



PRESS RELEASE

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Finalists announced for the inaugural Booker Prize Book Club Challenge

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Images of the book clubs can be downloaded [here](#)

From Devon to County Down, from steel workers to bakers, the finalists of [The Booker Prize Book Club Challenge](#) were celebrated last night, September 6, at the Booker Prize 2022 shortlist announcement at the Serpentine Pavilion in London. The Booker Prize has partnered with the national charity The Reading Agency to select six groups who will each be reading and discussing a different book on the 2022 shortlist, and competing for places at the winner ceremony for the first time.

The six shortlisted book clubs were selected by this year's judging panel, chaired by cultural historian, writer and broadcaster [Neil MacGregor](#), from over 100 entries cross the country. Representatives from each club attended last night's shortlist party where they met the judges and were paired with one of the shortlisted books. Over the next month the clubs will be reading, discussing and reviewing their book, sharing their views online on social media, as well as with The Reading Agency's community of readers and the [Booker Prize website](#). Two members of the club that shares the most original and engaging reviews will then be invited to attend this year's Booker Prize winner ceremony on October 17 at the Roundhouse, a fully in-person event for the first time since 2019.

The book club finalists and their assigned books from [The 2022 Booker Prize shortlist](#) are:

Book Club (Location)	Author (Nationality)	Title (imprint)
Weegie BeeGee (Glasgow)	NoViolet Bulawayo (Zimbabwean)	Glory (Chatto & Windus, Vintage, Penguin Random House)
The Royal Devon Culture Club (Devon)	Percival Everett (American)	The Trees (Influx Press)

Bridge Books book club (County Down)	Alan Garner (British)	Treacle Walker (4 th Estate, HarperCollins)
Casual Readers Club (East London)	Shehan Karunatilaka (Sri Lankan)	The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida (Sort of Books)
Scunthorpe Pageturners (Lincolnshire)	Claire Keegan (Irish)	Small Things Like These (Faber)
Shelter Cymru Chwaeroniaeth (Swansea)	Elizabeth Strout (American)	Oh William! (Viking, Penguin General, Penguin Random House)

Neil MacGregor, Chair of the 2022 judges, says:

*'We've always known that being alone with a book is one of the great pleasures of life. But the number and the range of entries for this first Booker Prize Book Club Challenge shows that for thousands of us, being with a group of friends **discussing** a book is even better. From all over the UK, people from different worlds get together to build friendships as they chew over the books they have recently read. This year's shortlist gives them lots of good things to sink their critical teeth into. Bon appétit!'*

Gaby Wood, Director of the Booker Prize Foundation, adds:

'We launched this competition - in collaboration with The Reading Agency - in the hope that book clubs all over the UK would want to discuss the books shortlisted for Booker Prize and share some of the thrill Booker judges experience when reading together.'

Little did we know that people all over the world would want to join in! Or that the hundreds of book clubs who did apply would have such incredible stories to tell, offering a window not only onto the reading nation but (it was just possible to feel) onto humanity.'

I hugely look forward to hearing more from the six clubs the judges have chosen, and on behalf of those of us who read all the entries I'd like to thank every single book club for allowing us a glimpse of your lives. Please keep in touch!'

Information about the official Booker Prize 2022 Book Clubs

- **Weegie BeeGee, Glasgow** - Glasow-based Weegie BeeGee ('weegie' being slang for a Glaswegian; BeeGee for book group) tell us they 'started up in the book group boom of the early 2000s and since then members have come and gone... and come back again'. In that time, their 18 readers have read 172 books by 165 authors and have eaten 113 cakes. These baked goods are an integral element of their club, so much so they even managed to deliver individual slices of cakes to each member for their online meetings during the pandemic.

They try to match the cakes to the books, often by location or theme. And while this group favours historical fiction, they often read crime, self-help and even graphic novels. They say they often ‘have quite different opinions’ on the books they read and frequently find their views differ from literary critics.

