



Scottish Book Trust Awards 2019 revealed

Author Theresa Breslin and Librarian Deena Wren recognised at award ceremony

Scottish Book Trust, the national charity changing lives through reading and writing, is delighted to announce the recipients of the 2019 Outstanding Achievement Award and Learning Professional Award. The awards are given annually to one author or illustrator, and one learning professional, who have had an inspiring impact on young readers in Scotland.

The Scottish Book Trust Awards, in association with Browns Books for Students, will take place tonight (6 March 2019) at The Lighthouse in Glasgow from 6pm. Guests include authors, teaching professionals, and representatives from publishing, libraries, the Scottish Government and BBC Scotland Learning.

Bestselling author Theresa Breslin will receive the Outstanding Achievement Award, recognising her thirty year long career as an advocate for children's literacy and libraries. Deena Wren, librarian at Beeslack Community High School in Midlothian, will receive the Learning Professional Award, acknowledging over ten years of service promoting reading for pleasure.

Theresa Breslin said: "On a personal basis, I am enormously thrilled and honoured to receive the Outstanding Achievement Award for my writing, but I am also pleased that it includes a public recognition of the value of Children's Literature and Literacy and the importance of a professionally delivered library service."

Deena Wren said: "I'm so honoured, as a school librarian, to receive this accolade and truly humbled that so many of my colleagues and students had taken the time to put me forward. This really means a great deal to me."

I learnt, very young, the power and pleasure of reading and it has been my passion ever since. Readers like me know that finding the 'right' book can change lives and it has been my privilege throughout the years to try to help my young people to discover theirs."

Alongside the Outstanding Achievement and Learning Professional Awards, Alan Windram will also receive the [Bookbug Picture Book Prize](#), and John Young will receive the [Scottish Teenage Book Prize](#), which were announced earlier this year.

Outstanding Achievement Award – Theresa Breslin

The author or illustrator nominated for the Outstanding Achievement Award is an individual with an impressive backlist, a long record of engaging with their audience, and meaningful engagement with the writing community. This year's award panel included: Arusa Qureshi (Editor, The List), Liz Gibson (Support for Learning Teacher, Caskieberran Primary School), Sha Nazir (Publisher, BHP Comics and member of SILIC Board), Cat Anderson (Bookseller, Edinburgh Bookshop) and representatives from Scottish Book Trust.

Theresa Breslin has been a stalwart of Scottish children's books for 30 years and has published over 50 titles during this time. Her work, which includes folklore, fantasy, historical novels and



modern issues, has appeared on television, stage and radio, and is read world-wide in many languages. The experience gained in her former career as a youth librarian provides insight for her creative writing: the panel recognised that Theresa has been a champion of professional librarians and vocal about the importance of school libraries over a number of years.

Her novel, *Whispers in the Graveyard*, was inspired by her work with dyslexic readers and their parents and won the Carnegie Medal. Theresa tackles serious issues and difficult subjects, using fiction as a safe space to explore and understand many sides of a situation. *Divided City*, with themes of racism, sectarianism and prejudice towards asylum seekers is also a story of friendship and the nature of friendship. First published in 2005, the book is still read extensively across schools in Scotland and abroad and was produced as a successful musical play by the Citizens Theatre. *Divided City* was also chosen for the One Book Community Reading Project, an Irish cross-border initiative funded by the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

Theresa is an Honorary Fellow of the Association of Scottish Literary Studies, and, as an informed advocate for libraries, was granted Honorary Membership of the Scottish Library Association for services to Children's Literature. In February 2011 Theresa co-ordinated the demonstration outside the Scottish Parliament to protest against the downgrading of library services and ask the Scottish Government to provide a nationwide policy. She was 2016 President of CILIPS (Chartered Institute for Librarians and Information Professionals in Scotland) and is a keen supporter of 'Save Scotland's School Libraries,' providing submissions to the committee considering the petition to parliament in 2015 and is quoted in the recently published new strategy for Scotland's School Libraries: *Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools - A National Strategy for School Libraries in Scotland 2018-2023*.

Arusa Qureshi, Editor of The List, said: "There were so many incredible candidates for this award, which just shows how much talent there is in the world of children's literature in Scotland. Being a part of the Outstanding Achievement Panel was a great experience for this reason and I'm so glad that we were able to recognise and discuss the writers and illustrators that are currently making a difference in their engagement with young audiences. Theresa Breslin is a worthy winner and a perfect example of someone making a positive impact in children's literature and Scottish culture on the whole."

Learning Professional Award – Deena Wren

The Learning Professional Award recognises a teacher or librarian who goes above and beyond the call of duty to pass on the 'reading for pleasure' message to the next generation, and who works tirelessly to inspire children to read and write.

