

**Lightbulb Moments: Powered by Librarians**  
**SLA/YLG Weekend Conference**  
**23 – 25 June 2017**

Harry Potter on the train to Hogwarts couldn't have been more excited than I was travelling down to North Yorkshire for the joint School Library Association & Youth Libraries Group conference in June. The conference marked several anniversaries, including 80 years of the SLA & Carnegie Medal, and 20 years of Harry Potter. Thanks to an award from the CILIPS Professional Development Fund (AKA Gringotts), I was able to attend a conference that celebrated and championed the work of school librarians.

After a warm welcome from Tricia Adams, the conference kicked off with the first of many excellent keynote speakers. Amnesty International & Chickenshed Theatre talked about how books can be used to explore human rights with children, and that celebrating human rights is a positive act.

Saturday was a day packed with optional sessions. Feeling like a Hogwarts student in Honeydukes, I chose three sessions I thought would help me most. Although I had hoped to see the Reading Agency's Reading Outcomes Framework in action through case studies, the session showed me the potential of this free resource to measure the impact that reading for pleasure has on pupils.

Next up was Amy McKay's session on engaging non-traditional library users. Amy is an incredibly creative librarian – she had us all pretending to be zombies at one point – who was very generous with her ideas and resources. Her strategy to find out what interests her pupils (from zombies to YouTube) and then use this to bring them into the library, has motivated me to do the same in mine.

My last optional session was on behaviour management. We had to decide whether our pet peeves about pupil behaviour could be changed or not. Very few problem behaviours were thought to be unfixable, and this session really made me empathise with the pupil point of view, and realise that sometimes the only thing I can change about a situation is how I deal with it.

Saturday's keynote speaker was Chris Riddell, and the new SLA Honorary President/former Children's Laureate couldn't have received a bigger round of applause if Dumbledore himself had appeared on stage. Champion of school librarians across the country, it was a privilege to hear him speak and watch him draw.

Sunday's discussion on creativity with current Children's Laureate Lauren Child and David Almond was excellent, and made the point that children should be given space to daydream. The final session on young people and mental health was one of the best – Natasha Devon was a truly inspiring speaker with a manifesto to improve teen mental health that was simple and inspirational.

I only wish I'd had a Time-Turner so that I could have benefitted from all the other sessions on offer. As a new school librarian I am so grateful to the SLA & YLG for putting on such a fantastic conference, and to CILIPS for funding my place – it was a truly magical experience.