



The 2013 Cilip Kate Greenaway Medal: the shortlist

Article Author:

[Martin Salisbury](#) [1]

[199](#) [2]

Article Category:

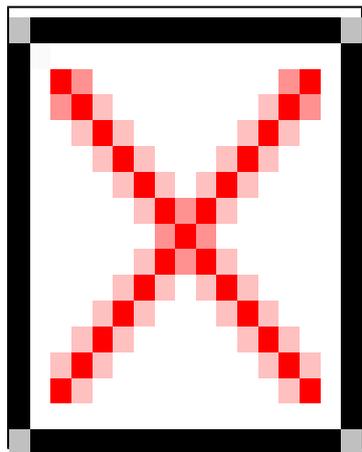
Awards

Byline:

The 2013 CILIP Kate Greenaway shortlist assessed by **Martin Salisbury**

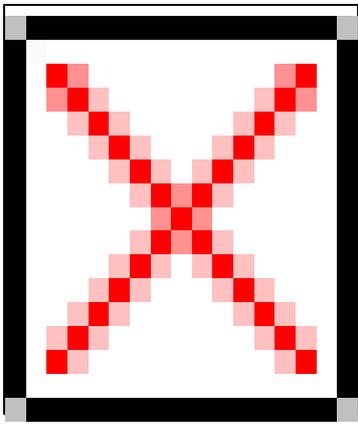
This month saw the announcement of the shortlist for the **CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal**, which rewards outstanding illustration in a children's book, the only prize of its kind in the UK. This year's shortlist includes previous double winners Helen Oxenbury and Emily Gravett, both looking to secure a place in the history books with an unprecedented third win, as well as new illustrators.

Here Martin Salisbury assesses the shortlist for **Books for Keeps**.



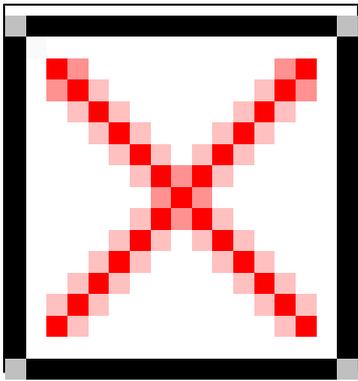
The Greenaway is upon us and with it comes the inevitable debate about how the shortlist is arrived at and why this that or the other book is not on it. I certainly have my own list of books that I feel should be here (the delicate yet powerful **My Grandpa** by Marta Altés; the brave and graphically expressive **Rabbityness** by Jo Empson?), but there is no disputing that some of the very best visual texts to appear recently are to be found on this year's list. Revisiting the criteria for selection reminds us that the award is presented entirely on the basis of visual, graphic excellence - for a book of 'outstanding artistic quality', not just as evidenced through the illustration, but through the entire design, typography and production values of the book. The shortlist is selected by librarians.

Looking at the eight books on the list, we can find traditional charm and sensitivity in narrative drawing; postmodern, self-referential humour and minimalism; rich, traditional painting techniques; retro chic and much more. The list reflects the wide diversity of illustration techniques, traditional and digital or



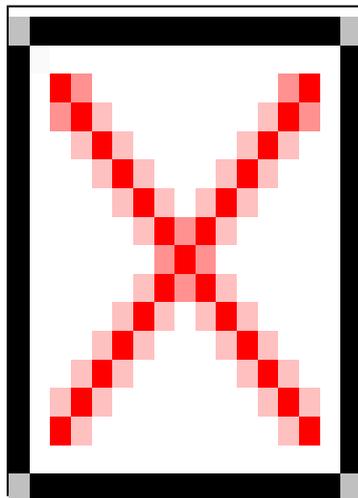
combined that can be found in children's publishing today.

Pirates and Pistols by Chris Mould does what it says on the tin. This is a substantial 96-page book that is designed and printed to Templar's usual high standard. The illustrations themselves are in the form of a mixture of black and white line drawings and full-colour artworks that combine both paint and line work with varying degrees of success. Levi Pinfold's **Black Dog** is another lavish Templar production. Pinfold's paintings are extremely well crafted, using a highly effective limited colour palette. His understanding of the effect of warm and cool hues on the textures of stone surfaces are particularly well articulated. In general, the typography and clever use of small, subsidiary monochrome images work very well though there is just one spread where the text appears to have been accommodated as an afterthought.



Emily Gravett loves to play with the form of the book itself, her work having spawned a new wave of playful visual texts that reference the traditions of the illustrated book and interact with their own physical make up. **Again!** does this very cleverly and genuinely funnily with excellent use of die cutting technology (that's mass-produced holes in books to you and me).

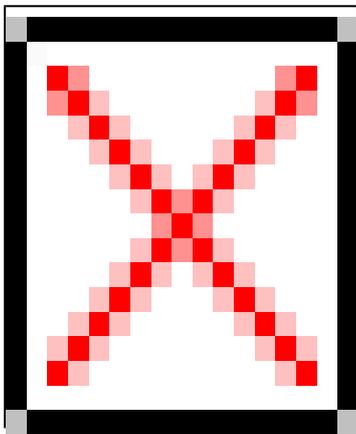
Just Ducks! features illustrations by Salvatore Rubbino to a text by Nicola Davies. Rubbino's work is best known from the picturebooks **A Walk in New York** and **A Walk in Paris**. Here the artist uses brush and watercolour to conjure up the colours and smells of the urban riverside, rather than the flat digital retro effects of his previous works. Davies' non fiction text on the everyday life of the Mallard is an unusual starting point for a picturebook but, written from the



perspective of the child and combined with the excellent artwork and all round design, this makes for a richly satisfying visual experience.

