



HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE  
DUAIS LEABHAIR NA GÀIDHEALTACHD

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Highland Book Prize 2023 Longlist Announced**



HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE LONGLIST  
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2023



The Highland Book Prize has announced its 2023 Longlist. Now in its seventh year, this year's list sees strong representation from non-fiction, reflecting current publishing trends, as well as literary fiction, poetry, and commissioned works from well-known Scottish authors on key moments in Highland history.

The prize, presented by Moniack Mhor, Scotland's National Writing Centre, and the Highland Society of London, celebrates literature that comes from the rich landscape and culture of the Scottish Highlands and Islands. This includes books written by authors who live in the Highlands or were born there, as well as books whose content is Highland themed.

Twelve books were selected from 76 eligible submitted titles by a team of volunteer readers with a diverse range of backgrounds and experience, in conjunction with the judging panel, Moniack Mhor, and the Highland Society of London.



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The judging panel will now review each of the twelve titles to select a shortlist and, ultimately, a winner. The 2023 Judging Panel are poet and essayist, Jen Hadfield, whose collection *The Stone Age* won the 2021 Highland Book Prize; acclaimed multi-award winning fiction writer Cynan Jones; and Peter Mackay, poet, lecturer and broadcaster, whose collection *Nàdar De* was longlisted for the 2020 Highland Book Prize. Alex Ogilvie, Trustee for the Highland Society of London, is non-voting Chair.

**Highland Book Prize Longlist 2023**

- *The Bone Cave: A Journey Through Myth and Memory*, Dougie Strang  
(Non-Fiction, Birlinn)
- *Briny*, Mandy Haggith  
(Poetry, Red Squirrel Press)
- *Columba's Bones*, David Greig  
(Fiction, Birlinn)
- *Elixir: In the Valley at the End of Time*, Kapka Kassabova  
(Non-Fiction, Jonathan Cape)
- *Footprints in the Woods: The Secret Life of Forest and Riverbank*, John Lister Kaye  
(Non-Fiction, Canongate)
- *Kitchen Music*, Lesley Harrison  
(Poetry, Carcanet Press)
- *Nothing Left to Fear from Hell*, Alan Warner  
(Fiction, Birlinn)
- *Sea Bean*, Sally Huband  
(Non-Fiction, Penguin)
- *Study for Obedience*, Sarah Bernstein  
(Fiction, Granta)
- *Turas*, Iain D. Urchardan  
(Poetry, Acair)
- *Wild Air: In Search of Birdsong*, James Macdonald Lockhart  
(Non-Fiction, Fourth Estate)
- *Wild History: Journeys into Lost Scotland*, James Crawford  
(Non-Fiction, Birlinn)



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The shortlist will be announced in May 2024. The winner will be revealed at an award ceremony which this year is being held in partnership with Nairn Book & Arts Festival on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

**Speaking about the selection process, Rachel Humphries, Centre Director at Moniack Mhor said,** ‘We congratulate each of the longlisted authors and their publishers. One of Moniack Mhor’s key aims is to foster the creation of new literature, and so is a joy to see the quality of the work being inspired by the Highlands, and being written and produced in the Highlands. Our volunteer reading panel play an integral part in helping us to form the final longlist, and it is wonderful to bring in a wide range of voices to the process.’

ENDS

For more information, or to arrange interviews, contact Kirsteen Bell, Highland Book Prize Co-ordinator, on [highlandbookprize@moniackmhor.org.uk](mailto:highlandbookprize@moniackmhor.org.uk)

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

- Images and logos are available to download [here](#).
- Full bios for the judging panel are [available here](#).
- Additional statement from Moniack Mhor on diversity of this year’s submissions available [here](#).
- **The Highland Book Prize**, established in 2017, celebrates the finest published work that recognises the rich talent, landscape, and cultural diversity of the Highlands.

This annual prize is open to work in fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

Presented by the Highland Society of London and facilitated by Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre, this literary prize aims to bring recognition to books created in or about the Highlands, and is open to books written about the Highlands & Islands; books written by residents of the Highlands & Islands; and writers who were born in the Highlands & Islands.



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The winner is awarded £2000 prize money and a week's writing retreat at Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre.

The [William Grant Foundation](#) provides funding to encourage public engagement with the Highland Book Prize.

[www.highlandbookprize.org.uk](http://www.highlandbookprize.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](http://www.highlandsocietyoflondon.org)

- **Moniack Mhor Writers' Centre** is situated in a beautiful rural location in the Scottish Highlands, Teavarran, Kiltarlity, 14 miles outside Inverness. Since 1993, Moniack Mhor has been working with the finest writers from the UK and beyond to deliver creative writing courses, retreats, and other support for writers of all ages and abilities and from all walks of life.

Moniack Mhor is a registered charity and is supported by Creative Scotland as a Regularly Funded Organisation. It also offers courses, mentoring and a leadership programme for care experienced young people aged 14-26 in Scotland, via funding from Life Changes Trust.

The Centre also facilitates several writing awards as well as providing residential opportunities for professional, published artists to develop their work. It works closely with other key Scottish literature organisations and other UK and international partners, and runs a broad community programme. It also runs a wide programme of creative opportunities for care experienced young people in Scotland and provides writing tuition in Highland schools.

Moniack Mhor champions equality and aims to break down barriers to the creative process, including offering a bursary scheme to support fees where needed.

[www.moniackmhor.org.uk](http://www.moniackmhor.org.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](http://www.williamgrantfoundation.org.uk)