

Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction announce two new judges for 2025 prize

The Chair of Judges for the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction has announced the arrival of two new judges to its 2025 Prize panel, Rosi Byard-Jones and Rosamund de la Hey.

Rosamund de la Hey was formerly children's marketing director at Bloomsbury Publishing where she worked for over 13 years.

During this time, she was responsible for marketing and promoting many notable books including J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series.

In 2008, she and her husband, Bill, opened The Mainstreet Trading Company in the Scottish Borders village of St Boswells where Rosamund runs a sparkling events programme with some of the biggest names in publishing.

The shop has won national awards including Independent Bookshop of the Year and Britain's Best Small Shop.

Rosamund, who served as President of the Booksellers Association 2016-2018, said: "I am delighted and honoured to join the judging panel for the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction.

"I have admired the prize since its inception and enjoyed following the shortlist with our Mainstreet Book Group over the years. It will be a treat to have the excuse to devote myself to the world of historical fiction in the coming months."

Rosi Byard-Jones was one of the inaugural winners of the Young Walter Scott Prize, the creative writing competition for young people. She studied Japanese at SOAS University of London and completed a master's degree at the University of Cambridge, focusing on Korean minority women's literature in Japan.

After a couple of years at the London bureau of Kyodo News, a Japanese news wire agency, she is now a key member of the team running the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham.

Rosi said: "As a devotee of historical fiction, I am extremely honoured to join the Walter Scott Prize panel this year. I am also thrilled to continue my role as a judge for the Young Walter Scott Prize, which has played such a formative role in my life since I was 17. I hope my involvement can serve as a personal tribute to Bizza, the late Duchess of Buccleuch, as the prize's co-founder, whose warmth and encouragement had such a positive and lasting impact."

The Chair of Judges, Katie Grant, said: "As Chair of Judges of the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction it's a great pleasure to welcome onto our panel Rosamund de la Hey of the wonderful Mainstreet Trading Company which has books at its heart, and Rosi Byard-Jones who won the Young Walter Scott Prize in 2015, and has been involved in judging the young writing Prize in recent years.

"Our WSP judging meetings are lively affairs, each judge broadening and enriching our discussions. As the Prize moves into its fifteenth year, Rosamund and Rosi will be insightful and valuable contributors."

Rosamund and Rosi join other judges James Holloway, Elizabeth

Laird, James Naughtie and Saira Shah on the WSP panel, which is chaired by writer Katie Grant. The Walter Scott Prize is managed by The Abbotsford Trust with the support of Hawthornden Foundation, and is awarded at the Borders Book Festival in Melrose in June.

First awarded in 2010, the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction – which has just closed for submissions for this year – honours the inventor of the historical fiction genre, Sir Walter Scott, and is amongst the richest literary prizes in the UK, with the winner receiving £25,000 and each shortlisted author £1,500. Previous winners include Hilary Mantel, Robert Harris, Sebastian Barry, and, most recently, Kevin Jared Hosein.