



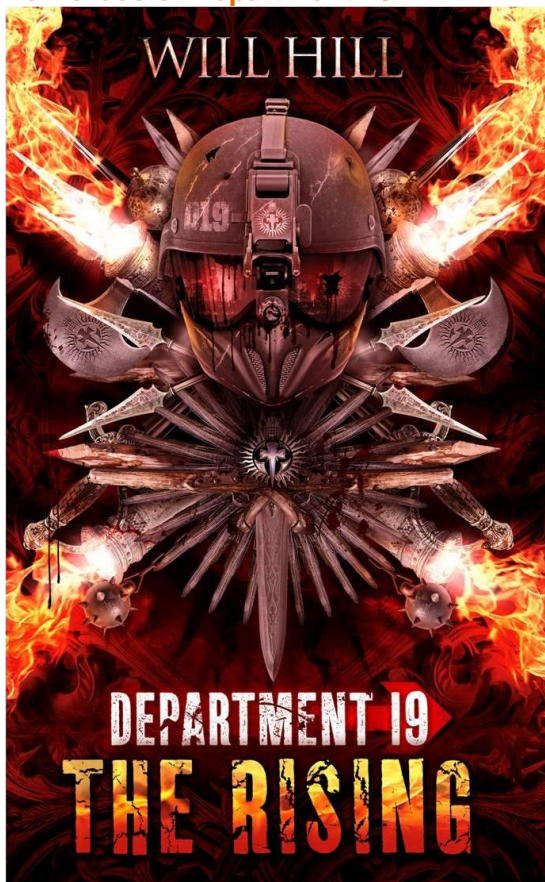
Welcome to the April edition of Teen Librarian Monthly! TLM is back to its usual self after being infested by the epically talented authors from The Edge.

We open with a powerful guest article about the Will Hill Department 19 launch, then take a look at two interesting pieces of information from the Scottish Booktrust. Following on from that we look at the importance of using props when working with teenagers.

Then we go for a brief look at a new Young Adult Book blog run by and about British YA authors.

There are also two competitions this month: the first hosted by incomparable author MG Harris at her site, and a chance for a lucky librarian to win a Mockingjay badge on teen Librarian. Finally the Eight Questions With... interview this month is with ace author Matt Whyman whose novel *Boy Kills Man* has just been rereleased.

The Heroes of Department 19



I love Department 19 by Will Hill. Not just because it is a gripping read, but because of the massive impact it has made.

At the end of 2011, Rosi Crawley from Harper Collins let it be known that she had sets of Department 19 to give to reading groups to read and review for a chance to be invited to the launch of the next book in the series, *The Rising*. One of my targets for the Spring term was to get more boys reading (I know, hardly an original one) so I jumped at the chance to use this as a launching pad for a boys' reading group and asked for 8 copies. I looked at Year 8 boys and created a list of 15 that had reading ages above average but rarely read books. We use Accelerated Reader (<http://www.renlearn.com/ar/>) so using their quizzing statistics made this an easy task. I then, on the morning of the last day of term, went to lessons and asked to speak to these select few in private. I told them I had a challenge for them: to read this amazing book before a meeting in the first week in January to discuss our favourite scenes. I said there was a chance that we could be invited to the sequel's launch, and also told them that I'd only picked a few pupils to invite but that I had asked more pupils than I had books available. Most of them seemed interested but I didn't get my hopes up, then at lunch break 8 of them dashed in to borrow a copy, hooray! So first hurdle passed, just to wait two weeks to see who actually read it.

Six boys turned up for the meeting. The prologue was the overall favourite part, which did plant a seed of doubt that they'd read the whole book, but they all passed the AR quiz and three of them got 100% of the 20 questions correct. Excitement from me and envious cries from them when I showed them I'd been sent a proof of *The Rising*. Unfortunately they never turned up again on a Thursday after school! They did however all turn up individually with their reviews, and I decided that rather than be disappointed about the flop of the reading group, I should just be pleased that boys that hadn't use the library much were now coming in at least once a week by choice.

I sent the reviews and we were invited to a fan event to be held on the Saturday at the end of February half term, which I was going to be away for, boo! Rosi said never fear, there would be a public event later in March that we could go to, on a weekday evening. I

thought the boys would have forgotten about me by then but they kept coming into the library, asking for recommendations and chatting, regularly pestering me about whether I'd read *The Rising* yet (I was working my way through the Carnegie long list so it hadn't reached the top of my tbr pile). They also all used Accelerated Reader infinitely more than they had in the previous term, passing quizzes on books such as the *Time Riders* series by Alex Scarrow and *The Enemy* by Charlie Higson, and two of them were winners of end of term awards from me.

