



This edition of Teen Librarian Monthly that you are currently reading marks six years of Teen Librarian being published on an almost monthly basis. I honestly had no idea how long it would run for – at the most I thought a year - maybe two at the outside. As you can see I was wrong!

There have been so many highlights over the past six years, me actually acquiring the official title of Teen Librarian even though that only lasted for a year (and what a fantastic year that was!), the best for me so far has actually been getting to know so many readers and users of TLM over the years and learning what so many of you are up to in your libraries. As I have said before, now more than ever is the time for us all to work together to offer the best teen and youth service that we can. In fact the opening article this month is about the Youth Libraries Group, written by my friend and regular TLM contributor Caroline Fielding, in fact if you are reading this and are not currently a member of the YLG I urge you to look into joining as soon as you have finished reading, follow the helpful links at the end of the article.

My favourite video free information service TED has launched an educational video service which is shaping up to be something amazing!

This month we also cross over to ~~Middle Earth~~ Christchurch, New Zealand, where Librarian Zac Harding has just started up a Teen Reading Group called Turn the Page.

Philippa Gregory will be live-streamed from North London; this is aimed at 13-14 year olds.

After Philippa we move on to another of my tips on working with teens and then a new feature for TLM – I will start focusing on YA book bloggers. Book blog sites are an excellent source of reviews and news on upcoming. The inaugural article is by and about Laura Heath and her site SisterSpooky: Book Fangirl.

The final article is about the Guardian Hot Key Books young Writers Prize.

The Eight Questions With... interview this month is with excellent YA writer Tim Bowler, author of the phenomenal *Blade* series and many other titles.

In closing I would like to say thank you for the past six years and I hope that you will all stay reading and sharing over the next few years!



## YLG – who, what, and why bother?

The Youth Libraries Group is a special interest group running under the umbrella of CILIP – the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. As a member of CILIP you can choose to join two of their special interest groups free of charge (many people would say that the membership fees for CILIP are high enough anyway, but that's another story). According to the Youth Libraries Group section of the CILIP website, it is “the organisation of choice for librarians, information professionals and all those working with or interested in children's and young people's books, reading development, the promotion of libraries and reading for pleasure”. I'd say that everyone reading this newsletter fits neatly into that category! You don't have to be a member of CILIP to get involved with YLG (although if you want to join a committee you do), you don't even have to work in a Library, you can become a 'friend' of YLG to take advantage of all the opportunities available.

As well as providing training regionally and discounted publications, one of the biggest opportunities joining YLG will bring you is that of meeting other like-minded professionals at events such as the AGM and book promotions. I first came across Teen Librarian Monthly about 5 years ago after meeting Mat at a manga workshop for staff in the borough I was working in at the time. We then bumped into one another at other events over the next few years, mostly those organised by YLG London. A YLG event isn't just a good night out, it is a chance to make contact with authors and publishers and share good practice and find a comforting ear for the issues we face daily, that people working in other areas can't share!

Although the events they hold are great networking opportunities, I am far too shy in

crowds to take full advantage of them! I decided the only thing I could do to overcome this was to get on the inside and meet key people more formally, so I applied to join the YLG London Committee nearly two years ago. I'd also just left public libraries and started as a School Librarian and didn't want to lose touch with the wider youth library world.

As a committee member I attend regular meetings, do the finances (I foolishly volunteered to take over as treasurer), help to organise and run the One Day Schools that YLG London runs at CILIP HQ, get invited to lots of book launches, and regularly get sent freebies by publishers that want to get their books into the hands of their intended audience. My school is very accommodating, allowing me the occasional day out for events, but they also get a lot from me being a member. Helping with the One Day Schools means I get that day's training free, as well as all the contacts I've made that have got me authors visiting my school as part of their promotional tours and the new books that have been put into stock!

This year their annual conference is being held earlier than usual, in June, jointly with the School Libraries Group (another CILIP special interest group) and the School Library Association. Conference is great fun but exhausting, I hope I'll see some of you there!

Caroline Fielding

Find out more about the YLG here:

<http://bit.ly/9f5SiV>

Not interested in joining CILIP? You can still participate as a Friend of YLG:

<http://bit.ly/IW78Uj>



TED believes passionately that ideas have the power to change attitudes, lives, and ultimately, the world. This underlying philosophy is the driving force behind all of TED's endeavors, including the TED Conferences, TEDx, TEDBooks, the TEDFellows Program, and the TEDTranslations Project. With this philosophy in mind, and with the intention of supporting teachers and sparking the curiosity of learners around the world, TED is excited to launch its newest initiative, TED-Ed.

