



Booker Prize for Fiction

President : The Lord Goodman CH
Chairman : Graham C Greene

The National Book League

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£5,000 BOOKER PRIZE FOR FICTION 1975 SHORTLIST

EMBARGOED UNTIL 01.00 HOURS ON THURSDAY 30 OCTOBER 1975

For the first time since the creation of the Booker Prize in 1968 the shortlist for the Prize is down to two books. In previous years this has ranged from four to six titles.

The winner of the 1975 £5,000 Booker Prize for Fiction, Britain's most valuable literary award, will be chosen from the following:

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| GOSSIP FROM THE FOREST | Thomas Keneally | <u>Collins</u> |
| HEAT AND DUST | Ruth Praver Jhabvala | <u>John Murray</u> |

Books by British, Commonwealth, Eire and South African writers are submitted from those published 1 January 1975 to 26 November 1975.

This year's panel of judges are:

- Angus Wilson (Chairman)
- Peter Ackroyd
- Susan Hill
- Roy Fuller

The winner will be announced at a celebrity dinner at Claridges, on 19 November 1975, when Angus Wilson, Chairman and spokesman for the judges, and himself a distinguished author, will make a major statement on British fiction.

In connection with the publication of the shortlist he has said:

"Entry for the Booker Prize of 1975 was large. Perhaps too large. For of the 83 books entered the judges read too many that were not of the standard set by the decent mass, let alone of the excellent few. There were, in compensation, a good number of high competence in a wide variety of subject and forms. Two novels stood out; and of the two the judges finally decided that one was more admirable than the other.

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over
Director:
Martyn Goff
Deputy Director:
Clifford Simmons

The two are:

THOMAS KENEALLY's Gossip from the Forest. This novel is original in its form without being self-consciously 'experimental'. It tells the story of the peace negotiations in a railway carriage in the Forest of Compiègne at the end of the First World War. Its surface is the interplay of personalities - of the victors Foch, Weygand, the English Admirals Wemys and Hope and of the defeated Erzberger and the other German delegates rapidly and haphazardly chosen to take the burden of surrender for a country where authority and order are in hourly danger of collapse into anarchy. This interplay is frightening, witty and moving, often all at the same time. The atmosphere of claustrophobic, locked battle, in which strange private fights burst through the public war of will, is always of its own age, yet never written-up history. Beneath the surface the author often reaches strange depths of the oceans of the human will for power.

RUTH PRATER JHABVALA's Heat and Dust. This simple-seeming, short novel has many layers, and an assured craft of construction and narration beneath its surface ease of reading. It tells of two English women: Olivia, a men-sahib of 1923, and her husband's granddaughter who visits India today ostensibly in search of the story of Olivia, her grandfather's first wife. Both are intensely English, yet each decided to stay in India through a power, as it seems, stronger than herself. Their stories are related but not interwoven. Ms Jhabvala conveys the feeling of India - its squalor, its miseries, its beauties, its excitements, the enticements of its paradox, quietly but absolutely. At the last, this is a cool, at times alarmingly restrained indictment of what is lacking in the West as much as a critique of what is present in the sub-continent. "

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF AUTHORS ON THE BOOKER PRIZE SHORTLIST AND ALSO BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THIS YEAR'S JUDGES PANEL ARE GIVEN SEPARATELY.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SHORTLISTED AUTHORS AND BOOKER TROPHY, CONTACT:

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BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF SHORTLISTED AUTHORS

GOSSIP FROM THE FOREST Thomas Keneally

Thomas Keneally was born in 1935 and was educated in Sydney. He trained for several years for the Catholic priesthood but did not take Orders. Thomas Keneally is married with two daughters and lives in Sydney, Australia. His earlier work includes A Place at Whitten (1964), The Fear (1965), Bring Larks and Herces (1967) which won the Miles Franklin Award for the best Australian novel of that year, Three Cheers for the Paraclete (1968) which was the joint winner of the 1970 Captain Cook Literary Award, A Dutiful Daughter (1971), The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith (1972) which was on the shortlist for the Becker Prize, and Blood Red Sister Rose (1974)

HEAT AND DUST Ruth Praver Jhabvala

Ruth Praver Jhabvala was born of Polish parents in 1927, and came to England with her family in 1939 at the age of twelve. She was educated in England and took her degree (M. English) at London University. She now lives in Delhi having married an Indian architect in 1951. They have three daughters.

