



Welcome to the February edition of Teen Librarian Monthly – the first for 2013! The best of 11th hour editing and putting together. I do apologise for the delay and am working on not leaving it so long again. That said if anyone is interested in helping out with writing articles, submitting ideas for future editions or sharing examples of work that I know a lot of you are doing so that other colleagues can benefit please do let me know!

Getting on with this issue, we start off with Start the Story by Tommy Donbavand and Barry Hutchison – regular readers may remember the interview with Tommy in the July 2012 edition of TLM well Start the Story is now free as Barry and Tommy wanted it to be available to everyone that is keen on getting young people to read.

Following on from that, the Intellectual Property Office is running a music business competition for teens between the ages of 14 and 18.

Anna James will be running a Twitter-based CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Awards Shadowing Group. The Nielsen Norman Group has concluded a very interesting study about teens and web use that refutes many stereotypes that a number of people hold about young people and the internet.

World Book Day is next week and they have ramped up online reading and writing offers for young people.

For TLM subscribers that can get to London – Stephenie Meyer will be making an appearance at Waterstones Piccadilly to promote *The Host* – rumours of her involvement with Matt Parker and Trey Stone's production of *The Book of Mormon* appear to be unfounded.

If you have any students who are science-mad then you may want to encourage them to participate in the Google Science Fair for 2013.

Flavorwire has a list of literary board games that may be popular in libraries.

This month the Eight Questions With... interview is with South African author Edyth Bulbring.

Start the Story

Start The Story is a bi-monthly digital magazine created by children's authors, **Tommy Donbavand** and **Barry Hutchison**.

Aimed at teachers, librarians and anyone who wants to promote literacy among children. Each issue is crammed with writing tips, lesson plans, book reviews, author interviews and much more.

Start the Story will have competitions where your pupils could win anything from a book token to a free Skype session with a top author. They will recommend great reads for everyone in your class – from the most enthusiastic story scoffer to the reluctant readers. And they will dig into years of experience in teaching creative writing to make sure you have everything you could ever need to get your children starting stories of their own.

The first issue is available free of charge, but to get your hands on it you'll have to become a [free member](#). It's a painless process which will take under a minute, and no payment details of any kind are requested.

When spiders go on the Internet, what do they visit first?

Charlotte's Web Site.

Music Biz: Be your Own Music Hero

Ever fancied being a master of metal, head of hip-hop, or a ruler of rock?

If you are 14 to 18, we want to see what you and your friends are made of!

What you need to do:

- Use your artistic flair and come up with a creative way of telling us how music artists are rewarded for what they do. Be imaginative, be innovative and above all, be original!
- Aim your storyboard or film at your 14 to 18 year old friends.
- Theme your storyboard or film anyway you want, but you must include the five keywords: Copyright, Royalty, Design, Performers and Original.
- The storyboard should be no more than 6 scenes and the film should be under 90 seconds.
- Your entry will be judged on originality, artistic flair, and creativity.

Closing date for entries is 19 April 2013.
<http://www.ipso.gov.uk/musicbiz>

Carnegie Award Shadowing Twitter Group

So as some of you will already know, if you follow me on Twitter, that I've been given the go ahead from CKG to run a Twitter shadowing group. I'm super excited about this for a multitude of reasons, and very chuffed that Aaron is really keen and been retweeting it from the CKG feed etc.

At the moment, I'm thinking we will read the same books at the same time once the shortlist is announced and specify a rough time each week to post a 140 character review and have the opportunity to chat

about them before a final chat (with cake as suggested by Nicky) and vote on our favourites. We'd need to think about ways of making sure everyone could join in with the chats without having to @ lots of people - probably by using a hashtag. Maybe #ckgtwit (thanks again Nicky) or #tweetckg.

It would be great to have lots of people involved, I've been really pleased by lots of positive responses on Twitter from all sorts of people. I realise a lot of you will be involved with your own Shadowing groups at school but hopefully if you're reading the shortlist anyway you can join in on Twitter too!

If you want to join in please follow me on Twitter and tweet me so I can keep up with who is involved and look out for announcements!

And ideas/suggestions about how to make it awesome, please let me know!

Follow Anna on Twitter at: @acaseforbooks

Teenage Usability: Designing Teen-Targeted Websites

Summary: *Teens are (over)confident in their web abilities, but they perform worse than adults. Lower reading levels, impatience, and undeveloped research skills reduce teens' task success and require simple, relatable sites.*

Their research refutes many stereotypes, including that teens:

- just want to be entertained online with graphics and multimedia,
- are supremely tech savvy,
- use smartphones for everything, and
- want everything to be social.

Find out more at: <http://bit.ly/XFcHQ8>

What is the one place you will find more nobles than at the royal court?

The Library – all the books have titles!

World Book Day & Movellas

The World Book Day YA app is powered by Movellas, and lets you stay connected and share with fans and other writers on the go.

Movellas.com is a community site where everyone can share their passion for great stories. You can publish your own stories - or movellas as we like to call them - so that everyone can read them and give you feedback, you can find lots of fantastic stories to read in every genre and on every topic, and you can talk directly to the authors and the rest of the community about writing and stories.

