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press release

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New Judges for 1970 Booker Prize

Four of the Judges who will choose the winner of the 1970 Booker Prize for fiction are new to the task - only Dame Rebecca West will be carrying on from last year. They are David Holloway, Literary Editor of the Daily Telegraph, who is Chairman, Antonia Fraser, Ross Higgins and Professor Richard Hoggart.

Biographical notes on the judges are attached.

The Booker Prize, launched in October 1968, was awarded for the first time in April this year to P.H. Newby for his novel Something to Answer For. Worth £5,000 (tax-free) to its winner, it is Britain's biggest fiction prize, and books by writers from the Commonwealth and the Republics of Ireland and South Africa are also eligible.

Once again, a short-list will be released for publication and speculation when the judges have narrowed their choice to the final six contenders. This device, an innovation for British literary prizes when it was announced last year (the Scottish Arts Council has now followed suit), aroused a modest amount of comment earlier this year but the hysterical atmosphere which precedes the award of, for instance, the Prix Goncourt, was never approached. Perhaps the contrast is due to national characteristics, perhaps to tradition or talk thereof - only time will tell.

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THE JUDGES

David Holloway (Chairman)

Born in London in 1924, David Holloway was educated at Westminster School and Magdalen College, Oxford. He has been Literary Editor of the Daily Telegraph since 1968, which paper he joined as Deputy Literary Editor in 1960. He started his career in journalism on the Middlesex County Times in 1940, and subsequently worked on the Daily Sketch, the Daily Mirror and the News Chronicle. It was while working on the latter that he started reviewing novels in 1953, becoming Assistant Literary Editor in 1954 and Book Page Editor in 1958. He is the author of John Galsworthy in the 'International Profiles' series.

Lady Antonia Fraser

Lady Antonia Fraser was born in London in 1932. She read History at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford and, after graduating, worked for a publisher for three years. She is married to Hugh Fraser, M.P. Earlier this year her much-praised biography Mary, Queen of Scots was published and she is now working on a book about Oliver Cromwell.

Dame Rebecca West

Dame Rebecca West was born in 1892 and educated at George Watson's Ladies' College in Edinburgh. She has contributed to many English and American newspapers as a literary critic and political writer and is a Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Among her books are: Black Lamb and Grey Falcon, The Fountain Overflows and The Birds Fall Down.

Ross Higgins

Aged 54, Ross Higgins has been a bookseller all his working life except for two years spent in advertising after he left school. A director of John Smith & Son Ltd., Glasgow, he manages its wholly-owned subsidiary John B. Wylie of Sauchiehall Street. This year he is also a judge on the Scottish Arts Council panel which will award £1,000 to a Scottish author early in October. He reads, on average, twenty-two books a week so that he can give his customers the advice they so frequently ask for.

Richard Hoggart

Born in 1918, Richard Hoggart was educated at elementary and secondary schools in Leeds and at Leeds University. He has taught at the Universities of Hull and Leicester, and was visiting Professor at the University of Rochester (New York) from 1956-7. He is now Professor of English at the University of Birmingham, a post he has held since 1962. In 1964 he became Director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. He has been, at various times, on the Albermarle Committee on Youth Services, the British Council British Books Overseas Committee, the BBC General Advisory Council and the Youth Service Development Council. He was also a member of the Pilkington Committee on Broadcasting. He is a Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre and was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature from 1957 to 1963 and Vice-Chairman of the Culture Advisory Committee to the UK delegation to Unesco. His books include The Uses of Literacy (1957), W.H. Auden (1957), Teaching Literature (1963) and a new one Speaking to Each Other is due early in 1970. Professor Hoggart is also the author of numerous articles, pamphlets and reviews.