

Teen Librarian

Monthly Newsletter

www.teenlibrarian.co.uk



If you are reading this edition of TLM you know that we are halfway through 2009. Not a bad year as they go but it is passing so quickly. This month we take a look at Roald Dahl Day, with celebrations taking place over a whole month this one will be BIG! Also in the newsletter is an excerpt from an article on gaming & libraries with a link to the complete article. If you live in Leeds then there is the chance to tell your manga readers about an event happening at the end of the month during the Breeze International Youth Festival.

This month features a new addition to TLM – a monthly review site suggestion. If anyone would like to suggest a review site they use for either work or personal enjoyment reasons they are welcome to send it through. If any reviewers would like to promote their site they are also welcome to get in touch. The only stipulation is that the site must feature teen literature (at least in part).

This month's Eight Questions With... author interview is with the talented N.M. Browne, author of the excellent Warriors of Ethandun and many other novels for young people.

Roald Dahl Day

On 13th September 2009 we will be celebrating the 4th annual Roald Dahl Day. Every year the Roald Dahl Day celebrations have got bigger and better and we've discovered that the nation's master storyteller is just too popular to be constrained by a single day. So this year we'll be celebrating for well over a month and we'd love YOU to join in. Here is just a small taster of all the fantabulous things that are going on – from school event kits to festival appearances & even GEORGE CLOONEY - there really is something for everyone and we challenge you to make your Roald Dahl Day celebrations the best ever... (George Clooney stars as the voice of FANTASTIC MR FOX in the animated feature hitting cinemas 23rd October 2009)

Organize your own Roald Dahl event - This year journalist and children's books consultant Geraldine Brennan has created exciting new online resources for schools and libraries. Geraldine says "I was so impressed by the inventiveness and creativity shown

by everyone that has taken part in Roald Dahl Day so far. Building on these brilliant ideas I've created a range of easy-to-use free materials from simple planning tools to an event toolkit so you can organise the perfect Roald Dahl activity. Even if you can only spare a few hours you will find great ideas ready to go from book quizzes for every level to Dahl-themed sports days and even drama festivals." Go to www.roalddahlday.info and click on the Complete Roald Dahl Day Kit button at the top of the page for everything you need to organise your own activities and celebrations for a day, a term or a year.

Discover Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Roald Dahl – the legendary road show is hitting five new locations – Edinburgh, Newcastle, Llandudno, Norfolk and Leeds. This event is a unique opportunity for school audiences to view a specially commissioned film on the life of Roald Dahl and to pose the most fiendish questions they can conjure up to a panel of Roald Dahl experts from the Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre and other special guests. Due to popular demand we are also hosting three other Everything... events for public audiences, featuring Michael Rosen at the Edinburgh Book Festival on 30th August <http://www.edbookfest.co.uk/>, Michael Rosen and special guests at the Bath Festival of Children's Literature on 26th September <http://www.bathfestivals.org.uk/2638> and our panel of Roald Dahl experts at the Newcastle Gateshead Juice Festival for Young People on 24th October <http://tinyurl.com/nxb4em>

We are also delighted to announce that Quentin Blake will be appearing at the Royal National Theatre, London on 3rd October <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/whatson> (Please note it's too early for bookings just yet but check the relevant website for event updates closer to the time).

Why Games?

By Liz Danforth -- Library Journal, 5/15/2009

Twenty-five years ago, librarians met gamers at the castle gates with pitchforks and torches, not sure

exactly what to think about these loud, rowdy college kids declaring they were delving into dungeons to kill dragons—and, yes, it was mainly college kids back then. Most of us gamers, however, grew up into normal, productive citizens, had families and kids of our own (whom we let play more games), and the gaming hobby grew like Topsy. Computer games flourished, becoming ever more complex and graphically beautiful; console video games exploded into must-haves for every household with teens; and now the Wii brings it all home.

