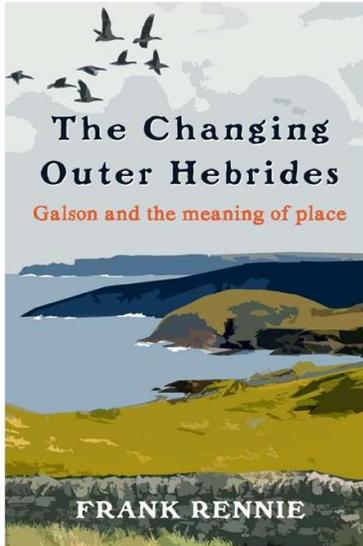




HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE DUAIS LEABHAIR NA GÀIDHEALTACHD



ANNOUNCING THE WINNER OF THE 2020 HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE

***The Changing Outer Hebrides: Galson and the Meaning of Place* by Frank Rennie, published by Acair Books, wins the 2020 Highland Book Prize.**

This is a fascinating and intimate account of the inter-relationship between one small island village in the Hebrides and the wider world. From the formation of the bedrock 3 billion years ago, to the predictable near-future, the layers of this unique landscape are explored. The social history of the people is closely interwoven with the natural environment in a journey of deep mapping to consider the meaning of special places. Through the Iron Age and the Clearances to the contemporary events of community land ownership, a portrayal is given that challenges the perception that this is a remote place, isolated at the edge, but instead is crucial to our contemporary relationship with the land.

Frank Rennie is the Professor of Sustainable Rural Development at Lews Castle College of the University of the Highlands and Islands, where he works on human ecology, rural issues, and education. As a natural scientist, he has strong roots in the landscape and community, and has a passion for presenting good science in everyday language. He travels widely and has published more than 30 books in both Gaelic and English.

The winning book was announced at 8pm on Saturday 8th May during an online event hosted by Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre, in association with the Ullapool Book Festival. As the winner of the 2020 Highland Book Prize, Frank Rennie will be awarded £1000 prize money and a week's writing retreat at Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre.



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Our sincere thanks go to expert judges: novelist and poet Kevin MacNeil; poet Jen Hadfield; Senior Lecturer in Gaelic Language and Culture at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Mark Wringe; and panel chair Alex Ogilvie of the Highland Society of London.

Our longest standing judge, Kevin MacNeil, encourages everyone to reach for a copy of the winning title –

"*The Changing Outer Hebrides: Galson and the Meaning of Place* by Frank Rennie is a book that shows us the life-enhancing joys of understanding - truly understanding - what a particular place is and means. Rennie's clear-eyed, well-researched writing shows us that we are not only who we are but where we are. Scotland has traditionally been marginalised, othered, overlooked and misunderstood; this book reverses those iniquities. I feel that if every part of Scotland had a book like this, Scotland herself would have a more sure-footed and compassionate sense of her culture, identity and connectedness to the world as it is, was and could be." Kevin MacNeil

Judge Jen Hadfield commented –

"Coming from a place of love and deep knowledge, *The Changing Outer Hebrides* represents a timely political gesture: Rennie quietly places his Galson, a small community in the Isle of Lewis, at the centre of the world." Jen Hadfield

The first round of judging was completed in October 2020, by a panel of 145 volunteer readers who spent the summer immersed in Highland fiction, poetry, memoir, history, nature, crime, young adult and Gaelic titles. If you would like to volunteer to read entries to the 2021 prize, and discover the latest literary talent connected to the Highlands, please email highlandbookprize@moniackmhor.org.uk, please visit the website for more information.

If you missed any of the 2020 Highland Book Prize Longlist Series of talks and conversations you can view them at – www.moniackmhor.org.uk/writers/moniack-mhor-tea-break and www.highlandbookprize.org.uk/events

The Highland Book Prize was established in 2017 to help celebrate the finest work that recognises the rich culture, heritage and landscape of the Highlands. The Prize aims to showcase the literary talent of the region and to raise the profile of work created in or about the Highlands. Presented by the Highland Society of London, The Highland Book Prize is facilitated by Moniack Mhor Writers' Centre in partnership with the Ullapool Book Festival. The William Grant Foundation provides funding to encourage public engagement with the Highland Book Prize.

For further information please contact Mirren Rosie, Coordinator of the Highland Book Prize.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Moniack Mhor is Scotland's Creative Writing Centre. Based in the beautiful Scottish Highlands, it runs residential and online courses in a range of genres tutored by some of the finest authors in the UK and beyond. With workshops and one to one tutorials, courses provide an atmosphere that enables writers to fully immerse themselves in their writing. The centre also offers writing retreats providing time and space, free from distractions, where writers can be part of a nurturing writing community. Other support offered by Moniack Mhor includes awards, bursaries, professional residencies to develop works in progress, mentoring, a Gaelic programme and a programme for young writers. <https://www.moniackmhor.org.uk/>

The Highland Society of London is a charity which exists to promote and support the traditions and culture of the Highlands of Scotland. www.highlandsocietyoflondon.org

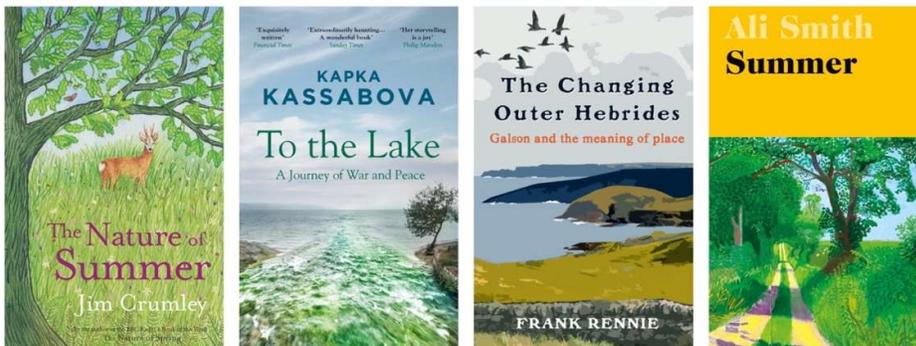
The first Ullapool Book Festival was held in May 2005 and it is the longest-running literary festival in the Highlands. It was founded by a group of literary enthusiasts in Ullapool Entertainments, the local voluntary arts organisation founded in 1982. Although it has to go digital this, year UBF looks forward to welcoming everyone back in 2022.

www.ullapoolbookfestival.co.uk

The family shareholders of William Grant & Sons established the William Grant Foundation in 2014 as a non-profit association to oversee and direct their charitable donations. The William Grant Foundation is committed to a future where everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to thrive, a belief that is deeply rooted in the core values shared by the family and the company.

www.williamgrantfoundation.org.uk

The shortlist was announced in March 2021.



***The Nature of Summer* by Jim Crumley**, published by Saraband (nature and environment)

***To The Lake: A Balkan Journey of War and Peace* by Kapka Kassabova**, published by Granta (memoir, reportage, travel)

***The Changing Outer Hebrides: Galson and the Meaning of Place* by Frank Rennie**, published by Acair Books (history and nature)

***Summer* by Ali Smith**, published by Hamish Hamilton (fiction)