

4th February, 2005

AVENTIS PRIZES FOR SCIENCE BOOKS ANNOUNCE JUDGES FOR 2005

www.aventisprizes.com

Winners announced 12th May 2005

The Judging Panels for this year's Aventis Prizes for Science Books are:

General Prize:

Bill Bryson, author and winner of the General Prize in 2004 (**chair**)

Lisa Burke, forecaster and Sky News weather presenter

Sian Ede, renowned UK authority on art and science interactions

Mark Lythgoe, broadcaster, neurophysiologist and lecturer

Ruth Padel, scholar, poet and Chair of the UK Poetry Society

Junior Prize:

Tanya Byron, BBC presenter and consultant clinical psychologist (**chair**)

Jim Al-Khalili, theoretical nuclear physicist and popular science author

Nick Arnold, author and winner of the Junior Prize 2004

Frances Dipper, marine biologist and winner of the General Prize 2003

Simon Pugh-Jones, award-winning secondary-school teacher and orchid specialist

The Aventis Prizes celebrate the very best in popular science writing for both children and adults and award a total of £30,000 to shortlisted authors and eventual winners.

Last year's winner of the General Prize and chair of the 2005 Judges Panel, Bill Bryson, commented: "I am delighted to be chairing the Judges Panel for this year's Aventis Prizes, the leading literary science awards. My colleagues and I are looking forward to reading this year's bumper crop of quality science books."

Lord May of Oxford, President of the Royal Society, said: "The Aventis Prizes, now in their 17th year, are firmly established on the global literary calendar. The Royal Society and the Aventis Foundation remain committed to bringing popular science

writing to a wider audience as an important element of encouraging an interest in science amongst young people.”

The Junior Prize long-list will be announced on 15th February and the short-list follows on 15th March. The long-list for the General Prize will be announced on 10th March and the short-list on 2nd April with the winners unveiled at a ceremony at the Royal Society on 12th May.

The Junior Prize is awarded to the best book written for under-14s and for the fourth year running, the Aventis Prizes have teamed up with [ecsite-uk](http://ecsite-uk.com), the national network of science centres and museums. Children aged up to 14 in 70 Junior Judging Panels in schools, libraries, science centres, and science clubs across the country will be selecting the winner from a shortlist selected by the Junior Prize Judging Panel.

The Prizes are managed by the Royal Society, the UK national academy of science and generously supported by the Aventis Foundation, a German charitable trust established by a predecessor of sanofi-aventis, a world leader in pharmaceuticals.

The General Prize in 2004 went to Bill Bryson for *A Short History Of Nearly Everything* while author Nick Arnold and illustrator Tony De Saulles won the Junior Prize for their book, *Really Rotten Experiments*.

Previous winners of the General Prize have included Stephen Hawking, Brian Greene, Steve Jones and Stephen Jay Gould while previous winners of the Junior Prize have included Dr. Frances Dipper for her book *DK Guide to the Oceans* and Richard Walker for his *DK Guide to the Human Body*.

For more information on the *Aventis Prizes for Science Books* please visit the website at www.aventisprizes.com.

Notes to Editors

The judges are available for interview and biographies are attached

About The Royal Society

The Royal Society is an independent academy promoting the natural and applied sciences. Founded in 1660, the Society has three roles, as the UK academy of science, as a learned Society and as a funding agency. It responds to individual demand with selection by merit not by field. The Society's aims are to:

- strengthen UK science by providing support to excellent individuals
- fund excellent research to push back the frontiers of knowledge
- attract and retain the best scientists
- ensure the UK engages with the best science around the world
- support science communication and education; and communicate and encourage dialogue with the public
- provide the best independent advice nationally and internationally
- promote scholarship and encourage research into the history of science
- For more information, visit the web site at www.royalsoc.ac.uk

About The Aventis Foundation

The Aventis Foundation is generously supporting the Aventis Prizes for Science Books.