If you haven't already, you can download the World Book Day app from iTunes or the Google Play Store.

Visit the World Book Day Young Adult portal on the WBD site: <http://bit.ly/XCufMX>

Get your students or teen groups involved in the Movellas/WBD Featured Authors Story Chain: <http://bit.ly/144myyL>

Know any young readers between the ages of 11 & 14? Then get them to join The Word Herd: <http://bit.ly/12dMFYX>

Waterstones event for Stephenie Meyer

Stephenie Meyer, author of the *Twilight* series, will be holding an event in the UK next week for the first time since 2007.

Meyer will be signing copies of Sphere title *The Host* at Waterstones Piccadilly on 5th March at 6 p.m. Her visit is to promote the cinema release of *The Host*.

- See more at: <http://bit.ly/XddeJD>

Google Science Fair 2013

Students sign up for the Science Fair with their Google account. Then they'll carry out a test or experiment on their chosen

subject, entering all the information on their project site. All submissions are due by **30 April 2013**. After the first round of judging, we'll announce 90 regional finalists, whose work will then be reviewed even more closely by a panel of judges. The top 15 students will be invited to our finalist event at Google headquarters in Mountain View, CA, where they'll present their work to a panel of scientists, tech innovators and Nobel Laureates.

For full details and to register go here: <http://bit.ly/Ta84Ni>

10 Literary Board Games

From Flavorwire:

When it's cold outside, book nerds tend to hibernate with their novels. But what about a bookish activity that's also social (and indoors)? This week, the *Paris Review* pointed us towards *Pride and Prejudice: The Board Game*, which seems like just the ticket — if you're a Jane Austen fan. However, what to do if you're more of a Twainish persuasion? Never fear we've collected a whole selection of board games based on novels, from fantasy to the classics, for your perusal. <http://bit.ly/150ULCx>

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... *Edyth Bulbring*

1. Hi Edyth thank you for agreeing to be interviewed, for the benefit of those who have not yet read your books before could you please introduce yourself?

Hi Matt, thanks so much for interviewing me on your blog. I was born in Boksburg (near Johannesburg) and spent 17 years growing up in Port Elizabeth, which is a very windy city on the coast of South Africa. I never wanted to be a writer, I wanted to be an airhostess and travel the world. But in the days when I was young you had to be very tall and very pretty to be an air hostess. I was neither. So I went to university in Cape Town and studied history and politics. I also edited the university newspaper and got a part time job as a switchboard operator at a weekly newspaper. But I was useless at it so they let me write a few stories. I ended up being the political correspondent for the South African *Sunday Times* from 1991–1995 (where I had the privilege of covering the transition to democracy). I then went and did an MBA at the University of Witwatersrand, where I learned that I don't have a strong profit motive. Ten years ago I chucked in the full-time job at the *Sunday Times* and decided to stay at home and look after my three children and try and write books (for which you certainly cannot have any profit motive). The first book I wrote was for my children. And when no one wanted to publish it, I wrote a few

more books. And then they all got published which was a bit of a relief.

I live in Johannesburg which is a brilliant city with the best weather in the world. I have published six books in South Africa. *The Club*, which was published by Jonathan Ball Publishers in September 2008, and five young adult novels: *The Summer of Toffie and Grummer* (Oxford University Press, February 2008); *Cornelia Button and the Globe of Gamagion* (Jacana, April 2008); *Pops and The Nearly Dead* (Penguin, March 2010); *Melly, Mrs Ho and Me* (Penguin, September 2010) and *Melly, Fatty and Me* (Penguin, September 2011).

2. You have written books for adults (*The Club*), tweens (*Cornelia Button*) as well as Teen readers (*Pops and the Nearly Dead & A Month with April-May*), do you have any preferences for writing for a particular age range?

I don't usually write with any audience in mind. I simply tell the story I want to tell. I like writing books from the perspective of young people. Teenagers are interesting people and their take on life fascinates me. I think they tend to be more honest than adults. And their observations on life and society tend to be less muted and constrained by convention.

I think *A Month with April-May* and its sequel *100 Days of April-May* would be enjoyed by teenage readers, but one of my other books, *Pops and the Nearly Dead*, is one of those cross-over books that appeals equally to adults and teenagers. I like the fact that it's the kind of book that builds a bridge between the generations and makes people realise that the only thing that separates old people from young people is a couple of years. When I set out to write *The Club* and *The Summer of Toffie and Grummer* I didn't have any market in mind. I didn't give it any thought. I just wanted to write a good story that would capture the imaginations of people who like to read books. And then these books got buffed and tweaked in later drafts when the publishers decided where they wanted to position them. Although *The Club* was pitched (by the publishers) at an adult market, a lot of teens have read it and it grew a bit of a cult status among teen readers. The only book that I specifically meant for children (aged about 9–12) was *Cornelia Button and the Globe of Gamagion*. I wrote it for my three children and I think it's very much a children's book. And unlike my others books, I have met very few adults who have actually enjoyed it. Which I think is fine, because I never wanted them to.

