Scotland’s Publishers are Picking up the Prizes
Wins, shortlistings and longlistings across major literary awards

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

- Edinburgh-based publisher Barrington Stoke win the Carnegie Medal with Anthony McGowan’s *Lark* – the first time a Scottish publisher has won the prize
- Saraband’s Donald S Murray wins the Society of Authors’ Paul Torday Memorial Prize for his Lewis set novel *As The Women Lay Dreaming*
- Polygon poet, Roseanne Watt wins two Society of Authors’ prizes – The Eric Gregory Award and the Somerset Maugham Prize
- Scottish publishers Canongate, Polaris, Fledgling, Charco, Sandstone and Birlinn are on the shortlists and longlists for other major literary prizes

The literary awards season is underway and Scotland’s independent publishers are sweeping the boards, winning major literary awards across a wide range of categories

The Carnegie Medal—the premiere literary prize in the UK for children’s books—was announced on BBC Radio 4’s Front Row programme on Wednesday night, with the prize awarded to Anthony McGowan’s *Lark*, published by the Edinburgh-based, specialist dyslexia-friendly Barrington Stoke. It’s the first time a Scottish publisher has won the prestigious award in its 84-year history, and the publisher sees the win as a validation of their mission to bring the joy of reading to struggling, reluctant and dyslexic readers across the country. Ailsa Bathgate, Barrington Stoke’s Editorial Director said: ‘The Carnegie Medal is the most prestigious award in children’s literature and we could not be more proud to have published this year’s winner, *Lark*, by Anthony McGowan, a tender and heart-rending portrayal of brotherly love. It is an outstanding piece of literature on any terms, but the triumph of this hugely impactful short novella is particularly important to us as it marks recognition of Barrington Stoke’s mission to make books accessible to all children, including struggling, reluctant and dyslexic readers. We believe that every child can be a reader and also that children from every part of society should be able to find themselves in the books that they read. *Lark* and the three books that preceded it in this series explore the reality for children growing up in hardship and poverty, stories that are important to tell.’
The Society of Authors also announced their awards this week, with more success for Scottish publishing. Donald S Murray won the Paul Torday Memorial Prize for his debut novel, *As the Women Lay Dreaming*, published by Saraband, while Shetlandic poet, Roseanne Watt, won two awards—The Eric Gregory Award and the Somerset Maugham Award—for her debut collection, *Moder Dy*, published by Polygon.

The accolades don’t stop there. Sports publisher, Polaris Publishing, find themselves on the shortlist for Rugby Book of the Year in the Telegraph Sports Book Awards for Ross Harries’ *Behind the Dragon*, having already won the Wisden Book of the Year with *Cricket 2.0* by Tim Wigmore and Freddie Wilde. And at the end of the month, on the 29th of June, the key book industry awards, the Nibbies, will be announced at a virtual ceremony where Edinburgh-based agent, Jenny Brown, is shortlisted for the Agent of the Year Award, and Inverness publisher, Sandstone Press, are shortlisted for Independent Publisher of the Year. Sandstone Press are used to big prize wins, being the current holder of the International Booker Prize for their book *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi. That prize may well stay in Scotland as this year’s shortlist includes Charco Press’s *The Adventures of China Iron* by Gabriela Cabezón Camara. The winner of the International Booker Prize will be announced on the 26th of August 2020.

Canongate, no stranger to literary prizes, are hopeful they can add to their trophy cabinet with longlistings in both the Gordon Burn Prize, for *My Name is Why* by Lemn Sissay, and the Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing, for *Rootbound* by Alice Vincent, which also sees a longlisting for Birlinn Ltd and Patrick Laurie for *Native: Life in a Vanishing Landscape*. Edinburgh’s Fledgling Press are optimistic they can solidify Scotland’s reputation for exceptional crime writing with Andrew James Greig’s *Whirligig* longlisted in the Crime Writer’s Association’s John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger Award.

This all points to a (pre-Covid) strong independent publishing sector in Scotland and a boost as the industry comes to terms with the consequences of the outbreak. The publishers have been hit hard by the crisis with over three quarters reporting a drop in sales of between 50-70% and others being left with almost no sales at all. With bookshops still closed in Scotland and recently opened in England, publishers, booksellers and writers fear they will struggle to come out of this time.

Publishing Scotland’s Chief Executive, Marion Sinclair says: ‘We are delighted for the publishers and the writers for their strong showing in UK prizes this year and congratulate them all. We have a struggle ahead to maintain that strength in the sector now that there has been such a steep decline in sales, and are looking at ways in which we can rebuild and recover from this period. Publishing and bookselling are low margin businesses and the current situation is leaving the book trade vulnerable. We remain very concerned.’

**ABOUT PUBLISHING SCOTLAND**

Publishing Scotland is the network, trade and development body for the book publishing sector in Scotland. It represents a wide range of publishers and suppliers – both print and digital. Publishing Scotland acts as the voice and network for publishing, to develop and promote the work of Scotland’s publishers both nationally and internationally, to provide support and advice, and to coordinate joint initiatives to develop and strengthen the publishing sector in Scotland.

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