

Scottish Book Trust Children's Book shortlist announced

Scottish Book Trust is delighted to announce today that three Edinburgh-based authors Alexander McCall Smith, Gill Arbuthnot and William Sutcliffe have been shortlisted for this year's [Scottish Children's Book Awards](#), celebrating the most popular children's and young adult books by Scottish authors or illustrators.

Run by Scottish Book Trust with support from Creative Scotland, these are Scotland's largest book awards, split into three age categories, with a total prize fund of £12,000. Shortlisted authors and illustrators receive £500 per book, and the three winning books receive £3,000 each. Over the next five months, children across Scotland will be reading the three shortlisted books in their age category and voting for their favourite. The three winning books will be announced at a special award ceremony on 4 March 2015.





Internationally renowned best-selling novelist Alexander McCall Smith is shortlisted in the Younger Readers (8-11 yrs) category for *Precious and the Mystery of the Missing Lion*. Published by Birlinn, this is a delightful tale exploring how the young Precious Ramotswe became the loveable private investigator of the *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series.

McCall Smith, one of the world's most popular authors, lives in the Merchiston area of Edinburgh. After the success of *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* he wrote four more series including *44 Scotland Street* novels and his most recent *Corduroy Mansions* series. In total he has published 74 stories as well as a number of academic texts. Over 40 million copies of his books have been sold and he continues to produce an average of 4 – 5 books every year. He has received numerous awards for his writing, including the British Book Awards Author of the Year Award in 2004 and CBE for services to literature in 2007.

Gill Arbuthnot is shortlisted in the Older Readers (12-16 yrs) category for her novel *Dark Spell*. Published by Kelpies and set in St Andrews, the book follows the adventures of teen witch Callie as she tries to come to terms with her powers and battles an unknown force.

Edinburgh born & bred, Gill A attended James Gillespie's High School before leaving the city for St Andrews University. Here she studied Zoology and then completed teacher training. Despite having a career in science Arbuthnott never gave up her intention of writing, and when she witnessed the millennium clock in the museum of Scotland she was inspired to write *The Chaos Clock* for children. Now with a large back catalogue of published work including, *Beneath*, *The Keepers*

Daughter and most recently *Winterbringers*, Arbuthnott lives in Edinburgh again, working as a writer and teacher.

Commenting on her nomination, Gill said:

"I am thrilled to be shortlisted for the Scottish Children's Book Awards. It's a particular pleasure to be in the running for an award which is going to be decided by the children and young people at whom the books are aimed, and a great honour to have made it onto the shortlist, especially looking at the range of tremendous books which have won in previous years."

Best-selling author William Sutcliffe is shortlisted in the Older Readers (12-16 yrs) for his novel *The Wall*. Published by Bloomsbury, it powerfully depicts the realities of life on the West Bank through the emotive coming-of-age story of thirteen-year-old Joshua.

London born William Sutcliffe attended private boy's school Haberdashers' Aske's in Hertfordshire. After leaving school he went on to study at Emmanuel College, Cambridge where he met his wife, novelist Maggie O'Farrell. He currently lives in Edinburgh. William has published five novels prior to *The Wall*, including *Are You Experienced?*, *New Boy*, *The Love Hexagon*, *Bad Influence* and *Whatever Makes You Happy*. *The Wall* is his first children's novel and has already received high acclaim, being longlisted for the Guardian Fiction Prize and shortlisted for the Carnegie Medal. William's work has been translated into 20 different languages.

Commenting on his nomination, William said:

"I am delighted to be shortlisted for the Scottish Children's Book Awards. It is an exciting prospect to know that my book will be read widely in schools across Scotland, and discussed, and voted on. It is vital that children read, and talk to each other about what they read. It's fantastic to have your work embraced into that process."

THE SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARDS SHORTLIST:

Bookbug Readers (3-7 years)

- *Princess Penelope and the Runaway Kitten* by [Alison Murray](#) (Nosy Crow)
- *Robot Rumpus* by Sean Taylor, illustrated by [Ross Collins](#) (Andersen Press)
- *Lost for Words* by [Natalie Russell](#) (Macmillan)

Younger Readers (8-11 years)

- *Precious and the Mystery of the Missing Lion* by [Alexander McCall Smith](#) (Birlinn)
- *Attack of the Giant Robot Chickens* by [Alex McCall](#) (Kelpies)
- *Pyrate's Boy* by [E.B. Colin](#) (Kelpies)

Older Readers (12-16 years)

- *Dark Spell* by [Gill Arbuthnott](#) (Kelpies)
- *The Wall* by [William Sutcliffe](#) (Bloomsbury)
- *Mosi's War* by [Cathy MacPhail](#) (Bloomsbury)

Jasmine Fassl, Head of Schools at Scottish Book Trust said:

"The Scottish Children's Book Awards are much more than a celebration of Scottish literature – they are about expanding children's horizons far beyond their physical boundaries and barriers. By simply reading just one of the shortlisted novels in their category, a 5 year old can imagine what it's like to have rampaging robots as babysitters, a 10 year old can hop aboard a pirate ship, and a 15 year old can be transported into the mind of a teenager in a war zone. We hope that children, teachers, parents and librarians across Scotland will take this journey with us and get lost in these 9 wonderful stories."

Jenny Niven, Portfolio Manager for Literature at Creative Scotland, commented:

“Literacy, and access to books for Scotland’s children and families is absolutely critical for our capacity to learn, to develop and to imagine. The work of Scottish Book Trust is fundamental in this. The next step beyond access is to provide the means for children and young people to develop an independent love of books and reading, and the Scottish Children’s Book Awards play an enormous role in making this possible.

“By voting for their own reading choices they are taking steps in their journeys as independent readers – steps which will have an impact on their education, their wellbeing and their imaginations far into the future. Creative Scotland is delighted to support this work, and is encouraged to see such a strong shortlist of Scottish books for our voters to choose from.”

The Scottish Children’s Book Awards also encourage budding authors or journalists to put pen to paper: the popular Book Review Competition offers pupils the chance to win book tokens for themselves and an author visit for their school.

Budding film makers can enter the book trailer competition to entice their peers to read the books too and win book tokens for their school. Scottish Book Trust provides extensive learning resources for teachers on how to create book trailers.