

# TeenLibrarian

Monthly Newsletter  
www.teenlibrarian.co.uk



*Welcome to the April edition of Teen Librarian Monthly, I apologise for the non-appearance of TLM last month but events beyond my control prevented me from being able to put together anything resembling a coherent newsletter.*

*There has been a lot of movement in the UK library world – threats of budget reductions, potential job losses and all round gloom and doom. In an attempt to combat budget cuts I would like to ask all readers to contribute an idea for a library event for young people that is of a low-to-no cost nature. This can be done in a number of ways – contributors can e-mail me their ideas and I can format them for the site and newsletter or I can set up a forum on the site again for a coming together of great minds & ideas.*

*The Teen Librarian site is currently a bit broken which has led to me being unable to post anything for a while, as those of you who drop by occasionally may have noticed. I am hoping that it will be resolved soon and regular postings will resume.*

*Moving on to this month's newsletter, we start with a look at Redbridge Libraries Teen Clubs and then move on to news of a new course starting soon at the University of Hertfordshire. We are introduced to author Jim Carrington (in his own words), he is also the subject of the Eight Questions With... interview at the end of the newsletter. Postcards from book covers deals with an idea on how to recycle old book covers that could be adapted into an event for young people. Tech news deals with some news from the social networking side of the web, focussing on Bebo and Facebook.*

*Shakespeare's birthday is fast approaching and there are a number of adaptations that can potentially turn teens into fans of Britains biggest Bard.*

*Finally there are two competitions – the first from Random House and National Drama and is aimed at secondary schools, the second is a Teen Librarian special with two Vampireology t-shirts on offer.*

## Redbridge Libraries Teen Clubs

Redbridge Libraries are now running a Teen Club every Friday between 5.30 – 8.00 in our recently refurbished teen space at South Woodford Library. Because of the teen refurbishment the library has become more inviting and successful with increased usage by Teens, not just at club times, but also throughout the week for study, computer and general library usage. In the Easter holidays for instance we had over 25 teenagers using the library for study purposes on a regular basis. During the club opening times the teenagers are able to play with the Wii and participate in board games. Once a month, there is a creative writing and Teen book club, as well as a monthly Manga club. We also hope to start a regular film club for the Teenagers.

Every week we have over 20 participating in our Warhammer club. The Warhammer teams representing South Woodford Library did very well in the regional stage of the school league competition in which libraries are able to take part. Both the Fantasy and the Warhammer 40,000 gained a place in the regional finals, with one of our boys winning points for the team for his "Best Painted Army".

If you want any more information do not hesitate to contact me:

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## Vampire Masters

According to BBC News, a newly-opened Cambridge centre for the study of children's literature (they call it a "centre," naturally) will cover, among other things, *Twilight*, the *Harry Potter* series, and video games as works of literature.

Not to be outdone the the University of Hertfordshire, will be launching the first-ever Master's program in the study of Vampire Literature.

The UofH also recently ran a conference titled: Open Graves, Open Minds: Vampires and the Undead in Modern Culture on the 16 and 17th April 2010

The aim of the conference was to relate the undead in literature, art, and other media to questions concerning gender, technology, consumption, and social change.

<http://bit.ly/wL7UB>

All jokes aside, using this forthcoming course will be a good way of engaging with young people about their post-school choices.

*"In the months I've been planning the conference I've fielded a huge number of inquiries from people all over the world who are interested in studying vampires, zombies and the undead at a higher level," she says. "I had the idea of offering the master's as a direct follow-up from the conference. I thought it was crucial to have a way of extending this burst of awareness." The best papers from the conference will be collected in a book, which will become a textbook for the MA students. - Dr Sam George*

### Authors to watch in 2010:

#### Jim Carrington

I started writing seriously when I was in my late teens, putting together and selling a photocopied music fanzine with a few friends. I soon found that I couldn't be bothered to review and interview real bands, and found it was much more fun to make up my own. Our readers seemed to enjoy it too.

After working as a betting shop manager, mystery customer, fruit picker and teacher, I took the MA in Writing For Young People at Bath Spa University. I started writing *Inside My Head*, my first novel, as an assignment on the course. The novel started out as a short story, based on real experiences of bullying. I particularly like novels that are gritty and realistic and that don't flinch from showing the warts and all side of life. I aim to represent real life in the same way in my own writing.