- **The Royal Devon Culture Club, Devon** - Born out of lockdown, the Royal Devon Culture Club was set up by three founding members who bonded over books and feminism on Twitter in September last year. The group is run by NHS staff who work at the Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and aims to provide an inclusive space where members read, discuss and listen to books, as well as poetry, podcasts and comedy. They first met formally in November of that year through Microsoft Teams and Twitter, to ‘talk about the things that matter to [them] most’ and their numbers now vary between six and 30 attendees every month. They are passionate about showing how beneficial books can be for wellbeing and mental health.
- **Bridge Books book club, Co Down** - Bridge Books, a small bookshop in Dromore, County Down, has been serving its loyal local customers for over 25 years. And while its book club has only been going for six months, it is already 14 members strong and boasts a broad mix of readers who are looking to discover something new. They often challenge themselves to read outside their own preferred genres and told us their favourite book so far has been *The Island of Missing Trees* by Booker-shortlisted Elif Shafak. As the little shop is bursting at the seams with books, the club meets in a local bar each month, where they discuss a selected book and choose from three titles to read at their next meeting.
- **Casual Readers Club, London** - The east London-based Casual Readers Club encompasses readers from a range of different backgrounds, who are aged from 19 to 40. There is an inclusive and safe space where members have an ‘earnest and honest connection over books’. With 20 regular members – and nearly a hundred on their mailing list – they say it often takes them ‘quite a while to decide on a book because there is just SO much to read’. They read across genres and chose to highlight books by women of colour for the first six months of this year. While shared experience is important to the club, one of the things they enjoy most is picking up a novel written by authors they don’t share experiences with.
- **Scunthorpe Pageturners, Lincolnshire** - The Scunthorpe Pageturners have been gathering to discuss books for an impressive 18 years and told us their club of seven has a wonderful mix of ‘enthusiasm and experience’. The group comprises a self-described ‘eclectic’ mix of individuals, including a civil servant, a steel worker, a shop worker, a dinner lady and two retirees. Between them, they have survived four changes of venue and the pandemic, to which they adapted by moving online. They pride themselves on a wide range of reading tastes, and regularly dive into literary fiction, crime and sci-fi. They aim to help fellow readers discover new authors and broaden their horizons.
- **Shelter Cymru Chwaeroniaeth, Swansea** - Shelter Cymru Chwaeroniaeth, which translates to ‘sisterhood’ in Welsh, are a group of readers committed to social justice and making a difference. But most of all, they just love books. They told us their club in Swansea gives them ‘the freedom to speak freely, behave badly, and embarrass ourselves... free from

identities as mothers, daughters, sisters, grandparents, professionals, carers, partners, neighbours, activists'. They use books to explore a range of ideas, stories and perspectives and look 'for that which unites us, rather than divides'. The members originally met many years ago while working for the charity Shelter, and with ages ranging from mid-fifties to early seventies they have kept in touch for 40 years, supporting each other through births, deaths and career changes, 'with tears and laughter'.

The Booker Prize 2022 winner announcement, shortlist events and winner event

The 2022 winner will be announced on Monday October 17 in an award ceremony held at the Roundhouse and fully in person for the first time since 2019. The winner receives £50,000 and can expect international recognition and a dramatic increase in global book sales.

The announcement will be broadcast live as part of a Front Row special on BBC Radio 4 from 9.15-10.00pm, with TV coverage expected to run on *BBC News at Ten* and news channels.

Ahead of the winner announcement, there will be two opportunities for readers to hear from the shortlisted authors in person. [In an event held in partnership with Waterstones, the writers will appear in conversation at the Shaw Theatre in Kings Cross, London, on Friday October 14.](#) Chaired by broadcaster and journalist Bidisha, the six authors will each deliver a reading from their shortlisted book.

The following day, on [Saturday October 15, the shortlisted authors will be take part in *The Times & The Sunday Times* Cheltenham Literature Festival.](#) The Booker Prize shortlist event will be chaired by Director of the Booker Prize Foundation, Gaby Wood.

