

# Judges announced for Fiction Prize



James Naughtie and Tam Dalyell announce the winner of the 2010 prize, *Wolf Hall*, at Sir Walter Scott's desk at Abbotsford with the sponsors Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch.

Newsnight presenter Kirsty Wark and University of St Andrews Principal Louise Richardson have become judges for the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction, which awards £25,000 to the author of the best historical novel of the year. They join the panel for the 2012 prize, which will meet in April to decide upon a shortlist of books published during 2011.

In its third year, the prize has also changed its criteria to allow the entry of books published in Commonwealth countries, extending the eligibility of the prize to authors writing in English from countries such as Canada, India and Australia.

The prize honours Sir Walter Scott, the founding father of the historical novel, and is made possible by the imaginative generosity of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch. It is sponsored by the Duke, distant kinsman of Sir Walter and Patron of the Abbotsford Trust which looks after his historic home in the Scottish Borders.

The Prize is awarded for work of quality, originality and innovation, which 'inhabits the past and enriches our historical understanding, while changing our perspective on the present'. Books must be set at least 60 years ago, echoing Sir Walter Scott's subtitle from the *Waverley* series: 'Tis Sixty Years Hence...'

Kirsty Wark said of joining the judging panel:

“It is a great honour to be a judge of the Walter Scott Prize. All the more so because the winner is announced at the Borders Book Festival, one of my favourite weekends in the calendar.”

Louise Richardson said:

“I am delighted to have an excuse to read so many good books and to participate in celebrating Scotland’s great literary tradition.”

Kirsty and Elizabeth join Elizabeth Laird, Alistair Moffat and Elizabeth Buccleuch on the 2012 prize judging panel.

The Walter Scott Prize is not limited to books set in Scotland: it is awarded for work of outstanding quality, set for the most part in the past. Its £25,000 award makes it one of the top five richest UK literary prizes, and the winner is announced at the Borders Book Festival in Melrose, in June.



Andrea Levy

Last year’s winner, Andrea Levy, said of the prize:

“this is a generous literary prize which focuses attention on an important aspect of the role of fiction. Fiction can – and must – step in where historians cannot go because of the rigour of their discipline.”

Hilary Mantel, winner in the prize’s inaugural year, said:

“Much the best thing that has happened for lovers of historical fiction is the founding of this prize. It is such a startlingly generous and imaginative gesture, an appropriately old-fashioned act of patronage of the arts. In the years to come, this prize will magnetise attention and stimulate debate.”