### Postcards from bookcovers

Although the defacing of books may be anathema to most librarians the fact remains that we often have books that through general wear and tear or being partially devoured by a borrower's pet or child are no longer suitable for returning to the shelf. Rather than discarding the remains in the recycling bin, parts can be

salvaged for craft activities, especially if the cover is untouched.

What You Need:

#### Materials

Paperback book covers

#### Tools

Utility blade (optional)

Corner cutter (optional)

#### Instructions

1. Most paperback covers will tear away easily from the book pages. Covers that are old or firmly adhered might require the use of a craft or utility knife.
2. Once the cover is removed, clean away any glue residue.
3. Use a corner cutter to create clean, rounded corners.
4. The printed side of these science fiction postcards was designed on a computer and printed using a desktop printer.

#### Additional Notes:

Follow postal regulations when mailing paperback postcards — they might require additional postage or hand stamping by a postal worker to enter the postal system. Be clever and choose a paperback title appropriate to the location and circumstances from where and when it will be sent.

This activity has been taken from *Playing With Books: The Art of Upcycling, Deconstructing, and Reimagining the Book* by Jason Thompson.

<http://bit.ly/bIEYD8>

### Tech News

It appears that one-time wonder of the social networking sphere **Bebo** may soon become history as AOL the current owner is struggling to offload it. At its peak Bebo was the most popular site for teens, but after the meteoric rise of Facebook it has struggled to maintain relevance.

**Facebook** is facing calls from (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre to place a panic button on its pages. The panic button sends users to a CEOP page containing advice on everyday internet security threats and bullying, inappropriate content, as well as a

link to report suspicious approaches to investigators.

The Classic Comics Store, the publisher of Classics Illustrated is now on Facebook:

<http://bit.ly/d8lmxo>

## Shakespeare's Birthday

The day on which the great Bard was born is fast approaching – at the end of this week in fact, the 23<sup>rd</sup> April. His works have been in print since they were published and are available in a variety of formats that will appeal to teen readers.

The always fantastic Self Made Hero <http://www.selfmadehero.com/> with their Manga Shakespeare titles illustrated by some of the UK's top manga masters:

*Midsummer Nights Dream* - Kate Brown

*As you like it* - Chie Kutsuwada

*Hamlet* - Emma Vieceli

*Macbeth* - Robert Deas

*Othello* - Ryuta Osada

*Henry VIII* - Patrick Warren

*Richard III* - Patrick Warren

*Romeo and Juliet* - Sonia Leong

*The Merchant of Venice* - Faye Young

*The Tempest* - Paul Duffield

*Twelfth Night* - Nana Li

*King Lear* - Ilya

Many libraries and schools have invited manga artists in to run workshops on creating manga and developing a manga art style but it is also possible to run a session focussing on Shakespeare and the intricacies of illustrating some of the best-known plays ever written.

I have hosted a number of the artists listed and have met most of them in libraries or at conventions and they are all fantastic people and very easy to work with.

Another publisher of graphic Shakespeare adaptations is Classical Comics <http://www.classicalcomics.com>, a company that produces unabridged volumes Shakespeare's works in three formats:

- **Original Text** - the full script
- **Plain Text** - a plain English version of the full script
- **Quick Text** - with shortened dialogue for young readers and for those people

who want to understand the story rapidly.

Shakespearean adaptations are not only limited to the page, there have also been a number of film adaptations, one of the most well-known being Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet*, there is also "O" an adaptation of *Othello* set in a high school; *10 things I hate about you* – an high school of *The taming of the shrew*; *A Midsummer Night's Rave*, with the tag line: Get Pucked up!; *She's the man!* an adaptation of *Twelfth Night*.

## Competitions

### FromPage to Stage

Random House has teamed up with the UK's biggest drama organisation, National Drama, to launch an innovative drama competition for schools - **Page to Stage**.

They're challenging secondary school based drama groups to adapt a pre-selected scene from Theresa's exciting new novel, *Prisoner of the Inquisition*. Individual secondary school pupils may enter - however the film clip must be submitted by a member of the school staff who should sign the entry form. Video the scene and upload it to the Page to Stage YouTube channel and you could win £1000 worth of books for your school along with a special event with Theresa, with other great prizes to be won.

