

# Longlist announced for the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction

The Longlist for the sixteenth Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction has been announced by The Abbotsford Trust, which now runs the prestigious literary award. The twelve novels contending for the £25,000 Prize are:

THE HEART IN WINTER Kevin Barry (Canongate)

THE CATCHERS Xan Brooks (Salt)

MOTHER NAKED Glen James Brown (Peninsula Press)

CLEAR Carys Davies (Granta)

THE MARE Angharad Hampshire (Northodox Press)

THE BOOK OF DAYS Francesca Kay (Swift Press)

THE FIRST FRIEND Malcolm Knox (Allen & Unwin Aus)

GLORIOUS EXPLOITS Ferdia Lennon (Fig Tree)

A SIGN OF HER OWN Sarah Marsh (Tinder Press)

THE LAND IN WINTER Andrew Miller (Sceptre)

MUNICHs David Peace (Faber)

## THE SAFEKEEP Yael van der Wouden (Viking)

More than half the longlisted books are from independent publishers and small presses, and the authors hail originally from England, Wales, Ireland, Holland and Australia. The settings of the longlisted novels span centuries, and even millennia: from Ancient Greece and Sicily to fifteenth-, sixteenth- and nineteenth-century England; from America at the turn of the twentieth century to Stalin's Soviet Union and the global legacy of the Second World War; right up to events still fresh within living memory; the 1958 Munich air disaster and the long, hard winter of 1962.

Chair of Judges, Katie Grant, said: "It has been exciting to read the diverse crop of novels on the WSP 2025 Longlist. We've discovered little-known aspects of our collective pasts, experienced excesses of human behaviour, and been placed so authentically in the middle of the action that we've felt part of the action. We're delighted to celebrate debut and emerging writers published by small presses, as well as more established authors and publishers. With two new judges on board, including one of the first winners of the Young Walter Scott Prize, we look forward to testing these novels against the Prize criteria of originality, innovation, longevity and quality, and then debating the merits of all twelve books and choosing our Shortlist later this spring."

Matthew Maxwell Scott, Walter Scott's great-great-great-great grandson and Trustee of The Abbotsford Trust which now operates the Prize, said: "Walter Scott, founding father of the historical novel, understood that our present is shaped by the tales we tell ourselves of the past. The Walter Scott Prize, now run from the vibrant hub of his great home, Abbotsford, shines a spotlight on the very best new historical fiction from across the UK, Ireland and Commonwealth. In recognising excellence, the Prize honours Scott's legacy by inspiring more people to discover the joy and value of historical fiction, supporting both new and established

writers in their careers, and bringing readers and authors of this illustrious genre together to celebrate and question each other.”

The judging panel comprises writer Katie Grant (Chair), winner of the inaugural Young Walter Scott Prize Rosi Byard-Jones, bookshop owner Rosamund de la Hey, historian and gallery director James Holloway, children’s writer Elizabeth Laird, broadcaster and writer James Naughtie, and author and filmmaker Saira Shah.

To qualify for the Prize, books must be written in English, set more than 60 years ago, and have been published during 2024 in the UK, Ireland or the Commonwealth. The winner receives £25,000, and each shortlisted author is awarded £1,500, setting the Walter Scott Prize amongst the highest value fiction prizes in the UK. The Prize is run by The Abbotsford Trust with support from Hawthornden Foundation, the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust, and the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry in memory of Elizabeth Buccleuch.

A Shortlist will be released in May, and the winner announcement and prizegiving event will take place at the Borders Book Festival and at Abbotsford, in June.