



File	Date Recd.
Booker Prize 1973	1/2/73

President: The Lord Goodman, CH  
**The National Book League**  
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PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held at the National Book League, 7 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BB, on Thursday 25 January 1973, at 11.0 a.m.

Present: Mr Michael Weekes, Chairman  
 Mr Martyn Goff  
 Lord Hardinge  
 Mr Tom Maschler  
 Mr Peter Smith

In attendance: Miss Marilyn Edwards

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Colin Eccleshare and Mr Rayner Unwin.

1. Amendment to Minutes of 21 December 1972

Booker Dinner;

The Committee felt that wives of those attending the Booker dinner, except those of working journalists, should be invited.

2. Number of Titles on Short List

Mr Martyn Goff raised the issue of the number of titles to appear on the short list, suggesting that 4 was more practical than 6 in terms of arousing public interest and that there was no reason to assume that less publicity would accrue from a shorter short list. Mr Tom Maschler pointed out that in certain years there would be at least four novels published by outstanding novelists and it would be inconceivable that they should not appear on the short list and that limiting the short list to 4 would therefore not be a good idea. After some discussion it was agreed that the short list should remain at a maximum of 6 titles, but that the Judges could be given a free hand to make it shorter if they wished.

3. Briefing of Judges

It was agreed that while the Rules must contain the phrase 'the best full-length novel in the opinion of the Judges', as a directive to the Judges, it was perfectly reasonable that the Judges should informally receive a briefing as to the kind of novel it was hoped would win the prize.

4. Co-ordination with Other Literary Prizes

Miss Marilyn Edwards had written, as agreed, to all other sponsors of major literary prizes asking them (a) whether they would be interested in a specific literary prize season or (b) when they were intending to award their prize so that 'clashing' could be avoided. The following replies were received:

- Society of Authors: Administers 8 prizes all awarded at different times of the year; but they would be prepared to hold them in abeyance for a particular period if we should wish.
- W. H. Smith Award: They feel quite strongly that prizes are competitive and until prizes are merged into one nationalized concern all sponsors should 'do their own thing in their own way'. They intend to award the Smith Prize in mid-November.
- Robert Pitman Award: They feel quite strongly that there should not be an organized prize period; that more publicity would be resultant from fairly well separated announcements.
- Wolfson Award: They feel quite strongly that there should not be a literary prize period and in any event clashing must be avoided at all costs. Making their award probably in November but yet to be informed.
- Whitbread Award: It would appear that they are not in favour of a literary prize season, but welcome liaison over dates. No date has as yet been fixed for the award.
- John Llewellyn Rhys Award: The sponsors are currently thinking of announcing the winner in June 1973, but this is still being debated.
- Commonwealth Poetry Award: The sponsors will be announcing the award in September 1973
- James Tait Black Memorial Prizes: The sponsors were interested in the suggestion of a literary prize period, but felt on consideration that it would not be workable for them for technical reasons. They will be announcing the 1973 award in January 1974
- Carnegie & Kate Greenaway Medals: The sponsors were interested in the suggestion that there should be a literary prize period. This year they will be announcing the awards on 23 May.

No replies had yet been received from sponsors of the Guardian and the Hawthorn ~~iden~~ Prizes.

Conclusion: In view of the general unwillingness to have a literary prize period either for technical or competitive reasons, the Committee felt that the Booker Prize should be awarded in November, but that they should avoid clashing it with other prizes. It was felt that it was desirable in terms of timing to make it fairly late in November, although it was essential not to be too late, thereby missing the Christmas Book Trade. In spite of the general feelings of other sponsors to avoid a prize period it was noted that most of the prizes which had a fixed date for the Award would be announced in November and it was felt that the Booker Prize would be better awarded after the majority of other prizes.

#### 5. Selection of Judges

Mr Tom Maschler reported that Mary McCarthy would probably accept as a Judge although a letter was still awaited from her finally. Miss Marilyn Edwards reported that V. S. Pritchett had refused. The Committee agreed that Judges should be limited to 3 and the following names were then put up:

Roy Jenkins  
Maurice Edelman  
Elizabeth Jane Howard  
Karl Miller  
Anthony Burgess  
Edna O'Brien  
Edward Blishen  
John Bowen  
Tom Stoppard  
John Wain  
William Cooper

After some discussion it was agreed that, depending upon the approval of Rayner Unwin and Colin Eccleshare, Karl Miller should be approached as Chairman and Elizabeth Jane Howard as third Judge. (Subsequently Rayner Unwin and Colin Eccleshare approved this choice). Tom Maschler agreed to approach both these people. *Accepted.*

#### 6. Booker Dinner

##### (a) Speaker

Mr Tom Maschler agreed to approach Noel Coward. If he refused he would then approach Lord Butler; if he refused, Peggy Ashcroft; if she refused, Paul Scofield.

##### (b) Date

It was agreed that as a result of complaints from literary editors of 'pop' dailies about not being able to give coverage except on a Thursday (meaning the dinner must be held on a Wednesday) it was agreed that this year the dinner should be held on Wednesday, 21 November.

#### 7. Date of Next Meeting

No date was fixed.