

# 2018 Costa Book of the Year: Final Judging Panel



## **Sophie Raworth (Chairman): BBC presenter and journalist**

Sophie Raworth is a BBC presenter and journalist. She presents the *BBC's News at One* and frequently appears on the 6 and 10 o'clock news. Sophie is a regular member of the BBC's events team and has covered everything from the Royal Wedding to the 2012 Olympics. She's also fronted several documentaries including *The Trouble with Working Women* for BBC2 and several Panoramas, including *Too Much Too Young* on the sexualisation of children. Sophie joined the BBC as a trainee in 1993 and worked as a producer and reporter before joining *BBC Breakfast* in 1997. Sophie has

previously judged the Women's Prize for Fiction and the Costa First Novel Award. An avid reader, she has her own book website: [www.readbyraworth.com](http://www.readbyraworth.com)



## **Kate Humble: Writer and broadcaster**

Kate Humble is a writer and television presenter specialising in live and factual programming. Her television series include *Back to the Land*, *Arctic Live*, *Lambing Live*, *Springwatch*, *Yellowstone* and *Off the Beaten Track*. She also presented the award-winning comedy game show *Wild Things*, wildlife quiz *Curious Creatures* and has made guest appearances on *Would I Lie to You*, *8 out of 10 Cats* and *Countdown*. She's the author of three books including the recently-published *Thinking on My Feet: The Small Joys of Putting One Foot in Front of The Other*. She's been a columnist for *The Telegraph*, *Top Sante*, *Country Smallholding* and regularly writes for *The Telegraph* Travel and Weekend sections. Kate set up *Humble by Nature*, a rural skills centre on her farm in Wales and founded *Humble*, a range of

environmentally friendly, biodegradable bath and beauty products. She was the first female president of the RSPB for 110 years, is currently president of WWT and is a qualified commercial diver.



## **Rachel Joyce: Author (representing the Novel Award category)**

Rachel Joyce moved to writing after a long career as an actor, performing leading roles for the RSC, the National Theatre and Cheek by Jowl. She's the author of a collection of interlinked short stories, *A Snow Garden & Other Stories* as well as international bestsellers including *The Love Song of Miss Queenie Hennessy* and *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, longlisted for the 2012 Man Booker Prize. Rachel was named National Book Awards New Writer of the Year in 2012 and was shortlisted for the 2014 UK Author of the Year. She's also written over twenty original afternoon plays and adaptations of the classics for BBC Radio 4.



**Mimi Khalvati: Poet  
(representing the Poetry Award category)**

Mimi Khalvati was born in Iran but has lived most of her life in England. She's published eight collections with Carcanet Press, including *The Meanest Flower* (shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize) and *Child: New and Selected Poems*, which was a Poetry Book Society Special Commendation. She was the founder of The Poetry School and now works as a freelance mentor and poetry tutor. She's a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and of The English Society.



**Prue Leith CBE, DL: Cook, novelist, entrepreneur and TV personality**

Prue's main interests - food, business, education and writing - have led to a varied career. Now a judge on *The Great British Bake Off* (*Channel 4*), she is much in demand as a serious and knowledgeable speaker on education, the importance of good food and on women in business. She started in catering with Leith's Good Food, followed by Leith's Restaurant, which won a Michelin star, and Leith's School of Food and Wine. A prolific food writer, her latest cook book *PRUE* was published in September; she has also published a memoir, *Relish*, and eight novels including the *Food of Love* trilogy, currently in development as a TV series. She has also been a food columnist for the

*Daily Mail, Sunday Express, the Guardian and the Daily Mirror*

Prue has been deeply involved in food in education, starting and chairing the charity Focus on Food and the Hoxton Apprentice. She was the Chair of the School Food Trust and is also Patron of the Prue Leith Chef's Academy in her native South Africa. She's also been active in general education, chairing Ashridge Management College, 3E's Enterprises and the RSA, and is Chancellor of Queen Margaret University. She received the CBE in 2010, *Veuve Clicquot* Businesswoman of the Year in 1990, and holds 13 honorary degrees or Fellowships from UK Universities.



**Rick O'Shea: RTE Broadcaster  
(representing the Children's Book Award category)**

Rick has been a presenter with Ireland's state broadcaster *RTE* since 2001 and currently presents weekday mornings on *RTE Gold*. He was previously with *RTE 2FM* for over 15 years and is the former presenter of *The Poetry Programme* on *RTE Radio 1*. He runs The Rick O'Shea Book Club (Ireland's largest with over 20,000 members) and, along with author Sinead Moriarty, recommends quarterly book choices for Ireland's largest book retailer, Eason. He also hosts events and public author interviews at arts festivals all across the country and is the literary curator of the Waterford Writers' Weekend. Outside the book world, he's been the National Patron of Epilepsy Ireland

since 2006.



**Sathnam Sanghera: Author and Journalist, The Times  
(representing the First Novel Award category)**

Sathnam Sanghera is an award-winning columnist and feature writer for *The Times*. He's been shortlisted for the Costa Book Awards twice: first for his memoir *The Boy With The Topknot* (adapted by BBC Drama in 2017) and subsequently for his novel *Marriage Material*. He's won numerous prizes for his journalism, including Young Journalist of the Year at the 2002 British Press Awards and Media Commentator of the Year in the 2015 Comment Awards. He comes from Wolverhampton.



**Anita Sethi: Journalist, Critic and Writer (representing the  
Biography Award category)**

Anita Sethi is an award-winning journalist, writer and critic who's written for publications including *The Guardian* and *Observer*, *Sunday Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Granta*, *The Pool* and *New Statesman*. She's also appeared on BBC radio, and has interviewed many writers, musicians, artists and politicians. Anita is a regular speaker and chair at festivals, and has been a writer-in-residence in Melbourne, Australia. She's been published in several anthologies including *Three Things I'd Tell My Younger Self* and in the forthcoming *Common People* and *Women on Nature*. She was born in Manchester.



**Simon Williams: Actor and Writer**

Simon is an actor and writer who currently plays Justin Elliott in *The Archers* on BBC Radio 4. Of many film roles, his most recent are in *The Viceroy's House* and *Goodbye Christopher Robin*. His last London stage appearance was in Alan Bennett's *Allelujah!* and before that he appeared in *Versailles* at the Donmar and in the stage version of *Chariots of Fire*. Long ago he played Captain Bellamy in *Upstairs Downstairs* and he's soon to be seen in *Poldark*. Other television credits include *Sensitive Skin*, *Dr Who*, *Don't Wait Up*, *Sherlock Holmes*, *Midsomer Murders*, *Spooks*, *Bletchley Park* and *Eastenders*. Simon has written six stage plays and two novels and currently has a weekly column in *The Telegraph Magazine*. He has seven grandchildren and lives with his wife, Lucy Fleming, and their cockapoo in Oxfordshire.