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Fiction favourites flaunt strong female leads in highly anticipated 2018 Blue Peter Book Awards shortlist

23rd November 2017 – Wizards, warriors, wabbits, weird worlds, long forgotten leper colonies and creepy things that go bump in the night take the top spots in the 2018 Blue Peter Book Awards shortlisted titles, fighting for a chance to win one of two prestigious awards: Best Story and Best Book with Facts.

Competing for the title of Best Story are: *The Island at the End of Everything* by Kiran Millwood Hargrave, *Wed Wabbit* by Lissa Evans and *The Wizards of Once* by Cressida Cowell. Each of the gripping fiction nominations have strong girl protagonists who must undertake dangerous journeys in their quest to triumph over evil. But who will end up triumphing in the Blue Peter Book Awards?

Meanwhile, battling to be crowned Best Book with Facts are: *Corpse Talk: Ground-Breaking Scientists* by Adam Murphy & Lisa Murphy, *Real-Life Mysteries* by Susan Martineau, illustrated by Vicky Barker and *Beyond the Sky: You and the Universe* by Dara Ó Briain, illustrated by Dan Bramall.

Managed by [BookTrust](#), the UK's largest children's reading charity, the immensely popular Blue Peter Book Awards honour amazing authors, imaginative illustrators and the best books for children, published in the last 12 months. The winning titles, voted for by over 500 children from 12 schools across the UK, will be revealed live on Blue Peter on World Book Day on Thursday 1st March 2018, with the winning authors and illustrators appearing on the special awards episode of the show.

The judges, including Drivetime DJs and *Kid Normal* authors Greg James and Chris Smith, Poet and Darcy Burdock author Laura Dockrill, School Librarian of the Year 2016 Amy McKay and Blue Peter editor and non-voting chair Ewan Vinnicombe selected the shortlist which will be sent out to 12 schools, giving participating children the opportunity to read the final six and vote for their favourite books.

Greg James said: "Chris and I love Blue Peter SO much so to be asked to judge their Book Award was a total dream. It was brilliant to lock ourselves away and get lost in the entries. It was an incredibly tough choice but we are confident we've chosen books that will inspire a new generation of young readers."

Amy McKay said: "It was a massive honour and pleasure to judge the Blue Peter Book Awards, I loved every minute of it! There were many fantastic books to choose from and I'm very proud of our eventual shortlists. I'm already eagerly awaiting hearing which books children vote as the winners."

Blue Peter editor, **Ewan Vinnicombe** said: "In Blue Peter's 60th year the Book Awards will play a key role in our celebrations. The shortlist is just so exciting and shows the creative strength in children's publishing at the moment. With a diverse mix in both categories, I can't wait to find out what school children in the UK decide are their favourites."

The Blue Peter Book Awards have been celebrating children's literature since 2000. BookTrust has managed the Blue Peter Book Awards since 2008. The 2017 winners were Kieran Larwood and David Wyatt who won Best Story with *Podkin One Ear* and David Long and Kerry Hyndman who won Best Book with Facts for *Survivors*.

Laura Dockrill explained: "I adored judging the Blue Peter Book Award, the nominated list was incredibly strong and made judging the prize so difficult. Which I think is a very good thing for the world of children's books! I met wizards, talking toys with speech impediments, was flown across the globe to marvellous new landscapes, was thrown (with a box of tissues on my lap) back in time to the heartache of the war, the Egyptians, the invention of the lightbulb! I met cats, wolves, dinosaurs and big foot, uncovered mysteries and had my head blown off by space facts. It was a wonderful privilege and the shortlist is stunning!"

Diana Gerald, CEO, BookTrust commented: "The Blue Peter Book Awards are a brilliant way to celebrate children's literature and get youngsters excited about reading. BookTrust is honoured to be involved in such prestigious awards and hopefully inspire even more children to become lifelong readers."

Keep up-to-date with the Awards at www.booktrust.org.uk/bluepeter and on Twitter by following @Booktrust and #BPBA

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Notes to Editors

Best Story

1. *The Island at the End of Everything* by Kiran Millwood Hargrave (Chicken House)
2. *Wed Wabbit* by Lissa Evans (David Fickling Books)
3. *The Wizards of Once* by Cressida Cowell (Hodder Children's Books)

Best book with facts

1. *Corpse Talk: Ground-Breaking Scientists* by Adam Murphy & Lisa Murphy (David Fickling Books)
2. *Real-Life Mysteries* by Susan Martineau, illustrated by Vicky Barker (B Small Publishing)
3. *Beyond the Sky: You and the Universe* by Dara Ó Briain, illustrated by Dan Bramall (Scholastic)

BookTrust is the UK's largest children's reading charity. We work to inspire a love of reading in children because we know that reading can transform lives. Each year we reach **3.4 million children** across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading. Every parent receives a BookTrust book in their baby's first year. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early year's practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. Reading for pleasure has a dramatic impact on educational outcomes, well-being and social mobility, and is also a huge pleasure in itself. We are committed to starting children on their reading journey and supporting them throughout. booktrust.org.uk