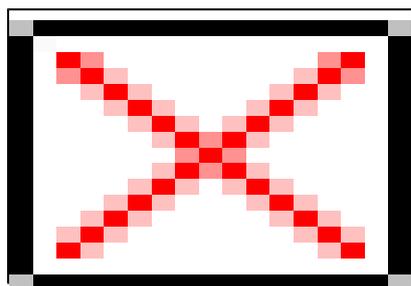




WHO WON THE LAUGH OUT LOUD BOOK AWARDS?

*The winners of the **Laugh Out Loud Book Awards 2020** have just been announced. Congratulations to Michelle Robinson and Tor Freeman who won **Best Laugh Out Loud Picture Book** with **Ten Fat Sausages**, to David Walliams and Tony Ross who won the **Best Laugh Out Loud Book for 6-8 year olds** with **The World's Worst Children 3**, and to Joshua Seigal winner of the **Best Laugh Out Loud Book for 9-13 year olds** with **I Bet I Can Make You Laugh**.*



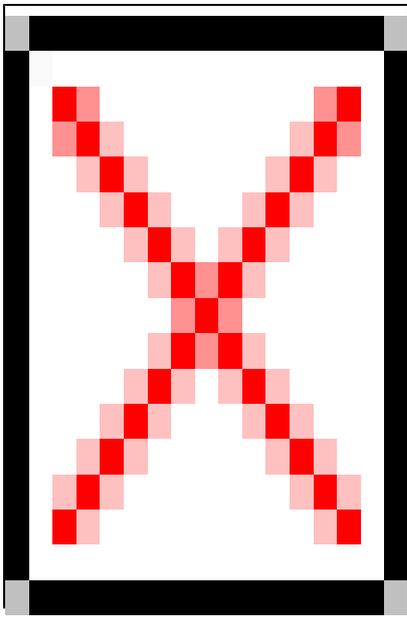
Find out [more about the winners](#) [1], and details of [the shortlist here](#) [2].

Thanks to **Matt Brown**, who attended the ceremony to report back for **Books for Keeps**.

The Sweetest Lollies of All

For reasons that I've never really understood, children's books do not get a lot of coverage in the mainstream British media. Kid's books account for one-in-three titles bought in the UK and yet the task of getting them in the spotlight is so difficult it would foil Hercules and Anneka Rice, even if they were working together, in matching jumpsuits, with helicopters. Funny books seem to suffer especially poorly from recognition, even within the publishing industry itself. A cursory glance at the list of past **Waterstones Children's Book Prize** winners show that only two funny books have won in its fifteen-year history ([The Great Hamster Massacre](#) [3] by Katie Davies and [My Brother is a Superhero](#) [4] by David Solomon). And funny books don't fare any better in the **Costa Children's Book Awards** either* [5].

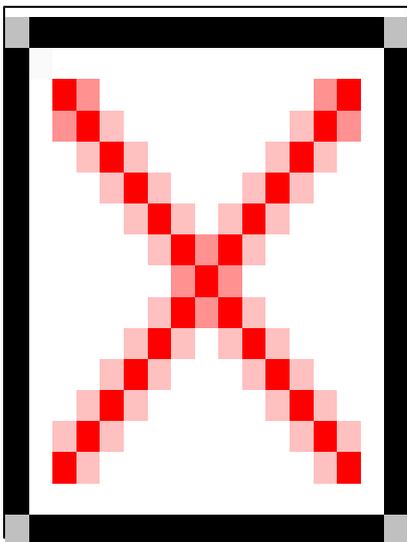
Well, let's all thank sweet baby Christmas for the **Laugh Out Loud Book Awards**. For the last four years the **Lollies** has been trumpeting the heck out of funny kids' books. This year's ceremony took place last week so I decided to pour myself into my finest pair of party-trousers and go along to my very first Lollies. Now, I know you must be reading this and thinking to yourself, 'but Matt, you've been writing insanely funny books for kids for the last six years surely you must have won a Lollie by now?'. Well, no, I haven't ever won a Lollies award before. But that's absolutely fine and not a problem in the slightest. You see, for me, winning awards isn't a big deal because it's as much to do with good fortune as good writing. No, I think it's the being nominated that counts because to be nominated is to be recognised by your peers. Not that I've ever been nominated for a **Lollies** award, either. But, hey, I'm fine with that. Really. It is absolutely not a problem or a big deal. Not in any way. I hadn't even really given it any thought until this very moment.