3. Is *A Month with April-May* your first novel to be picked up by an international publisher?

Yes, Hot Key Books is publishing *A Month with April-May* in February 2013 and the sequel, *100 Days of April-May* in September 2013. There is also a third book which will be published next year that is not part of the April-May series. The two April-May books are also being published by Bayard in France next year.

4. Did you have any favourite authors when you were a teen?

I read everything I could lay my hands on and never really took note of who was writing them. I read all my mother's and sisters' library books. I read lots of trashy books and some good books too. I was a bit of a glutton. The children's books I really liked were written by Enid Blyton, Willard Price and I liked the Katy books by Susan Coolidge. I loved Anne of Green Gables (Lucy Montgomery) and I have tried to get my daughters to read it and they have refused. It breaks my heart.

But the one author I admired as a teen and still go back to is Jane Austen. She never disappoints. I enjoy her irony and her sense of empathy. And her long sentences. I wish I could write long, complicated, grammatically perfect sentences. But apart from Jane Austen, there is one author who I esteem above all others for writing the best book ever written for both adults and teens: Harper Lee (who only ever published one book

and got it right the first time). Whenever I see *To Kill a Mocking Bird* in charity shops, I buy it. I have about thirty copies and I'm going to keep on buying it. She inspires me to keep on writing until I get it right.

5. Who is your favourite young adult writer (local and international)?

I don't read young adult fiction unless I have to. I know that sounds a bit mad, but I don't want to be influenced by what other young adult writers are writing. And it would make me nervous. But the one author I really like who writes for both adults and teens is Philip Pullman. I loved His Dark Materials Trilogy. They are cross-over books which I think are the best sort of novels. I also like Roald Dahl. I didn't mind reading his books to my children too much when they were young.

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

Most of the ideas of my books come from things I have heard or experienced. With *A Month with April-May*, a couple of years back, my daughter was going through a rough spot. She didn't want to go to school, she was sleeping a lot, and her grades were dropping. I finally figured out that she was having a bad time with one of her teachers. And knowing my daughter, the teacher was probably having a rotten time of it too. It got me thinking about the effect that one teacher can have on the life

of a child. And how teachers have the ability to make or break pupils – and vice versa. It also got me wondering about the miscommunication that happens between people and how sometimes it sets us off on a course of action we can't stop, even when things are heading for a train smash. So I decided to write about a teacher and a student who butted heads and things got out of hand. In my daughter's case, things didn't end happily. Writing this book was a way of turning things around and giving the story a different ending. There are aspects of *Pops & the Nearly Dead* which are based on real life characters and events. About six years ago my parents moved into a retirement village in Port Elizabeth and a few months later my father died. In the years that followed his death, my mother and I would talk about the people and goings-on at her retirement village – and of course we would talk about my father. We would knit – she was teaching me how to knit a blanket for my daughter – and talk and sometimes cry, and then I would write a chapter. And so, over the years, *Pops & the Nearly Dead* grew into a book. A lot of the book comes from true stories about my mother's retirement village and a number of the characters are based on real people. But I took a lot of these events and turned them on their head and asked "What if?" and "Why not?" I enjoyed being able to take real people and events and give them different histories and endings. In a sense,

I loved the fact that I had the power to rewrite history and make it all better.

7. What is your favourite part of the writing process?

I think it is when I have completed the first draft. I try and write the first draft of my books really fast. Because I'm not one of those disciplined writers who plan and have an outline of a book. So I lurch from chapter to chapter, never quite sure how one will end and the next will begin. I go a bit loopy in the process, sort of in a bit of a panic as to what comes next. And so of course, I drive my family a bit mental. So I need to finish the manuscript quickly before things completely unravel. I can't afford to indulge in writer's block because then it would make the whole first-draft process longer and more agonizing for everybody. But when I do hit a snag I go walking. Walking always sharpens the mind and makes you alert to all sorts of possibilities – like breaking your leg by falling down the holes left by the *skollies* who nick the water meter covers to sell for scrap metal. I also wander around my garden a lot and read newspapers. I love newspapers. There are always a hundred possible books in every newspaper, and usually I'll read something that removes the snag and allows me to carry on writing. I find writing is a bit like running a marathon. It's very hard work and the first and last few chapters are the worst. So I really like it when the first draft is written

and I can go back to it feeling less crazy and start to flesh it out.

8. Do you ever visit schools or libraries in South Africa and have you considered Skype visits for international virtual visits and if you answer yes to either of those questions what is the best way to get into contact with you to arrange visits?

I have visited a lot of schools in South Africa and I like doing it. I enjoy hearing what young people are thinking and I find it really rewarding. But the idea of Skype scares the skin off me. I tried to do it once and I felt really weird. I think I'm a bit digitally challenged. But also I think I like to feel connected to people and Skype made me feel isolated. But if any school in the UK wants me to come and visit in all my fleshiness, I would love to do that. I can be contacted on facebook, or at my email address edythbulbring[at]gmail.com.

This interview has been edited. To read the full interview over at Teen Librarian please follow this link: <http://bit.ly/WjiWLg>