

# The Branford Boase Award



**\*\* UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 8.30 AM WEDNESDAY 24 JANUARY 2024 \*\***

**25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Branford Boase Award, celebrating the most talented debut writers for children and their editors**

**25 vibrant new writers celebrated on the award's 25<sup>th</sup> longlist**

[www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk](http://www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk) / #BBA2024 #BranfordBoaseAward

The longlist for the **2024 Branford Boase Award** is announced today (Wednesday 24 January 2024). Set up in memory of award-winning author Henrietta Branford and her editor Wendy Boase, one of the founders of Walker Books, the **Branford Boase Award** is given annually to the author of the year's outstanding debut novel for children. The **Branford Boase Award** is the only award to honour the editor of the winning book, highlighting the importance of the editor in nurturing new talent.

Founded in 2000, 2024 marks 25 years of this unique award.

The **Branford Boase Award** is known for identifying the most talented authors at the start of their career. Past winners and shortlisted authors have included **Meg Rosoff**, **Frank Cottrell Boyce**, **Jenny Downham** and **Patrick Ness** as well as **Frances Hardinge**, **Philip Reeve**, **M.G. Leonard** and most recently **Maisie Chan** (2022) and **Christine Pillainayagam** (2023).

Winning editors include Philip Pullman's editor **David Fickling**, and **Barry Cunningham**, who famously published J K Rowling, plus **Fiona Kennedy**, **Sarah Odedina** and **Bella Pearson**.

For the fourth consecutive year, over 60 books were submitted, more than three times the number in 2000, and from 30 different publishing houses. Reflecting current trends in writing for children and young people, the longlist of 25 features three verse novels, including poet Matt Goodfellow's **The Final Year**, edited by Charlotte Hacking (Otter-Barry Books) and Tia Fisher's **Crossing the Line**, edited by Emma Matthewson and Tia Albert (Hot Key); detective stories, including Beth Lincoln's ingenious **Nero Book Awards** shortlisted country house murder mystery, **The Swifts**, edited by Ben Horslen and Julie Strauss-Gabel (Puffin); YA romances including Lex Croucher's 'queer as hell' comedy, **Gwen and Art are Not in Love** (Bloomsbury) edited by Hannah Sandford and also shortlisted for the **Nero Book Awards**; plus a wealth of original new fantasy adventures, including **City of Stolen Magic** (Puffin) by Nazneen Ahmed Pathak, edited by Natalie Doherty and India

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Chambers. Issues of identity and modern life are also explored in contemporary dramas including **You Think You Know Me** by Ayaan Mohamud, edited by Sarah Stewart (Usborne).

**The 2024 Branford Boase Award longlist in full:**

**Montgomery Bonbon: Murder at the Museum** by Alasdair Beckett-King, illus Claire Powell, edited by Gráinne Clear (Walker Books)

**Glow Up, Lara Bloom** by Dee Benson, edited by Ruth Bennett (Hot Key Books)

**Gwen and Art are NOT in Love** by Lex Croucher, edited by Hannah Sandford (Bloomsbury)

**Finding Phoebe** by Gavin Extence, edited by Chloe Sackur (Andersen Press)

**Digging for Victory** by Cathy Faulkner, edited by Leonie Lock (Firefly Press)

**Crossing the Line** by Tia Fisher, edited by Emma Matthewson supported by Tia Albert (Hot Key Books)

**The Final Year** by Matt Goodfellow, illus Joe Todd-Stanton, edited by Charlotte Hacking (Otter-Barry Books)

**How Far We've Come** by Joyce Efa Harmer, edited by Lucy Pearse (Simon and Schuster)

**Vivi Conway and the Sword of Legend** by Lizzie Huxley-Jones, edited by Eishar Brar (Knights Of)

**The First Move** by Jenny Ireland, edited by Ruth Knowles with Sara Jafari (Penguin Books)

**The Detention Detectives** by Lis Jardine, edited by Katie Sinfield and Millie Lean (Puffin)

**Safiyah's War** by Hiba Noor Khan, edited by Eloise Wilson (Andersen Press)

**Steady for This** by Nathanael Lessore, edited by Ella Whiddett and Ruth Bennett (Hot Key Books)

**The Swifts** by Beth Lincoln, illus Claire Powell, edited by Ben Horslen and Julie Strauss-Gabel (Puffin)

**You Think You Know Me** by Ayaan Mohamud, edited by Sarah Stewart (Usborne)

**The Kingdom Over the Sea** by Zohra Nabi, edited by Ali Dougal (Simon and Schuster)

**Last Girl In** by Cheryl Diane Parkinson, edited by Sonya McGilchrist (Dinosaur Books)

**City of Stolen Magic** by Nazneen Ahmed Pathak, edited by Natalie Doherty and India Chambers (Puffin)

**The Destiny of Minou Moonshine** by Gita Ralleigh, edited by Lauren Atherton (Zephyr)

**The Witchstone Ghosts** by Emily Randall-Jones, edited by Rachel Leyshon (Chicken House)

**Influential** by Amara Sage, edited by Alice Swan (Faber)

**Yomi and the Fury of Ninki Nanka** by Davina Tijani, illus Adam Douglas-Bagley, edited by Mattie Whitehead and Karelle Tobias (Little Tiger)