Read the full article here: <http://tinyurl.com/n9hpdj>

Thought Bubble & Leeds Young Peoples Film Festival Presents a special FREE 2 DAY MANGA EVENT

SUNDAY 28TH JUNE TRAVELLINGMAN COFFEE BAR

How to Draw Manga Creatures Workshop with the amazing YISHAN LI + Anime Screenings

New to manga art and want to learn the basics? Come along and Yishan Li will show you how! Are you a more experienced manga artist? Bring your portfolio and get some advice!

Creature art from this workshop will be exhibited at the Hyde Park on Monday 29th June & a winner will be picked to receive a special prize!

12.10pm Anime Screening FLCL
1.00pm How to Draw Manga Workshop
3.00pm Anime Screenings Samurai 7/Slayers

MONDAY 29TH JUNE HYDE PARK PICTURE HOUSE

5.00pm Cosplay Competition/artwork display
6.00pm Surprise Anime Screening
8.00pm Winners announced & prize ceremony (Hyde Park event FREE to Breeze card holders, £1 for adults)

<http://www.breezeleeds.org/>

Funding

Funding to Encourage Innovation in Non Formal Education and Youth Work (UK)

The European Commission has announced that it is inviting applications from non-profit organisations such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs),

networks and public bodies under Action 4.4 of its Youth in Action Programme (2007 - 13). This actions seeks to support projects that encourage creativity and innovation in non-formal education and youth work.

In 2009, priority under this call will be assigned to projects focusing on the themes of media literacy of young people and e-youth work. Projects must involve partners from at least four different Programme Countries (including the applicant organisation), of which at least one is a Member State of the European Union. The total budget allocated to the co-financing of projects under this call for proposals is estimated at £1. 2 million and the maximum grant available is £100,000. The closing date for applications is the 30th September 2009.

<http://tinyurl.com/n2bnxf>

MLA Announces Two New Grant Schemes (England)

The Museums, Libraries, Archives Council (MLA) has announced that it has two new grants programmes that are now open to applications from museums, libraries and archives across England. The two programmes are; The Literature & Storytelling Phase 2 scheme and the Young Cultural Creator scheme. The Literature & Storytelling Phase 2 scheme has 27 grants of £750 available to enable families to learn together using museum, library and archive collections. Funding will pay for the delivery of family storytelling events across England, which will support audiences to engage with collections in new ways. The Young Cultural Creator scheme has 27 grants of £750 to £1,000 available for museums, libraries and archives working in partnership with students to create poetry inspired by collections. Funding will pay for projects that will build the capacity of cultural services to deliver social and learning outcomes to vulnerable young people. Schemes will take place between October 2009 and February 2010. They will work with groups of young people outside mainstream education or at risk of exclusion - from Pupil Referral Units and other Children's Services. The closing date for applications is the 19th July 2009.

<http://tinyurl.com/lfsf27>

Mini Mediabox Open for Applications (England)

Mediabox offers disadvantaged 13 to 19 year olds the opportunity to develop and produce creative

media projects, using film, television, print, radio or online platforms. Mediabox has announced that Mini Mediabox is now open for applications. Mini Mediabox provides grants of £1,500 to £5,000 and is open to grassroots and community youth organisations with a turnover of £100k or under. The scheme which is run by a consortium consisting of First Light Movies, Media Trust, Skillset and the UK Film Council is for young people to:

Express their own opinions, ideas and views

Gain new skills

Encourage creativity

Boost personal development

Get their voices heard.

Applications can be submitted at any time.

<http://www.media-box.co.uk/index.php>

Review Sites: My Favourite Books

My name is Liz de Jager and I am happy to confess that I am a bookaholic. This is one of the reasons why I started my review blog:

www.myfavouritebooks.blogspot.com and haven't looked back since. The blog started off as somewhere for me to air my views on books I was reading and these leaned heavily towards fantasy and action adventure with some literary and other speculative fiction thrown in. It started very slowly but then – unexpectedly - it kicked off into something beyond my wildest dreams.

