



# READING

## Newsletter

### *Bye bye January blues, hello Fabulous February!*



January: the only month with 648 days. The bank balance is low, the heating bills are up and the waistline has expanded – this is the month where we need to take it easy on ourselves whilst still trying to rev the engine up for a great year. Nothing's ever easy, is it? One thing you can always count on to calm you down, perk you up or anything in between: a book. Studies show that reading can help with improving sleep, reducing stress, lowering blood pressure and heart rate and even with skills in communication and empathy. Sounds like a recipe for an amazing year to me.

### *What's new with reading?*

At a time when more and more people are developing seasonal depression because of the short days and the bleak weather, anything that can help keep our spirits up is a welcomed relief. Researchers at Liverpool Health Inequalities Research Institute examined a phenomenon called 'bibliotherapy': a two weekly reading group program for people diagnosed with depression over a 12-month period reported a significant improvement to mental health. Participants reported improved concentration, better emotional understanding and increased self-awareness. Not a bad result considering a book can cost as little as 20p from your local charity (not to mention costing nothing from your local library). All we need now is someone to bring us a cuppa while we put our feet up.

### *Days out for bookworms*

#### The Lit & Phil, Newcastle city centre

This much-loved, but easily overlooked library is one of Newcastle's best-kept literary secrets. The Literary and Philosophical Society (its proper name!) was founded in the 18th century and has been occupying its grand building for the past 200 years. With more than 1,000 books and the most beautiful winding staircases, it's a fantastic place to spend some quiet time in the city.

#### South Shields Museum, Ocean Road NE33 2JA

The north east has a lot to be proud of and Dame Catherine Cookson may near the top of that list. Selling over 100 million books during her life, she came from humble beginnings: she was raised by her grandparents in Tyne Dock and left school at 14 to work in a laundry. Cookson didn't write her first novel until she was 42 (proof that there's time yet to achieve even your most far-off goals) and the South Shields Museum has a great range of artefacts from her life, amongst other treasures, for you to enjoy.



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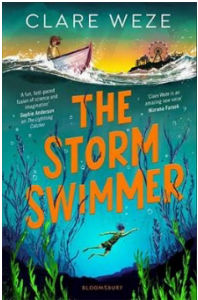
### *Tip of the month*



Do you have reluctant readers at home? Are you the one who sometimes puts off reading for something, well, easier? Use this month as your motivational tool: grab that book and get reading! But, let's up the ante: can you use the book you're reading as a tool to stir your creative calling? Use the characters, plot and themes to create a piece of art? Do your kids love video games? Get them to transform a character from their book into a gaming hero or villain. Got a budding movie maker? Transform a chapter into a movie trailer.

### *Recommended Reads*

(for the youngsters)

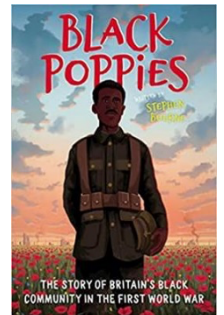


#### The Storm Swimmer by Clare Weze

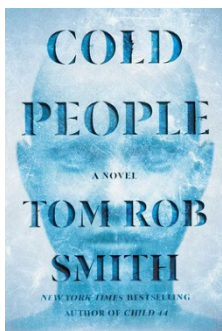
This is an exciting, unusual and imaginative adventure story, easy to read and wonderfully magical. Ginika's mum and dad are in financial trouble so send her off to live with her grandparents by the sea where unexpected things start to happen. A captivating books covering adversity, bravevery, friendship and acceptance.

#### Black Poppies by Stephen Bourne

This thought-provoking collection of true stories shines a light on the contributions made by Britain's Black community during the First World War. Illustrated throughout with photographs, this insightful selection of biographies and commentaries would be a valuable addition to any home library.



(And for the grown ups)



#### Cold People by Tom Rob Smith

An alien invasion wipes out Earth's population driving the lone survivors to Antarctica to set up a new society. Cold People is a zany, wildly gripping, dark futuristic fantasy.

### *Where next?*

BorrowBox – for your free books – and [info@bedlingtonacademy.co.uk](mailto:info@bedlingtonacademy.co.uk) for any help