The 2021 Booker Prize for Fiction was won by Damon Galgut with *The Promise*. In the two weeks after it won the 2021 Booker Prize, Damon Galgut's *The Promise* sold 1,925% more copies in the UK than it had in the previous two weeks. According to *The Bookseller*, in the 12 weeks after his win, Galgut sold more copies of his books that he did in the previous 17 years since first being published in the UK. Rights to *The Promise* have been sold in 35 territories.

The [first public event with the Booker Prize 2022 winner takes place on Thursday October 20 at Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall](#) as part of London Literature Festival 2022, alongside Galgut who will hand over the baton. The 2022 winner and Galgut are in conversation with novelist and former lawyer Sara Collins.

The leading prize for quality fiction in English

First awarded in 1969, The Booker Prize is recognised as the leading prize for literary fiction written in English. The list of former winners features many of the literary giants of the last five decades: from Iris Murdoch to Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul to Hilary Mantel.

The Booker Prize is supported by Crankstart, a charitable foundation.

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Notes to Editors

- Images of the book clubs, along with shortlisted book synopses, author biographies, author images, jacket images and social media graphics are available to download [here](#)
- The Reading Agency is a national charity that tackles life's big challenges through the proven power of reading. We work closely with partners to develop and deliver programmes for people of all ages and backgrounds; our vision is for a world where everyone is reading their way to a better life. We help 1.9 million people benefit from reading every year, through our programmes, our tireless campaigning, our excellent networks and our power to influence, challenge and make change happen. www.readingagency.org.uk
- The Booker Prize - awarded annually in the autumn - is the leading literary award in the English speaking world. It was first awarded in 1969 and has brought recognition, reward and readership to outstanding fiction for over five decades. It was called the Man Booker Prize for Fiction when sponsored by Man Group from 2002-2018. Each year, the prize is awarded to what is, in the opinion of the judges, the best work of long-form fiction written in English and published in the UK and Ireland, irrespective of the nationality or citizenship of the author. The winner receives £50,000 as well as the £2,500 awarded to each of the six shortlisted authors. Both the winner and the shortlisted authors are guaranteed a global readership and can expect a dramatic increase in book sales. The 2022 longlist was announced on July 26 and the shortlist was announced on September 6. The winner will be announced on October 17.

The 2021 winner was Damon Galgut with *The Promise*. The morning after the announcement, the book was number one on Amazon's bestseller chart. Two weeks after the win, Chatto & Windus announced that it had reprinted 153,000 copies of *The Promise*, having sold 23,878 copies in hardback, 14,622 of which sold in the two weeks following the news - a 1,925% jump in volume compared with the previous two weeks. Rights to *The Promise* have now been sold in 35 territories and it has been a bestseller in Germany and Greece.

The influence of the prize extends far beyond the initial months after a win. *Girl, Woman, Other*, by Bernardine Evaristo co-winner of the 2019 Booker Prize, was the 7th most popular title borrowed from UK public libraries for the 2020/21 Public Lending Right year.

- The rules state that a longlist of 12 or 13 books - the 'Booker Dozen' - is to be selected, followed by a shortlist of six from which the winner is chosen. UK and Irish publishers may submit works of long form fiction written in the English language and published in the UK or Ireland between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022. The number of works a publisher can submit will depend on that publisher's inclusion in longlists over the previous five years, as follows:
 - Publishers with no longlistings - 1 submission

- Publishers with 1 or 2 longlisting(s) - 2 submissions
- Publishers with 3 or 4 longlistings - 3 submissions
- Publishers with 5 or more longlistings - 4 submissions

This means that the number of submissions for each publisher may change from year to year. A new work by any author who has previously been shortlisted for the Booker Prize (pre-2002 or post-2018) or Man Booker Prize (2002-2018) is automatically eligible.

The judges also ‘call-in’ a number of works each year. In addition to their main submission(s), a publisher may provide a list of up to five titles for consideration, accompanied by a justification from the editor. The judges are required to call-in no fewer than eight and no more than 12 of these titles. The judges are also permitted to call-in other works published within the requisite dates, even if the work has not been submitted through any other route.

