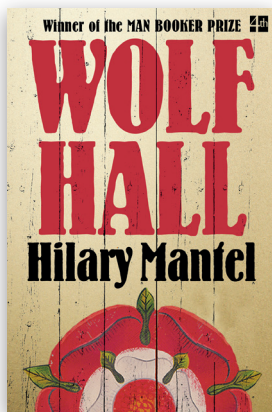
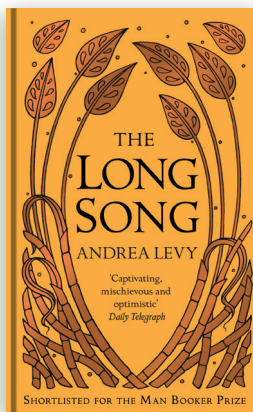


Ten years of exceptional fiction

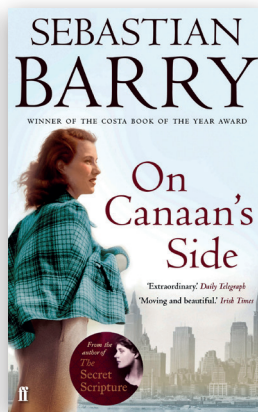
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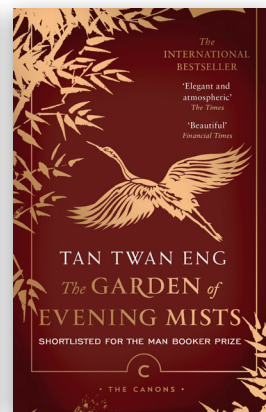
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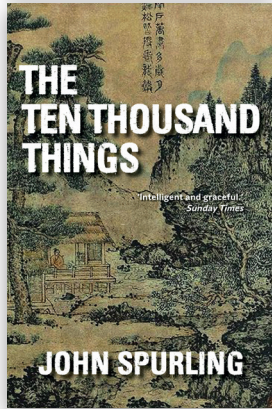
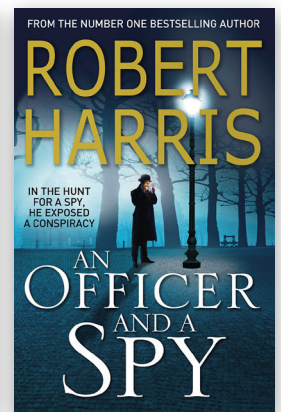
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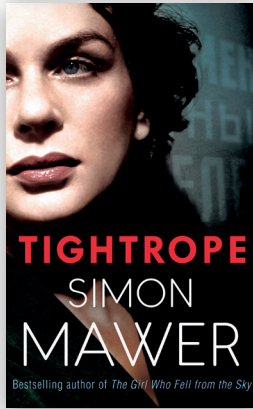
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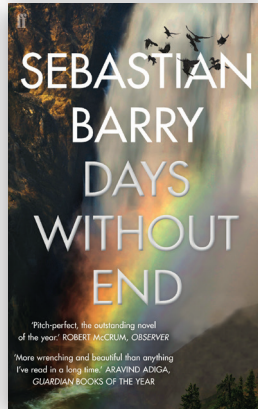
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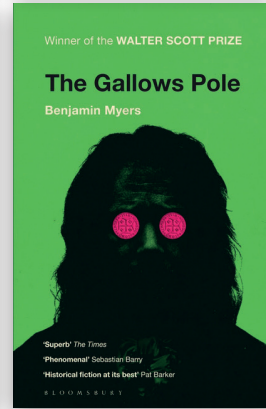
2015



2016



2017



2018



2019

For book group Reading Guides for all of these books and to join in the conversation about historical fiction, go to: www.walterscottprize.co.uk



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THE WALTER SCOTT PRIZE FOR HISTORICAL FICTION **10 YEARS**



THE WALTER
SCOTT PRIZE
FOR HISTORICAL
FICTION **10 YEARS**



More about the Walter Scott Prize

"Here is an absolutely wonderful prize for historical fiction which is acquiring a history of its own"

- Sebastian Barry, twice winner of the Prize

The Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction was founded in 2009 by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch and the director of the Borders Book Festival, Alistair Moffat. Honouring the achievements of Sir Walter Scott, the founding father of the historical novel and distant friend and kinsman of the Buccleuch family, the Prize is unique for rewarding writing of exceptional quality which is set in the past. It is awarded annually at the Borders Book Festival in Melrose, Scotland. The winner receives £25,000 and shortlisted authors each receive £1,000, making it amongst the richest literary prizes in the UK.