The event fell on the day before the end of Spring term. We stayed in the library after school and had a bite to eat, then I showed them I'd got them copies of *The Rising* before leaving and I wish you could have seen their faces, they were so excited. We had a chatty trek across London to Waterstones, High Street Kensington, and when we got there dashed to the front row of seats. They were star struck when Will came in, sat enthralled while he talked about the books and read an extract, and then asked a bunch of questions at the end. We got our copies of *The Rising* signed by Will, who said it was great to meet us, and then went up to the kids/YA section of the shop for a quick browse for things I should get for our library. We had a bit of a story time as well – I read them 'It's a Book' by Lane Smith and they cracked up, heehee – before the long journey home during which they started reading *The Rising* and nattered about how much Will's prose has matured in this book (I jest not, my kids used that phrase).

I can't describe how proud I was of the boys, I should say that I work in a school with a high percentage of kids from 'difficult' backgrounds, where behaviour can often be problematic, and the boys I took with me are by no means perfect. For me the heroes of Department 19 aren't Jamie and Larissa, they're Will Hill himself and his adoring young fans, and I feel privileged to have been able to bring them together.

But this doesn't have to be a unique event! Find out what authors are doing events in bookshops near you and get permission to take a group of pupils – but choose them carefully – not just your usual suspects but kids you think could get hooked by this particular book. Spend a bit of your budget on getting copies to have signed (at least you've not paid for an author visit) and make a big thing of how great the book is. It does mean sacrificing an evening, but I like to go to these things anyway and it was fun to spend the time with some great kids.

We all read *The Rising* during the Easter Hols and thankfully it actually **is** a great book. Now the long wait for Book Three...I'm sure we'll find something to read in the meantime :-)

Caroline Fielding

Teenagers and Reading

Scottish Booktrust has an interesting and thought-provoking post that looks at the questions: Why do books like *The Hunger Games* appeal so strongly to teens? And does it really matter whether they're reading a novel or a newspaper? This is taken from a keynote speech by Nicola Morgan addressing these points at the National Literacy Network conference:

<http://bit.ly/HA5FGo>

Staying with Booktrust Scotland, they have another event coming up on Thursday 10th May:

Authors Live: David Walliams



You have seen him on your TV, now watch him on your computer! Multi-talented funny man David Walliams will be talking about his hilarious new book *Gangsta Granny*. Guaranteed to cause an epidemic of smiles to breakout across the UK.

The event will be streamed live to audiences across the UK at 11am on Thursday, 10th May. It will then become available to watch again for free by Thursday, 17th May for everyone worldwide!

Your readers can join tens of thousands of pupils across the UK watching the event live.

Parents, readers and fans of David can watch the event by going directly to the BBC website at 11am on Thursday, 10th May: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/learning/author/live/>

Or, if you are a teacher, you can register your entire class by following this link: <http://bit.ly/HHTTol>

If you can't make the live broadcast the entire event can be downloaded or streamed for free from Thursday, 17th May here: <http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/learning/aut-hors-live/david-walliams>

Tips on Working with Teens: Props are Important

Props can be broken down into three categories:

Active, Passive and Inbetween/Interactive props

Active Props

Active props are those that you can use to initiate conversation with a teen or group of teens, these can be books, magazines or things as simple as a sign up sheet for a group activity.

A book is perhaps the easiest and simplest prop to use. If you are new to the library you do not want to go out brandishing a book; the first thing to do is find out where the teens lurk in your library. These days it is usually the Teen/YA area. You need to be in that area before the teens arrive, working not just loitering as (unless you are a teen yourself) hanging around a teen area can give the wrong impression. Once they have gotten used to your presence and started treating you like part of the furniture you may be able to pick up on their interests and reading habits. The next time they come in to the library you can have a book in your hand that tallies with what you gleaned from their activities previously and when they start chatting you could insert yourself into their conversation with a "If you like that then you may enjoy this!" and showcase the book. Even if they do not take the book you will at least have been able to initiate conversation which can make things easier in future.

A piece of paper can have many uses, firstly it can be used to take notes after you have said something along the lines of: "Hi I am [insert name here] and I am the new Teen/Youth Services/ Young Adult Librarian and I am hoping to run clubs and activities for young people in the library, what sort of groups would you like to see here?" Then you could either jot down what they say, or give each of them a sheet clearly marked with a space for names and ideas.

Passive Props

Passive props are generally things that you wear or can have on your desk or around you if you are working in the Teen Area.



The most successful passive prop I own is a Domo-kun lanyard that I used to use to hold my library name badge, there was a massive manga reading group of young people that used to come in and when they saw it they invariably asked where I got it, and, could they have it?

