

## PROPOSALS ON NEW LITERARY AWARD

The following notes describe the results of two meetings. The first was held on 27th June at the Booker Flat at St. James's Hotel at which were present Miss Jill Mortimer, Mr. Tom Maschler, representing the Publishers' Association and Lord Hardinge, Mr. Mike Hearder and Mr. John Murphy representing Bookers Books Ltd. The second was held on 4th July also at the Booker Flat when the following were present, Mr. Bill Webb of The Guardian, Mr. Charles Tyrrell, Lord Hardinge, Mr. Mike Hearder and Mr. John Murphy of Bookers Books Ltd.

The object of the 27th June meeting was to reach provisional agreement on as many aspects as possible of the proposed award so that a detailed report could be made to the Publishers' Association and to Booker, McConnell Ltd. The 4th July meeting was to enable Bookers Books to meet Mr. Bill Webb with a view to his being chairman of the panel of judges for the first year of the award.

While certain detailed points remain outstanding it is felt that basic agreement has been reached on the most important aspects of setting up the award which we record below.

It is hoped that formal approval of the joint participation of the Publishers' Association and Bookers Books Ltd in the setting up of the administration of the award on the basis of proposals reached here will be shortly forthcoming. It would also be desirable if the Publishers' Association and Bookers Books Ltd would each nominate members to form a joint committee which would take all necessary present and future decisions to do with the award.

### Points of Agreement:

#### THE AWARD

1. That the Publishers' Association and Bookers Books Ltd should jointly sponsor a literary award to be awarded annually for the best work of fiction in the opinion of the judges.

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2. That the name of the award should be "THE BRITANNIA AWARD" or "THE BRITANNIA PRIZE.
3. That the award should be open to works of fiction written in English by a citizen of the British Commonwealth (including Eire) and published in the U.K. during the dates of the award year.

4. The award should run from 1st December to 1st December. The first year's award shall be in respect of books published from 1st December, 1967 to 1st December, 1968 and will be the Britannia award for 1968.

5. THE JUDGES

The judges shall be five in number and shall consist of : a literary editor, (who shall also be chairman of the panel), a reviewer, a novelist, a publisher, a 'literate' public person not in the book world.

Short lists of possible members of the panel were agreed but final decision as to whom to approach should be left until a chairman has been selected and had agreed to serve. As to the meeting on 4th July, it was unanimously agreed to ask Mr. Bill Webb, Literary Editor of The Guardian, to be chairman for the first year. It is clear that Mr. Webb will accept. The selection of the remaining judges for the first year should be carried out in conjunction with Mr. Webb.

6. CONDITIONS OF ENTRY

Any U.K. publishers, large or small, who regularly publish fiction may submit two separate titles (but no more) published in each award year.

7. Publishers must send in six copies of each novel they wish to submit.
8. The panel of judges shall be free to ask to see any novel eligible irrespective of whether it has been submitted by a publisher.

9. CITATION

Formally, and for public announcement, the award will be for "the best novel in the opinion of the judges" that falls within the conditions of entry.

It will be suggested to the panel that the award should be given to a novel "capable of communicating

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9. with an intelligent general audience'. No other guide lines will be given to the judges.
10. TIMING  
The deadline for entry will be books published, or to be published, for the first time in the U.K. between 2nd December of the previous year and 1st December of the current year.
11. The public announcement of the award will take place between 15th March and 15th April of the succeeding year.
12. It is felt that the formation and publication of a 'short list' a month or so before the announcement would help to stimulate interest and speculation.
13. FINANCE  
Bookers Books will guarantee the payment of the prize of £5000 to the author of the winning book for a period of three years, in the first instance.
14. Bookers Books will also contribute for the same period up to a further £2500 per year to the expenses.
15. The judges will be paid £250 for the year's judging.
16. The publishers of the prize winning book will be required to guarantee :
  - (a) to spend not less than £500 on direct advertising of the winning title after the announcement of the award. Bookers might consider supplementing this if there is any cash left over from the £2500 expense figure (cf heading 14).
  - (b) To have at least 3000 copies of the prize winning title in stock and available on the day of the announcement. He will be given sufficient advance warning to make this possible.
17. PUBLICITY AND ADMINISTRATION  
Miss Jill Mortimer on behalf of the Publishers' Association will undertake both of these. She will do this in her usual working hours for the Publishers' Association. But out-of-pocket expenses, such as postage, telephone and whatever entertaining or travelling as may be necessary for promotional



17. purposes will come from the Bookers Books contribution to expenses.

18. ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE AWARD

It is hoped that the panel of judges for the first year will be chosen fairly soon and that it will be possible to make a formal announcement - by means of a press conference - of "The Britannia Prize" half-way through September.

J.N.M.

10th July, 1968