

Winners of Scottish Children's Book Awards announced today

EDINBURGH AUTHOR WINS SCOTLAND'S BEST CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD



Award-winning Edinburgh-based children's author Janis Mackay was today announced as the winner of the Younger Readers (8-11 years) category of the Scottish Children's Book Awards 2013, for her book *The Accidental Time Traveller*, published by Kelpies.

A celebration of the best of Scottish writing and illustration for children, the Scottish Children's Book Awards are judged in 3 age categories – Bookbug readers (3-7), Younger Readers (8-11) and Older Readers (12-16) – and are run by Scottish Book Trust in partnership with Creative Scotland. The winner in each category receives £3000.

Commenting on her award, Janis, a lecturer at the Office of Lifelong Learning in Edinburgh University, said: -“I am completely thrilled, and can't quite believe it. It has been such a wonderful opportunity to be shortlisted for this award; suddenly my books are in the consciousness of hundreds of teachers and librarians – and pupils – and I have been invited to many schools and libraries and book festivals.

“First winning the Kelpies prize and now this amazing prize – I feel chuffed, and have already written the sequel!”

Janis MacKay is a writer, storyteller and voice teacher born and raised in Edinburgh. She studied journalism in London, but aged 21 she realised that it was the wrong job for her, and

took time out to travel. After returning to Scotland she studied speech and drama, becoming a teacher and voice coach.

After many years she studied for an MA in Creative Writing at Sussex University. An SAC writer-in-residence award took her to Caithness, where she wrote the novel that became her Kelpies prize-winning [Magnus Fin and the Ocean Quest](#) in 2009. Her children's novels feature Magnus Fin, a young boy who is part human, part selkie – a mythical sea creature. Her latest novel, [Magnus Fin and the Selkie Secret](#), is published by Floris books.

Janis is also the niece of Helen Crummy OBE, whose statue is being unveiled on 21st March in Craigmillar, where she lived and started the Craigmillar Festival Society.

The Accidental Time Traveller is a pacy, time-travelling adventure, full of funny misunderstandings and gripping action. It tells the story of Saul, who is on his way to the corner shop one ordinary day when a girl appears suddenly in the middle of the road. She doesn't understand traffic, or the things in shops, and she's wearing a long dress with ruffled sleeves. Her name is Agatha Black and she is from 1812, and Saul needs to find a way to get her back there. With help from his mates Will and Robbie, he tries to work out how to make time travel happen.

Record numbers of children read the books on this year's shortlist, with over 38,000 votes cast – an increase of 20% on last year. The shortlist is comprised of books published between 1st April 2012 and 31st March 2013 by authors or illustrators living and working in Scotland, and is chosen by a panel of booksellers, teachers, librarians and, most importantly, children. Children across Scotland are then invited to read the shortlist of three books in their age category and to vote for their favourite.

Jasmine Fassl, Head of Schools at Scottish Book Trust,

commented: -“A big thank you to all of the shortlisted authors for writing such wonderful books – children across the country have enjoyed reading, debating and championing each and every one of them over the past few months, with huge numbers of children voting for each book. As our review competition shows, there was something for everyone in the shortlist, with the themes of humour, first love and fast-paced action proving most popular this year. There is nothing nicer than celebrating the books that children themselves have enjoyed reading, and the passion of the teachers, librarians, parents and authors who take part in the Scottish Children’s Book Awards are playing a key part in inspiring a new generation of book lovers.”

Picture book author Chae Strathie, based in Fife, won the Bookbug Readers Category (3-7 Years) for Jumblebum, illustrated by Ben Cort and published by Scholastic and debut author Claire McFall, based in the Scottish Borders, won the Older Readers Category (12-16 Years) for Ferryman (published by Templar).

CALL Scotland has again worked with Scottish Book Trust and the authors and publishers to create accessible digital versions of the nine shortlisted books, for children and young people with physical, visual and reading or dyslexic difficulties, who can’t read the paper books. The accessible digital versions are available free of charge from CALL Scotland. You can request books by going [to their website](#).

The Scottish Children’s Book Awards are managed by Scottish Book Trust in partnership with Creative Scotland, and are supported by The Barcapel Foundation, Times Educational Supplement Scotland, Waterstones, CALL, Ernest Cook Trust and the Zachs-Adams family.