years before, from which he came back a changed person. Gap years, it seemed to me, are interesting modern rites of passage, definitely worth writing about. That I'm now able to do so is very much thanks to funding from the Arts Council and the Authors' Foundation, and to the willingness of Trekforce Worldwide to trek me out into the jungle to witness some of their conservation projects at first hand.



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?

Yes, I do take part in library events and have visited reading groups, schools and library groups of all sizes over a period of twenty years. I enjoy such visits very much and can be contacted through my agent, Laura Cecil, 17 Alwyne Villas, London, N1 2HG.