More recently I have become the proud owner of a Mockingjay pin; now that gets a lot of attention – from teens as well as adults who are in the know, I have received the usual questions as to where I got it and can they have it, not only that but I have created a dystopia novel conversation group in my library based on a single pin (and the multimillion advertising for the movie and the books).



Hats can work as props, but are more limiting indoors, clothing can also be used but depending on the dress code where you work your mileage may vary!

In-between or Interactive props

In-between or Interactive props are those that fall somewhere between Active and Passive ones, they can include musical instruments, games consoles and even plush furry toys.



The furry beast is a prop that I used infrequently and mostly when one or more of the kids I worked with were upset – giving I teen a hug is just about acceptable for a female librarian but for a male member of staff it is the sort of thing that can get you reported for improper behaviour, but having something plush for them to cuddle until they feel better is a lot safer all round.



My ukulele has attracted a lot of attention in my current library as I take it in to practice during my lunch break but games consoles will give you an automatic audience no matter where you are!

UK Young Adult Books



UK YA, the showcase for the best teen fiction set in the UK. The purpose of the site is to promote books which are set in the UK, for the benefit of readers all over the world.

Booklists can be searched by genre or by setting, from the Highlands of Scotland to the Cornish coast.

It also has a helpful glossary of Brit-speak slang for those that may not be familiar with the way we speak.

As the site develops it will offer special features, news on upcoming releases, interviews and more!

This site is run and maintained by Keris Stainton, Susie Day and Keren David.

<http://ukyabooks.wordpress.com/>

The Joshua Files 2012 Finale Competition

Amazing author MG Harris is currently running a competition celebrating her fantastic Joshua Files series:

Prizes

- A signed copy of **your choice** of a first editions of one of the five Joshua Files books, limited PVC sleeved

edition (including the rare first edition of ZERO MOMENT!)

- A signed postcard, a Joshua Files T-shirt, enamel badge, and a Joshua Files neon orange drawstring bag.

Further information

- Deadline is July 1st 2012.
- Entries in the art category should be scanned and emailed to [contactmg \(at\) mgharris.net](mailto:contactmg@mgharris.net) OR posted to JOSHUA FILES COMPETITION, Harris Oxford Limited, 41 Cornmarket Street, Oxford, OX1 3HA
- Entrants in the video category should email the link to their video to [contactmg \(at\) mgharris.net](mailto:contactmg (at) mgharris.net)
- Eligibility - you don't have to be a resident of the UK, but please read the [terms and conditions](http://www.themgharris.com/Terms_and_Conditions) carefully to check that you're eligible. http://www.themgharris.com/Terms_and_Conditions
- Only one entry per category per entrant.
- You must read the [full terms and conditions](#). Receipt of an entry for any category will be taken as confirmation that you have read the terms and conditions.

Find out more here:

<http://www.themgharris.com/Contest>

Competition

Win a Mockingjay pin with Teen Librarian:

<http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/?p=2437>

Write for Teen Librarian!

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

Subscribe!

Subscribing to Teen Librarian Monthly is free just send an e-mail to:

teenlibraryservice@gmail.com

Eight Questions with... Matt Whyman

Q1 What influenced your decision to write for Teenagers?

I like the sense of possibility that comes with the genre – which is the loosest genre I think you'll find in literature. Quite simply, there are no limits or restrictions. What's more, the teenage years are fuelled by a sense of optimism. You're not a little kid, and nor are you a world-weary adult. It's a time for experimentation, testing limits, making mistakes and seeking to make your mark. I'd sooner explore what it means to be at this time of life than any other.

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

If the characters are rounded enough then they should take on a life of their own – making decisions that can sometimes surprise in a story – but that's when it becomes interesting as a writer – making it all hang together!

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

I never set out to write for teenagers. I think it can be patronising and then you've lost your reader. Good teen fiction is about teenagers, but written in whatever language serves the story – which has to be a good one, of course. For me, if I can sum up the story in a sentence before I start then I feel it's worth giving it my best shot.

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

The first draft can often feel like a slog, whereas the second draft is more like a holiday that you've earned after all that hard work.

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

There are so many good teen authors out there it's hard to know where to start. Bali Rai

is a great, passionate storyteller, and I always enjoy whatever Melvin Burgess, Anne Cassidy and Marcus Sedgwick serve up.

Q6 Are any of your novels based on personal experiences?

I think we can all identify with the emotions that our characters go through. As for the experiences – hacking into Fort Knox, contract killing for pocket money – not stuff I've done first hand.

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

Well, we've just released an ebook edition of *Boy Kills Man*, my 2004 novel about Colombian child assassins, and I'm currently writing a novel for Hot Key Books, to be published next year about a respectable family with an appetite for human flesh, called *The Savages*.

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?

Lots! You can contact me directly via my website www.mattwhyman.com