



School Library Association  
South West Wales Branch

**South West Wales SLA 'Interview with a Librarian Competition'  
Winner announced on National Libraries Day, Saturday 8 February 2014**

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH ANGELA EVANS, LIBRARIAN, YSGOL MAES Y  
GWENDRAETH, CARMARTHENSHIRE :**

"Hello, my name's Angela Evans. I'm the Librarian at Maes y Gwendraeth. I'm being interviewed today by Celyn, a Year 7 pupil at the school. So, I think we'll make a start."

**What was your favourite book as a child and why?**

"Right, I've got lots of favourite books. I was going to say one of the Enid Blyton books, because I used to love Enid Blyton, but I think my favourite was *Susan's Helping Hand*. I think, Jane Shaw the author was. I think there was a series of books, but that's the one I really enjoyed. It's about a girl whose parents have gone to live in Africa and she is sent to live with relatives in England. The girl's Scottish. And while she's there she gets into all sorts of scrapes and mysteries and helps solve mysteries that have happened. And I think it's just a fast-paced, exciting book. When I was a bit older, it was *A Town Like Alice*, a story of prisoners, women prisoners of war, in Malaysia, and about a girl who is left an inheritance after the war and decides to go back to Malaysia to help them out. I think it's just, she's a very independent woman and during that time in the 1950s, I think it something good to read because it was very difficult in those times for women to be independent."

**What's your favourite book now and why?**

"Right, my favourite book changes all the time, because every time I read something new, it becomes my favourite book. So, at the moment, it's *The Hundred Year Old Man Who Jumped Out of the Window and Ran Away*. I think I liked it because it's completely different to anything I've read before and even though it's a work of fiction, it brings a lot of history into it, which I think is correct. Yes, it's just because it was so different to anything I've read before. That's my favourite at the moment. But it could change again."

### **What 3 books would you take to a desert island?**

"I've been thinking and thinking about this question, and the only three I could come up with were: *The Kite Runner*, *Angela's Ashes*, and *Shell Seekers*. I was going to say something profound like *War and Peace* or *The Bible*, but I think I'll stick with those three because they're books that I've really enjoyed and they are up there with my favourite books, and I just think I'd enjoy reading them all again, and again, probably."

### **How long have you been a librarian?**

"I've worked in libraries for 22 years. I'm not a qualified librarian, it's just a job I fell into a long time ago and enjoyed it and decided to stick with it."

### **What's the best thing about your job?**

"Oh, I think it's working with the children, even though we complain about them a lot. I think that's the very best thing because you never know what's going to happen, what they're going to say. Yeah, it's just when you help them discover something or find a new book, it's, you feel as though it's been quite an achievement."

### **What's the most challenging thing about your job?**

"I think the most challenging thing is probably balancing how the Library is used, because you often get Sixth Formers who want to work quietly in here, and then you get a class in who are just back and fore, wanting to change their books, and then somebody else who wants to book the Library, so you've got to cancel your library lessons, maybe, turn the Sixth Form away, so I think that's one of the challenges, finding like a happy medium, so that the Library can be used by everybody. And, maybe choosing the right resources, because with a limited budget, you're never quite sure that you are buying the correct stock, so I think that's quite a challenge, and rainy lunchtimes, maybe, when we get everybody wanting to come in here and I think that can be quite a challenge sometimes."

### **How has your job changed in the last 5 years?**

"I think a lot of it is just keeping up with new technology; there's so much new stuff out there, it's, you just can't keep up with it all. And figuring out then how you can use that technology in your job to help the pupils. Yeah, I think that's probably the most challenging at the moment, knowing what to get involved with..."

### **What's the coolest use of technology you've come across in the last 2 years?**

"Oh! There's so much out there! Probably, I haven't worked a lot with iPads and things, and I'm sure there's a lot there, but as far as we're concerned in the Library, it's

probably just the use of e-books and how that's all opened up, how the pupils are able to borrow books when they're at home, they don't have to actually be in the Library to choose a book any more. Oh, we've subscribed to an online audio book service, and I think the fact that everything's gone digital and gone out there so that libraries can be accessed sort of 24/7 in a way. You know, even the pupils who don't maybe like actually coming to the Library can have access to resources that we've got."

### **How do you think our library will change in the next 5 years?**

"Back again to the e-books, I think our non-fiction section will get smaller and smaller as people research more online. I just think we need to get involved with technology, subscribe into online resources, so that we can, maybe pupils can, work collaboratively with departments and the Library online and share documents. The Library's become, it's not a place to sit and work quietly any more. I think we get more in doing groupwork and sharing resources, so that's all changed.