She has written eight novels and three volumes of short stories. Her novel, The Householder, has been filmed, and she collaborated with the director, James Ivory, in writing a highly successful film Shakespeare Wallah. They have also worked together on the films, The Guru, Bombay Talkie and Autobiography of a Princess. The latter stars James Mason and will be shown at the Academy Cinema, in London, from the end of November. Her best recent works include: The Householder (1960), Get Ready for Battle (1962) Like Birds, Like Fishes (1963 a book of short stories, A Backward Place (1965), A Stranger Climate (1968) and An Experience of India (1971) both books of short stories, and A New Dominion (1973).

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Judge's Panel for the 1975 £5,000 Becker Prize for Fiction

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

ANGUS WILSON; author, was educated at Westminster School and went on to Merton College, Oxford. After four years in the foreign Office he was Deputy to the Superintendent of the Reading Room at the British Museum. He began to write in 1946. Professor of English Literature at the University of East Anglia since 1966 he is the Immediate Past Chairman of the National Book League, an Honorary Fellow of Cowell College, University of California at Santa Cruz, a lecturer for the International Association of Professors of English at Lausanne (1959). He has since held various lectureships. A member of the Committee of the Royal Literary Fund and member of the Arts Council (1967-1969). He began writing in 1946 and his many written works include novels, short stories and most recently plays for television. His most recent novels are: The World of Charles Dickens (1970) Yorkshire Post Book of the Year, and As If By Magic (1973). In 1972 he received the award, Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

PETER ACKROYD was born in London. He gained a Double First in English Literature at Cambridge University and was a Mellon Fellow at Yale University; a trans-atlantic Fellowship operating between the two universities. He has been the Literary Editor of The Spectator since 1973 and contributes reviews and articles to literary journals and has made several radio broadcasts. His published works include: London Lickpenny (1974), a book of poetry, and a critical study, European Modernism, which will appear later this year.

SUSAN HILL, novelist, was born and educated in Scarborough. She studied at Kings College London and after graduation decided to become a professional writer. She was for four years the Literary Critic on the Coventry Evening Telegraph and had two plays produced at the Bolgrade Theatre in Coventry. Her likes are given as; music, the country and English buildings. She was awarded the Somerset Maugham Prize (1971) for her novel I am the King of the Castle, appeared on the 1972 Becker Prize shortlist with The Bird of the Night, gained the 1973 John Llewelyn Rhys Memorial Prize for The Albatross and the 1973 Whitbread Award for The Bird of the Night. Her other published works include The Enclosure, written when she was sixteen, A Bit of Singing and Dancing and In the Springtime of the Year (1974).

ROY FULLER, poet and author, was born in Oldham. He trained as a business solicitor and spent five War Years in the Royal Navy. He was Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford from 1968-1973 and has the Queens Gold Medal for Poetry, awarded in 1970. He is Director of the Poetry Book Society and a governor of the BBC. His many professional posts include: Director of the Woolwich Equitable Building Society and Vice-President of the Building Societies Association. He was Chairman of the Legal Advisory Panel 1958-1969. Among his most recent published works are: New Poems (1969), for which he won the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize, Catpaw, Off Course, The Carnal Island, Owls and Artificers: Oxford Lectures on Poetry, Seen Grandpa Lately?, Tiny Tears (1973) and Professors and Gods: Last Oxford Lectures on Poetry (1973).