



booktrust
Inspiring a love of books

Olympians and the world's tallest man compete with werewolf cousins and a time-travelling schoolgirl in a bid to win the Blue Peter Book Award 2012

www.booktrust.org.uk/bluepeter

Booktrust and Blue Peter are delighted to announce the shortlist for the Blue Peter Book Awards 2012. These enormously popular and influential awards have been recognising and celebrating the best children's authors, the most fascinating fact books and the greatest reads for children since 2000. This year's shortlist includes: a fact book that contains all there is to know about the 2012 Olympics; a treasure trove of information about the extremes of the planet; a novel that investigates those strange howls in the night; and a tale of friendship, time travel and tragedy. The shortlist will be announced on the show from 4.30pm today by children's author Cressida Cowell whose book *How to Train Your Dragon* was recently made into an animated movie.

The Blue Peter Book Awards 2012 shortlist is:

Discover the Extreme World by Camilla de la Bedoyere, Clive Gifford, John Farndon, Steve Parker, Stewart Ross and Philip Steele (Miles Kelly)

The Official Countdown to the London 2012 Games by Simon Hart (Carlton Books)

The Considine Curse by Gareth P. Jones (Bloomsbury)

A Year without Autumn by Liz Kessler (Orion Children's Books)

This year's judges who selected the shortlist are the bestselling children's author of the series *My Secret Unicorn* and *Stardust*, Linda Chapman, Librarian Rebecca Gediking and Blue Peter Editor Tim Levell. They were looking for the best two fiction and non-fiction titles that would appeal to boys and girls, aged between 6 and 12.



booktrust
Inspiring a love of books

Judge and author Linda Chapman comments:

'I'm delighted with the shortlist! I think there's a great mix of books that will appeal to a wide range of readers - from those who love a good story to those who are hooked on facts. The important thing I think all four books have in common is that readers will be excited by them, want to re-read them and share them with their friends.'

The shortlisted books will now be judged by more than 200 young Blue Peter viewers drawn from 10 schools across the UK to decide the winner of the **Blue Peter Book of the Year 2012**. This year for the first time, the winner will be announced and awarded a Blue Peter trophy on a special edition of Blue Peter dedicated to children's books on Thursday 1 March 2012, to coincide with World Book Day.

Tim Levell, Editor of Blue Peter and Chair of Judges, comments:

'We are proud that the Blue Peter Book of the Year is one of the few book prizes actually chosen by children for children. We know that our young viewers love reading, and we are excited to introduce them to four amazing new books. We have over 200 young judges reading the four shortlisted books, and given the strength of the field, one thing is certain - they are going to have a tough job picking the winner!'

The reading and writing charity Booktrust has managed the Blue Peter Book Awards since May 2008.

*****For interviews, jacket images, author and judge biographies, and photographs please contact:**

Alice Ingall on 020 8875 4827 alice.ingall@booktrust.org.uk

OR

Will White on 020 8875 4583 / .white@booktrust.org.uk



Shortlisted author biographies:

Simon Hart is a sports writer specialising in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. He has reported on three summer Olympic Games – Sydney, Athens and Beijing – and has written extensively on London's bid and preparations for the 2012 Games. He also reported on the Beijing Paralympic Games and his work has taken him to three winter Olympic Games and numerous World and European Championships involving Olympic sports.

Gareth P. Jones is the author of *The Thornthwaite Inheritance* which has been shortlisted for over eleven local book awards and won seven. His first novel for Bloomsbury, *The Dragon Detective Agency: The Case of the Missing Cats* was shortlisted for the Waterstone's Book Prize. He has written three more Dragon Detective books as well as the interstellar crime adventure *Space Crime Conspiracy*. Gareth works as a TV producer and is a talented musician, creating songs for his books. He lives in London and has seven cousins who he never sees when the moon is full!