The Prize is open to novels published in the previous year and set, according to the subtitle of Scott's most famous work *Waverley*, at least 'sixty years since'. Books must be written in English but can be first published in the UK, Ireland or the Commonwealth.

The first winner of the Prize, Hilary Mantel, said in 2010:

"This has been an interesting year for writers and readers of the historical novel - perhaps a turning point year. The genre that Sir Walter established has had mixed fortunes, even in my reading lifetime. It has been deeply unrespectable. But a genre doesn't need respectability so much as it needs vitality. This is what this prize will ensure. It will push writers on to explore the limits of technique and the limits of their influence, and will open up for readers, I hope, the treasures of the genre. Much the best thing that has happened for lovers of historical fiction is the founding of this prize. When I first heard of it I couldn't quite believe it; it is such a startlingly generous and imaginative gesture, an appropriately old-fashioned act of patronage of the arts."

On the founding of the Prize, Richard, the 10th Duke of Buccleuch, said:

"The publication of Walter Scott's Waverley in 1814 marks, by common consent, the birth of the historical novel - and yet today the life and writings of this extraordinary man, one of the most influential Scotsmen ever to have lived, lie shrouded and ignored. This is lamentable, or so it certainly appeared to someone proud to call himself Scott's family kinsman."

"It struck me and my wife in 2008 that the campaign begun in that year to restore Abbotsford, his historic Scottish Baronial home, needed to reach beyond bricks and mortar and to seek recognition of Sir Walter's literary and other gifts. Through the medium of a

substantial prize for outstanding writing, which vividly records and brings to life the past, as he did – awarded in his name annually at the Borders Book Festival in Melrose, and thanks to Alistair Moffat and a panel of distinguished, independent judges, this is now happening. Almost uniquely, the Prize is awarded not at a formal dinner but in a joyful public celebration of words and books. Its heart is in Scotland – as was Sir Walter’s – but its reach, appropriately for the first international bestselling author, now extends around the globe.”

In 2012, the Prize changed its rules to include novels published in the Commonwealth as well as the UK and Ireland. In 2017 it created the Walter Scott Prize Academy, and in 2015 the Prize launched a junior version, The Young Walter Scott Prize, which is the UK’s only historical creative writing prize for young people, and which awards two young winners with a travel grant and a trip to the Borders Book Festival every year.

The Duke of Buccleuch said on the Prize’s tenth anniversary:

*“What a feast of exceptional writing has been showcased in the 10 years since the founding of the Walter Scott Prize, and my wife and I are more grateful than we can say to the brilliant authors, brave judges and passionately engaged readers who have made it so hugely worthwhile. Through the alchemy of historical fiction we have, together, crossed centuries and continents and met a cast of characters who I am sure have touched us all in some way or another. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Ivanhoe*, the most widely read and known of all Sir Walter’s novels and, as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the prize with panache, we will think back on our local genius who set it all in motion.”*

Sir Walter Scott

Sir Walter Scott (1771 – 1832) is one of the most celebrated Scotsmen ever to have lived. In his lifetime he became the first international bestseller, and his novels are still widely read in translation around the world, probably more than they are in English. In Edinburgh, his presence is inescapable, the skyline dominated by the towering Scott Monument, the tallest to an author anywhere in the world, and with Edinburgh Waverley the only train station in the world to be named after a book.

Although born in Edinburgh, Scott spent much of his youth in the Scottish Borders and developed a fascination with the songs and folklore of the region. Initially he found fame as the author of long narrative poems such as *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion* and *The Lady of the Lake* but faced with the growing success of his rival, Byron, he reinvented himself as a novelist. Uncertain of the reaction, his first novel, *Waverley*, was published anonymously in 1814 but proved an astonishing success, the initial print run selling out within 2 days. It was to be the forerunner of 27 novels, an extraordinary output over the remaining 18 years of his life, which included classics such as *Ivanhoe*, *Rob Roy* and *The Heart of Midlothian*.