Publishers started sending me books! I was making friends with famous authors and people wanted me to interview them! I attended signings, I started networking. I made more and more contacts in the publishing industry and before I knew it, I had to ask my husband Mark to help me review and I've roped in a few friends to do guest reviews on occasion.

The blog has grown and with it my appetite for reading. People ask me what my favourite genre is and I can say, hand on my heart, that it is reading children's books and young adult novels. I used to be a bit ashamed by this. I used to sneak around the children's department at Waterstones on Piccadilly and secretly buy books by authors like **Robert Muchamore**, **Cornelia Funke**, **Celia Rees**, **Holly Black** and **Julie Hearn** and hide them at home. I thought there was something a bit wrong with me – I mean, I am an adult and I've started preferring reading kids' books over adult books! It was difficult – I could see my friends look at me a bit funny when I waxed lyrical about **Inkheart** or

Recruit. Then I became addicted to the **Spiderwick Chronicles** after reading **Holly Black's Tithe** books. And it all just exploded out from there.

I read more YA and children's books now compared to adults' books. I have to force myself away from these books, repeating to myself: the blog has to be balanced, you haven't reviewed an adult book in two weeks. I do try my best, keeping things balanced, but it is so very hard!

I've never been able to put my finger on why I love kids' books so much. To be honest, one of the reasons is the freedom authors feel when writing kids' books that attracts me to them. Adult books are very regimented – there are definite genres: horror, science fiction, literary, crime, thrillers. It's all a bit tedious. I also think people who write for young adults and children are also kept more honest in their writing. I say this because if you write for adults, you can get away with something like sloppy dialogue whereas you don't stand a chance like writing for kids and teens. Also, I know for a fact, that when I go and stand in the kids' department in any bookshop, I can be assured of a fantastic read and pure escapism!

I have been incredibly fortunate in my dealings with many amazing children's publishers. At the beginning of this year I received six large boxes of books from people like Atom, Bloomsbury, Walker, Random House Kids and Macmillan. I divvied the books up and gave these boxes away in a massive Children's Books Competition (<http://tinyurl.com/nbyubu>) on my site. It was very well received by librarians and schools and has subsequently attracted a large number of librarians and kids to the blog. It is beyond flattering; I have to pinch myself sometimes as part of the reality check I do on a weekly basis.

I keep running competitions on the blog as I have a solid core of people visiting it on a daily basis. The competitions range across all genres for both kids and adults, but I can quite freely admit that the kids' books are the favourites and I get the most entries. Case in point being **Sarwat Chadda's** hotly anticipated novel **The Devil's Kiss** earlier this year. It was a bit of a scrum with over 100 people entering, but at the end only five readers could win.

I realise too that although I proclaim my love for kids and young adult books, I've not even begun to scratch the surface of what is available. I discovered this when fantasy author, good friend and local school librarian, Sarah Ash, recently invited me to visit her Year 6's at Oak Lodge Primary.

I took a selection of books with me to show the kids, some to give away and to donate to their library. I

was petrified out of my skull, having never had to talk in front of a group larger than five or so. Thirty pairs of eyes swivelled to me as I sat down and I almost ran screaming from the room. But I managed to clamp down on my inner coward and discovered how amazing they were – we chatted about the books, I read excerpts and asked them about their favourite books. They couldn't believe I got some of the books I review on the site for free! I think some of them immediately resolved to set up their own review blogs. The afternoon went by in a whirl – I got a list, the length of my arm from them, about books they've read and loved. The majority of these were books I've not read. It made me feel very much the amateur. This list has duly been added to my "to buy" list for "further consumption".