There are no fees for publishers to submit books to the prize, nor to be longlisted, shortlisted or win.

The rules of the prize were changed at the end of 2013 to embrace the English language ‘in all its vigour, its vitality, its versatility and its glory’, opening it up to writers beyond the UK and Commonwealth, providing they were writing novels in English and published in the UK. Novels published in Ireland have been eligible since 2018.

- The International Booker Prize - awarded annually in spring - is for the best single work of fiction translated into English and published in the UK and Ireland. It was known until 2019 as the Man Booker International Prize when sponsored by Man Group. The winner’s prize purse is £50,000; £25,000 for the author and £25,000 for the translator (or divided equally between multiple translators). There will be a prize of £5,000 for each of the shortlisted titles: £2,500 for the author and £2,500 for the translator (or divided equally between multiple translators). The announcement of the 2022 International Booker Prize winner, *Tomb of Sand*, written by Geetanjali Shree and translated by Daisy Rockwell, was met with both public and critical acclaim. The novel made history as the first book originally written in any Indian language to win the prize. The book’s British publisher, Tilted Axis, ordered a 15,000 re-print the day after the winner announcement, and sales saw a 877% jump week on week in volume. HarperVia acquired the rights in the US shortly after.
- The International Booker Prize 2023 judging panel chaired by the prize-winning French-Moroccan novelist, Leïla Slimani. The panel also includes Uilleam Blacker, one of Britain’s leading literary translators from Ukrainian; Tan Twan Eng, the Booker-shortlisted Malaysian novelist; Parul Sehgal, staff writer and critic at the *New Yorker*; and Frederick Studemann, Literary Editor of the *Financial Times*. The 2023 judging panel will be looking for the best work of translated fiction, selected from entries published in the UK or Ireland between 1 May 2022 and 30 April 2023.
- The recently relaunched website, thebookerprizes.com - supported by Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok accounts, as well as a YouTube channel - is a unique online space which showcases the 500+ exceptional books that have won, or been longlisted or shortlisted for the Booker Prize and International Booker Prize. The site aims to be an entertaining and illuminating content destination that combines both practical information about the prizes past and present with fresh and original features to bring the books and their authors to life, encouraging readers new and old to visit and revisit titles in the ‘Booker Library’.

- The Director of the Booker Prize Foundation is Gaby Wood. The Administrator of The International Booker Prize is Fiammetta Rocco - senior editor and culture correspondent, *The Economist*.
- The Booker Prize Foundation is a registered charity (no 1090049) established in 2002. Its purpose is to promote the art and value of literature for the public benefit and its mission is to inspire people to read the world's best fiction. It is driven by a simple belief - great fiction not only brings joy to millions, it has the power to change the way we think about the world we live in. It is responsible for awarding the Booker Prize for Fiction and the International Booker Prize. Other aspects of the Foundation's work include reading initiatives in prisons, writers' visits to universities, the distribution of books to disadvantaged readers, the funding of Braille and audio editions of Booker Prize books through the RNIB, and awarding the annual UEA Booker Prize Foundation Scholarship.
- The trustees of the Booker Prize Foundation are: Mark Damazer (chair) - freelance journalist and former broadcast executive; Tony Damer (treasurer) - member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants; Nick Barley - director, Edinburgh International Book Festival; Carol Lake - President of the JPMorgan Chase Foundation; Ben Okri - poet and author; MT Rainey - strategist, agency founder and social entrepreneur; Professor Dame Louise Richardson - vice chancellor of the University of Oxford; Nicki Sheard - chief marketing officer, BBC Studios; The Rt Hon. Lord David Willetts - writer, ex-minister and advocate of fairness between the generations.
- The Booker Prize Foundation Advisory Committee, which advises on any changes to the rules and on the selection of the judges, represents all aspects of the book world. Its members are: Nic Bottomley - co-founder, Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights; Jamie Byng - publisher, Canongate Books; James Daunt - managing director of Waterstones; Jonathan Douglas CBE - director of the National Literacy Trust; Adam Freudenheim - publisher, Pushkin Press; Daniel Hahn OBE - writer and translator; Sharmaine Lovegrove - publisher, Dialogue Books; Emma Paterson - agent, Aitken Alexander Associates; Fiammetta Rocco - senior editor and culture correspondent, *The Economist*, and The International Booker Prize Administrator; Eve Smith - Secretary, Booker Prize Foundation; Boyd Tonkin - writer and critic; Helen Williams - Legal Counsel of Booker Group plc. It is chaired by Gaby Wood - Director, Booker Prize Foundation.
- Crankstart, a charitable foundation, is the exclusive funder of the Booker Prize and the International Booker Prize.
- Four Culture handles PR, comms and event management for the prizes and provides all events and administrative back-up.
- Booker Group is the UK's leading food & drink wholesaler with branches nationwide and a delivery network. It serves over 400,000 catering customers and 100,000 independent retailers.
- In 2009, the Booker Prize Foundation and the University of East Anglia came together to create the UEA Booker Prize Foundation Scholarship. The Creative Writing course at UEA is a close historical relative of the Booker Prize, boasting as it does a number of alumni who have gone on to win the prize - including Anne Enright, Kazuo Ishiguro and Ian McEwan.