With *Waverley* Scott, it was widely recognised, invented a new genre of literature: the historical novel. His formula, inserting fictional characters into recent history (in this case the Jacobite Rebellion, still within living memory), was an instant success. Furthermore it made the reading of novels more widely respectable, marking the emergence of the

modern novel in the western world, and acknowledged as such by many of the great authors who followed including Balzac, Tolstoy, Dickens and Verne.

Despite his many successes, in 1826 Scott suffered a disastrous financial crash, when printing and publishing firms producing his work collapsed. Scott vowed to write himself out of all his debts, and produced vast amounts of work at high pressure despite failing health. He wrote in his Journal: 'I will involve no friend either rich or poor - my own right hand shall do it'.

Sir Walter Scott was a kinsman of the Dukes of Buccleuch; Henry, 3rd Duke to whom his first major success *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* was dedicated; Charles, 4th Duke, his close friend, and Walter Francis, the 5th Duke for whom he was guardian and mentor. Scott was a frequent visitor to Bowhill, the Buccleuch family home in the Scottish Borders, and today the house has a room dedicated to him with many important artefacts, including the famous portrait by Sir Henry Raeburn showing Scott as a young man. The links with Sir Walter Scott are reflected today by the current Duke who is Patron of the Abbotsford Trust, which has recently restored the Scottish Baronial home created by Sir Walter, to include an acclaimed heritage centre.

In 2021 the Walter Scott Prize will be joining in the celebrations around the 250th anniversary of Scott's birth.

Judges

The Walter Scott Prize is judged by a panel which changes periodically but not every year. The Prize's co-founder and sponsor Elizabeth Duchess of Buccleuch, chairman Alistair Moffat, and award-winning children's writer Elizabeth Laird, have been judges throughout the Prize's ten year history.

Other judges over the years have included writer Allan Massie, journalist David Robinson, academic Dr Gavin Wallace, Professor Louise Richardson, then Vice Principal of the University of St Andrews, writer and journalist Kate Figes, writer and poet Jackie Kay, and Jonathan Tweedie of Brewin Dolphin. Writer and broadcaster Kirsty Wark joined the panel in 2012 and is among the longest-serving of the judges.

For the last three years, the judging panel has comprised Elizabeth Buccleuch, Elizabeth Laird, Alistair Moffat, writer Katharine Grant, broadcasters James Naughtie and Kirsty Wark, and art historian James Holloway.

Academy

The Prize's founder and sponsor the Duke of Buccleuch launched the Walter Scott Prize Academy in 2016. Designed to broaden the global reach and strengthen the resources of the Prize, the Academy is an advisory group feeding into the submission and judging process, comprising people at the centre of literary life in the UK and in Commonwealth countries around the world, whose positions and knowledge give them a unique standpoint to help the Prize find its winners.

The Prize publishes an 'Academy Recommends' list of books every year, featuring a selection of the very best historical fiction from around the world not included in the shortlists.

Academy members include UK book bloggers, literary critics and bookshop owners, and the directors of book festivals in Nigeria, South Africa, Bangladesh, Canada, Scotland and New Zealand.

Trophy

The Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction is unique amongst book prizes in having a permanent master trophy which is on display at Bowhill, the Duke of Buccleuch's Borders home. This exquisite glass sculpture was commissioned from the artist Colin Reid, and features a towering stack of books. The first four winning authors were presented with smaller versions of this flagship trophy by the Duke at prize ceremonies.

In 2015 a new winner's trophy was commissioned from glass artists Annica Sandstrom and David Kaplan at Lindean Mill Glass. A beautiful glass panel was designed and created, capturing the colours and shapes of the Scottish Borders. A newly created version of this trophy has been presented to winners in subsequent years.

More information about the Walter Scott Prize can be found at www.walterscottprize.co.uk

...ends/

THE WALTER
SCOTT PRIZE
FOR HISTORICAL
FICTION **10** YEARS



Prize winners and shortlists

2019

Winner: *The Long Take* by Robin Robertson

Shortlist: *A Long Way From Home* by Peter Carey
After The Party by Cressida Connolly
The Western Wind by Samantha Harvey
Now We Shall Be Entirely Free by Andrew Miller
Warlight by Michael Ondaatje

2017

Winner: *Days Without End* by Sebastian Barry

Shortlist: *A Country Road, A Tree* by Jo Baker
The Vanishing Futurist by Charlotte Hobson
The Good People by Hannah Kent
Golden Hill by Francis Spufford
Mothering Sunday by Graham Swift
The Gustav Sonata by Rose Tremain

