

Teen Librarian

Monthly Newsletter

www.teenlibrarian.co.uk

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Welcome to the March edition of Teen Librarian Monthly! I would like to apologise for the non-arrival of the February edition.	Using Postcards to Describe Book Settings Lucas Maxwell	2
I would also like to extend an invitation to all library folk to join Lucas & I, and get involved in writing for TLM (all credits & ownership of articles will remain with the writer).	Book Quiz	3
We kick off this month with a brilliant lesson by Lucas Maxwell on using postcards to describe book settings. Following swiftly on from this is a link to the Book Quiz I put together for World Book Day, the joy of this is that if you strip out the WBD branding it can be used throughout the year!	Shakespeare 400	4
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This April marks the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, I have put together some links to sites that may be useful in putting something together; I am also working on a set of posters that I will make available on the Teen Librarian blog in coming weeks. The American School Library Journal has recently published a number of brilliant articles on providing services to teens, I have provided links to two of these as they provide excellent examples of best practice in working with young people.

The Siobhan Dowd trust is looking for state schools to submit bids for funding to work with disadvantaged young people and bookshops.

I have put together a short list of fiction titles dealing with online threats and dangers that can be used in lessons when discussing online safety.

Finally the interview this month is with Dr Dominic Walliman and Ben Newman, creators of Professor Astro Cat, star of *Frontiers of Science* and *Atomic Adventure*, as well as a brilliant app exploring the solar system published by the brilliant Flying Eye Books.

Using Postcards to Describe Book Settings



I've been interested in using postcards in Library Lessons and didn't know how to incorporate them until I saw [this page](#) on BuzzFeed depicting postcards from fictional places.

I decided to do my own postcard lesson based on book settings.

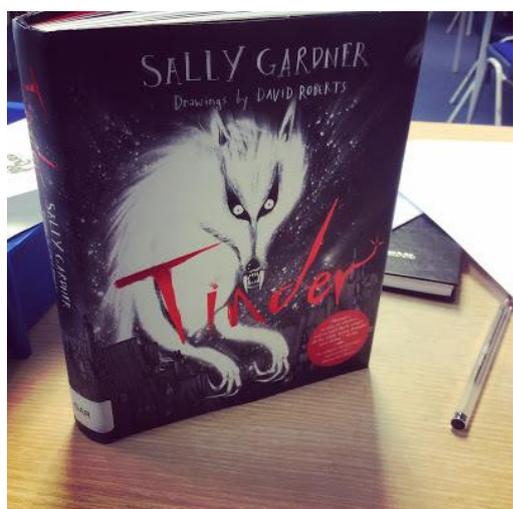
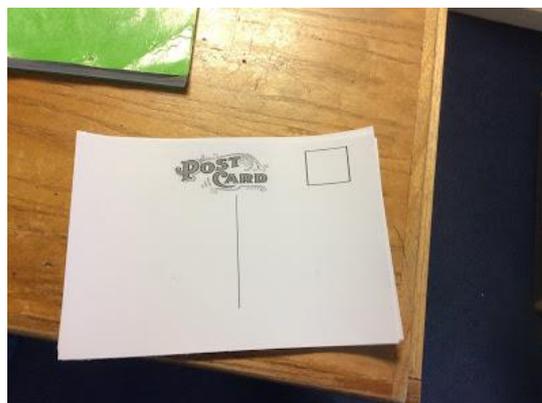
My first task was to see how familiar the students are with postcards, so I made up a rough outline of one along with the postcards I found on BuzzFeed.

I included the basics, the Greeting, the Message, the Sign-Off, the Address and the Stamp.

Then I used a postcard template to give to the students once we started the project.

We then had a brief discussion about postcards and discussed the BuzzFeed ones and then we talked about how important the setting is to a novel. I had the students provide me with a list of reasons that I wrote down on the whiteboard.

I explained to the students that they were going to make their own postcards. They could either insert themselves into the novel or pretend that they were a character from it. The rule was that they had to describe their setting, pretending they were writing the postcard to someone at home.



I provided them with an example, using the novel *Tinder* as my setting.

I read out a short postcard I had written home, describing the dangerous forest I was in, the sounds, the smell and the fear.

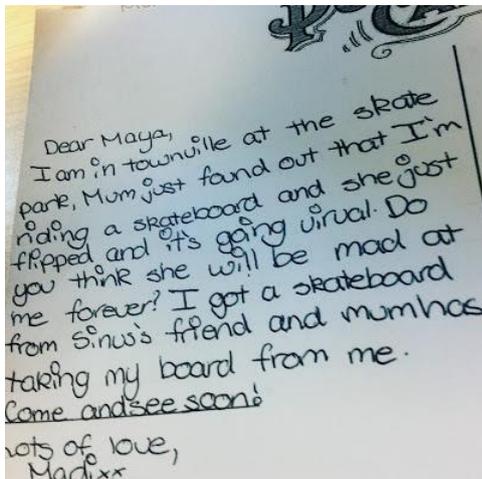
I then handed out the blank postcards and the students began their own.