TED-Ed's commitment to creating lessons worth sharing is an extension of TED's mission of spreading great ideas. Within the growing TED-Ed video library, you will find carefully curated educational videos, many of which represent collaborations between talented educators and

animators nominated through the TED-Ed platform. This platform also allows users to take any useful educational video, not just TED's, and easily create a customized lesson around the video. Users can distribute the lessons, publicly or privately, and track their impact on the world, a class, or an individual student.

TED-Ed's videos aim to capture and amplify the voices of the world's greatest educators. TED pairs extraordinary educators with talented animators to produce a new library of exceptional educational videos. This website, similar to TED.com, is ever-evolving and we depend on the TED community, to nominate inspiring teachers that have touched their life or clever animators who have the skills to bring a gifted teacher's lesson to life. <http://education.ted.com/>

## Turn the Page

One of the things I love most about my job as a librarian is getting to talk to children and teens about what they're reading and tell them all about the great books I've been reading. After the major earthquakes we had in Christchurch my role in the public library changed and I took up the position of Community Learning Librarian at one of our community libraries. This meant that, rather than working specifically with children, parents and teachers in the children's area, I was now an information librarian and a jack-of-all-trades. As I'm sure many of you know, you can't simply leave your passion for children's literature behind you, so I decided that I wanted to make it my mission as the Community Learning Librarian to fill in the gaps that we had in our programming for children and young adults. One of the things I've wanted to do for years is to run a teen book club and make a connection with the teens in the community, so I approached my team leader about setting up a teen book group. Thankfully I have an amazing team leader who is incredibly supportive and lets us try new ideas.

After getting the go ahead, I approached one of my colleagues, Michelle, who also loves young adult literature and a passion for working with teens. As we are the younger members of our team, we hoped that our teenage customers would be able to relate well to us. Together we brain-stormed ideas of how we wanted to run the club, what we could name it, and how we could promote it. We researched how other libraries, in the UK and the US had run their book clubs and decided that an informal, monthly session seemed to work best. We would start each session talking about new books in the library, great books that we had read that month, then ask the rest of the group what they had been

reading. An interesting name for the group also seemed to be important to grab the attention of teens, so we decided to get our target audience to choose the name for us. We went to one of our local intermediate schools and asked them to suggest names. They came up with quite a few different names, but they then voted on their favourite, which was Turn the Page.

So Turn the Page was born and we set out to promote our book group. Michelle designed a fantastic poster that we then put up around the library and distributed to our local intermediate and high schools. One of the high schools asked me to come and promote Turn the Page to their Year 9 and 10 English classes and librarians, which helped to spread the word.

Two days ago we had our first meeting of Turn the Page and five teens came along (two of which weren't originally there for the book club but really enjoyed it). Beforehand, my main concerns had been getting the conversation started and keeping it going, but this didn't prove to be a problem. I had plenty of questions up my sleeve in case this did happen, but the conversation flowed pretty smoothly. Of the teens who attended, two of them were boys and three were girls, and were all either 12 or 13 years old. At the end of the meeting most of them said they had other friends they thought would be interested and would bring them along next time.

Next month we hope to have a few more members and I'm sure it will keep growing until we have a good-sized group. Over the next month we are going to promote Turn the Page more, through our network of libraries and our local schools.

**Zac Harding**

Zac Harding is a Community Learning Librarian at Christchurch City Libraries in Christchurch, New Zealand. He loves Children's and Young Adult literature, from David Melling to Michael Grant. He reviews his favourite children's books on the Christchurch City Libraries children's blog, [www.christchurchkids.wordpress.com](http://www.christchurchkids.wordpress.com) and his own blog about books for children and young adults, [www.bestfriendsrbooks.wordpress.com](http://www.bestfriendsrbooks.wordpress.com)

## Philippa Gregory Live Streamed Schools Event

International bestselling author Philippa Gregory will be taking part in a live-streamed event at 1pm on Wednesday 30th May. The event will be streamed from a venue in north London, where Philippa will be talking to a live school audience of 13-14 year olds from South Hampstead High School about the first book – *Changeling* – in her new series for teenagers, *Order of Darkness*. Other schools, book groups and individuals across the globe will be invited to register to watch the live online event and submit their own questions

by visiting [www.philippagregorylive.com](http://www.philippagregorylive.com). The event will also be made available to watch on demand for one month.

