



THE WHITBREAD LITERARY AWARDS

Whitbreads are to make three annual literary awards of £1,000 each for a novel, a biography and a volume of poetry. The awards - to be known as the Whitbread Literary Awards - are being supported by the Booksellers Association of Great Britain and Ireland, who have undertaken their administration.

The awards will be made to British writers, or writers domiciled in Britain for five years, who are working within the mainstream of the English literary tradition.

The awards will run from October 25th, 1970 until October 24, 1971 and publishers will have three separate submission dates. For this year the dates are:

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| April 1st.     | For titles published between October 25th, 1970 and 31st March, 1971. |
| July 1st.      | For titles published between April 1st, 1971 and 30th June, 1971.     |
| September 1st. | For titles published between July 1st, 1971 and 24th October, 1971.   |

The announcement of the awards will be made in the third week in October each year.

Judging Panel

The works submitted will be considered by a panel of three judges: Mr. J.B. Priestley (chairman), Miss Margaret Drabble and Mr. Anthony Thwaite. Apart from works submitted to them, each member of the panel will be free to nominate additional titles for consideration.

Background to the Awards

Speaking at a press conference to announce the awards Mr. Raymond Seymour, a main board director of the Whitbread Group, said:

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"For us at Whitbreads the literary awards, although a new venture, are not really a departure. They are rather a natural development of sponsorships of the arts, in different forms, for which Whitbreads have been responsible over the years.

"The Whitbread Group has been associated with the arts almost from the beginning of its existence, for Samuel Whitbread 1 commissioned Gainsborough to paint members of his family and his partners. His son carried on the tradition and it was he who headed the fund raising committee to rebuild the old Drury Lane Theatre when it was destroyed by fire in 1789.

"This association with the theatre has continued into the twentieth century. We were one of the founder members of the Mermaid Theatre and we are also associated with the National Theatre and the Stratford Theatre.

"Down the years we have also commissioned a large number of paintings, mainly for the Whitbread Calendar, which itself is something of an institution. Some of them are on exhibition here in the City Cellars; others are on loan to art galleries in various parts of the country. And in three weeks time our subsidiary, Stowells of Chelsea, will be presenting the Stowells Trophy to the winner of its annual painting competition, which is open to students at the major London and provincial art colleges.

"As a large company engaging in very close contacts with a wide cross-section of the public, we are keen to participate in activities of this sort. And seen this way, making some contribution to important achievements in the literary world, is not too far removed from our broader interests.

"Clearly it is the company's wish in making these awards available to encourage the writing of good works, especially perhaps in an age of great change and varying taste.

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"In Mr. J.B. Priestley, Miss Margaret Drabble and Mr. Anthony Thwaite, we have an outstanding panel of judges, and I am quite certain that through them and with the support of the Booksellers Association and the Publishers Association, we shall see some memorable winners of these awards.

"I would like to say a special word of thanks to the Booksellers Association, and in particular to its Director Mr. Davies; its Secretary Miss Curtis and its Vice President Mr. Hodges for the sound advice and efficient and cheerful co-operation they have already given us in making these awards a reality. It is a great pleasure to be working in this way with both themselves and the Association.

"Finally, may I thank the journalists, and our friends from the publishing world and all those who are here today. I hope that we can count on the support of all of you in making this venture a success."

With the compliments of John Fox.

March 3rd, 1971

# Press Release From

## The Booksellers Association

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The Booksellers Association is glad to help Whitbreads with their new Literary Awards because the interest shown in such awards can be translated into practical terms throughout the bookshops of the nation.

Most booksellers are noted for caring about what they sell as well as how many they sell. While the books of the day reflect the contemporary state of society and writing, serious booksellers are always happier when their "steady-sellers" are books which have not only been applauded by critics for literary quality, but happen also to offer "a good read".

Some 30,000 titles are newly published each year. Each one carries with it the great hopes of its author and publisher, but no bookshop can stock them all. The first major task of a bookseller who wants to stay in business is to select for his shop the books which will suit his customers.

In such circumstances, any event which draws special attention to the good qualities of particular books and authors helps those who face the colossal task of making them available to the public. The choices made by the judges, headed by Mr. J.B. Priestley, will do a good turn not only to the authors but to the whole of the reading public.

The judges are J.B. Priestley, Margaret Drabble and Anthony Thwaite.

J.B. Priestley, novelist, essayist, playwright and critic, has been publishing books regularly since 1925, when his The English Comic Characters appeared. The Good Companions, now assured of its place in English literary history, appeared in 1929. His plays have filled many London theatres and established themselves in repertory. More recently his Study Literature and Western Man, was acclaimed by critics and historians.

Margaret Drabble has produced several notable novels, particularly The Garrick Year, The Millstone and The Waterfall and has established herself also as a literary critic, both through reviewing and in a published study of Wordsworth. She is married to Clive Swift, the actor.

Anthony Thwaite, a literary editor formerly of The Listener, and now The New Statesman, has also been a radio producer and university teacher in English. He has published three volumes of poetry, the most recent of which The Stones of Emptiness won the Richard Hillary Memorial Prize.