I am going to make this into a two-part lesson, next time they are in the students are going to finish the flip-side of their postcard by including the title and author and a

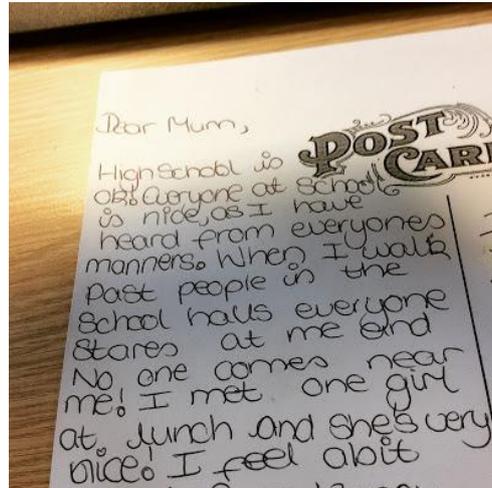
small illustration.

The students will present on their postcards and we will have a short postcard quiz to see if they can name different cities just by looking at their landmarks.

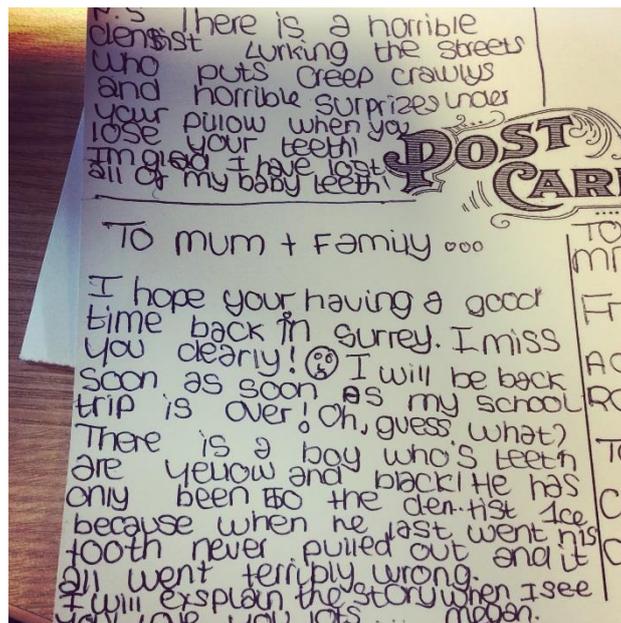
Below are a few results from today's lesson:



Bubble Wrap Boy by Phil Earle



Wonder by RJ Palacio



Demon Dentist by David Walliams

Book Quiz

I put together a book quiz for World Book Day, it has been one of the most popular things that I have poste don the Teen Librarian blog recently and it is still available for download. It is fairly easy to strip out the WBD branding (it is only on the first slide) and use it as a normal book quiz for the remainder of the year.

You can download it and the answer sheet here:

<http://teenlibrarian.co.uk/2016/02/25/world-book-day-2016-quiz/>

Shakespeare 400

This April 23rd marks the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare and as I am sure you have noticed there is a flurry of all things Shakespeare happening around the world. In case you are not aware of all that is available here are some links to resources that you may find useful:

Discovering Literature: Shakespeare

A project of the British Library, Discovering Literature is a free online learning resource that provides unprecedented access to the Library's unique literary and historical collections. This phase of the project explores Shakespeare's plays in relation to the social, political and cultural context in which they were written, and examines the ways in which these works have been transformed and interpreted over the last four centuries. Through a diverse range of collection items, including rare printed books, unique contemporary manuscripts, annotated play-scripts, playbills, pamphlets, maps, photographs and paintings, the site gives users new insights into the images and ideas that shaped Shakespeare's imagination and that reflect his legacy. Users can also view 80 articles by leading scholars, explore a range of teachers' notes and, from May 2016, watch a series of short documentary films.

<http://www.bl.uk/shakespeare>

Shakespeare Documented

Shakespeare Documented is the largest and most authoritative collection of primary-source materials documenting the life of William Shakespeare (1564-1616), bringing together all known manuscript and print references to Shakespeare, his works, and additional references to his family, in his lifetime and shortly thereafter.

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

Shakespeare Lives

Explore Shakespeare through British Council's work in the UK and overseas; from Akala and The Hip Hop Shakespeare Company in Africa to our Shakespeare Lives podcast straight from the Edinburgh International Fringe Festival, there's something here for everyone.