2015

Winner: *The Ten Thousand Things* by John Spurling

Shortlist: *The Zone of Interest* by Martin Amis
The Lie by Helen Dunmore
Viper Wine by Hermione Eyre
In the Wolf's Mouth by Adam Foulds
Arctic Summer by Damon Galgut
A God in Every Stone by Kamila Shamsie

2013

Winner: *The Garden Of Evening Mists* by Tan Twan Eng

Shortlist: *Toby's Room* by Pat Barker
The Daughters Of Mars by Thomas Keneally
Bring Up The Bodies by Hilary Mantel
The Streets by Anthony Quinn
Merivel by Rose Tremain

2011

Winner: *The Long Song* by Andrea Levy

Shortlist: *C* by Tom McCarthy
The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet by David Mitchell
Ghost Light by Joseph O'Connor
Heartstone by C J Sansom

2018

Winner: *The Gallows Pole* by Benjamin Myers

Shortlist: *Manhattan Beach* by Jennifer Egan
Sugar Money by Jane Harris
Grace by Paul Lynch
The Wardrobe Mistress by Patrick McGrath
Miss Boston and Miss Hargreaves by Rachel Malik

2016

Winner: *Tightrope* by Simon Mawer

Shortlist: *Sweet Caress* by William Boyd
A Place Called Winter by Patrick Gale
Mrs Engels by Gavin McCrea
End Games in Bordeaux by Allan Massie
Salt Creek by Lucy Treloar

2014

Winner: *An Officer and a Spy* by Robert Harris

Shortlist: *Life After Life* by Kate Atkinson
The Luminaries by Eleanor Catton
Harvest by Jim Crace
Fair Helen by Andrew Greig
The Promise by Ann Weisgarber

2012

Winner: *On Canaan's Side* by Sebastian Barry

Shortlist: *The Sisters Brothers* by Patrick de Witt
Half Blood Blues by Esi Edugyan
The Stranger's Child by Alan Hollinghurst
Pure by Andrew Miller
The Quality of Mercy by Barry Unsworth

2010

Winner: *Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel

Shortlist: *Hodd* by Adam Thorpe
Lustrum by Robert Harris
Sacred Hearts by Sarah Dunant
Stone's Fall by Iain Pears
To Kill a Tsar by Andrew Williams
The Glass Room by Simon Mawer
The Quickening Maze by Adam Foulds

THE WALTER
SCOTT PRIZE
FOR HISTORICAL
FICTION **10** YEARS



More about the winners of the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction

2010

***Wolf Hall* by Hilary Mantel**

Wolf Hall was the first in Hilary Mantel's masterly series of fictionalised biography documenting the rapid rise to power of Thomas Cromwell in the court of Henry VIII, through to the death of Sir Thomas More. It was the unanimous winner of the very first Walter Scott Prize, chosen from a shortlist of eight by a judging panel comprising co-founders the Duchess of Buccleuch and Alistair Moffat, writers Elizabeth Laird and Allan Massie, journalist David Robinson, and academic Gavin Wallace.

The Judges said of the book:

"This is as good as the historical novel gets - immersive, constantly engaging, beautifully crafted, and compulsively readable. Choose any superlative: it will fail this book. Mantel's empathy for, and assimilation of, her world is so seamless and effortless as to be almost disturbing. Each book on the shortlist is deserving of the prize, but *Wolf Hall* was for us the outright winner, in a class of its own."

Hilary Mantel said on receiving the Prize:

"I am astonished and delighted and gratified to be the first winner of the Walter Scott Prize. Intense involvement in history was what started me writing. And now - although I hope to go on writing contemporary novels - the challenges and perplexities of historical fiction have become my preoccupation. But much the best thing that has happened for lovers of historical fiction is founding this prize. When I first heard of it I couldn't quite believe it; it is such a startlingly generous and imaginative gesture, an appropriately old-fashioned act of patronage of the arts. In years to come, this prize will magnetise attention and stimulate debate"

2011

***The Long Song* by Andrea Levy**

The second Walter Scott Prize was won by Andrea Levy. *The Long Song* tells the story of the last turbulent years of slavery and the early years of freedom in nineteenth-century Jamaica. The Judges said:

"Andrea Levy brings to this story such personal understanding and imaginative depth that her characters leap from the page, with all the resilience, humour and complexity of real people. There are no clichés or stereotypes here. *The Long Song* is quite simply a celebration of the triumphant human spirit in times of great adversity."

