

CA Prize-winner 2009: Caroline Lawrence

The 2009 Classical Association Prize was presented after the conference dinner at Glasgow on Sunday 5 April. The winner was Caroline Lawrence, author of the widely acclaimed series of children's detective stories, *The Roman Mysteries*, published by Orion. Starting in 2004 with *The Thieves of Ostia*, the series already runs to an astonishingly prolific 16 books, and the final volume of the series is due out in June. The books are being translated in numerous languages, including Italian, Spanish, German and Japanese, and in addition to the actual stories there are such spin-offs as a quiz book and a travel guide. As if all that weren't substantial enough an achievement, there have been two TV series based on the books, shown on both BBC1 and CBBC, and Caroline runs an excellent website, which includes historical background and teachers' resources, as well as a blog which lets readers in on the researching and writing processes (<https://carolinelawrence.com/>).

If you have children of the appropriate age you could hardly fail to have come across *The Roman Mysteries*, but for those of you who don't, the Financial Times' review of the second book, *The Secrets of Vesuvius*, sums the series up as "Lindsey Davis for young readers". The series is set in Ostia around AD 79, and the heroine is "detectrix" Flavia Gemina, the 12-year-old daughter of a Roman sea-captain, aided and abetted by her friends Jonathan, Nubia and Lupus. Their investigations begin in Ostia, but later books take them to Pompeii, Rome, Greece, North Africa, Egypt and Turkey, before they finally return to Ostia and Rome. The crimes they take on range from the disappearance of Nubia's brother to the highest affairs of state, the final book tackling the sudden death of Titus in September AD 81: was he murdered, and was Domitian responsible? If you want to find out whodunit, you'll have to read *The Man from Pomegranate Street*.

Dr Emma Stafford (University of Leeds)
CA Publicity Officer, 2003-2011

June 2009