



October 2024

Branford Boase Award 2025

*Phoebe Demeger, Nicki Thornton and Rumena Aktar to join Nathanael Lessore as judges for the **2025 Branford Boase Award***

Submissions are now open for the **2025 Branford Boase Award**. Publishers are invited to make their submissions by the closing date, midnight **Friday 29th November 2024**.

This year's panel of judges will be led by **Nathanael Lessore**, who together with his editors Ruth Bennett and Ella Whiddett won the **2024 Branford Boase Award** with **Steady For This**. Joining him on the panel are **Phoebe Demeger**, CLPE's highly respected librarian; author, former bookseller and now **BA Bookshop Mentor Nicki Thornton**; and **Rumena Aktar**, former **SLA School Librarian of the Year** and expert reviewer for **Inclusive Books for Children**. The judging panel will be chaired by **Julia Eccleshare**, children's director of the Hay Festival.

The **Branford Boase Award** was created in 2000 by Julia Eccleshare and Anne Marley in memory of award-winning author Henrietta Branford and her editor Wendy Boase and rewards the most promising new authors for young people and their editors. Twenty-five years since its foundation, it remains the sole award to credit the work of editors in supporting new authors and ensuring their work is the best it can be. With its emphasis on the craft of writing and the crucial role played by editors, the award showcases outstanding writing for children. Being shortlisted for the award is a sought-after accolade and winning authors and editors are recognised as setting standards in publishing excellence.

The Branford Boase Award gratefully acknowledges support from Walker Books and from ALCS

Opening the 2025 **Branford Boase Award**, chair of judges Julia Eccleshare MBE says, “We are delighted and proud to be opening the 26th Branford Boase Award. The roll call of previous winners and shortlisted authors and editors is a document of the very best new writing for children over a quarter of a century and we are excited to see what this year will bring in submissions.”

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

The submission form and full criteria can be found at <https://branfordboaseaward.org.uk/>

For further information contact:

Andrea Reece

E: andrea.reece@zen.co.uk T: 020 8889 1292/ 07807893369

Notes to Editors:

Founded in 2000, the **Branford Boase Award** was set up in memory of award-winning author Henrietta Branford and her editor Wendy Boase of Walker Books, who both died in 1999, and is unique in honouring editor as well as author.

Wendy Boase co-founded Walker Books in 1978 with Sebastian Walker and Amelia Edwards. Her role was to look after the words and she was instrumental in shaping the list, and especially in editing the fiction. Finding new authors was one of Wendy's talents and she nurtured many prize-winning writers including Lesley Howarth and Hugh Scott. Her authors relished her passion for their writing and her obsessive eye for detail. Combined, these ensured that they were driven, though not against their will, to produce their best.

Henrietta Branford began writing when she was 40, starting with pieces for a local newspaper, and before long was writing books for children and winning prizes. Henrietta’s books covered the whole range from picture books to teenage novels. *Dimanche Diller*, the first in a trilogy about the eponymous heroine, won the Smarties Prize and in 2002 was awarded the Prix Tam-Tam in France; *Dimanche* and *The Fated Sky* were both shortlisted for the Guardian Children’s Fiction Prize which Henrietta subsequently won with *Fire, Bed and Bone*, a title that was also Highly Commended for the Carnegie Medal.

The Branford Boase Award is now regarded as one of the most important awards in children’s books and has an impressive record in picking out star authors at the start of their careers. Previous winners include Meg Rosoff, Liz Hyder, Marcus Sedgwick, M.G. Leonard and Frances Hardinge. Winning editors include JK Rowling’s editor Barry Cunningham, Philip Pullman’s editor

David Fickling and Fiona Kennedy, publisher of Michelle Paver, Marcus Sedgwick and Sally Gardner.

The shortlisted authors may have published other books in another genre – e.g. 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 Award is the joint idea of Julia Eccleshare MBE and Anne Marley MBE. Julia is the director of the Hay Festival children’s programme. Anne was Head of Children’s, Youth & Schools Services for Hampshire Library & Information Service for many years and helped to found Authors Aloud UK, an author booking agency.

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About the Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society



Authors'
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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 120,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £700million to writers.

For more information visit 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).

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For more information about the award, including a full list of past winners, and the Henrietta Branford Writing Competition visit www.branfordboaseaward.org.uk .

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