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**BookTrust Celebrates 20 Years of the Waterstones Children’s Laureate**

* **Beautiful gift anthology *Flights of Fancy* from Walker Books**
* **‘League of Laureates’ UK tour**
* **Partnership with Puffin Virtually Live**

**London, Friday 2 November 2018:** BookTrust, the UK’s largest children’s reading charity, has today unveiled its first plans to celebrate 20 years of the Waterstones Children's Laureate in 2019.

Launching in February 2019, the 20th anniversary campaign will harness the power of the ten Waterstones Children’s Laureates: Quentin Blake, Anne Fine, Michael Morpurgo, Jacqueline Wilson, Michael Rosen, Anthony Browne, Julia Donaldson, Malorie Blackman, Chris Riddell and Lauren Child.

Highlights of the campaign will include a specially commissioned anthology of stories, poems and pictures from the ten Children’s Laureates to date; a nationwide League of Laureates tour; and a partnership with Puffin Virtually Live – with more details to be announced in the New Year.

**Jill Coleman, Director of Children’s Books at BookTrust**, said: “We are immensely proud of the many ways in which this unique and vital Laureateship has showcased the exceptional quality of children’s literature in the UK over the past 20 years, and are so very grateful to the extraordinary authors and illustrators that have worn the Children’s Laureate silver medal. We look forward to celebrating the legacy of our ten Laureates and the many ways in which they have inspired young readers, as well as looking forward to the next 20 years and beyond of celebrating the wonderful world of children’s books.”

Walker Books will publish a beautiful gift anthology ***Flights of Fancy: Stories, pictures and inspiration from ten Children's Laureates*** (7 February 2019, Hardback) with original contributions from all ten of the former honourees. *Flights of Fancy* will inspire children to let their imaginations soar, with rare insights such as Quentin Blake on the stories behind his pictures of weird and wonderful beasts, an original short story from Jacqueline Wilson, and witty, read-aloud poems by Michael Rosen that play with language and shape. Part of the proceeds from sales of the book will go to BookTrust.

**Jane Winterbotham, Publishing Director at Walker Books**, said: “We are thrilled to be publishing this one-of-a-kind anthology to celebrate these ten exceptional talents and the mark they have made on the world of Children’s Literature. In this original and entertaining anthology, the Laureates have shared their own techniques and inspiration, to help children unlock their imaginations and produce their own work. This book will be treasured by anyone with a passion for children’s books, and will help to inspire the next generation of authors, illustrators, poets and possibly even a future Laureate. ”

The **‘League of Laureates’** nationwide tour will see Laureates appearing at a series of events across the country with the final celebration taking place at Hay Festival. Hay Festival 2019 ([hayfestival.org](file:///%5C%5Cmid-lon-dc01%5Cshared%5CBookTrust%20Waterstones%20Children%27s%20Laureate%5CPress%20Releases%5Chayfestival.org%5C)) takes place 23 May-2 June.

Puffin’s hugely successful webcast for schools – **Puffin Virtually Live** – will celebrate the anniversary with two special webcasts in the spring and summer term, each one starring Children’s Laureates. Streamed free online, on average around 75,000 children watch Puffin Virtually Live shows simultaneously in classrooms around the world.

Waterstones, who sponsor the Children’s Laureate, will join in the celebrations by working with BookTrust to put on a special event for school children with some of the past Children’s Laureates, and the trade launch party will be hosted by Waterstones Piccadilly.

**Florentyna Martin, Children’s Book Buyer at Waterstones**, said: “It’s a privilege to sponsor the Children’s Laureate and we have thoroughly enjoyed working with each of the Laureates over the last 20 years who have each used the position to champion children’s books and to encourage reading and creativity using their own individual passion, energy and style. We are looking forward to celebrating the 20th anniversary and to continuing our work with BookTrust to further engage and excite young readers about books.”

The Children’s Laureate was created in 1999 by Poet Laureate Ted Hughes and children’s author Michael Morpurgo and is awarded once every two years to an eminent children's book writer or illustrator to honour outstanding achievement in their field. The Laureates are the foremost representative of children’s literature in the UK, showcasing the extraordinary and dynamic artform and its rich contribute to culture.

The twentieth anniversary campaign will celebrate all that has been achieved over the past 20 years of the Waterstones Children’s Laureate and look forward to the future of the Laureateship.

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**For further information please contact Hannah McMillan at Midas Public Relations:** **hannah.mcmillan@midaspr.co.uk** **| 020 7361 7860**

**About BookTrust**

BookTrust is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. Their early language development is supported and they also do better at school. We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity; each year we reach 3.4 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives. We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. [booktrust.org.uk](http://www.booktrust.org.uk)

**About Waterstones**

Waterstones is the UK and Eire’s leading high street bookseller with 285 shops. It employs over 3,000 booksellers. Waterstones is the only national specialist book retailer of scale in the UK, with the average sized shop carrying a range of around 30,000 individual books and with over 200,000 titles in the largest shop.

**About Walker Books**

Home to books for all ages, **Walker Books** publishes many award-winning authors, illustrators, and literary franchisesincluding Anthony Horowitz, Cassandra Clare, Lucy Cousins, *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney and Anita Jeram, Anthony Browne, Patrick Ness, and *Where’s Wally?* by Martin Handford. Walker Books is part of the vibrant international **Walker Books Group** that includes **Walker Books Australia; Candlewick Press** in America and its new division, **Walker Books US**; and **Walker Productions**. The **Walker Books Group** enjoys a unique ownership structure which includes employees from around the world and more than 150 long-term authors and illustrators. Walker is the world’s leading wholly independent publisher of English-language children’s books.

**About Puffin Books, Penguin Random House UK**

Puffin is an imprint of Penguin Random House, the world’s number one publisher. Penguin Random House champions authors, shaping and sharing writing that sparks thoughts, dreams, conversations and learning.

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