On receiving the Prize at the 2011 Borders Book Festival, Andrea Levy said:
"I'm very honoured to receive the Walter Scott Prize. This is a generous literary prize, which focuses attention on an important aspect of the role of fiction. Fiction can - and must - step in where historians cannot go because of the rigour of their discipline. Fiction can breathe life into our lost or forgotten histories. My subject matter has always been key to what and why I write - the shared history of Britain and those Caribbean islands of my heritage. I would like to remember all those once enslaved people of the Caribbean who helped to make us what we are today"

The Long Song was Andrea Levy's last novel; she died in 2019, and leaves behind a remarkable body of work.

2012

***On Canaan's Side* by Sebastian Barry**

Narrated by Lilly Bere, *On Canaan's Side* opens as she mourns the loss of her grandson, Bill. The story then goes back to the moment she was forced to flee Sligo, at the end of the First World War, and follows her life through into the new world of America, a world filled with hope and danger.

The judging panel in 2012 comprised broadcaster Kirsty Wark, Professor Louise Richardson, then Principal of the University of St Andrews, Jonathan Tweedie of Brewin Dolphin, Elizabeth Laird and Elizabeth Bucleuch, and chair Alistair Moffat. They said of Sebastian Barry's book:

"It was its drive, and its sustained power than persuaded us to award the Walter Scott Prize to Sebastian Barry. A work of immense power, the book is muscular and complete, and the author wears his learning lightly. Every character is fully drawn and utterly memorable."

Barry said, upon receiving his Award:

"I'm uncharacteristically speechless. I really was not expecting to win - just look at the others on the shortlist. My first encounter with Walter Scott was unlocking a trunk in my grandfather's attic, which contained the Waverley novels. I felt as if I was excavating a tomb. I think that is an appropriate way to encounter a writer - as if you were literally retrieving him from the damp and history of your grandfather's life."

2013

***The Garden of Evening Mists* by Tan Twan Eng**

Tan Twan Eng's novel triumphed over Hilary Mantel's *Bring Up the Bodies* to win the 2013 Prize. *The Garden of Evening Mists* deals with the legacy of the Second World War and the Malayan Emergency of the 1950s, through the story of a woman who has been interned in a Japanese POW camp and seeks to build a garden in memory of her sister in the Cameron Highlands. The book has now been made into a major feature film by HBO Asia, released in 2019.

The Judges said: "The poignancy of both remembering and forgetting is what this book is all about. One of the strengths of the Walter Scott Prize is that we can be broad in our reach. Set in the jungle-clad highlands of Malaya, this year's winner leads us into the

troubled aftermath of World War Two. It is pungent and atmospheric; a rich, enigmatic, layered novel in which landscapes part and merge, and part again."

Receiving his prize in Melrose, Tan Twan Eng said:

"To be the first writer from the Commonwealth to win the Walter Scott Prize was a tremendous honour. Because of the Prize, *The Garden of Evening Mists* has now been read by countless people who would never have picked it up before. The Walter Scott Prize will only go from strength to strength and take its place as one of the premier literary prizes in the world."

2014

***An Officer and a Spy* by Robert Harris**

Robert Harris, shortlisted for the very first Prize in 2010, was announced its winner in 2014. The Judges said:

"*An Officer and A Spy* is a masterwork, a novel written by a story-teller at the pinnacle of his powers. In making compelling literary drama out of the Dreyfus affair, an episode familiar to many, Robert Harris has done something Walter Scott would have been proud of. Exactly 200 years ago, Scott pulled off the same transformation with *Waverley* and another familiar episode, the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. The book is set at the end of the 19th century but its themes have resonated ever since. Cover-ups, anti-semitism and a suspicion of the other, codes and leaks, and the mission of a single individual to force a government to right an injustice ñ all of these have modern parallels."

In his acceptance speech, Robert Harris cited Sir Walter Scott as a hero of his since discovering his Journals in a second hand bookshop as a young man. Harris quoted from the Journals: "I think I make no habit of feeding on praise, and despise those whom I see greedy for it, as much as I should an underbred fellow who, after eating a cherry-tart, proceeded to lick the plate."