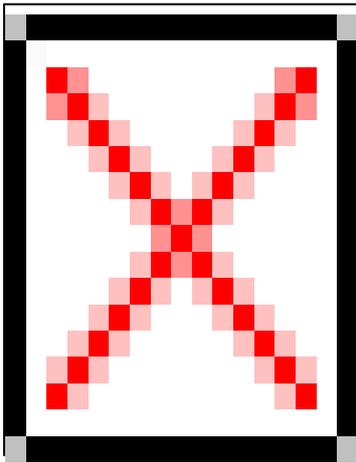
Julia Donaldson's quote on the cover of **Lunchtime** by Rebecca Cobb is spot on. 'Funny and Charming - as delicious as the little girl's dinner.' Cobb is one of the best new talents around at the moment and her work is improving all the time. This book is beautifully paced and does indeed have real charm. The character and gestures of the little girl at the centre of the story are thoroughly convincing, as are those of her three lunch guests. All of this achieved with elegant use of space, pattern and line to create a book that is narratively and aesthetically outstanding.

It's not easy to find anything new to say about two time Greenaway winner, Helen Oxenbury. No one has won this award three times and few would begrudge this wonderful artist if she were to be the first to do so. **King Jack and the Dragon**, with text by Peter Bentley, is a delicious marriage of text and image that is born of great empathy for the



imaginary world of the child and the thin line between courage and fear. As with the work of her husband, John Burningham, there is never a trace of flashiness or overconfidence in Oxenbury's line. It always searches nervously for the truth of the character or setting that it describes. The depiction of the youngest of the three adventurers in this story is a particular delight.

In contrast, the final two books on this year's shortlist could both be said to come from the postmodern end of the spectrum. Jon Klassen's **I Want my Hat Back** and Chris Haughton's **Oh No, GEORGE!** are highly sophisticated in their minimalist use of the page. Both books speak to children who are growing up with an early grasp of how to read the humour that resides in those all-important spaces between the pictures, pages or frames. Irishman Haughton's witty use of crudely pixelated digital shapes and saturated hot colours is beautifully combined with coloured type (so rarely used because of co-edition costs) and uncoated paper.

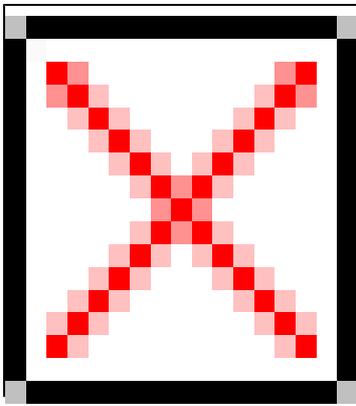


Jon Klassen hails from Canada and has burst onto the scene in recent years with his distinctively understated approach to pictorial space. **I Want my Hat Back** is a masterpiece of pacing, design and general manipulation of the stage that is the picturebook. It is also genuinely hilarious.

And the winner is?

Martin Salisbury is Professor of Illustration at Cambridge School of Art in Anglia Ruskin University, where he runs the MA in Children's Book Illustration programme, which he designed. He is author of a number of books on the subject including **Children's Picturebooks: The Art of Visual Storytelling** (with Morag Styles, Laurence King, 2012).

Lunchtime Rebecca Cobb, Macmillan Children's Books, 32pp. 978-0230749535 £6.99



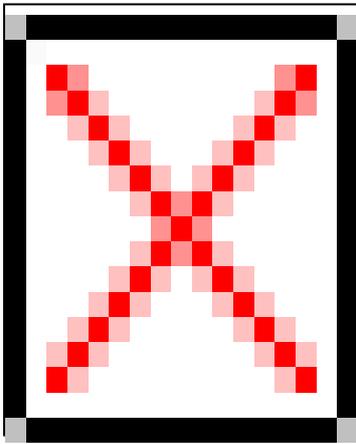
Again! Emily Gravett, Macmillan Children's Books, 32pp 978-0330544030, £6.99

Oh No, George! Chris Haughton, Walker Books, 32pp, 978-1406344769, £6.99

I Want My Hat Back Jon Klassen, Walker Books, 40pp, 978-1406338539, £6.99

Pirates ?n? Pistols by Chris Mould, Hodder Children's Books, 96pp, 978-0340999349, £10.99

King Jack and the Dragon Peter Bently, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury, Puffin Books, 32pp, 978-0141328010, £6.99



Black Dog Levi Pinfold, Templar Publishing, 32pp, 978-1848777484, £6.99

Just Ducks! Nicola Davies illustrated by Salvatore Rubbino, Walker Books, 32pp, 978-1406344776, £6.99

My Grandpa Marta Altes, Macmillan Children?s Books, 32pp, 978-1447202592, £5.99

Rabbityness Jo Empson, Child?s Play, 32pp, 978-1846434822, £5.99

Page Number:

3

Source URL (retrieved on Jan '20): <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/199/childrens-books/articles/awards/the-2013-cilip-kate-greenaway-medal-the-shortlist>

Links:

[1] <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/martin-salisbury>

[2] <http://savfikn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/199>