



The Booker Prize 40 in 2008

"No matter the slings and arrows it gets, it's still the most respected literary prize out there." Jon Howells, Waterstone's.

2008 sees the 40th anniversary of the Booker Prize (now the Man Booker Prize) for Fiction, the most important literary prize in the English speaking world. To mark the occasion, a range of events and initiatives are planned throughout the year including a campaign to directly involve the reading public.

Since P.H.Newby won the first prize with *Something to Answer For* in 1969, 'the Booker' has attracted consistent media attention worldwide and the 40th anniversary promises to be no exception.

'When the Booker Prize was established forty years ago the aim was to create an English-language Prix Goncourt, an award that would encourage the wider reading of the very best in fiction across the UK and the Commonwealth', says Ion Trewin, Administrator of the Man Booker Prizes. 'The programme for the Booker Prize 40 is testimony to that aim being achieved – whether you judge the prize by numbers of books sold, the number of films it has helped generate or the way it has opened our eyes to a range and quality of writing that might otherwise have been ignored.'

Winners of the prize can look forward not only to worldwide recognition but also a place in the history of English literature. Contenders over the years have ranged from well established authors to first time novelists. In the past decade Arundhati Roy for *The God of Small Things* (1997), Yann Martel for *The Life of Pi* (2002) and DBC Pierre for *Vernon God Little* (2003) were each unknown authors until winning. As testimony to the enduring quality of the winners, all of the books which have scooped the prize are currently in print, with the exception of only one, *Something to Answer For*. Rights for this are currently under discussion for the anniversary.

'Over the last four decades the prize has continued to recognise, though not without controversy, the best of contemporary fiction. It is a glittering prize based on the integrity and the independence of its processes,' says Jonathan Taylor, Chair, The Booker Prize Foundation.

A new look for the prize

A completely new look and feel has been designed for the Man Booker Prize and the 40th anniversary year. A new suite of logos for the Man Booker Prize family, with a distinctive abstract book shape, has been developed, including the Rubine red 40 logo

The Booker 40 at the V&A

To coincide with the announcement of the 2008 Man Booker Prize shortlist in September, the **V&A Museum** is to host an exhibition telling the visual story of the prize over the years. From book jackets to photographs, one-off designs by artisan bookbinders to posters, letters and television footage, this is the first time that such a collection of archive material has been on public display.

Some of the content for the exhibition will come from private individuals as well as from The Booker Prize Archive which has been housed at Oxford Brookes University since 2003. The archive is in the process of cataloguing which will be completed in time for the 40th anniversary.

The Booker at the Movies

39 Booker Prize winning and shortlisted books have been made into films or are in production. This includes such box office hits as Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List* and most recently, Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. In June 2008 the Institute of Contemporary Arts will present a season of films – **The Booker at the Movies** – featuring films from Booker prize-winning books and authors. Writers, directors, screenwriters and cast will take part in panel discussions to accompany each film. The season is part of *CinematICA*, the ICA's new fundraising initiative.

The British Council

The British Council is working towards the creation of an online collection of contemporary British literature and is in negotiation with publishers to include former winners of the Booker Prize and Man Booker Prize as e-books, which can be purchased. This initiative would take high quality literature to parts of the world which other channels of distribution do not reach. For more information about the British Council Literature department, please visit:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-literature>

Literary Festivals

Arts and literary festivals across the UK will be joining in the celebrations by hosting anniversary events inspired by the Booker Prize. *The Sunday Times* Oxford Literary Festival, Canterbury Festival, Edinburgh International Book Festival and

The Times Cheltenham Literature Festival are already on board and activities will include panel discussions with critics, winners and judges past and present.

Further details will be announced in the new year for major events around Booker 40, updates on all these plans and more can be found at the Man Booker website - www.themanbookerprize.com. The site, which incorporates a new look for the 40th anniversary, is rapidly becoming a key reference for contemporary fiction. It includes *Perspective*, an online magazine, featuring Q&A interviews, written pieces and a Literary Calendar. It also gives up to date news on the prize as well as related literary stories.

For further information contact:

Eleanor Hutchins / Jane Acton

Eleanor@colmangetty.co.uk / jane@colmangetty.co.uk

Tel: 020 7631 2666

Notes to editors

- The Booker Prize for Fiction was first awarded in 1969, and Man Group plc was announced as the sponsor of the prize in April 2002, with a five year extension agreed in 2006. For a full history of the prize including previous winners, shortlisted authors and judges visit the website: www.themanbookerprize.com. The site features the rules of entry, background information and breaking news and is the quickest way for the prize's worldwide audience to access information
- 41 authors have won the prize since it launched in 1969 because in 1974 and 1992 there were two winners. In 1974 Nadine Gordimer won with *The Conversationist* and Stanley Middleton with *Holiday*. In 1992 Michael Ondaatje with *The English Patient* shared the top spot with Barry Unsworth and *Sacred Hunger*. From 1993 onwards the rules stipulated that there could only be one winner per year.
- The Advisory Committee, which advises on any changes to the rules and on the selection of the judges, represents all sides of the book world. Its members are: Ion Trewin (Administrator, Man Booker Prizes); Richard Cable, publisher; Mark Chilton, Company Secretary, Booker Ltd; Jonathan Douglas, Director of the National Literacy Trust; Victoria Glendinning, writer; Basil Comely, BBC TV; Derek Johns, Managing Director, AP Watt; Gerry Johnson, Managing Director, Waterstone's; Peter Clarke, Chief Executive, Man Group plc; Fiammetta Rocco, literary editor, *The Economist* (Man Booker International Prize administrator); Eve Smith (Company Secretary, the Booker Prize Foundation); and Erica Wagner, literary editor, *The Times*
- The Booker Prize Foundation is a registered charity (no 1090049) which, since 2002, has been responsible for the award of the prize. The trustees of the Booker Prize Foundation are former Chairman of Booker plc, Jonathan Taylor CBE (Chair); Lord Baker of Dorking CH; former Man Booker Prize administrator, Martyn Goff CBE; playwright and President of the Royal Literary Fund, Ronald Harwood CBE; former Chair of the British Council, Baroness Kennedy QC; writer, Baroness Neuberger DBE; MEP Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne; and former Finance Director of Rentokil plc, Christopher Pearce
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- Booker is the UK's leading food wholesaler with over 170 branches nationwide. It serves over 350,000 independent businesses.