Liz Kessler is the author of two popular children's series: Emily Windsnap and Philippa Fisher. *A Year Without Autumn* is her first standalone title. Born in 1966, Liz grew up in the seaside town of Southport in the north west of England. She studied English at Loughborough University, gained a teaching qualification at Keele University and more recently received a distinction in a Masters degree in Creative Writing at Manchester Metropolitan University. Before becoming an author, Liz taught English and Media Studies, ran Creative Writing courses and worked as a journalist. Liz lived on a narrowboat on the canal for about ten years, after which she settled briefly in Manchester before travelling round Europe in a campervan for a year. She now lives in St Ives, Cornwall.

Discover the Extreme World is authored by an expert selection of UK-based non-fiction authors including Camilla de la Bedoyere, John Fardon, Clive Gifford, Steve Parker, Stewart Ross and Philip Steele. Packed full of facts about our extraordinary planet – from spy technology to super volcanoes – it is the first in a new series called *Discover the World*, published by Miles Kelly in association with Discovery Channel.

Judges' biographies:

Linda Chapman grew up dreaming of being a writer and riding in the Olympics. At least one of those dreams came true. She has now written over 150 children's books including the popular series' *My Secret Unicorn*, *Stardust* and *Not Quite a Mermaid* and, in collaboration with Steve Cole, the *Genie Us* books. Her latest series *Sophie and the Shadow Woods*, is also a collaboration, this time with Lee Weatherly and involves lots of terrifying shadow creatures, a very rude parrot called Nigel, a grumpy grandpa and a skateboarding heroine called Sophie. Linda's dreams of riding in the Olympics have been shelved (for now). Instead she gives free-rein to her obsession by writing about horses in her new series for older readers, *Loving Spirit*. Linda lives in Leicestershire with her husband, three children, two dogs and a pony. Find out more at [.lindachapmanauthor.co.uk](http://lindachapmanauthor.co.uk).



Rebecca Gediking began her career in libraries working part time whilst studying for her degree in Drama and Theatre Studies at the University of Kent in Canterbury and hasn't looked back since. Rebecca now works as a librarian for Haringey Council and is completing her MA in Library and Information Studies at UCL. She thoroughly enjoys working with children and promoting literacy. She hasn't hung up her dancing shoes yet though, and is still passionate about theatre. In her spare time Rebecca performs and directs shows with an amateur theatre group, Saint Monica's Players (SMP), based in Enfield, North London. Her favourite show with SMP was the traditional pantomime Dick Whittington, in which she played the role of Spongebob Squarepants.

Tim Levell has been Blue Peter Editor since September 2007. Previously he was the Editor of the children's news programme Newsround, where he was also a producer and reporter. In total, Tim has worked in children's media for 13 years. Tim has also spent time at Sky News and on the BBC News website, and started his career as a local radio reporter at BBC Radio Sheffield.

Notes to Editors

About Blue Peter

Blue Peter is the longest running children's programme in the world. The twice weekly factual magazine show is designed to inspire, entertain, excite and enthrall its young viewers. Each programme features a unique variety of films and studio items which cover a huge range of diverse subjects which could include sport, adrenaline-filled adventures, marvelous makes or a unique take on history and science. As well as the Book Awards the show is renowned for its annual appeals, foreign trips, pets, the garden and the badges it awards children.

[.bbc.co.uk/bluepeter/](http://bbc.co.uk/bluepeter/)

About Booktrust

Booktrust is an independent reading and writing charity that makes a nationwide impact on individuals, families and communities, and culture in the UK. Booktrust makes a significant positive contribution to the educational outcomes of children from the earliest age. We work to empower people of all ages and abilities by giving them confidence and choices about reading. And we want individuals of all backgrounds to benefit from the wellbeing that a rich and positive engagement in reading and writing can bring.

Booktrust is responsible for a number of successful national reading promotions, sponsored book prizes and creative reading projects aimed at encouraging readers to discover and enjoy books. These include the Roald Dahl Funny Prize, the Children's Laureate, and Bookstart, the national programme that works through locally based organisations to give a free pack of books to babies and toddlers, with guidance materials for parents and carers.

[.booktrust.org.uk](http://booktrust.org.uk)