For details on how to enter the competition see [www.nationaldrama.org.uk](http://www.nationaldrama.org.uk) or [www.theresabreslin.co.uk](http://www.theresabreslin.co.uk)

To see Theresa talking about the competition and reading from the book see [www.youtube.com/pagetostage](http://www.youtube.com/pagetostage)

### Vampireology

Teen Librarian, in conjunction with [Ologyworld](http://www.Ologyworld.com) & Galactus is offering two lucky people the chance to win one of 2 Vampireology T-shirts and Tattoos - <http://bit.ly/b6utJK>

The competition is running until the 15<sup>th</sup> May.

Edited by: Matthew Imrie  
Articles by: Jill Keeling, Jim Carrington & Matthew Imrie  
Special thanks go to Jim for answering the Eight Questions With... interview

## Eight Questions With... Jim Carrington

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

It was a happy accident. I did the MA in Writing for Young People at BathSpa and tried my hand at writing for all age groups, from picture books to YA. One of my final assignments was to write a piece for teenagers. As it was anti-bullying week, I wrote a short story about an incident that I remember happening at my school when I was about 14 years old, when I had stood by and watched somebody get bullied without doing anything about it. I realised that I still felt a sense of guilt about. I used that story as a starting point and built the rest of my first novel, *Inside My Head*, around it.

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

A lot of what I write is based on things that really happened, which I think makes it easy to get into the characters' heads. I also find that writing in the first person helps, because writing through the eyes of your characters you can't help but experience what they are going through – how they feel, what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste.

In my current novel, *Inside My Head*, I tried to write from the point of view of Gary (who is bullied), David (who stands by and lets his best friend bully Gary) and Zoë (who has the courage to stand up and challenge what is happening). At various times in my life, I had some degree of experience of all these situations, and tried to draw on those feelings to get inside the heads of my characters. I often find when I'm writing that I get so into role that I sigh or I raise an eyebrow or smile or cheer, just as the character is about to.

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

I'm not convinced that I ever grew up much beyond my teens, so the things that appealed to me then by and large appeal to me now! I try to write the kinds of things that I would have wanted to read as a teenager. I think the feelings and concerns that teens have

now are fairly similar to the way they have always been. The things that change most are fashion and technology and I try not to get too caught up with them in my writing.

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

Most parts of the writing process are both satisfying and excruciating in equal measure and often at the same time! I particularly enjoy the first experimental stage of writing something new, when characters are starting to take shape and I only have a vague idea of who they are and what they might do.

Redrafting and editing can often be satisfying too, because this is when loose ends are tied and the whole story begins to take shape and make sense. It took me a long time to work out that redrafting is where most of the hard work of writing happens, and that it can be just as rewarding as writing a first draft. As soon I worked that out, it was a revelation and my writing improved immensely.

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

Yes, loads. I absolutely recommend the writing of Kevin Brooks, who writes brilliantly for this age group. His books are so gripping, well observed and well written. I also like Melvin Burgess and Keith Gray. And I recently reviewed *Pretty Bad Things* by CJ Skuse for another website, and thought that she had a really engaging and refreshing style. One of the novels that inspired me to become a writer – and one I always go back to - is *A Kestrel for a Knave* by Barry Hines. I would recommend that to anyone.

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

I often start off by writing short stories about real life events - something that has happened to me or that I have observed. I find that the characters and plot soon start to develop beyond the short story though and take on a life of their own. From this point on, the story often evolves beyond my own

experiences and the characters start doing things that I have never done or seen, such as shooting guns and stealing tractors in Inside My Head.

Some of the parts set in school in Inside My Head are based on real experiences, and most of the settings are based on places near where I grew up in Norfolk. I've changed all the place names though, so you'll have to guess where they are.

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

I've just finished my next novel, which at the moment is called In The Bag. It's similar to Inside My Head, in that it is from multiple viewpoints. The story revolves around two friends who find a crashed car and a bag in the woods one night. Their decision to keep the bag and tell no one soon starts to test their relationship and plunge them into danger.

**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 haven't done yet, but would love to. I can be contacted by email at [jimcarrington@talktalk.net](mailto:jimcarrington@talktalk.net) .