



## The Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction 2026 PRIZE RULES

1. Books must be written in English and must have been first published in the **UK, Ireland or the Commonwealth**, between **1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**.
2. Books written in English by **authors of British nationality** first published outside the UK, Ireland or the Commonwealth in 2025 are also eligible provided they are **also published in the UK in that calendar year**.
3. For the purposes of this prize, 'historical' means that the **majority of the book**, ie more than 50%, must be set **at least 60 years before its publication date**, ie 1965 or earlier. This definition comes from the subtitle of Walter Scott's novel *Waverley; Or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*.
4. The criteria for judging the works are, in the judges' opinion, **ambition, innovation and enduring appeal**, with **quality of writing** as the deciding factor. It is suggested that entrants look at previous winners and shortlists for the prize (listed at the end of this document) to determine the calibre of work likely to be considered.
5. Authors who have already won the prize twice are precluded from submitting a new work until a period of seven years has elapsed since they last won the Prize. For example a second-time winner in 2021 could not submit again until 2028. This rule does not apply to previously shortlisted authors, only winners.
6. Books must be submitted by publishers. The submission of an author's work by the publisher will be taken as agreement by the author that they are willing for the submitted work to be considered. Self-published books are not eligible, either where the author is the publisher or where a company has been specifically set up to publish that book.
7. Publishers may submit up to three titles per imprint. The judges and administrators reserve the right to call in further books for consideration, beyond the submission limit.
8. Hardback and paperback originals are eligible. Finished copies or bound proofs may be submitted, and in certain circumstances, e-Book files and pdfs.
9. Entries must be submitted by **31<sup>st</sup> October 2025**.
10. There is no charge for submitting a book, but a fee of £1,200 + VAT per shortlisted title will be levied to contribute to promotion and marketing of the shortlist. By entering, publishers agree to pay this contribution should their book be shortlisted, and agree that future reprints of the book carry an approved Walter Scott Prize roundel on the front cover, which we will supply.

11. A longlist will be announced in February 2026. Publishers of the longlisted books will be notified as soon as the longlist is decided and will be able to promote the book's longlisting after the announcement date. We regret that we are not able to notify publishers whose titles have not been successful in reaching the longlist.
12. A shortlist will be announced in April 2026. Publishers of the shortlisted books will be notified as soon as the shortlist is decided and will be able to promote the book's shortlisting on an agreed date. A publishers' media pack with assets will be provided for this purpose.
13. Shortlisted authors will be invited to the Walter Scott Prize prizegiving event in the Scottish Borders in June 2026. Shortlisted authors will be guests of the Prize and The Abbotsford Trust, and accommodation will be covered, but publishers are expected to cover their authors' travel expenses.
14. The winner is awarded £25,000. Other shortlisted authors receive £1,500 each, which is awarded after the winner is announced.
15. No books or proofs will be returned.
16. The judges' decision is final. Discussion or correspondence concerning any decision cannot be entered into.
17. **Six copies** of each entry should be submitted with one submission form, by **31<sup>st</sup> October 2025**, to:

Rebecca Salt, The Walter Scott Prize  
 Room 10, Brewery Park Business Centre,  
 Haddington, East Lothian, EH41 3HA  
 Scotland, United Kingdom

A submission form is attached or available to download at [www.walterscottprize.co.uk](http://www.walterscottprize.co.uk).

For more information please contact Rebecca Salt or Fiona Atherton:  
 Telephone: 01620 829800 Email: [rebecca@stonehillsalt.co.uk](mailto:rebecca@stonehillsalt.co.uk) or [fiona@stonehillsalt.co.uk](mailto:fiona@stonehillsalt.co.uk)

## PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THE WALTER SCOTT PRIZE FOR HISTORICAL FICTION

### 2025

**Winner:** *The Land in Winter* by Andrew Miller

**Shortlist:** *The Heart in Winter* by Kevin Barry

*The Mare* by Angharad Hampshire

*The Safekeep* by Yael van der Wouden

*The Book of Days* by Francesca Kay

*Glorious Exploits* by Ferdia Lennon

### 2024

**Winner:** *Hungry Ghosts* by Kevin Jared Hosein

**Shortlist:** *The New Life* by Tom Crewe

*My Father's House* by Joseph O'Connor

*In the Upper Country* by Kai Thomas

*Absolutely and Forever* by Rose Tremain

*The House of Doors* by Tan Twan Eng

### 2023

**Winner:** *These Days* by Lucy Caldwell

**Shortlist:** *The Geometer Lobachevsky* by Adrian Duncan

*Act Of Oblivion* by Robert Harris

*The Chosen* by Elizabeth Lowry

*The Sun Walks Down* by Fiona McFarlane

*Ancestry* by Simon Mawer

*I Am Not Your Eve* by Devika Ponnambalam

### 2022

**Winner:** *News of the Dead* by James Robertson

**Shortlist:** *Rose Nicolson* by Andrew Greig

*Fortune* by Amanda Smyth

*The Magician* by Colm Tóibín

### 2021

### 2020

**Winner:** *The Mirror and the Light* by Hilary Mantel  
**Shortlist:** *The Tolstoy Estate* by Steven Conte  
*A Room Made of Leaves* by Kate Grenville  
*Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell  
*The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams

#### 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

**Winner:** *The Narrow Land* Christine Dwyer Hickey  
**Shortlist:** *The Parisian* by Isabella Hammad  
*To Calais, in Ordinary Time* by James Meek  
*Shadowplay* by Joseph O'Connor  
*The Redeemed* by Tim Pears  
*A Sin of Omission* by Marguerite Poland

#### 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* 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* Sebastian Barry  
**Shortlist:** *The Sisters Brothers* 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

