

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

**FINAL JUDGING PANEL ANNOUNCED FOR
2012 COSTA BOOK OF THE YEAR**

- **Writer, journalist and broadcaster, Dame Jenni Murray, to chair**
- **Actress Jenny Agutter, actor and writer Sophie Ward, author and comedian Mark Watson and broadcaster Katie Derham confirmed as final judges**
- **Authors Wendy Holden, D.J. Taylor, Daljit Nagra and Marcus Sedgwick complete the panel**

London, 19th December 2012: Writer, journalist and broadcaster, Jenni Murray DBE, will chair the final judging panel which selects the overall winner of the prestigious 2012 Costa Book of the Year, it was announced today.

The Costa Book Awards recognise the most enjoyable books of the last year by writers based in the UK and Ireland.

Dame Jenni Murray will chair a panel which includes actress Jenny Agutter, actor and writer, Sophie Ward and broadcaster Katie Derham.

The five category judging panels are represented by author and comedian Mark Watson (First Novel Award), Wendy Holden (Novel), D.J. Taylor (Biography), Daljit Nagra (Poetry) and Marcus Sedgwick (Children's Book Award).

The final judges will meet on Tuesday 29th January 2013 to select the winner of the Costa Book of the Year, which will be announced at an awards ceremony later that evening.

The ceremony, hosted by presenter and broadcaster Penny Smith, will take place at Quaglino's in central London.

"Costa is delighted to have a final judging panel of such distinguished personalities, all of whom share a passion for great writing and a good read," said Christopher Rogers, Managing Director at Costa. "It's never an easy task to single out one Book of the Year which stands out above the rest, but we're thrilled to have such a fine panel of strong-minded people to undertake the task this year."

Former final judges have included Hugh Dennis, Elizabeth McGovern, David Morrissey, Rosamund Pike, Gary Kemp, Erin O'Connor, Alex James, Emilia Fox, Marie Helvin, Michael

Morpurgo, Hugh Grant, Caroline Quentin, Ralph Fiennes, Jerry Hall, Ian Hislop, Jonathan Ross and Kirsty Young.

Recent winners of the Book of the Year include Andrew Miller (2011), Jo Shapcott (2010), Christopher Reid (2009), Sebastian Barry (2008), A.L. Kennedy (2007), Stef Penney (2006), Hilary Spurling (2005), Andrea Levy (2004), Mark Haddon (2003), Kate Atkinson (1995), Philip Pullman, Seamus Heaney and the late Ted Hughes.

Each of the category award-winning authors receives £5,000 and the overall Costa Book of the Year winner will be presented with a cheque for £30,000. This is the 41st year of the prize. This year, for the first time, the winner of the Costa Short Story Award – voted for by the general public - will also be announced at the awards ceremony.

For more information on this year's Costa Book Awards, go to www.costabookawards.com.

-ENDS-

For further press information, images or to arrange an interview with a final judge, please contact:

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Notes for Editors:

About the Costa Book Awards:

- The Costa Book Awards, formerly the Whitbread Book Awards, were established in 1971 to encourage, promote and celebrate the best contemporary British writing.
- The total prize fund for the Costa Book Awards stands at £55,000. The award winners from the five categories - Novel, First Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book - each receive £5,000.
- The overall Costa Book of the Year is selected from the five category Award winners with the winner receiving a further £30,000.
- The winner will be announced at the awards ceremony hosted in central London on 29th January, 2013.
- To be eligible for the 2012 awards, books must have been first published in the UK or Ireland between 1 November 2011 and 31 October 2012.
- The 2011 winner of the Costa Book of the Year was Andrew Miller for *Pure* (Sceptre).

About Costa:

Costa is the UK's favourite coffee shop having been awarded "**Best Branded Coffee Shop Chain in the UK and Ireland**" by Allegra Strategies for two years running (November 2010 & November 2011).

Winner of "Best Branded Coffee Chain in Europe" Allegra Strategies November 2011

- Costa was founded by Italian brothers Sergio and Bruno Costa in 1971.
- Costa is the nation's favourite coffee shop brand and has grown to become the sector leader within the UK and the second largest international coffee shop operator. At present the company has more than 2,300 stores across the UK, EMEI and Asia.
- Just 1% of the world's production of coffee is good enough for us to choose from. Only the very best 100% RFA certified coffee available can go into creating the unique taste and aroma of our Mocha Italia blend.