Deena Wren has over ten years' experience as a librarian and sits on the senior management team at Beeslack Community High School. She has created a library that is used as a shared learning space by all, and is a welcoming and accessible area for students. Deena was nominated by her colleague, Karen Atherton, Teacher of English.

She started a 'Read for the Future Programme' across the school, which involves pupils keeping a reading journal and has inspired generations of local children to read for pleasure. The library is organised into 'worlds' of reading based on topic, encourage pupils to read widely across genres. After their reading is completed, they are encouraged to report on the world to their teachers or



parents, either orally or verbally. Once three reports are completed, a sticker is used to mark the pupil's progress on a chart, which creates a sense of purpose. To date, 62% of S1 pupils have completed at least 6 reports.

Deena also ensures that teachers in the school are involved, so that reading is modelled around the school. Celebrations for National Poetry Day, World Book Day and Harry Potter Day are used to remind both pupils and staff to share a love of reading. As the library is also used as a teaching space, Deena is often included in lessons, promoting collaborative working across the curriculum: literacy is regarded as a school-wide issue.

She also works closely with reluctant readers and has developed a collection of graphic novels and texts to support students with dyslexia. When a pupil approached Deena with an interest in reading manga, she created a club, and now 35 students attend once a week. There are many other active clubs that take place in the library, including BRAW (Beeslack Reading and Writing Club). Deena is also involved in the school's paired reading program involved S6 reading to S1 pupils, and they also visit local primary schools.

Deena also actively organises author visits, and one of the most successful events was from Outstanding Achievement Awardee, Theresa Breslin. Using her novel *Whispers of the Past*, Deena put together a slideshow to showcase the pupils' work, including images, videos and creative writing.

Karen Atherton, Teacher of English, said:

“As a librarian, Deena goes above and beyond her role. She inspires a love of reading with her personal knowledge of books and through her amazing ‘Read for the Future’ programme. In addition, Deena has produced and delivered wonderful literacy classes that children remember even years later. The sheer popularity of reading in the school speaks for itself: the library is packed all the time. Every pupil has been supported by Deena – she’s the beating heart of the school.”

This is the third year of the Scottish Book Trust Awards, set up to recognise and celebrate excellence in inspiring young people in Scotland. Scottish Book Trust also wishes to highly commend the following nominees:

- Support for Learning Teacher Emily Sinclair from Bankton Primary School (West Lothian)
- Pupil Support Assistant Sheila Borys from Craigoyston Primary School (Edinburgh)
- Improving Outcomes PT Emma Richie from Clackmannashire Council

Marc Lambert, CEO at Scottish Book Trust, said: “Many congratulations to the winners of this year’s Scottish Book Trust Awards, and our thanks to our sponsors, Browns Books for Students.

Theresa Breslin is a well-loved author whose stories have touched generations of readers in Scotland and beyond. She is a passionate advocate for libraries and has worked tirelessly to support children’s literacy. It’s a testament to Theresa’s storytelling that *Divided City* continues to be used in schools to tackle difficult issues, more than ten years after publication.



Deena Wren is a stellar example of how literacy can be tackled by the school as a whole, and how the library can be integrated into lessons. It is clear that Deena is highly regarded both by her colleagues and pupils, and Scottish Book Trust is delighted to recognise her years of work, dedicated to promoting reading for pleasure.”

Claire Smith, Sales Manager for Browns Books for Students, said:

“The first fundamental principle of education, is learning how to read. Without this, everything that follows becomes infinitely more difficult. The work undertaken by Scottish Book Trust is truly amazing in helping the young people of Scotland reach their full potential. Browns Books for Students are proud to have such a long-standing and active relationship with Scottish Book Trust. It is an honour to support such a successful charity, which transforms lives for the better in Scotland.

Congratulations to this year’s winners, and also to all nominated for the awards. I would also like to thank the team at Scottish Book Trust who make these awards possible.”

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Notes to Editors

For all press queries, please contact PR and Marketing Manager:

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Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that include:

- Gifting books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home.
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classroom activities, book awards and author events.
- Supporting Scotland’s diverse writing community with our training, awards and writing opportunities.
- Funding a range of author events for the public to enjoy and promoting Scottish writing to people worldwide.



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Scottish Book Trust Awards

The Scottish Book Trust Awards in association with Browns Books for Students, will be awarded annually. More information is available at www.scottishbooktrust.com/sbta

Browns Books For Students

Browns Books for Students, sponsor of the Bookbug Picture Book Prize, supplies books, eBooks and DVDs for schools, colleges and businesses. More information on Browns Books for Students, is available at www.brownsbfs.co.uk

Creative Scotland

In addition to general fundraising, Scottish Book Trust receives Creative Scotland support through Regular Funding. Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit www.creativescotland.com

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