

Edinburgh authors to the fore in the Scottish Children's Book Awards



Great news from the Scottish Book Trust! Edinburgh-based authors have dominated the shortlist for the 2016 [Scottish Children's Book Awards](#), with four out of the nine shortlisted authors hailing from the city.

(Lovely photos with pupils from Royal Mile Nursery, Flora Stevenson Primary and Holyrood High as always from [Rob McDougall!](#))

Emily MacKenzie, Elizabeth Laird, Danny Weston and Joan Lingard are all up for the prestigious awards, which celebrate the most popular children's and young adult books by Scottish authors or illustrators. Run by Scottish Book Trust with support from Creative Scotland, they are Scotland's largest book awards with a total prize fund of £12,000 – the nine shortlisted authors and illustrators receive £500 per book, and the three winning books receive £3,000 each.

Emily MacKenzie, who lives in the New Town and studied Graphic Design at Edinburgh College of Art, has been shortlisted in the Bookbug Readers (3-7 yrs) category for her debut picture book Wanted! Ralfy Rabbit Book Burglar, published by Bloomsbury. She was recently shortlisted for The Independent Bookshop Week Children's Picture Book Award and her second book, Stanley The Amazing Knitting Cat will be published by Bloomsbury in January 2016.



Commenting on her nomination, Emily said: “I was absolutely over the moon when I found out that Ralfy had been shortlisted for the Scottish Children’s Book Awards! The book has had such a warm response from teachers, librarians and the children I’ve read it to so far which has been really lovely, but the idea that a further 64,000 P1 children starting school in Scotland this year will receive a copy of it to enjoy and hopefully help them on to a path of loving reading and books as much as I do, blows my mind. It’s a dream come true and Ralfy and I want to say a big thank you to Scottish Book Trust for all their support!”

A free copy of Emily’s book will be gifted to every Primary 1 child during Book Week Scotland, in the Bookbug P1 Family Bag, along with copies of the two other shortlisted books in the Bookbug category. This bag was produced by Scottish Book Trust in conjunction with Education Scotland and the Scottish Government as part of [Read, Write, Count](#) – a new literacy and numeracy campaign aimed at children in Primary 1 to 3.

Elizabeth Laird, based in the Old Town, has been shortlisted in the Younger Readers (8-11 yrs) category for her book *The Fastest Boy in the World*, published by Macmillan. Elizabeth, who has previously appeared on the 2008 and 2010 Scottish Children's Book Awards shortlists, is an award-winning author of children's fiction and travel. She has written over 30 books for children and has been shortlisted five times for the CILIP Carnegie Medal, including for *The Fastest Boy in the World* this year. She has been nominated by UK IBBY for the international Hans Christian Anderson Award, and her new novel, *Dindy and the Elephant*, was published in June. Elizabeth now lives with her husband, splitting their time between London and Edinburgh.

Commenting on her nomination, Elizabeth said: "It's a thrill and an honour to be shortlisted for the Scottish Children's Book Award. 'The Fastest Boy in the World' is an Ethiopian lad called Solomon, who dreams of joining the ranks of the great African running champions. Now, thanks to this lovely award, he'll be running all the way round Scotland. Go Solomon!"

Danny Weston, who lives in Tollcross, has been shortlisted in the Older Readers (12-16 yrs) category for his book *The Piper*, published by Andersen. He has published three novels (under the name Philip Caveney) with Edinburgh-based publisher Fledgling Press. These are time travel adventures, all set in Edinburgh at different points in its history. The first book *Crow Boy* is set in Mary Kings Close, *Seventeen Coffins* is all about the tiny coffins found on Arthur's Seat in 1836 and the most recent book, *One For Sorrow*, is all about Robert Louis Stevenson. In the New Year, Fledgling will be bringing out *The Calling* – a novel featuring all the statues in Edinburgh. *The Piper* was also recently shortlisted for the North East Book Award.

Commenting on his nomination, Danny said: "I was surprised and delighted to hear that I had been shortlisted for this

prestigious prize. At a time when the importance of literacy seems to be increasingly challenged, prizes like this mean more than ever to authors like me.”

Joan Lingard, who lives in Edinburgh’s New Town, has been shortlisted in the Older Readers (12-16 yrs) category for her novel *Trouble on Cable Street*, published by Catnip. Joan has been a published writer for young people and adults for over 40 years and is best known for the Kevin and Sadie books, set in Northern Ireland at the time of the troubles there. Her popular Elfie and Joe trilogy began when she discovered that her grandfather had run a pub in Stoke Newington in London and she started to research that area around the turn of the 19th Century when he and his wife lived there.

Following a conversation with a friend about the period between the first and second world wars, Joan began to research the impact of the Fascist movement in London in the 1930s, and the parallel conflict in Spain. Commenting on her nomination, Joan said:

“I’m delighted that *Trouble on Cable Street* has been shortlisted for the Scottish Children’s Book Awards. I have been writing for young people for over 40 years and I am always pleased to know that readers are enjoying my books. I enjoyed writing this book very much. It is set in a fascinating, unsettled time in Britain’s history – and European history – and the more I read about what happened in the 1930s the more I found parallels with some of the problems we’re facing today, 8 decades later. In 1936 the communities of the East End of London rallied to stop a march by Oswald Mosley and the British Union of Fascists. They clashed with the police in Cable Street and the march was eventually stopped, but many people were injured in the fighting. I always enjoy writing strong characters, and once I’d settled on Isabella and her two brothers their story fell into place against the backdrop of London in those difficult times.”

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