The Aventis Foundation (www.aventis-foundation.org) is a German charitable trust established by a predecessor of sanofi-aventis, a world leader in pharmaceuticals. The Aventis Foundation serves to promote music, theatre, art and literature, projects in the social and political arena with a focus on healthcare, as well as science, research and higher education. It was established in 1996 as the Hoechst Foundation and was renamed the Aventis Foundation in 2000, following the merger of Hoechst, its founder, with Rhône-Poulenc which created Aventis. For more information visit the website at www.aventis-foundation.org

For further information, please contact Zoë Harris or Chris Owen at Trimedia on tel: 020 7471 6855 / 851 or email: aventisprizes@trimediauk.com

Aventis Prizes for Science Books Judges Panels

General Prize Judges

Bill Bryson

Bill is without doubt one of the world's most popular authors, with his witty engaging style helping him to top book charts across the globe time after time. Bill won the Aventis Prizes' General Prize in 2004 for his book 'A Short History of Nearly Everything', a quest to explain the world through an in-depth study of seven distinct topics.

Lisa Burke

Sky News' weather presenter Lisa Burke joined the channel in 2000 and is one of the stations most popular presenters, being voted 'Sexiest Weathergirl Ever' in 2001 – ahead of the likes of Denise Van Outen and Ulrika Johnson. Off screen Lisa is a keen music lover, singing in the BBC Symphony Chorus and performing at the Royal Albert Hall. Lisa graduated with a first class Masters degree in Natural Sciences from Cambridge University in 1999 and was made a scholar of New Hall.

Sian Ede

Sian is the Arts Director for the UK Branch of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, a charitable trust with a reputation for pioneering seminal ideas and activities in the arts, education and social welfare. She regularly chairs and lectures at Art / Science events, conferences and festivals in the UK. Her new book 'Art and Science' is due to be published this spring by I B Tauris.

Mark Lythgoe

By his own admission, Mark's entry into the scientific community was somewhat circuitous, including as it does a 'hellish' trip up the most active volcano in South America and a year spent on the wrong side of attack dogs in his time as a dog trainers' dummy. However, Mark is now a leading expert in the study of the brain and most recently presented a Channel 4 documentary where he drove across America in a red Cadillac searching for Einstein's brain, while his BBC documentary series 'Is This The One' explored the science of attraction and compatibility

Ruth Padel

Ruth is a poet, a writer, a journalist, a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a previous winner of the UK National Poetry competition. She also happens to be the great great grand daughter of Charles Darwin. The last two years have seen Ruth travel through ten Asian countries researching wild tigers, an experience which she describes in her new book 'Tigers in Red Weather', a lively personal memoir of her travels.

Junior Prize Judges

Tanya Byron

Tanya is the presenter and on screen expert for BBC TV's acclaimed 'Little Angels' and 'Teen Angels' programmes which explore behavioural problems in children and adults. She is a respected NHS Clinical Psychologist specialising in child and adolescent mental health and writes regularly for Express Newspapers, SHE Magazine and Health & Fitness magazine.

Jim Al-Khalili

Jim is a theoretical nuclear physicist at the University of Surrey and a successful popular science writer who regularly contributes to national newspapers and magazines and who has seen his three published books so far translated into twelve languages. His television work includes being a presenter, with fellow judge Mark Lythgoe, of Channel 4's 'Riddle of Einstein's Brain' and in 2004 he was chosen as one of '21 British Faces Of Science' to be displayed in London's National Gallery.

Nick Arnold

One of the most popular children's science writers in the world, Nick can lay claim to over twenty best sellers – all with one thing in common. They're gruesome, gory and full of Horrible Science! He is also the most successful author in the history of the Prizes. He was shortlisted in 2001 and 2003 for 'Suffering Scientists' and 'The Terrible Truth about Time' and is the only author other than Jared Diamond to win twice, in 1997 with 'Blood, Bones and Body Bits' and 'Ugly Bugs', and in 2004 with his 'Really Rotten Experiments' alongside illustrator Tony De Saulles.

Frances Dipper

Author, underwater photographer and marine consultant, there isn't much about marine life that Frances doesn't know about. She has conducted countless expeditions and courses for divers and written numerous books and articles on the marine biology and the ocean environment. Another Aventis Prizes' prizewinner on the Judges Panels, her 'DK Guide to the Oceans' won the Junior Prize in 2003.

Simon Pugh-Jones

Simon's lifelong passion for orchids has developed into a project heralded as being at the forefront of ecological science research, transforming Writhlington School in Bath into a true centre of excellence for orchid research and conservation. With some orchids hugely endangered, Simon encourages his students to research and culture rare varieties under laboratory conditions - resulting in many becoming experts in their own right and going on to become professional scientists. His pupils' work has been exhibited at many venues including the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Royal Horticultural Society shows, the Royal Society's Summer Science Exhibition and the Cheltenham Festival of Science.