*Currently, I have got a range of children's and teen books lined up to read in the next few weeks and this list seems to be growing every day. I am currently reading Sarah Singleton's decidedly gothic and wonderfully descriptive *The Poison Garden* and I'm dragging it out, limiting myself to a few pages a day. I don't want it to end!*

I list below some books I've thoroughly enjoyed reading thus far this year:

- *The Thirteen Treasures* by Michelle Harrison
- *Airman* by Eoin Colfer
- *How Kirsty Jenkins Stole the Elephant* by Elen Caldecott
- *Marked* by PC and Kirsten Cast
- *Furnace: Lockdown* by Alexander Gordon Smith
- *Knife* by RJ Anderson
- *Percy Jackson series* by Rick Riordan
- *Ginger Snaps* by Cathy Cassidy
- *Crossing the Line* by Gillian Philips
- *If I Stay* by Gayle Foreman
- *Gone* by Michael Grant
- *Extreme Kissing* by Luisa Playa
- *The Demon's Lexicon* by Sarah Rees Brennan

Thanks Matt for inviting me along! Please stop by the blog, enter the competitions and send me emails about recommendations. I am always keen to find new authors to read.

Edited by: Matthew Imrie

Articles by Liz de Jager & Matthew Imrie

Special thanks go to N.M. Browne for taking the time to answer the interview questions in *Eight Questions With...*

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

Subscribing to *Teen Librarian Monthly* is free to receive it monthly send an e-mail to: teenlibraryservice@gmail.com

Eight Questions With... N.M. Browne

Q1 **What influenced your decision to write for Teenagers?**

I began my writing career writing for younger children but I always wanted to write at novel length. Of all the thousands of books I have read in my life so far the ones that haunt me the most, that live in my head, are the ones I read as a child. They were not all children's books but they spoke to me and I suppose I wanted to write that kind of book.

Writing for teenagers is very liberating there is nothing you can't write about, but you have to write it in a way that makes sense to people who are relatively inexperienced but often intellectually sharp and ruthlessly judgemental. In short I like the challenge, the discipline and the buzz when someone writes to me to say that my story has taken up residence in their head.

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

I don't know. Usually they just turn up when I start writing and I don't have to think about who they are or what they want. It is as if they exist already and I just get to know them better as the story unfolds. I am an instinctive writer so I don't write list of characteristics or background details, though if you were to ask me what shoes they wore or what was their favourite ice cream I could probably tell you. Ursula, for example likes vanilla while Dan likes banana and strawberry, though not together.

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

Well, all teens are different so I tend to think that even on a good day I will hit some and miss others. My own tastes haven't changed that much over the years so what would have made me laugh as a teenager would probably still make me laugh now and I still like weird stuff, stories that take me to another place, just like I did then. I tend to write stories that interest me, that would have interested my younger self and I just hope that they will work for other people too.

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

The end? I love beginnings too – it just gets a bit tough sometimes in between those two points.

It is great seeing the finished book and having something complete that you can give to other people gives me a great sense of achievement, but I also love that moment when I write the first few

lines of something new and sense that I am about to go somewhere new and interesting, that I embarking on a journey into the unknown that just might be the best thing I've ever done.

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

Yes. I am a big fan of my friends' writing: Kate Cann, Ann Cassidy, Eleanor Updale, Catherine Johnson, Helena Pielichaty, Mary Hooper, Celia Rees and Mary Hoffman – to name just a few. My tastes are quite eclectic. I loved the 'Tales of the Otari' by Lian Hearn, the writing of Ursula Le Guin, Phillip Pullman and, whenever I am stuck, I read Diana Wynne Jones because she writes so effortlessly and entertainingly but her ideas and stories are often complex.

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

Not really. I've had a quiet life and somehow avoided fighting in battles, being transformed into a fox, or indeed stepping into a parallel universe. Much to my regret I don't even possess the tiniest hint of a trace of magical power either.

Q7 **Are you working on anything new at the moment (or do you have anything planned?)**

I have just finished two novels – one set in the flooded Britain of a globally warmed world and another which is more difficult to describe, involving aliens, strange sensory experiences and romance.

I am just gearing up to begin something new. (This involves a lot of dog walking, novel reading and chocolate consumption, but is still work, honest.)

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 but I would and the best way to get in touch is through my website at

www.nmbrowne.com