

PRESS RELEASE

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Shortlist announced for Derby Children's Picture Book Award

Four books have been shortlisted for the second Derby Book Festival Children's Picture Book Award, which aims to celebrate picture books that children can relate to and in which the diversity and challenges of modern life are represented. Fourteen Derby primary school teachers selected the books from the original longlist of nine.

This year's shortlist comprises:

- *My Hair* by Hannah Lee and Allen Fatimaharan (Faber)
- *The Pirate Tree* by Brigita Orel and Jennie Poh (Lantana)
- *All are Welcome* by Alexandra Penfold and Suzanne Kaufman (Bloomsbury)
- *Brian the Brave* by Paul Stewart and Jane Porter (Otter-Barry)

Children in Years 2 and 3 from six Derby schools will vote for their favourite book after reading them in class over the next half term. Each school will receive copies of the books, provided by the sponsorship of local businesswoman, Deborah Fern. The winner will be announced on 1 May 2020.

Di Smith, who devised and organises the: "We had a very high standard of submissions for the Award from 15 publishers and we have an excellent and varied shortlist. The books give children the opportunity to see a window on their world and a mirror in which to see themselves."

The Festival, which will be held for the sixth time in 2020, from 29 May – 6 June, invited children's publishers to submit up to three books, published in 2019, which meet the criteria.

Liz Fothergill, Chair of Derby Book Festival said: "We have four beautifully illustrated, thought-provoking and moving picture books which will both inspire a child and help them to understand the issues and challenges of today's modern world. We have always aimed to have a book festival which inspires a new generation of readers to appreciate the joy that books and reading bring to our lives. The Award goes a long way to help us achieve this."

One of the illustrators has a local connection with Derby and said: "I am absolutely delighted that *Brian The Brave* has been shortlisted. It was a wonderful story to illustrate and I really enjoyed drawing out

Paul Stewart's important themes of inclusivity, diversity and equality through the playful medium of sheep. I'm particularly happy to be linked with this book festival, since my mother grew up in Derby and I have very fond memories of visiting my grandparents there. I hope readers will spot some hints of the Peak District in the dry stone walls and wildlife of Brian's world!"

Brigita Orel, the author of *The Pirate Tree* said: "I am delighted and honoured that *The Pirate Tree* was shortlisted for the Derby Children's Picture Book Award, particularly because it was chosen by teachers who, I feel, do so much to shape and improve our children's futures."

Derby Book Festival has a strong programme of events for children, families and schools with Meet the Author events held at both Derby Theatre and the University of Derby for both primary and secondary schools across the city.

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For further press information, please contact:

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Notes to editors:

Derby Book Festival will include over 90 events aimed at all ages and interests. Tickets for all events will be on sale on 8 April, when the programme is officially launched at a special *Derby Reads* event in QUAD. Tickets will be available online from the Festival website: www.derbybookfestival.co.uk or in person from the Festival Box Office at QUAD and other venues.

To find out more, visit the Festival website and sign up for more information. You can also follow the Festival on Twitter at: @DerbyBookFest and 'like' the Festival on Facebook: www.facebook.com/derbybookfestival

Background to the Award

There has been a lot of discussion in the publishing world about the lack of representation of ethnically diverse characters in children's books. A recent report from the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education has revealed that only 1% of children's books have black and minority-ethnic (BAME) main characters. Derby is a diverse city with a significantly higher number of BAME residents than the national average (19.7% compared to 14.6%). It is hoped that the Award will encourage more authors to produce books to redress this imbalance.

Background to the Festival

The sixth Derby Book Festival will again feature internationally acclaimed authors and celebrate local writing talent with the aim of bringing Derby's residents together in a love of books and inspiring new readers to appreciate the pleasure and power of reading. The nine day Festival programme will include a broad range of events and activities aimed at all ages and interests children's activities and book related crafts, to author talks, discussions, live performances, films, Masterclasses for budding writers and the annual Book Quiz. The Festival is organised in partnership with all the major arts, cultural and educational partners in the city: Déda, Derby Cathedral, Derby City Council, Derby College, Derby LIVE, Derby Museum & Art Gallery, Derby Theatre, Marketing Derby, QUAD, University of Derby and Waterstones, who will all host events.