



Judges Announced for 2015 Costa Book Awards

Key Dates:

Category Shortlists announced: Tuesday 17th November 2015

Category Winners announced: Monday 4th January 2016

Costa Book of the Year: Tuesday 26th January 2016

London, 23rd September 2015: Costa, the nation's favourite coffee shop, today announces the judging panels for the 2015 Costa Book Awards, which is open to writers based in the UK and Ireland.

They include writers Matt Haig, Louise Doughty, Martyn Bedford and Jane Shilling, poet and children's author Julia Copus and biographer and broadcaster Penny Junor.

The full panels are listed below:

COSTA FIRST NOVEL AWARD

Hannah Beckerman: *Author and Journalist*

Lauren Hadden: *Deputy Editor, Psychologies Magazine*

Matt Haig: *Writer*

COSTA NOVEL AWARD

Louise Doughty: *Novelist*

David Headley: *Managing Director, Goldsboro Books*

Cathy Rentzenbrink: *Books Editor, The Bookseller; Director, Quick Reads*

COSTA BIOGRAPHY AWARD

Simon Heafield: *Marketing Manager, Foyles*

Penny Junor: *Journalist, Biographer and Broadcaster*

Jane Shilling: *Author and Critic*

COSTA POETRY AWARD

Julia Copus: *Poet and Children's Author*

Adam Newey: *Poetry Critic*

Melanie Prince: *Co-Owner of The Poetry Bookshop, Hay-on-Wye*

COSTA CHILDREN'S BOOK AWARD

Martyn Bedford: *Writer*

Melissa Cox: *Head of Children's Buying for Waterstones*

Andrea Reece: *Managing Editor, Books for Keeps; Children's Books Reviewer and Specialist*

A total of 638 books were entered for this year's Costa Book Awards.

The Costa Book Awards have the single aim of celebrating the most enjoyable books of the last year by writers based in the UK and Ireland. Originally established in 1971 by Whitbread Plc, Costa announced its takeover of the sponsorship of the UK's most prestigious book prize in 2006.

Novel category judge, Louise Doughty, commented, "What's so impressive about the entries for this year's Costa Novel Award is the range and inventiveness of their subject matter. We've had imaginary worlds, time travel and hauntings, along with a wonderful number and variety of more traditional narrative tales; childhood reminiscences, thrilling plots, historical stories. It demonstrates what a broad church the world of the novel is in the UK today, what a glorious smorgasbord: there really is something for everyone."

Recent winners of the Costa Book of the Year include Helen Macdonald for *H is for Hawk* (2014), Nathan Filer for *The Shock of the Fall* (2013), Hilary Mantel for *Bring Up the Bodies* (2012), Andrew Miller for *Pure* (2011), Jo Shapcott for *Of Mutability* (2010), Christopher Reid for *A Scattering* (2009), Sebastian Barry for *The Secret Scripture* (2008), *Day* by A. L. Kennedy (2007) and Stef Penney for *The Tenderness of Wolves* (2006).

"Last year's judges chose a remarkable book as overall winner in *H is for Hawk* and, having spent a wonderful summer immersed in the contenders for this year's Costa Book Awards, I am absolutely certain that this year's crop of biographies promises to produce something equally remarkable," added **Penny Junor, Biography category judge**. "I have been knocked out by the depth of research, the scope, the originality and the talent in much of the writing. Narrowing it all down to one winner is going to be all but impossible."

The judges will select shortlists and winners in their respective categories (First Novel, Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book) and the five Award Winners will form the shortlist for the 2015 Costa Book of the Year, which will be announced at an awards ceremony in central London on Tuesday 26th January 2016.

In 2012, Costa launched the Costa Short Story Award, a new Award for a single short story run in association with the Costa Book Awards but judged independently of the main five-category system. The Award is for a single, previously unpublished short story of up to 4,000 words by an author aged 18 years or over and written in English.

A panel of five judges will select a shortlist of six entries which will be revealed in November 2015. The public will then be invited to vote online for their favourite story from the six finalists. The two runners-up and winner will be announced at the Costa Book Awards ceremony on 26th January 2016.

- Ends -

For further press information, please contact:

Amanda Johnson

Costa Book Awards Press and Publicity
Telephone: 07715 922180 (mobile)
Email: amanda@amandajohnsonpr.com

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 Costa Book Awards have the single aim of celebrating the most enjoyable books of the last year by writers based in the UK and Ireland and have five categories: Novel, First Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book.

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 five years running (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 & November 2014).

Winner of "Best Branded Coffee Chain in Europe" Allegra Strategies 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

With over 2,000 coffee shops in the UK and more than 1,100 overseas, Costa is the fastest growing coffee shop business in the UK and the second largest coffee shop operator in the world. Founded in London by Italian brothers Sergio and Bruno Costa in 1971, Costa has become the UK's favourite coffee shop chain and diversified into both the at-home and gourmet self-serve markets.

Costa employs over 20,000 people and is creating around 1,500 jobs this year and over 4,500 jobs in the next three years in the UK. We continue to be part of the Sunday Times Best Companies To Work For list.

Costa is committed to looking after coffee-growers. That's why we've established The Costa Foundation, a registered charity. The Costa Foundation's aims are to relieve poverty, advance education and the health and environment of coffee-growing communities around the world. So far, The Costa Foundation has funded the building of 47 schools and improved the social and economic welfare of coffee-growing communities.