2015

***The Ten Thousand Things* by John Spurling**

John Spurling was the Walter Scott Prize's oldest recipient, with a book which took him 15 years to write and was reputedly rejected 44 times before eventually being published. Set in 14th-century China, during the final years of the Mongol-ruled Yuan Dynasty, *The Ten Thousand Things* is the story of Wang Meng, one of the era's four great masters of painting.

The Judges described the book as: "Subtle and rewarding. Through John Spurling's writing you feel as though you are reading Wang Meng's paintings as he created them. It is a mesmerising, elegantly drawn picture of old imperial China, which feels remarkably modern. It was the illumination shone by John Spurling on this fascinating and little-known period that lit us up for the longest time. It is a book which deserves enormous credit."

Accepting his award at the Borders Book Festival, Spurling said:

"I am worried for very young writers who win prizes and are told they are geniuses, and can never write anything again. I always thought that I would like success to be in my seventies, and I'm seventy-nine this year, so have just made it!"

2016

***Tightrope* by Simon Mawer**

Tightrope follows the spy Marian Sutro, who has survived Ravensbruck and is back in dreary London trying to pick up the pieces of her post-War life. It is Simon Mawer's tenth novel; his seventh, *The Glass Room*, was shortlisted for the Walter Scott Prize in 2010.

The judging panel was joined by broadcaster James Naughtie and poet and writer Jackie Kay in 2016. The Judges said of Mawer's novel:

"*Tightrope* is a spy story in the grand tradition, sweeping the reader irresistibly into the harrowing life of a secret agent in World War Two. Impeccably researched, it perfectly inhabits its time and place. It is a worthy winner of the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction."

Collecting his Prize, Simon Mawer said:

"I would like to thank Marian Sutro, who is very close to my heart, and probably of all my characters, in all my fiction, is the one most alive to me, and I owe her a great deal.

On being shortlisted, Mawer said: "I don't consider myself a historical novelist at all. All I do is write novels about what interests me at the time ... and the recent past is where my particular interests lie. However, I think our collective past should be important to everyone: if we don't comprehend where we've come from, then we won't have any idea where we are going."

2017

***Days Without End* by Sebastian Barry**

Sebastian Barry became the first author to win the Prize twice, with his epic novel set in America. The judging panel, refreshed in 2017 to include writers Kate Figes and Katharine Grant and art historian James Holloway, said of the book:

"Intimate, lyrical, courteous, Barry offers the authentic voice of Thomas McNulty, a nineteenth century Irish-American possessed of a nineteenth century respect for both language and reader. In this tale of Indian War and American Civil War carnage, the voice is also, miraculously, the voice of love.... Neither comfortable nor pretty, it pulses with courage, loyalty and, amid the horrors, grace. This is a living novel. From its pages, Thomas shakes the reader's hand and the hand of every ragged soldier on our ragged streets."

On receiving his second Award, Sebastian Barry said:

"It's difficult to itemise my simple childish joy at receiving this prize; that the judges did all this work to make a 61 year old man feel 12 again."

Returning to the Borders Book Festival in 2018 to present Benjamin Myers with his Prize, Barry said:

"Here is an absolutely wonderful prize for historical fiction which is acquiring a history of its own. To me this is a prize like no other. A prize that does its strange work so well that it may be considered not just passively to honour historical fiction, but to be having an effect

on it at DNA level. It digs and nurtures the seed bed. It seems to me that the prize itself has not only boosted and bolstered the historical novel, but also has begun to redefine it"

2018

***The Gallows Pole* by Benjamin Myers**

2018 saw small Yorkshire-based independent publisher Bluemoose triumph over some of the UK's biggest publishing houses to win the ninth Walter Scott Prize with *The Gallows Pole*, of the true story of the Cragg Vale Coiners. Winner Benjamin Myers was also congratulated with a Royal Mail postmark stamped on 30 million pieces of mail during the week of the announcement.

The Judges said:

"Imagine the wild moors of Calderdale in Yorkshire in the 18th century where stealing a loaf of bread could result in hanging. The only profit to be made was in the manufacture of fake money from melted down clippings of fake coins. Under the 'protection' of King David Hartley, the tough folk of that harsh valley had at least some hope of sustenance. As Hartley said, 'we live as clans - protection was our purpose especially from any incomers'. But historical progress was one incomer that could not be halted. The writing is brutal but lyrical and deeply affecting. This is an important book."