*"I know I have many readers looking forward to hearing about my new book Changeling, which I have written especially for them."* said Philippa Gregory, *"I am delighted at the prospect of reaching a global audience with this exciting new event format and the internet seems like the natural place to reach out to young fans."*

This is the first in a series of live-streamed author events from Simon & Schuster's children's and YA list. Others to follow include Sophie McKenzie and Darren Shan.

## Tips on Working with Teens: Do not try to be cool! You are not cool – and never will be!

If you were cool you may never have become a librarian, we are never cool but we ARE completely awesome in many other ways!

Cool is by nature exclusionary – and the library is used largely (but not exclusively) by uncool kids – the geeks, outsiders and young people that want a place where their bullies may not think of looking for them. If you exude coolness it may scare them off as only cool kids mingle with cool people.

If you target the in crowd first you will limit the growth of the group to those that are in their favour and the library group may become just another clique where the outsiders are marginalised.

Be a geek, this is easy as almost everyone is a geek these days, be your natural slightly odd self – most of the best librarians I know and spend time with are painfully uncool in all the best ways; they are also magnificent when it comes to working with young people.

Eventually the library teens will accept you as one of their own and start trusting you and your suggestions on what to read and do!

Being uncool you will not be a threat to the cool kids and they will eventually take pity on you and talk to you. Once the first one starts talking the others will eventually come round and start engaging

One of the perks of being uncool is that kids will feel secure enough to laugh with you and, at times at you but you will be their librarian and they will trust you and love you for as long as you are there!

Once you have done this you will have started transcending the cool barrier, the kids you work

with will eventually start saying that you are cool (it may take a year or so)but you must remind them that you are not cool – you are AWESOME – as is everybody that uses the library! When teens realise that they are awesome they will finally start realising that cool is not really that cool.

## YA Book Bloggers

### SisterSpooky: Book Fangirl

My name is Laura and my blog is SisterSpooky: Book Fangirl

I write reviews and blog posts about mainly YA books with a few cross-overs into middle grade and Adult fiction depending if they tickle my fancy. I try my best to sound like "me" when I write the reviews and such because it would be dead boring if not!

I started blogging when I was about 14 ish and just did a personal blog like an online diary about anything on Livejournal which was pretty cool back then. In the end I ended up just talking about two things I loved which were books and music so after reading some fab book bloggers websites for months and months and getting to know them on twitter I was convinced to start my own blog. I doubted it would go anywhere or be anywhere near as good as the blogs I read but vowed to just write it the way I'd want to read a blog. So I did. I hope so anyway. I was a volunteer for 2 years in my school library when I was in 6th form and reorganised the entire fiction section (it was a real mess) and then worked for about 4 years in a book shop so my love of books has slipped into my work life more than nee but at the moment I work in a chocolate shop so books are the outside passion.

I love the UK YA blogging community because it's like a massive family and all the authors and publishers appreciate the hard work we put in for free and in our own time. I just love that I get to read what I love and talk about it with people that understand the pleasure of reading.

My only tips for new bloggers or people that want to book blog is to just go for it, read as much as you can, don't do it to get free books or expect to me meeting authors every 3 seconds, chat with other bloggers because they are the nicest people I've ever met and will always help and answer questions. Most importantly: put a bit of yourself in the way you blog and review. It'll make your blog unique to you!

I love that I get to share my love of books with other people and I've been called a walking 'Amazon recommends' by friends many times before. I get very excited about books I love and

have what I refer to as the 'Kermit flail' moment over them....where I actually flail around in real life. I get THAT excited. I see my blog is not just a place where I get to gush about new books or things I've read but where people that follow my blog can share too and the more the merrier.

<http://sisterspookybookfangirl.blogspot.co.uk/>

## Guardian Hot Key Books Young Writer Prize

Rising stars of children's fiction Will Hill and Elen Caldecott join high-profile representatives of the children's books world on the judging panel for the Guardian Hot Key Books Young Writers Prize. The Prize is open to writers aged 18 to 25 residing anywhere in the world, who could win the chance to be published by Hot Key Books and an advance of £10,000.