Anyway, the first person I got chatting to at my very first **Lollies** (I know!) was **Michael Rosen**. He helped create the **Roald Dahl Funny Prize** in 2008 and was asked by **Scholastic** to be the chief judge for the **Lollies** when they were formed. We sat down and, after I'd got his autograph and a selfie to impress my kids, he explained that the **Lollies** were an attempt to celebrate funny books, and to draw the attention of parents and buyers and libraries to them because they're so important. Funny books are neglected by the mass media in this country. I've been campaigning for more space in the press and the media for what seems like about forty years.

Part of blame for this, Michael lays at the (neat and highly-scrubbed) doorstep of Martin Luther. Hovering over British culture is the Protestant Reformation, which said that in order to prevent the devil from getting to children, they had to be sober and not diverted. Look at the poetry in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and you can see, it's very explicit, **DO NOT HAVE FUN**? And the shadow of that is still with us. Too much fun, too much mucking about by children is somehow sloppy and dangerous.

The **Lollies** doesn't just thumb its nose at this Protestant shadow of serious, sober behaviour, it pulls down its trousers and waggles its bottom in its face. The ceremony was a riotous celebration of the hilarious, the absurd, the comical, and the enormously fart. Fabulous performances from **Julia Donaldson** (with husband Malcolm), **Michael Rosen**, the breakfast team from **Capital Radio**, and the brilliant **Lollies Actors** were accompanied by the soundtrack of screaming laughter from the audience of kids.



Winners on the night were Michelle Robinson and Tor Freeman for **Ten Fat Sausages**, David Walliams and Tony Ross for **World's Worst Children 3**, and Joshua Seigal and Tim Wesson for **I Bet I Can Make You Laugh**. I spoke to Michelle about how weird it was to win an award whilst wearing a book-themed costume (not that I'd know). She said,

?I did have to look down at one point and think, ?Yes I really am wearing a sausage outfit and there really are hundreds of people looking at me and Julia Donaldson has just given me an award?. The imposter syndrome thing never goes away.?

After the ceremony had finished and as the crumbs from packed lunches were swept up, I managed to chat to Greg James and Chris Smith who, despite not winning a **Lollie** (like me - not that I mind), wanted to champion funny books. Chris said, ?Books that make you think are brilliant, and books that make you think about other people are brilliant but books that make you laugh are the best books of all because you can?t laugh without thinking and you can?t laugh without thinking about other people. There?s a lot of stuff from funny books that goes into your brain but you don?t notice because you?re laughing so much.?

I couldn?t agree more.

Matt Brown?s latest book [Mutant Zombies Cursed My School Trip](#) [6] (978-1474960236) is published by Usborne.

* [7] I would like to caveat this with the admission that I am not a journalist and have only a limited attention span to do proper research (eight minutes, tops). I put each of the winners into the Waterstones search engine and if they were identified as ?humour? by its own classification then I counted them as a ?funny book?. Please address all complaints to Leika Giffadamm at the **Books for Keeps** HQ.

Source URL (retrieved on Jun '20): <http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/news/who-won-the-laugh-out-loud-book-awards>

Links:

[1] <https://shop.scholastic.co.uk/lollies>

[2] <http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/news/lollies-2020-shortlist-the-year?s-funniest-children?s-books>

[3] <http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/181/childrens-books/reviews/the-great-hamster-massacre>

[4] <http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/213/childrens-books/reviews/my-brother-is-a-superhero>

[5] http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/news/who-won-the-laugh-out-loud-book-awards#_ftn1

[6] <http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/mutant-zombies-cursed-my-school-trip>

[7] http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/news/who-won-the-laugh-out-loud-book-awards#_ftnref1