On being awarded the Walter Scott Prize, Benjamin Myers thanked his 'small but perfectly formed' publishers, and said he would be spending the Prize money on 'going to see the original line-up of Guns 'N' Roses in Reykjavik', and to have a break after publishing seven books in eight years, to 'sit in his back garden and listen to the birdsong.' On being shortlisted Myers said: "I'm surprised, delighted, humbled and then surprised again. To be amongst such excellent long-and shortlisted literary company both past and present is a huge confidence boost in a profession where many, I suspect, exist in a state of doubt and insecurity."

2019

***The Long Take* by Robin Robertson**

In 2019 the Walter Scott Prize celebrated its tenth anniversary. Robin Robertson was both the first Scot and the first poet to win the Prize in its ten year history. His book *The Long Take* is written in a combination of verse and prose, echoing the format often used by Sir Walter Scott himself in his long historical narrative poems.

The Judges said:

"*The Long Take* recounts the inner journey of Canadian veteran Walker as he travels from New York to Los Angeles and San Francisco attempting to rebuild his life after living through the horrors of war in Europe. In poetry of the utmost beauty, Robin Robertson interweaves themes from the great age of black and white films, the destruction of communities as cities destroy the old to build the new, the horrors of McCarthyism and the terrible psychological wounds left by war. Robertson shows us things we'd rather not see and asks us to face things we'd rather not face. But with the pulsing narrative drive of classic film noir, the vision of a poet, and the craft of a novelist, *The Long Take* courageously and magnificently boosts the Walter Scott Prize into its next decade."

Robin Robertson explained, on winning the Prize:

"Like Walter Scott, I started as a poet and then moved into narrative fiction by accident'. *The Long Take* started as a poem but became something longer. I think this is the most friendly prize to authors in the world and I think this is how prizes, which are so important to writers, must be run."

...ends/



Did you know...

- ◆ The Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction is the UK's only book prize not to have a commercial or academic sponsor. It is supported through the generosity of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, who have historic family links with Sir Walter Scott.
- ◆ Nearly £300,000 has been awarded to authors over ten years. The winner receives £25,000 and each shortlisted author receives £1,000.
- ◆ Only one writer has won the prize twice – Sebastian Barry. Simon Mawer, Hilary Mantel, Robert Harris and Andrew Miller have all been on the shortlist twice. Two women and eight men have won the prize since 2009.
- ◆ Winners have described the prize as 'truly life-changing' (Benjamin Myers), 'opened the field of possibility' (Hilary Mantel) and 'a prize that Scott himself would be proud of - acknowledging historical fiction not just as a musty recreation of the past but as a vital mirror of the present' (Robert Harris).
- ◆ 930 novels have been submitted for the prize over ten years. 63 books have made it onto the shortlist or longlist.
- ◆ Two books have won with titles beginning with 'The Long...' – Andrea Levy's *The Long Song* and Robin Robertson's *The Long Take*
- ◆ In 2019, seven books were submitted which had the word 'black' in the title. There were also five submitted authors named Elizabeth, two Elizas and one Liz
- ◆ A survey conducted by the prize revealed that the Victorian era was by far the most popular period for submitted books. Of books to have been shortlisted, nearly a quarter were set during WW1, and 14% were set during WW2.
- ◆ The prize is presented in front of a live audience at the Borders Book Festival in Melrose, Scotland. Shortlisted authors do not know who has won before the prize is announced.
- ◆ Actors to have read the shortlisted work aloud at the prize ceremony have included Robert Powell, John Sessions and Jack Lowden. In 2019, the writer Alexander McCall Smith marked the tenth anniversary of the prize by writing an operetta based on a Walter Scott character, Dandie Dinmont, which was performed at the ceremony
- ◆ Shortlisted authors are invited to stay as guests of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch at their home in the Scottish Borders, Bowhill, along with the prize judges. Parlour games have been known to break out after prize ceremonies. Judge Kate Figes recalls winner Sebastian Barry entering the room as the subject of a guessing game, tripping on a rug and exclaiming 'he died before he could cash the cheque!'
- ◆ A celebration of five years of the Prize was held in 2015 at John Murray's House in Albemarle Street, London – where Walter Scott and Lord Byron had their first meeting almost 200 years ago to that day.