- Costa is committed to looking after our coffee-growers. That's why we've established The Costa Foundation, a registered charity. The Foundation's aims are to relieve poverty, advance education and the health and environment of coffee-growing communities around the world. So far, we have funded the building of 22 schools and improved the social and economic welfare of coffee-growing communities in countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Uganda and Vietnam – making a very real difference to thousands of children.

2012 Costa Book Awards

Final Judging Panel Biographies

Jenni Murray DBE (Chairman): Writer, journalist and broadcaster

Jenni is one of radio and television's most respected broadcasters. Her wide-ranging expertise in politics, business and the arts has led commentators to write admiringly of her "well-stocked mind". Her interviews with the powerful are described as "probing", "steely" and "no-nonsense", and her knowledge of the arts is matchless.

Jenni was made a DBE in 2011, in recognition of her work in broadcasting for over 40 years. Her voice, which the veteran broadcaster and journalist Charles Wheeler described as 'the most beautiful voice on radio, ever' has often helped to temper the often difficult and controversial issues she has addressed and presented to her audience on an almost daily basis.

Born and educated in Barnsley, she has a degree in French and Drama from Hull University. She also has Honorary Degrees from a number of universities including Bradford, Bristol, St Andrews, Hull and the Open University.

Jenni is the author of several books including *My Boy Butch* (2011) and *Memoirs of a Not So Dutiful Daughter* (2008). She also writes for numerous newspapers and magazines, including the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mail*.

She lives in Cheshire with her partner and the now legendary Chihuahuas - Butch and Frieda - and has two sons - one a vet, the other a photo-journalist.

Jenny Agutter OBE: Actress

Jenny Agutter trained at Elmhurst Ballet School. At the age of eleven she was cast as a young dancer in Walt Disney's film *Ballerina*. She first played Roberta in *The Railway Children* on television when she was fourteen and again in the film almost three years later.

In 1971 Jenny played Fritha in the BBC TV film of *The Snow Goose*, for which she won an Emmy. She joined the Royal National Theatre in 1973 to play Miranda in Sir Peter Hall's production of *The Tempest* with Sir John Gielgud. Aged 21, she went to live in Los Angeles for a number of years, returning in 1990.

Jenny's films include *Logan's Run*, *The Eagle has Landed*, *American Werewolf in London*, and *Equus* for which she won a British Academy Award. Most recently she was in Joss Whedon's *Avengers Assemble* for Paramount.

She has also maintained a career in the theatre with companies including the RSC and the National Theatre, playing in the West End and on Broadway. On television she was Tessa in *Spooks*, played opposite John Hurt in *The Alan Clark Diaries* and, more recently, was in *The Invisibles*. She is currently filming the second series of *Call the Midwife*.

Jenny has recorded several books on tape including *The Secret Garden* and *Music and Silence*. She was recently awarded an OBE in the Queen's Honours List.

Katie Derham: Broadcaster

Katie Derham is one of Britain's best-loved television and radio presenters. Known for many years as a news anchor on ITV, she's now the face of the BBC Proms, and a regular presenter on BBC Radio 3 and 4.

Having arrived at ITV News via the varied delights of BBC's *Moneybox* and Barry Norman's Film show, she spent 12 extremely happy years as both Media Editor and Newsreader, both out on the road and anchoring in the studio.

In 2008 Katie was asked to take part in a BBC programme which would change her life. *Maestro*, the reality show in which celebrities learned to conduct an orchestra, reminded her just how much she loved music. Sky Arts then helped confirm that by asking her to take part in *First Love*, a programme in which she re-learned the violin, and performed at King's Place. An invitation to then be the first regular face of the BBC Proms since Richard Baker was an offer she couldn't turn down, and in 2010 she left ITV News to start a new chapter.

Katie regularly hosts conferences and awards ceremonies and is actively involved in a number of charities: an ambassador for the Princes Trust and Leonard Cheshire Disability, a patron of For Dementia, Arts for Dementia, Eastside Educational Trust and the St Peter and St James Hospice, and vice president of Music in Hospitals and the Cambridge Summer Music Festival.

