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NEW WELSH WRITING AWARDS 2017

Press Release

Thursday 4 May 2017

Under Embargo until 7.30pm, Thursday 4 May 2017

WOMEN DOMINATE CATEGORIES FOR NOVELLA AND MEMOIR IN NEW WELSH REVIEW'S WRITING PRIZE FOR SHORT BOOKS

[New Welsh Writing Awards 2017: Shortlist Announcements for the Aberystwyth University Prize for Memoir and the Americymru Prize for the Novella](#)

New Welsh Review, in association with Aberystwyth University and AmeriCymru, is delighted to announce two shortlists for the New Welsh Writing Awards 2017: the Aberystwyth University Prize for Memoir, and the AmeriCymru Prize for the Novella. Women writers dominate the shortlists in both categories, with two out of three women contesting the Memoir category, and an all-women final in the Novella prize. Last year's award, the University of South Wales Prize for Travel Writing, was won by Mandy Sutter's *Bush Meat*, a book that will be published by the magazine's imprint this autumn. 2015's winner, meanwhile, Eluned Gramich's *Woman Who Brings the Rain*, was shortlisted for the Wales Book of the Year Award last year. The Awards were established to champion short books of less than 30,000 words, in rotating categories that have so far comprised writing of nature, travel and memoir, as well as the novella.

Both new and established writers based in Wales, England and the US are in the running for the top prizes. The Memoir shortlist includes the true story of a Canadian hobo, an account of anorexia at Oxford University; and backpacking behind the iron curtain. The highly commended entries in the Memoir category feature a daughter's American road-trip to help reconcile her father and grandmother, an all-boys care-home in South Africa whose residents included a baboon, and a true tale of family rifts and reconciliation.

In the Novella category, sexual abuse and grooming are among the central themes, as well as the destructive power of archetypes and idylls, and escaping the shadow of a father figure. The highly commended entries feature homosexuality in a Welsh monastery, expat life in Cuba, and a haunting fictionalised account of Sylvia Plath's life.

New Welsh Review editor Gwen Davies judged both categories with help from students from Aberystwyth University. The winner for the Novella category will now be co-judged by Welsh-American writer David Lloyd. David is the author of nine books including poetry collections and novels, and directs the Creative Writing Program at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, NY. Gwen Davies, a literary translator in her spare time, will decide on the winning memoir next month.

The shortlist event will be held on Thursday 4 May, 6.30-8pm, in the Aberystwyth Arts Centre bookshop. It will feature a panel interview of shortlisted memoirist Adam Somerset and shortlisted novella writer Nicola Daly by judge Gwen Davies.

The winners will be announced at a special event at Hay Festival on 1 June, 2017, where Gwen Davies will make adjudications for winners of both the memoir and the novella, and also present a short film interpretation of the winners, made by Aberystwyth University graduate, Emily Roberts. Each category winner will receive £1,000 cash, e-publication by New Welsh Review on their New Welsh Rarebyte imprint and a positive critique by leading literary agent Cathryn Summerhayes at Curtis Brown. Second prize for each category is a weeklong residential course at Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre in Gwynedd, north Wales and third prize is a weekend stay at Gladstone's Library in Flintshire, north Wales. All six winners will also receive a one-year subscription to New Welsh Review. In addition, New Welsh Review will publish the highly commended and shortlisted nominees in a forthcoming edition of its creative magazine *New Welsh Reader* with an associated standard fee.

The Awards are open to all writers based in the UK and Ireland plus those who live overseas who have been educated in Wales. The AmeriCymru Prize for the Novella was also open to writers based in the US and Canada.

Congratulations to our shortlisted and highly commended writers below:

Aberystwyth University Prize for Memoir Shortlist

Catherine Haines (Charing, Kent) *My Oxford*

Mary Oliver (Newlyn, Cornwall) *The Case*

Adam Somerset (Aberaeron, Wales) *People, Places, Things: A Life with the Cold War*

Highly Commended

Maria Apichella (Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk) *The Red Circle*

Liz Jones (Aberystwyth, Wales) *On Shifting Sands*

Amanda and Robert Oosthuizen (Eastleigh, Hampshire) *Boystown S.A.*

AmeriCymru Prize for the Novella Shortlist

Cath Barton (Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, Wales) *The Plankton Collector*

Nicola Daly (Chester, Cheshire) *The Night Where You No Longer Live*

Olivia Gwyne (Newcastle Upon Tyne, Northumberland) *The Seal*

Highly Commended

Rebecca Casson (Holywell, Flintshire, Wales) *Infirmarian*

Barbara de la Cuesta (Seaside Heights, New Jersey, US) *Exiles*

Atar Hadari (Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire) *Burning Poets*

The 2017 Awards are sponsored by Aberystwyth University, the core sponsor and host of New Welsh Review, and US online magazine and social network AmeriCymru. The Awards are run in partnership with Curtis Brown, Gladstone's Library and Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre.

For more details on the Awards and for interview requests please contact Jamie Harris on marketing@newwelshreview.com or 07812 804505