**Greenwild** by Pari Thomson, illus Elisa Paganelli, edited by Emma Jones (Macmillan)

**The Sleeping Stones** by Beatrice Wallbank, edited by Janet Thomas and Rebecca F. John (Firefly Press)

**Never Trust a Gemini** by Freja Nicole Woolf, edited by Non Pratt (Walker Books)

Chair of the judges and co-founder of the **Branford Boase Award**, **Julia Eccleshare** says, “We are delighted to be celebrating 25 years of the **Branford Boase Award** as it continues to highlight the most talented new writers for children and the editors who support them. We’re excited that this year’s longlist features a particularly wide variety of voices and stories, all freshly told. It demonstrates the vibrancy of current children’s literature and is an inspiring memorial to the work of Henrietta Branford and Wendy Boase, in whose names the award was established 20 years ago.”

This year’s judges are Christine Pillainayagam, author and winner of the **2023 Branford Boase Award**; **Emily Drabble**, Head of Children’s Books Promotion and Prizes at **BookTrust**; **Lucas Maxwell**, former School Librarian of the Year and winner of the **UK Literacy Association’s** Reading for Pleasure Teacher Champion Award 2022; and **Amy McKay**, also a past UK School Librarian of the Year and for ten years **Yoto Carnegies National Coordinator**. The judging panel will be chaired by **Julia Eccleshare**, children’s director of the Hay Festival.

The Branford Boase Award is delivered in partnership with the [Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society \(ALCS\)](#) and supported by Walker Books.

The **shortlist** for the Award will be announced on Thursday 25 April 2024. The winner will be announced on Thursday, 11 July 2024 at an award ceremony at **CLPE** in London.

The **Henrietta Branford Writing Competition**, the annual competition for young people which runs in conjunction with the **Branford Boase Award**, will open on Tuesday 6 February 2024.

**For further information please contact Andrea Reece on 07807893369 or [andrea.reece@zen.co.uk](mailto:andrea.reece@zen.co.uk)**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

The annual **Branford Boase Award** celebrates the most promising book for seven-year-olds and upwards written by a first-time novelist and also highlights the importance of the editor in the development of new authors. The shortlisted authors may have published other books in another genre – for example, poetry or a picture book – but eligibility for the prize requires that this is their first children’s novel.

As well as encouraging publishers to find and promote new writers, the Award sets out to alert readers of all ages to the work of interesting newcomers.

The **Branford Boase Award** was set up in 2000 in memory of the outstanding and prize-winning author **Henrietta Branford** and **Wendy Boase**, editorial director and one of the founders of Walker Books. They worked together on a number of Henrietta’s novels, a partnership they greatly enjoyed. Both Henrietta and Wendy died of cancer in 1999.

Running alongside the Branford Boase Award, the **Henrietta Branford Writing Competition** encourages writing talent in under 18s.

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The Award is the joint idea of **Julia Eccleshare** and **Anne Marley**. Julia is children's director of the Hay Festival and a regular contributor to **Radio 4's Front Row** and **Open Book** programmes. Anne was Head of Children's, Youth & Schools Services for **Hampshire Library & Information Service** for many years. She has served on numerous children's book award panels, including **the CILIP Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Awards**.

### **About the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society**



Authors'  
Licensing and  
Collecting  
Society

**The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)** is a not-for-profit organisation started by writers for the benefit of all types of writers. Owned by its members, ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers' work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity; ensure they receive fair payment and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. It represents over 118,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £600million to writers.

For more information visit [alcs.co.uk](http://alcs.co.uk)

### **About Walker Books**

The **Walker Books Group** is one of the world's leading independent publishers of books and content for children. This vibrant international group includes **Walker Books UK**, London; **Candlewick Press**, Somerville, Massachusetts; and **Walker Books Australia**, based in Sydney and Auckland.

Renowned for its truly original publishing and outstanding quality, the **Walker Books Group** is home to books for readers of all ages. Award-winning authors and illustrators for the group include National Ambassador for Children's Literature, Kate DiCamillo, M.T Anderson, Patrick Ness, and Jon Klassen, and major brands for the group are **Maisy**, **Guess How Much I Love You**, **Tilly and Friends**, the widely acclaimed **Judy Moody** and the bestselling **Where's Wally/Where's Waldo**.

The **2023 Branford Boase Award** was won by Christine Pillainayagam and her editor Leah Thaxton with **Ellie Pillai is Brown** (Faber).

**For more information about the award, including a full list of past winners, and the Henrietta Branford Writing Competition visit [www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk](http://www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk) .**

Or contact Andrea Reece on 07807893369 or [andrea.reece@zen.co.uk](mailto:andrea.reece@zen.co.uk)

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