Will Hill, author of the *Department 19* series of YA supernatural thrillers (published by HarperCollins) and Elen Caldecott, author of contemporary adventure stories including *How Kirsty Jenkins Stole The Elephant* (published by Bloomsbury Children's Books), join Guardian Children's Books Editor Julia Eccleshare, bookseller and Chair of the Children's Booksellers' Association John Newman and Hot Key Books Publisher Emily Thomas on the panel. School children will also be consulted by the panel to select the winners.

The Prize is looking for new young writers between the ages of 18 and 25, who write in either of two categories: for ages 9-12 or 13-19. Entrants should be unpublished talents new to the literary world who are passionate about writing for children. The winners, one for each age category, will be given editorial support and the chance to be published by Hot Key Books with the offer of a worldwide publishing contact and an advance of £10,000. The winners will be announced at London Book Fair 2013.

The Guardian Hot Key Books Young Writers Prize was launched at London Book Fair 2012 and is now open for submissions until 31 May. Entry details and full terms and conditions can be found at [www.youngwritersprize.com](http://www.youngwritersprize.com).

## Write for Teen Librarian!

All submissions of articles, reviews & ideas are welcome and can be sent to [teenlibraryservice@gmail.com](mailto:teenlibraryservice@gmail.com)

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## Eight Questions with... Tim Bowler

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

I don't write for teenagers but about teenagers, and my first novel set the trend for this. I just found myself writing a story about a boy of fifteen; or to be more accurate, I found myself writing a story about a young man in his early twenties and then changed that character half-way through the first draft to a fifteen-year-old boy. I'm not quite sure why I did this. I think it just felt a more accurate portrayal of the kind of person I was trying to get to grips with. Ten drafts later this story became the novel called *Midget* and by then I'd grown so fascinated with the teenage mind that when I started my second novel, *Dragon's Rock*, I put two main protagonists in the story and made them both fourteen. It went on from there for the next eighteen books. I just find the teenage mind an extraordinarily challenging and absorbing thing to write about.

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

It doesn't happen quickly. I have to live with the characters for some time before I get to know them, and by 'living' I mean living with them through the story. I don't sit down and write character biographies beforehand. I know some authors do this but it doesn't work for me. It's only when the characters act out their dramas on the page that I start to learn about them, but if I'm patient and keep my controlling little ego out of the way and listen to what the characters are trying to tell me, or rather show me, underneath their actions and dialogue on the page, I usually find they reveal what their fears and motivations are.

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

I don't know instinctively what will appeal to teens (or anyone else), but it's not hit or miss either. I have a sense of the story I'm writing, a sense of what I hope readers will connect with, and then I just hope the two things fit together. Each reader is different, whatever age he or she may be, and no writer can get inside the heads and hearts of everyone. For the most part, I just focus on telling the best story I can and then I float my words into the firmament and hope someone will read them.

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

I love the whole thing, even when it goes wrong. I love feeling the ideas come,

watching the empty space on the screen fill with words. I love the raw writing, the exploratory stuff, the pauses, the mulling over, the new words, the throwing away, the rewriting, the honing, the struggle to make something work and then nailing it, the sense of failure and then success when you didn't give up on something and it comes out all right. I even love the self-doubts, when you force yourself to put down words and find you've written something in spite of them and it's not that bad. The whole business of writing is tricky, gloriously tricky, and that's what I love most. If writing was easy, I couldn't do it.

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

I do read and admire other teen/YA authors and there are too many to mention here. Also, most of them are my friends, so I'd worry about giving you a list in case I missed off somebody important – and that would be quite easy to do at the present time, as we're living in a real golden age for teenage and YA fiction. Writers in this field are pushing boundaries as never before and I think it's a great time to be a teenage reader.

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

All my novels dip into my own personal experiences, but they dip into other people's experiences too and whatever I can glean from the world inside and around me. From these various influences the imagination conjures the experiences of the characters in the story.

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

I've just finished a new novel called *Sea of Whispers*, which is coming out in January 2013, and I'm now working on a four-book series of independent novels linked by a common thread. I've also started a separate standalone novel.

### **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 often speak to Teen Reading Groups and enjoy that very much. The best way to arrange a visit is to email me direct. You can find the contact details at my website ([www.timbowler.co.uk](http://www.timbowler.co.uk)).