**Embargo: Thursday 7th November 2019 at 18:00**

**Greta Thunberg inspiring change and Deadly Frogs darting poison… something for everyone as the 2020 Blue Peter Book Awards contenders are revealed**



7th November 2019 – Deadly frogs that dart poison, space adventurers, coping with grief, misfits with a mission and inspirational children changing the world are just some of the themes from the brilliant line up of titles shortlisted for the 2020 Blue Peter Book Awards, managed by [BookTrust](http://www.booktrust.org.uk), the UK’s largest children’s reading charity.

Fighting for the title of Best Book with Facts are: *Fanatical About Frogs* written and illustrated by Owen Davey (Flying Eye Books), *How to be an Astronaut and Other Space Jobs* written by Dr Sheila Kanani and illustrated by Sol Linero (Nosy Crow) and *Rise Up: Ordinary Kids with Extraordinary Stories* by Amanda Li and illustrated by Amy Blackwell (Buster Books).

Meanwhile, *Owen and the Soldier* written by Lisa Thompson from Barrington Stoke, is the first dyslexia-friendly title to ever be shortlisted for the Blue Peter Book Awards. Alongside it competing for the Best Story accolade is *Vote for Effie* written by Laura Wood and *Wildspark* by Vashti Hardy, both published by Scholastic Children’s Books.

Discover stories about Effie fighting for change at her new school, Owen’s pursuit to save a special war memorial from being destroyed and Prue’s quest to help her family’s grief by bringing her dead brother back to life.

This November is non-fiction month, so the perfect opportunity to be inspired by young girls and boys around the world who have achieved the unimaginable – from surviving in a jungle after a plane crash, to striking against climate change. Get to know the beautiful but deadly poisonous frogs of the world and find out if you have what it takes to become an astronaut in these varied and wonderful books.

**Diana Gerald, CEO, BookTrust said**: “Once again we are delighted be involved in the Blue Peter Book Awards. These fantastic books are helping to inspire and encourage children everywhere to love reading and discover more about science, space and how to truly be yourself.”

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 awards are rigorously judged by school children across the country. This year nearly 500 schools applied to be a part of the judging process. The winning titles, voted for by over 400 children from 12 schools across the UK, will be revealed live on Blue Peter on World Book Day on Thursday 5th March 2020 with the winning authors and illustrators appearing on the special awards episode of the show.

**Meryl Fernandes, TV Presenter, Actress Blue Peter Book Awards judge said: “**I absolutely loved being on the judging panel this year for the Blue Peter book awards and thoroughly enjoyed discussing all the books with the other judges. All the books in the longlist were so incredible that it actually made shortlisting a very tough task for all of us. I am delighted with our final shortlist as they are all equally brilliant and I can't wait for kids and parents to fall in love with them as much as I did and to read them again and again!”

**Amanda Li, author of Rise Up: Ordinary Kids with Extraordinary Stories, said:** “I’m over the moon that *Rise Up* is on the shortlist for the Blue Peter Book Award! I grew up with Blue Peter and never missed an episode… And now my book has been chosen – how incredible is that! I loved writing this book as it gave me the chance to find out all about the lives of some amazing young people. All of them are working in their own ways, big and small, to improve their lives or make the world better. And they’ve certainly inspired me.”

**Lisa Thompson, author of Owen and the Soldier, said:** “To have a book nominated for an award is wonderful, but to have a book in the final three of the Blue Peter Book Award is an absolute honour! I was an avid Blue Peter viewer as a child, and I am so delighted to see *Owen and the Soldier* included in the short list. It's so exciting!”

**Blue Peter Editor Ellen Evans said:** “The Blue Peter Book Awards are very special, for the last 20 years they have celebrated the very best new children’s books from British authors and illustrators. The 2020 shortlist features outstanding books and I enjoyed reading them all. The story books make you feel empathy, feel empowered and fire your imagination. All the books celebrate the achievements of amazing kids and will inspire young people to think about who they might want to be in life, these are ideas that have been at the heart of Blue Peter for the last 60 years.”

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

For fun-filled content about the judging and the shortlisted books head to the Blue Peter website <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/shows/blue-peter>

Discover who wins on a Blue Peter World Book Day Special, on Thursday 5th March 2020 at 5.30pm on CBBC.

***[Ends]***

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**Notes to Editors**

The judging panel consisted of TV presenter and Actress Meryl Fernandes, award-winning poet, performer and author Joseph Coelho, publishing booktuber expert Jean Menzies and Blue Peter editor and non-voting chair Ellen Evans.

**Blue Peter** is the longest running children’s magazine programme in the world. As well as the Book Awards, the show’s family of presenters, live studio home, amazing competitions, incredible challenges, live music, interviews with celebrities, access behind the scenes, pets, makes and bakes, free games online and most importantly its commitment to the audience are all long standing elements of this iconic show. [www.bbc.co.uk/bluepeter](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bluepeter)

**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 3.9 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)

**Best book with facts:**

* Fanatical About Frogs by Owen Davey
* How to be an Astronaut and Other Space Jobs by Dr Sheila Kanini and Sol Linero
* Rise Up: Ordinary Kids with Extraordinary Stories by Amanda Li and Amy Blackwell

**Best story:**

* Owen and the Soldier by Lisa Thompson and Mike Lowery
* Vote for Effie by Laura Wood
* Wildspark by Vashti Hardy

**Schools taking part in the judging process:**

* Clifton School (North West England)
* Carrickfergus Model Primary School (Northern Ireland)
* St Agatha's R C Primary (Scotland)
* Zaytouna Primary School (East Midlands)
* Buckingham Preparatory School (London)
* Grangetown Primary School (North East England)
* Ocklynge Junior School (South East England)
* Oreston Community Academy (South West England)
* Brynmill Primary School (Wales)
* St Nicholas CE VA Priory Primary School (East of England)
* Firs Primary School (West Midlands)
* Worlaby Academy (Yorkshire and The Humber)

**Ellen Evans** is Editor of Blue Peter, the world’s longest running children’s series, with weekly live shows, an amazing online fan club and Blue Peter badges. A life-long fan of Blue Peter, she has worked at the BBC on factual and entertainment output for over 20 years, making shows for BBC One, BBC Two and BBC Three, CBBC and CBeebies.

**Meryl Fernandes** is most notably known for playing Afia in Eastenders, Meryl was contracted for three weeks on the show, but her feisty character portrayal proved such a hit that she stayed in the award-winning soap for three years. After training at Millennium Performing Arts Academy in London for three years, Meryl landed her first West End show The Far Pavillions at the Shaftesbury Theatre. She went on to perform at The National Theatre in critically acclaimed plays such as The Man of Mode with Tom Hardy and A Matter of Life and Death. Her television credits followed in programmes such as BBC 1’s Doctor Who, ITV’s Demons and C5’s Minder staring in scenes alongside Rik Mayall. Most recently Meryl completed filming as a presenter of CBBC’s The Dengineers which is due to air later this year.