

## Books 'n' Blogs

There's still time to get your students reading and talking about some great books and sharing their views with students from other schools through Books 'n' Blogs. The theme this term is Heroes and Villains and next term is Destiny & Destinations. All the information you need is on our website

## Book marks

You asked for it – we're providing it! In collaboration with Applied Arts Students, SLS are creating genre bookmarks with recommended reads. These will be free for subscribers to download from our website in 2009.

## Book Reviews

**Sarah Singleton The Amethyst child**

Amber's mundane world changes when she becomes friends with Dowdie, a girl who has an alternative lifestyle and views. When she also becomes close to Johnny, a gorgeous loner who shares her interest in surreal photography, Amber is torn between the two. What is going on at the Community where Dowdie lives, and is Amber really a special 'Amethyst child' as the charismatic leader James would have her believe? The mystery and tension build to an exciting climax in this book, and the characterisation is strong throughout. A fascinating read for KS3 / KS4.

## Justin Richards The Chaos code

15 year old Matt goes in search of his missing father, using a set of cryptic clues that have been left behind for him. These lead him to the mysterious Julius Venture, whose enigmatic daughter Robin accompanies Matt on an exciting and dangerous race across continents to get to the treasure, and his father, before the bad guys catch up with him. This is a fast paced page-turner with a great plot, interesting characters and difficult clues to try to solve along the way. 'Doctor Who' author Justin Richards knows how to draw the reader in and then take them along on the journey. Think Da Vinci Code meets The Mummy meets Indiana Jones and you won't be far wrong. Great stuff. For KS3 readers

## Emma Clayton The Roar

What a fantastic debut novel from Emma Clayton! In a bleak future society, where most people live on meagre rations in crowded and miserable conditions, twins Ellie and Mika face many challenges in their efforts to become reunited after Ellie has been kidnapped. The plot twists and turns like the podfighter shown on the front cover, and even if, like me, you're not normally a sci-fi fan, I'm pretty sure you'll soon be hooked. The characters are very well drawn – some likeable, some weird and a few just plain evil. This book is an exhilarating roller coaster ride from beginning to end, where the reader is left with as many questions as answers. Of course there's a sequel to follow. KS3 /KS 4 (This title will be one of the new Books 'n' Blogs reads for the Spring)

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# Newsletter Autumn 2008

## Devon gets Reading

# Drop Everything And Read

D.E.A.R. Day at Braunton School and Community College.  
Students and staff, including Principal David Sharratt, all 'get reading'!



### Message from Co-ordinator of Devon gets Reading Roger Kirk

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this successful Devon wide event recently. Feedback has been very positive, with schools turning the event into a great opportunity to promote the enjoyment of reading.

[www.devonsls.org.uk](http://www.devonsls.org.uk)



# Authors write and Readers' rights

Great Torrington School hosted two author visits as part of the Appledore Book Festival

## Appledore Book Festival in Great Torrington School

A wonderful, respectful hush descended when Geraldine McCaughrean passed around her Italian red leather bound notebook for her novel 'Peter Pan in Scarlet'. She made a joke of not being able to read her own handwriting and then we could see why. She said her best tip was to type up her notes very quickly after writing them. When we read from the red notebook it was like handling a little piece of the Peter Pan magic. Geraldine read excerpts and dressed in her bespoke full length red coat made for the launch party of the book. Students enjoyed the chance to ask questions and have their books signed. It was a great opportunity to meet a published author and benefit from her experiences. Geraldine impressed upon us all the huge scope and power of the imagination. A current of electricity was buzzing around the Library when Murderous Maths author, Kjartan Poskitt was speaking. His very entertaining magic tricks and maths puzzles kept everyone on their toes. Kjartan made use of many willing volunteers to demonstrate mathematical phenomena and models. It was like having a humorous whirlwind here, who twisted numbers into shape. He finished his talk with the Director of the Appledore Book Festival and author Nick Arnold joining him in an amusing play. They rallied the students with rousing war cries and were dressed with lampshades on their heads. For some reason it all seemed perfectly normal!



## YEAR 6 FUN AT THE KING'S SCHOOL LIBRARY

Year 6 primary school students recently experienced a taste of life at The King's School. Each class spent a one-hour session in the school library where Librarians Debra Hanson and Annie James used laminated A3 versions of the Daniel Pennac & Quentin Blake poster 'The Rights of the Reader' to encourage imaginative and lively discussion about reading. The poster produced by Walker Books lists 10 'rights' and cleverly embraces the ethos of The National Year of Reading – namely that all reading is good reading. Students, notably so many of the boys normally categorised as reluctant readers, competed to list the comics, magazines and websites they like to read and to recall outlandish places in which they have read.

Students also carried out activities based on the library's new reading scheme due to be launched in September and were so enthusiastic some even requested the right to do extra pages! The happy participation of these students was an encouraging reminder of how libraries can play a key role in engaging children with learning.



## Teens Reading 4 Exeter

My colleague Mike Waller and I heard about the Plymouth Children's Book Group which has been running for many years now. This involves all 18 Plymouth schools sending a few students each to meet at the main Library once a month to read books and write reviews. They also take part in voting for the Red House Children's Book Award.

Mike and I decided we should have a similar group in Exeter. With the support of Nicola Cowling and Christine McFarlane from Devon SLS and Lesley Salter, Young People's Librarian from Devon Libraries, we made contact with Librarians and English teachers from each of the 5 Exeter secondary schools. Mike spent the summer persuading publishers to send us proof copies of books for the students to read. We managed to get 35 books with the promise of more if the students write reviews and send thank you letters.

The first meeting was held on Monday 20th October in the Music Room at Exeter Central Library. We met with 14 students from St. Luke's, St. James' and St. Peter's along with Carolyn Robbins, Teen Librarian from Devon Libraries. After some ice breaking exercises, we chose the name for the group and discussed what makes a book good or bad and then over biscuits and squash, the students chose which of the proof copies they wanted to read with some people choosing to read 2 or 3.

We now plan to meet monthly at Exeter Central Library. Thank you very much to Devon Libraries and Devon SLS for your support.

Aileen Hamer – St. Luke's Science & Sports College



## Kids Lit Quiz – Wadebridge, November 2008

Congratulations to all Devon and Torbay teams who took part, especially South Molton CC who were a close second and Exmouth CC who came third.

Team members answered some fiendishly difficult questions, and staff didn't do too badly either by winning some of the spot prizes!

If your school would be interested in taking part in 2009 please contact the School Library Service, who can put you in touch with some of this years' participants, or look at the website: [www.kidslitquiz.com/uk/](http://www.kidslitquiz.com/uk/)