

Winner of the School Librarian of the Year 2019

Giving school library staff the recognition they deserve



Press release – 27 June 2019, 4.00pm

The SLA School Librarian of the Year Award is the School Library Association's prestigious honour to recognize the excellent work that is carried out in school libraries every day and highlight the best practice of those whose work is outstanding.

This year **Ros Harding** at The King's School Chester (www.kingschester.co.uk) has been awarded the honour of the School Librarian of the Year 2019. 2019 YA Book Prize winner Sara Barnard presented Ros Harding with her award at a special ceremony at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel, Kensington, London Kensington on 27 June.



Head Librarian and Archivist at **The King's School Chester** (www.kingschester.co.uk, an independent selective school for 3-18 year olds), **Ros Harding** contributes in many ways to the life of the school and to the wellbeing of its students and staff. She was described variously as "caring, for people but also for the library itself", "inspiring curiosity" and a "tour de force". As well as establishing a School Book Award, Ros is an excellent ambassador of research skills and ensures all aspects of the school to have a place within the library. She empowers pupils and gives outstanding support and pastoral care.

🐦 @kingschester, @KSCLibrarian 📷 @@thekingschoolchester

Sue Bastone, Chair of the SLA School Librarian of the Year Selection Committee, said:

"It was a real honour to visit the three exceptional librarians on this year's Honour List and it was incredibly difficult for the judges to pick a winner. Ros's professionalism and contribution to teaching and learning make her a highly valued equal among her teaching colleagues. Her caring and inclusive nature is appreciated by students, staff and parents, many of whom describe her as inspiring, not least in the way she makes things happen to the benefit of all who come into contact with her, from junior school pupils to the Senior Leadership Team."

Noting that the award is a unique and wonderful celebration of the work of school librarians, Alison Tarrant, Chief Executive of the School Library Association, said:

"The Honour List this year are fantastic examples of the impact that effective school libraries can have, as shown by the affection and respect with which pupils and teaching staff talk about them. All three have all had a positive influence on the learning that goes on within their schools, both formally and informally. Ros has 'redefined the role' according to her nominee and all prove that the stereotype of a school librarian who sits behind a desk and stamps books is just that – a stereotype. All the Honour List should be incredibly proud of their contribution to ensuring all their pupils have a fully rounded education."

Announcing the School Librarian of the Year 2019, Sara Barnard, winner of YA Book Prize 2019 for her novel *Goodbye, Perfect*, published by Macmillan Children's Books said:

"Libraries are essential to any school and community, and I'm delighted to pay tribute to them and the librarians who make them what they are."

The two other school librarians on the Honour List, recognised for their outstanding work the Honour List were Learning Resource Centre Manager at **Herne Bay High School**, (www.hernebayhigh.org, an above-average-sized, mixed, non-selective Secondary academy), **Chantal Kelleher**, and Librarian/Learning Resources Manager at **Kingston Grammar School** (www.kgs.org.uk, an independent, co-educational day school), **Helen Cleaves**.

From bringing books to life in highly imaginative and engaging ways, to generous and bold outreach work with their respective communities, via substantial and meaningful support for staff as well as pupils, Ros Harding and each librarian on the Honour List have made a huge difference to the lives of all they work with, igniting a passion for reading.

To read the profiles of all the librarians on the Honour List visit the SLA website at: www.sla.org.uk.

Notes for editors

The School Library Association is committed to supporting everyone involved with school libraries, promoting high quality reading and learning opportunities for all. For information please visit www.sla.org.uk

The School Library Association created the School Librarian of the Year Award in 2004 in response to the need for recognition of the excellent work that is carried out in school libraries every day, and to highlight best practice through celebrating those whose work is outstanding. Nominees do not need to be members of the SLA, and may be from any phase of education.

The selection process

When the nomination forms reach the SLA office they are opened by the office staff and all trace of identity is removed from the form so that each nomination is anonymous when seen by the SLYA panel at the first selection meeting. At the first selection meeting the forms are discussed and a long list is compiled. Those on the list are asked to provide a range of paperwork to support their nomination. The judging panel looks at the documents and finally selects a long list of between 7 and 10 candidates. These longlisted candidates are sent a detailed questionnaire to complete and asked for further evidence to help the judges select those whom they will visit, normally 4-6 candidates. Over the next few months at least two panel members visit each school. One member of the panel goes on every visit to provide continuity. After the round of visits, reports are prepared for each nominee and shared with the other members of the panel prior to a final selection meeting where all the candidates are discussed at length and there is an opportunity to add personal comments to the reports. An Honour List of 3 or 4 is selected. For more detailed information see www.sla.org.uk/slya-background.php.

The selection panel, all of whom have donated their time to enable the awarding of the School Librarian of the Year 2019 comprises:

Sue Bastone	SLA Vice-Chair and SLA School Librarian of the Year Award – Honour List (2010)
Stephen King	School Librarian at The Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover, and SLA Trustee 2018-21
Amy McKay	Librarian at Corby Business Academy, SLA Board Member and past winner of SLA School Librarian of the Year Award (2016)
Margaret Pemberton	SLA Board Member and freelance School Library and Book Consultant

Previous Winners of the SLA School Librarian of the Year Award

2018: **Emma Suffield** – Saint Wilfrid's C of E Academy, Blackburn
2017: **Lucas Maxwell** – Glenthorne High School, London Borough of Sutton
2016: **Amy McKay** – Corby Business Academy
2015: **Annie Brady** – St Paul's CBS Secondary School, Dublin, Republic of Ireland
2014: **Liz Millett** – Weatherfield Academy, Dunstable
2013: **Hilary Cantwell** – St Paul's Community College, Waterford, Republic of Ireland
2013: **John Iona** – Oasis Academy, Enfield, Middlesex
2012: **Adam Lancaster** – Monk's Walk School, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire
2011: **Carol Webb** – Forest Hill School, London
2010: **Duncan Wright** – Stewart's Melville College, Edinburgh
2010: **Kevin Sheehan** – Offerton School, Stockport
2009: **Lucy Bakewell** – Hill West Primary School, Sutton Coldfield
2008: **Nikki Heath** – Werneth School, Stockport
2007: **Ingrid Hopson** – George Abbot School, Guildford
2006: **Anne-Marie Tarter** – Ripon Grammar School, North Yorkshire
2005: **Anne Robinson** – Nicholas Chamberlaine Technology College, Bedworth

Sponsors



The 2019 School Librarian of the Year Award is sponsored Macmillan Children's Books and by the Foyle Foundation (www.foylefoundation.org.uk), who are providing generous support for the Award through to 2020.



The Foyle Foundation is an independent grant making Trust supporting UK charities which, since its formation in 2001, has become a major funder of the Arts and Learning. The Foundation also operates a community small grants programme and a national school library improvement scheme.

Sara Barnard lives in Brighton and does all her best writing on trains. She loves books, book people and book things. She has been writing ever since she was too small to reach the 'on' switch on the family's Amstrad computer. She gets her love of words from her dad, who made sure she always had books to read and introduced her to the wonders of second-hand bookshops at a young age. Sara won the YA Book Prize 2019 for her novel *Goodbye, Perfect*. Sara Barnard is published by Macmillan Children's Books.

For more information about the SLA School Librarian of the Year please contact:
Nicky Potter 07715 587948 or nicpot@dircon.co.uk