

Gallacher and Foreman join forces on the Booktrust Early Years Awards

2010

www.booktrust.org.uk

****embargoed until Friday June 4****

The broadcaster and TV presenter **Kirsty Gallacher** and award-winning author/illustrator **Michael Foreman** have today been announced as judges for the 2010 Booktrust Early Years Awards. The Awards honour books that demonstrate remarkable creativity in words, design and illustration necessary to encourage young children into reading.

Kirsty and Michael will join an expert panel of children's literature specialists which includes Bookstart founder **Wendy Cooling** MBE, Bookstart Coordinator **Janet Harrison** and Modern Matron **Jackie Woodroffe**.

Kirsty started her broadcast career as a presenter for *Sky Sports News* and has since worked on numerous prime-time programmes, including Ant and Dec's *Saturday Night Takeaway*, *Gladiators*, *The Richard & Judy Book Club* and *The Games*. In January 2010 she gave birth to her second son.

Kirsty Gallacher comments:

'Every night, I witness first-hand the vital role that books play in bonding and development - my three-year-old son Oscar loves nothing better than a good bedtime story and it's a pleasure to share that experience with him. I can see the importance of illustration and colour, as well as a good story, even for my younger son Jude. So I'm delighted to be involved in the Booktrust Early Years Awards and am loving sharing the submissions with Oscar – he is the best judge, after all!'

Michael is a much loved illustrator of over 200 books, 50 of which he also authored. His work has been recognised by numerous awards including the Kate Greenaway Medal and the Nestle Smarties Prize.

Michael Foreman comments:

'I am so pleased to be involved in the Booktrust Early Years Awards this year. The special role that illustrated books play in helping babies, toddlers and young children make sense of the world around them and the wonderful worlds of the imagination is incredibly important. In recognising this, the awards are welcomed by publishing as a whole and especially by all those childrens' illustrators beavering away in their studios - those just starting out and those of us who have been around a while!'

The Booktrust Early Years Awards aim:

- to celebrate, publicise and reward the exciting range of books being published today for babies, toddlers and pre-school children
- to promote and make these books accessible to as wide an audience as possible

Categories of award:

- The best book for babies under one-year-old
- The best book for pre-school children, up to five years of age
- An award for the best emerging illustrator

The winners will be announced at a ceremony on Thursday 2 September 2010.

**** Interviews available with all the judges****

****For further information about the Booktrust Early Years Awards and to request interviews and images please contact Alice Ingall on 020 8875 4827 or alice.ingall@booktrust.org.uk ****

Notes to editors

About the judges

Kirsty Gallacher

Born in Edinburgh, Kirsty relocated to Surrey with her family. After graduating from the London College of Fashion, Kirsty worked as an editorial assistant for Sky Sports. She was soon talent spotted, leading to her presenting on *Sky Sports News* and *Soccer AM*. Kirsty has also been involved with various sport and entertainment programmes, including Ant and Dec's *Saturday Night Takeaway*, *Gladiators*, *Only Fools On Horses*, and *The Games*. Other presenting credits include shows for BBC Radio Five Live,

holiday programmes such as *Departure Lounge*, reporting for *Richard and Judy* in their book club series, and hosting her own series for Sky One including *Kirsty's Home Video's* and *TV Meltdown*.

Kirsty is a keen athlete and excels in a number of sports including swimming, sprinting and golf. Her two sons Oscar and Jude keep her busy along with George the dog and Scarlett the hen.

Michael Foreman

After completing his studies at the Royal College of Art, Michael Foreman travelled all over the world for various magazines making hundreds of sketches which he later used as the inspiration for many of his books. Michael has written and illustrated more than 50 of his own books, in addition to illustrating more than 150 books by other writers from Shakespeare and Dickens to Charles Causley and Michael Morpurgo. He has won numerous awards including: the Graphics Prize at Bologna; the Aigle d'Argent at Nice, twice winner of the Francis Williams Prize, awarded by the Victoria & Albert Museum; twice winner of the Kate Greenaway Medal and twice winner of the Nestle Smarties Prize. He has had solo exhibitions of his work in London, Paris, New York, Japan and South America.

Wendy Cooling (Chair)

Children's Book Consultant Wendy Cooling was originally an English teacher in inner-London secondary schools. In 1990, she left teaching to join The Children's Book Foundation (now Booktrust) running a range of projects to promote reading, including Bookstart for which she founded in 1992 and continues to act as Senior Consultant to. Wendy works with many children's book publishers, reviewing books, running in-service training sessions for teachers and librarians and working with children of all ages on reading-related projects. She is the editor of several story and poetry anthologies. She won the Eleanor Farjeon Award in 2006 for outstanding service to the world of children's books and in 2009 she was awarded an MBE for services to children's literature.

Janet Harrison

Janet Harrison is currently the Bookstart Co-ordinator at Oldham M.B.C. She has worked with children throughout her career, working for fifteen years as a Nursery Nurse in a Primary and Nursery School. Janet was instrumental in developing the first Bedtime Radio Programme for young children in the UK with Oldham Community Radio.

Jackie Woodroffe

Jackie Woodroffe is a Modern Matron working for South West Essex Community Services and manages the Health Visitors, School Nurses and Children Centre services in Basildon. She has been a qualified Health Visitor for 18 years and has been involved in Bookstart since 1995. Jackie has been the lead for Bookstart in the Brentwood area and helped set up the service in Havering. Jackie is committed to the Bookstart programme and feels the service plays an important part in raising enjoyment of books with parents.

About Booktrust

Booktrust is an independent charity dedicated to encouraging people of all ages and cultures to engage with books. The written word underpins all our activity and enables us to fulfil our vision of inspiring a lifelong love of books for all. 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 Orange Prize for Fiction, the Children's Laureate, the Get London Reading campaign, the Booktrust Teenage Prize and Bookstart, the national programme that works through locally based organisations to give a free pack of books to young children, with guidance materials for parents and carers. Booktrust has developed two further free book programmes in the UK: Booktime, run in association with Pearson, gives a free book to every Year One pupil, and Booked Up, which gives a free book, from a choice of twelve, to every Year Seven pupil.