Katie is married to John Vincent, co-founder of Leon Restaurants and founder of Flat Planet. They have two daughters, Natasha and Eleanor.

Daljit Nagra: Poet (representing the Poetry Award category)

Daljit Nagra comes from a Punjabi background. He was born and raised in London then Sheffield and has won several prestigious prizes for his poetry including, in 2004, the Forward Prize for Best Individual Poem with *Look We Have Coming to Dover!* This was also the title of his first collection which was published by Faber & Faber in 2007 and won the Forward Prize for Best First Collection and The South Bank Show Decibel Award.

His second collection, *Tippoo Sultan's Incredible White-Man Eating Tiger Toy-Machine!!!*, was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize. Daljit's poems have been published in many publications including the *London Review of Books* and *Poetry Review*.

A regular contributor to BBC radio, he's written articles for the *Financial Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Observer* and *The Times of India*.

D.J. Taylor: Writer and historical biographer (representing the Biography Award category)

D.J. Taylor is the author of ten novels, including *Derby Day* which was long-listed for the 2011 Man Booker Prize.

He has also written several works of non-fiction, including *Orwell: The Life*, which won the 2003 Whitbread Biography Award.

Wendy Holden: Novelist (representing the Novel Award category)

Wendy Holden was a journalist on the *Sunday Times*, *Tatler* and *The Mail on Sunday* before becoming a full-time author.

She has written nine novels, all *Sunday Times* Top Ten bestsellers. She regularly writes features for newspapers and magazines on a wide range of social, topical and lifestyle subjects and is also a regular TV and radio contributor. She is married with two young children and lives in Derbyshire.

Marcus Sedgwick: Author (representing the Children's Book Award category)

Marcus Sedgwick was born and raised in East Kent and now divides his time between a small village near Cambridge and the mountains of Switzerland.

Alongside a 16-year career in publishing, he established himself as a widely-admired writer of Young Adult fiction and is the winner of many prizes, most notably the Branford Boase Award for a debut novel (*Floodland*), and the Booktrust Teenage Prize (*My Swordhand is Singing*). His books have been shortlisted for over thirty other awards, including the Carnegie Medal (four times), the Edgar Allan Poe Award (twice) and the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize (four times). He now writes full-time, is Writer-in-Residence at Bath Spa University, teaches creative writing, and is currently working on film and other projects.

Sophie Ward: Actor and writer

Sophie is an actor and writer who trained at the Anna Scher Theatre in North London. Her theatre credits include a wide variety of productions including *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *An Ideal Husband*, *Three Sisters*, *Turn of the Screw*, *Flare Path*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Private Lives* and *Blithe Spirit*. Her film credits include *Jane Eyre*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Little Dorrit*, *Aria*, *Young Sherlock Holmes* and *Return to Oz*. Her television credits include *Secret State*, *Hustle*, *New Tricks*, *Law and Order*, *Land Girls*, *Lewis*, *Casualty*, *Holby City*, *A Village Affair*, *A Dark Adapted Eye*, and *The Shell Seekers*.

She writes a monthly column for g3 magazine and has just finished her first novel, *The Schoolhouse*. She is currently on tour in Agatha Christie's *Go Back For Murder* and is studying for her PhD in Creative Writing at Goldsmiths College, London.

Mark Watson: Author and comedian (representing the First Novel Award category)

Mark Watson is an acclaimed novelist and comedian, best-known for his appearances on *Mock the Week*, *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*, *Have I Got News for You* and Michael McIntyre's *Comedy Roadshow* as well as the Edinburgh Fringe.

Mark has written four novels that, between them, have been published in over a dozen languages worldwide: *Bullet Points* (2004), *A Light-Hearted Look At Murder* (2007), the internationally bestselling *Eleven* (2010), and his latest, *The Knot*. He also wrote, *Crap at the Environment* (2008), following his own efforts to halve his carbon footprint over the course of one year which was the BBC Radio 4's Book of the Week. Future writing projects include an as-yet untitled graphic novel and more full-length fiction.