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# press release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1 AM ON FRIDAY 20 MARCH 1970

From: The Publishers Association, 19 Bedford Square, London W.C.1.

The winner of the second £5,000 Booker Prize for fiction will be chosen from among the following six short-listed novels. The authors are in alphabetical order:

- + John Brown's Body by A.L. Barker (Hogarth Press)
- + Eva Trout by Elizabeth Bowen (Jonathan Cape)
- + Bruno's Dream by Iris Murdoch (Chatto & Windus)
- + The Elected Member by Bernice Rubens (Eyre & Spottiswoode)
- + Mrs Eckdorf in O'Neills Hotel by William Trevor (Bodley Head)
- + The Conjunction by Terence Wheeler (Angus & Robertson)

The terms of reference for the 1970 prize are "the best work of fiction in the opinion of the judges, to have been published between 1 December 1968 and 30 November 1969". The judges are David Holloway (Chairman), Lady Antonia Fraser, Dame Rebecca West, Ross Higgins and Professor Richard Hoggart. David Holloway makes the following comments:

"The judges considered sixty works of fiction that had either been submitted by publishers or called in. While they were surprised by some of the novels that the publishers had thought worthwhile submitting, they were very happy to produce a short-list of six novels of high quality whose merits had commended themselves equally to five judges of widely differing tastes.

"While almost all the books submitted were novels, under the present terms of the Booker Prize it is possible to submit volumes of short stories. One such volume, A Time to Keep by George Mackay Brown (Hogarth Press), much impressed the judges with the spare saga-like quality of its prose. Because they did not think, despite its merits, that it was worthy of the prize, they preferred to restrict their short-list, as last year, to novels, partly on account of the difficulty of comparing the relative merits of a novel and a volume of short stories.

"John Browns Body, by A.L. Barker, is an amusing and eventually pathetic study of that modern phenomenon, the "dolly-girl". Marise is told by her husband that he thinks the man living upstairs is a murderer. Her fantasies about this innocent figure eventually ruin four lives. Miss Barker is not a showy writer, but her characters are all beautifully drawn and their actions are delicately observed.

"Eva Trout, by Elizabeth Bowen, is the first novel for some time by one of the most distinguished of novelists. In the centre stands Eva, rich and totally insensitive. Her seemingly aimless progress

leaves a trail of destruction behind it, shocking but somehow inevitable. Few writers are better than Miss Bowen in being able to describe the capacity of people to love and hurt another.

"Bruno's Dream, by Iris Murdoch, is the second of this author's books to appear on a short-list. Like The Nice and the Good, selected last year, this is a morality, though rather more sombre in tone. Round the dying Bruno those whose lives are caught up with his act out, as only Miss Murdoch can make them, their little drama in which love and duty are in conflict.

"The Elected Member, by Bernice Rubens, is a closely observed study of the effect that the madness of one member of a family has on the rest. Norman, doted on by his mother, is an infant prodigy who fails in life and passes through drug-taking into madness, and thus is regarded by the rest of the family as the scapegoat for all their own failings. Though concerning a Jewish family in the East End of London, the problem posed by this disturbing novel is universal.

"Mrs Eckdorf in O'Neill's Hotel, by William Trevor, is wildly funny and deeply moving by turns. The fashionable woman photographer who descends on the decaying Dublin hotel to record its motley inhabitants for a coffee-table book thinks that she can manipulate human-beings as easily as she can operate her camera. While she stalks her victims, quite unconsciously they are laying a trap for her. The bizarre cast is handled with all Mr. Trevor's characteristically ruthless humour.

"The Conjunction, by Terence Wheeler, is the only first novel to be included on this list. It is an impressive study, obviously based on personal experience, of the contrasts and the frustrations of living in present-day India, where the new world of the big industrial corporations is jostling unhappily against the old one based on traditional values absorbed in varying quantities from religion and the Raj. The setting is a small university whose existence is threatened by the bauxite mines nearby."

The announcement of the winner will be made on the evening of 21 April, when the cheque and a trophy will be presented by Miss Jennie Lee at a reception at the Stationers' Hall to mark the occasion.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE AUTHORS

A.L. Barker began her writing career in women's weeklies. In 1947 she won the Somerset Maugham award for the Innocents as a result of which her writing began in earnest. In 1962 her career was further aided by the award of the Cheltenham Festival of Literature Prize. Her previous books are Innocents, Apology for a hero, A Joy-Ride and After, Lost Upon the Roundabouts, A Case Examined, The Middling.

For further information, please contact Jane Taylor at Hogarth Press (01-836 5549)

Elizabeth Bowen, born of Irish parents, was educated at Downe House, Kent. She was awarded the C.B.E. in 1948 and received an Hon. D. Litt from Trinity College, Dublin in 1949, and Oxford in 1956 and was awarded the Companion of Literature in 1965. Her previous novels are The Little Girls, A Day in the Dark, A World of Love, The Heat of the Day, The Demon Lover, Look at all Those Roses, The Death of the Heart, The House in Paris, The Cat Jumps, To the North, Friends and Relations, Joining Charles, The Last September, The Hotel.

For further information, please contact Anthony Colwell at Jonathan Cape (01-636 5764)

Iris Murdoch was born in Dublin in 1919 and educated at the Froebel Educational Institute, London, Badminton School, Bristol and Somerville College, Oxford. She has been a Fellow of St. Anne's, Oxford since 1948 and an Honorary Fellow since 1963. In 1956 she married John Oliver Bayley, and lives in Oxford. Her previous novels are Under the Net, The Flight from the Enchanter, The Sandcastle, The Bell, A Severed Head, An Unofficial Rose, The Unicorn, The Italian Girl, The Red and the Green, The Time of Angels, The Nice and the Good (short-listed for the 1969 Booker Prize), A Fairly Honourable Defeat, her latest novel, was published earlier this year.

For further information, please contact Jane Taylor at Chatto and Windus (01-836 0127).

Bernice Rubens was born in Cardiff, and after graduating there during the war she joined ENSA as an actress which she gave up to teach. She is also a film critic and film director and won an award for her documentary film Stress. She is married to Rudolph Nassauer and has two daughters. Her novels are, Set on Edge, Madame Sousatzka, Madame Sousatzka.

For further information and photographs, please contact Jan Hopcroft at Eyre & Spottiswoode (01-583 9855).

William Trevor was born in Ireland in 1928. He attended many schools and later obtained a place at Trinity College Dublin. He now lives

and works in London with his wife and two sons. His first novel The Old Boys won the Hawthornden Prize in 1965. Recently he was elected to the Irish Academy of Letters. His previous novels were, A Standard of Behaviour, The Old Boys, The Boarding-House, The Love Department, The Day We Got Drunk on Cake.

For further information and photographs, please contact Euan Cameron at Bodley Head (01-836 9081)

Terence Wheeler was born in 1936 in Portsmouth, and graduated at Wadham College Oxford. Having been a school teacher at a London comprehensive school for a short time he then went to India to teach. He returned in 1965 and is now lecturing at a teaching college in Canterbury. He is married and has three children. The Conjunction is his first novel.

For further information, please contact Joyce Emerson at Angus & Robertson (01-606 7831)

For further general information and photographs of the trophy, please contact Marilyn Edwards at the Publishers Association (01-580-6321)