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

The Telegraph List of All things Shakespeare

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/from-the-rsc-to-the-bbc-britain-celebrates-shakespeares-400th-an/>

Almost Home: How Public Libraries Serve Homeless Teenagers

Young people who are homeless may be hard to spot, because they generally look just like typical teens. But with hundreds of thousands of American youth experiencing homelessness, library services—whether provided in a local branch or in a shelter—can serve as a stable environment and help connect these teenagers to other social services.

“By doing this we are saying that we want to pull them in: ‘We want you to become part of a larger community because you have a voice and a really interesting voice that we want to hear,’” says Julie Winkelstein, a lecturer in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and a member of the Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty Task Force, created in 1996 by the American Library Association’s (ALA) Social Responsibilities division.

Read the full article here:

<http://www.slj.com/2016/02/teens-ya/almost-home-how-public-libraries-serve-homeless-teenagers/>

To Support Teen Parents, Libraries Build Trust and Unique Programs

Patty Reeber preps her 40 full-time children’s librarians with crafting projects, songs, and reading materials that focus on early literacy techniques.

Then the early literacy coordinator for the [District of Columbia Public Library](#) sends her staff out to nine of the district’s 15 high schools.

*Working specifically with teen parents through its [S.T.A.R.](#) program (Sing, Talk and Read), the librarians help the school-aged parents make flannel books of nursery rhymes and plastic shaker eggs, while giving out picture books, such as Ezra Jack Keats’ *Peter’s Chair* (Harper & Row, 1967) and Spike Lee’s *Please Baby, Please* (S. & S., 2002) for teens to take home to their children.*

Sometimes just a few students come, says Reeber. But the key to the entire program—and what Reeber says is the most important element to its success—is that librarians come back to visit the schools when they say they will.

Read the full article here:

<http://www.slj.com/2016/01/public-libraries/to-support-teen-parents-libraries-build-trust-and-unique-programs/#>

Siobhan Dowd Trust 2016 Funding Opportunity for Schools and Groups who work with Disadvantaged Young People

In 2016 the Siobhan Dowd Trust is funding an opportunity for schools and groups who work with disadvantaged young people to apply for a series of small grants to be spent in local independent bookshops.

The amount awarded in each UK region will total £1000. This may go entirely to one school/group, it is possible that this amount will be broken down into several smaller grants of £750 / £500 / £250 – £250 can still buy a few nice books!

Which bookshops we use will depend on the location of the winning groups. It is expected that young people will choose the books themselves, with guidance from their librarians, teachers and booksellers.

As with other school competitions the Trust has run, this is not eligible for fee-paying schools to enter.

All they need – in a short email to their director – is the following:

- * Your contact details
- * Name and location of your school / group
- * PP / FSM number (or equivalent to demonstrate that you work with disadvantaged or vulnerable groups)
- * What it is you do to engage hard to reach young readers (we are looking to build on already existing good practise).

Please email this to director@siobhandowdtrust.com

2016 Deadlines by region:

June 30:

Scotland

North East

North West

Yorkshire & Humber

September 30:

Wales

West Midlands

East Midlands

East of England

November 30:

N Ireland

South West

South East

London

For more details visit:

<http://www.siobhandowdtrust.com/teachers-and-librarians/>

A list of books to suggest to students when discussing online safety and Internet use

Chicken Clicking – Jean Willis & Tony Ross

Dark Poppy's Demise – S.A. Partridge

Defriended – Ruth Baron

Exposed – Susan Vaught

Followers – Anna Davies

Identity Theft – Anna Davies

Little Brother – Cory Doctorow

Ready Player One – Ernest Cline

Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda – Becky Albertali

Want To go Private? – Sarah Darer Littman

Web of Darkness – Bali Rai

Interview with Dr Dominic Walliman & Ben Newman, creators of Professor Astro Cat

To celebrate Science Week I am extremely pleased to welcome Dr Dominic Walliman and Ben Newman to Teen Librarian to talk about Professor Astro Cat.



I will break up my first question into two parts, the first being how long have the two of you worked together and how did you come to be co-creators of Professor Astro Cat?

BEN: We've been friends since secondary school. I got to know Dominic better when he and a friend of ours put on a comedy night. A few of my close friends and I were involved in the evening. We always stayed in touch despite going off on very different paths. Back in 2010, I designed and printed a solar system poster which sold really well from my website and I approached my publisher, Nobrow about publishing a book about Space for children. They agreed and asked if I knew anyone who could write it. I immediately thought of Dominic and when we were back in our home town for Christmas I asked him and he said 'no'.... kidding! He said 'yes', really.

DOM: I got really into astrophysics when I was in 6th form after reading a book that tied in with a BBC documentary series called Universe. I wasn't studying physics at the time, but I remember all the facts

blowing my mind, and I used to come into school and tell everyone all the crazy stuff I had learned. I think that is probably why Ben thought of me when he wanted to make the book; and I jumped at the chance!