On the Fiction side, maybe not so much, except that we are offering e-books and audiobooks online at the moment. I think a lot of people still enjoy coming in and choosing books to take home. So I do think the physical space of the Library will change in the next 5 years."

### **What kind of things do you do to encourage us to read for pleasure?**

"I think the first thing is just having a good selection of books here, offering alternatives such as e-books and audiobooks. We do competitions in the Library, we celebrate World Book Day and Poetry Day. All the pupils get free books, a book each for free on World Book Day. We've registered for World Book Night now and hopefully we'll get something there. It's just a matter of putting posters up. We've started a new blog and Twitter and Facebook page so hopefully we can keep encouraging and advertising what's going on in the Library and what resources we've got available, through the social media. We're planning at the moment to do a 'Drop Everything and Read' session fairly soon, and we're hoping to put book boxes into all the tutor rooms so that when they have a PSE session once a week that perhaps there'll be a chance on some sessions that the pupils can read during those times. It's just advertising I think what we've got and what we can offer. We follow book awards, we've started a book club that meets once a fortnight, every Friday, so we've got quite a few members there who are keen readers and it's open to everybody. I think it's just being available. The pupils know they can come in between lessons every break and every lunchtime, and before and after school if they want so I think a lot of it's just being available for them to come in."

### **What do you do to recommend and promote other things apart from fiction in our Library?**

"Apart from fiction, I meet regularly with Heads of Department so that we can try and encourage them to come into the Library and do research work. I speak to the Sixth Form at the start of the year, so that we can talk to them about what's available and how I can help them out with any research work, maybe for the Welsh Baccaulaureate. It's just a matter of trying to get people and teachers on board really to bring them in. We subscribe to some newspapers and magazines here as well, so that pupils can maybe read non-fiction for pleasure. Recently, I've spoken to pupils in Year 10 and Year 11, same as the Sixth Form, to promote the resources we've got, for the Welsh Baccaulaureate as well. Off the top of my head, that's all I can think of for the moment."

### **What do you do to recommend and promote fiction in our Library?**

"Same, I suppose, as what I said for the question about encouraging pupils to read for pleasure. I try to keep up with all the latest fiction, I read quite a few reviews. I've usually got displays up promoting different books or different series of books. We've had a few author events over the years, but again budget restrictions are difficult there so we can't have as many as we'd like. We've had a Readathon. We have quizzes, we've got the book club, we've got a Staff Book Club that meets once a fortnight, shadowing book awards, and that kind of thing. Again actively holding book fairs and over the year, we celebrate World Book Day and different events, Roald Dahl Day, we've got a T. Llew Jones Day in Wales, and just taking every opportunity we can to find an opportunity to promote books."

### **Can you give some examples of the kind of things which take place in our Library and how it is used?**

"Right, erm, all pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 come in twice a fortnight to change their library books; they come in once with their English teachers, and once with their Welsh teachers so they've always got two books on the go. Then during, outside of lessons then, we've usually got quite a few things going on over lunchtimes. We have a quiz every Wednesday, and it's usually the pupils that write the quizzes. At the moment we've got quite a long waiting list, so I'm alright for quizzes now until way after half term. Our book clubs meet, we've got a pupils and a staff book club that meet once a fortnight. We took part last year in the Guinness World Record Attempt. This year the celebrate National Libraries Day, we've got a Roald Dahl Quiz here at lunchtime and hopefully we'll have celebrations, we'll organise something for breaktime as well. I haven't quite decided what to do there yet. We've got Chinese New Year coming up, so we'll have events for that. We've got designing fans, designing a dragon, wordsearches, we do a worksheet on the Chinese calendar. During lesson time again, the Sixth Form use the Library in their free periods for research and working, we get classes in to do research. Our most recent was the Welsh Department and Year 8; they did research on

animals. The Geography Department use us; they did research on climate change; and the Science Department do famous scientists, so they've been coming back and fore. And again we celebrate Poetry Day; we'll have a book fair to coincide with World Book Day. I think it's just a matter of keeping advertising the Library to all the pupils and making sure we've got events that go on on a regular basis and keeping the Library fresh in everybody's minds."

"There we are. Is that it? Any more questions?  
Thank you Celyn. Thank you very much."

