

The Favourite Scottish Novel is Revealed



Trainspotting by Irvine Welsh has emerged as the winner of Book Week Scotland's poll to find the favourite Scottish novel of the last 50 years.

Over 8,800 votes were cast in the search for the nation's favourite novel, with 1 in 10 votes going to Welsh's debut novel about drug addiction in Edinburgh, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Book lovers from around the globe got involved in the poll, with votes coming in from 57 different countries including the USA, Ethiopia, Iceland and South Korea.

Commenting on the announcement, Welsh said: "I don't know if Trainspotting is the best Scottish book – I'm far from convinced it's my own best book. But I'm obviously flattered just to be on that list of great novels with those amazing writers, especially when I consider some of the brilliant books and my personal favourites that never made it onto this list."

The results of the poll revealed that the 10 favourite Scottish novels of the last 50 years are:

1. Trainspotting by Irvine Welsh (833 votes)
2. Lanark by Alasdair Gray (750 votes)
3. Black and Blue by Ian Rankin (591 votes)
4. The Bridge by Iain Banks (496 votes)
5. One Fine Day in the Middle of the Night by Christopher Brookmyre (416 votes)

6. Excession by Iain M Banks (330 votes)
7. Morvern Callar by Alan Warner (296 votes)
- 8.44 Scotland Street by Alexander McCall Smith (282 votes)
9. The Trick is to Keep Breathing by Janice Galloway (271 votes)
10. Docherty by William McIlvanney (269 votes)

The poll was launched by Scottish Book Trust as part of Book Week Scotland 2013. Members of the public were invited to choose from a shortlist of 50 titles compiled by author and literary critic Stuart Kelly in collaboration with Scottish Book Trust staff. These books were carefully selected in an attempt to reflect the depth and breadth of the journey Scottish writing has taken over the last half century.

Commenting on the results of the poll, Stuart Kelly said: "Crime, comedy, science fiction, the avant-garde – the public vote has reinforced the diversity of contemporary Scottish writing. My sole regret is that we have only one woman on the list – that said; *The Trick is to keep Breathing* is indubitably a contemporary classic."

Marc Lambert, Chief Executive of Scottish Book Trust, said: "It's great to be able to announce the top 10 Scottish novels of the last 50 years – as voted for by the public – during Book Week Scotland, our national celebration of books and reading. This is a fascinating list combining traditional classics with modern greats, with every book an absolute gem. Aside from acting as a barometer of Scottish reading tastes, the list has amply fulfilled its purpose of generating an exciting debate and discussion around great Scottish novels. *Trainspotting* is undoubtedly deserving of the top spot. It remains a brilliant read, and its publication was a key cultural moment in the history of the Scottish novel."

More information about the vote and the top 10 novels can be found at www.bookweekscotland.com.

Alasdair Gray said "My reaction to your news is delighted astonishment that Lanark has been judged more popular than a book by Ian Rankin, and only regret that this wonderful honour had no money attached to it."

Christopher Brookmyre said: "I am really thrilled to see One Fine Day in the Middle of the Night placed so high in Scottish readers' affections. It was my intention to take all the grandeur and excitement of Hollywood action movies and re-imagine them through a prism of very Scottish sensibilities, so the book's enduring popularity would suggest that I got the balance right. It was the book I most enjoyed writing, and remains the one I recommend to newcomers who haven't read my work before.

- Adele Hartley said: "Iain [Banks] was always a huge fan of his fans and I think he'd have been very flattered by their support and delighted to be in such fine company."

- Ian Rankin said: "Such an honour to find myself in this particular top 10, especially with a book I regard with great fondness. I'm sure the results will be pored over and discussed, but what really matters is that books are still read with a passion. I feel sure this will be the case in another 50 years' time!

- Alan Warner said: "I am amazed Morvern Callar made it among votes as high as 8000. That is quite a response."

- Alexander McCall Smith said: "I'm pleased that people like Scotland Street. I get great pleasure from writing those books, and will continue to do so. Thank you."