I love the Professor Astro Cat's Solar System app and would like to know if there are plans for more apps and if they will be available for other operating systems?

BEN: Professor Astro Cat's Solar System is in the digital mechanics being fine tuned as we speak. I believe MiniLab will be announcing some really cool stuff very soon in regards to the app and other operating systems.

In terms of new Professor Astro Cat apps, I have had numerous conversations with MiniLab about a couple of ideas that we are throwing around. Nothing in the works yet but I'm not sure I could tell you even if there were... Or could I?

What is your working dynamic like? Did you meet up to discuss the layout of Frontiers of Space and Atomic Adventure or did you write the text and work on the illustrations separately?

BEN: At the start of 'Frontiers of Space', we did physically sit down and work out the running order and how we thought the book should work. After the text was finished and while I was about half way through drawing that book, Dominic moved to Vancouver in Canada to work on Quantum computers.

We stay in touch via email but we found that while making the 'Atomic Adventure', we needed to talk more often face to face over skype. This was a huge help to both of us and made us feel like a team again. We work together very closely despite the distance.

The text is never concrete so it means that Dominic and I can revisit it while I am drawing and designing the layouts. This was a big help for 'Atomic Adventure' because the text informs the image and then the text can be integrated and adapted to work with the images. This fluidity was a real breakthrough for us.

DOM: Our work mostly involves me getting down a first draft of each spread and then running it past Ben. Then we do several iterations of back and forth, cutting things out and adding things in. Then when Ben is illustrating we do a few more tweaks on the text, and I sometimes help out on the images if Ben gets stuck on things like the technical details. I think it helps that I'm a very visual person and have some art and graphic design skills.

Ben how long did it take you to illustrate each book and do you work digitally or with traditional paper & paint/ink?

BEN: More than a year but less than two years. It's difficult to judge the time it takes because I try to fit in other projects at the same time. In both books, there has been a lot of trial and error which at the time is incredibly frustrating but ultimately it is a detrimental part of the process.

My work is a mixture of both traditional and digital. Much more of *Atomic Adventure* was sketched out on the computer this time. Mainly because I wanted to illustrate with the text laid out in front of me. *Frontiers of Space* was illustrated in areas that I measured on the computer and then drew by hand.

Dom, there is so much information collected in so little space how long did it take you to put the text together? How many sources did you use to collate the information?

DOM: The first book took about 2 years, but now I have got the a book down to about a year. This might seem like a long time but as I'm working full time at D-Wave I use my evenings and weekends to write. Getting the word count down has definitely been something I have got better at though – it is almost like a crossword puzzle! How do I get what I want to say in as few words as possible, and it be very clear at the same time. It is super fun though. For Atomic Adventure, most of the material came straight out of my head as Physics is a subject I have been studying for a very long time. Then I did a lot of fact checking to make sure I got it all right.

What scientific exploration will we experience next with Professor Astro Cat?

BEN: Well, there is a Professor Astro Cat space project out this summer and maybe even another project later in the year. Dominic and I are already working on his next adventure into science but it's top secret.

DOM: I can say that the first draft of the next book is done, and I can't wait to be able to talk about it. It is going to be a lot of fun!

Frontiers of Space was my favourite scientific picture book of 2015 and with Atomic Adventure you have given me my favourite for 2016 (it is a combination of engaging art and really interesting snippets of information) and since discovering your work I have seen more picture books dealing with scientific themes and information. Do you think we are at the beginning of a revolution in scientific picture books?

BEN: I hope so. It would be great to be a part of a movement towards engaging minds young and old in science. Children's non-fiction has been an area well in need of some TLC for a long while now so finger's crossed there is a resurgence.

DOM: I hope so too! I would love for science to become a bit more mainstream. When I talk to people, I find a lot of adults who think science is some mixture of intimidating, difficult or dull, and I think it is such a shame. When explained well, science is none of these things. In fact there are few things as enjoyable as understanding something new about the fundamental nature of the Universe. So if we can give the young people of today a more positive experience of science, that is fantastic, and I heartily encourage others to do the same.

For readers who fall in love with your work can both of you give a suggestion for further reading (both your own works and any other authors/illustrators that you think we may enjoy)?

BEN: I love Jim Stoten's *Mr Tweed's Good Deeds* as it is mind bogglingly illustrated and fun. Jim and I used to share a studio together when we were working on our books so he was a big inspiration. Also, Andrew Rae's *Moonhead* is a brilliant illustrated story. It's really funny.

DOM: If you haven't read the *Calvin and Hobbes* books yet, I would highly recommend them. They aren't about science, but are philosophical in the most fun way.

Thank you so much for giving up your time to answer these questions!