It is awarded annually to an applicant who has already been offered a place to study for an MA in Prize Fiction, but who in many cases would not be able to afford to accept were it not for the support of the Booker Prize Foundation. The scholar is chosen each year by

members of the Creative Writing department in collaboration with the Director of the Booker Prize Foundation. Many past scholars have since met with acclaim as published authors.

The scholar for 2022/23 will be Zanta Nkumane (Eswatini). The past scholars are:

2009-10 D.W. Wilson (Canada)
2010-11 Anthony Good (UK)
2011-12 Eliza Robertson (Canada)
2012-13 Sharlene Teo (Singapore)
2013-14 Sarah Young (New Zealand)
2014-15 Anna Pook (UK)
2015-16 Kristien Potgieter (South Africa)
2016-17 Alake Pilgrim (Trinidad)
2017-18 Francis Gosper (Australia)
2018-19 Stephen Buoro (Nigeria)
2019-20 Daniel Wiles (UK)
2020-21 Esther Opeoluwa (Ope) Adedeji (Nigeria)
2021-22 Michael Egan (UK)

- The Booker Prize Foundation has a longstanding partnership with RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People). The Foundation funds the production of The Booker Prize for Fiction shortlisted titles in braille and audio, which the RNIB produces by the date the winner is announced. It also funds the production of the winner of the International Booker Prize in these formats. The accessible versions are then made available to the tens of thousands of blind and partially sighted members of the RNIB Library. People with sight loss have a limited choice of books in accessible formats and often have to wait much longer than their sighted peers for titles to be made available to them - and there are many more books that they will never have the chance to read. The Foundation is working with RNIB to change this story. For further information contact the RNIB PR Team on 020 7391 2223 or pressoffice@rnib.org.uk
- The Booker Prize Foundation has partnered with the National Literacy Trust since 2012 to deliver Books Unlocked. The Foundation funds the programme, which has transformed the lives of prisoners and young offenders in the UK by helping them develop a love of reading. Prisoners are able to engage with high-quality writing as copies of The Booker Prize for Fiction and International Booker Prize shortlisted titles are sent out to prison reading groups. These same titles are also serialised as audiobooks on National Prison Radio, which is broadcast into c.80,000 cells, enabling still more prisoners to experience these exceptional stories. Authors go into prisons to discuss their writing directly with reading groups and many also record interviews on National Prison Radio. The shared vision for Books Unlocked is to bring about positive change in prisoners' life chances. Since 1993, the National Literacy Trust has led the campaign to transform the future of the UK's most disadvantaged young people by improving their literacy levels: literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/books-unlocked/
- The Booker Prize Archive was given on loan in 2003 to Oxford Brookes University, where it now resides.

Four Culture,
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