



## PRESS RELEASE

# Wales Book of the Year 2010 Longlists announced

From the tales of the Mabinogi to an account of a rural Welsh childhood in the 1920s and the diary of a modern-day police officer on the beat, the longlist for the Wales Book of the Year features an eclectic mix of subject matter and genres.

The longlists for the eighteenth Wales Book of the Year – Wales's premier award for literature - were announced today, Tuesday 20 April at The Management Centre, Bangor Business School, North Wales. The awards, worth £10,000 to the winners, are presented to the best books of the year in the English and Welsh language.

The English language judges are poet and lecturer at the University of Wales, **Ian Gregson** (chair); fiction writer, **James Hawes** and broadcaster **Sara Edwards**.

The list includes debut novels from **Mike Thomas** and **Terri Wiltshire**; **Alun Trevor**'s memoir of a Welsh childhood; travel writing by **Horatio Clare**; short stories from **Emyr Humphreys** and poetry from **Jasmine Donahaye**, **Philip Gross** and **Richard Marggraf Turley**. **Peter Lord** is nominated for his scholarly account of the history of Welsh painting and **Nikolai Tolstoy** for his analysis of the origins of the Mabinogi.

**Ian Gregson**, Chair of the English-language judges said:

'This year's list is especially exciting because almost all the best books this year were by lesser-known or younger writers, notably the two novelists and the three poets. It's also conspicuously varied in terms of genre: as well as poetry and novels, it includes nature-writing, life-writing, short stories, and two books of intriguing and challenging critical exegesis.'

**Peter Finch**, Academi Chief Executive commented:

'The Wales Book of the Year Award means something. It marks longlisted authors as winners and gives readers a pretty reliable indication of which books they should tackle next. This year's list includes a number of new names – a sure indicator of the vibrancy of Welsh culture – and stretches itself right across the forms. Poetry battles with short fiction, criticism is ranged against the novel. Who will win? Watch this space.'

On Sunday 6 June, the shortlist of three books in each language will be announced at the Guardian Hay Festival. The winners will be announced on Wednesday 30 June at a gala dinner at St David's Hotel, Cardiff where the winners in each language will receive a cheque for £10,000 and four runners-up will each receive £1,000.

The Wales Book of the Year is administered by Academi, and funded by the Arts Council of Wales through its income from the Welsh Assembly Government.

## Wales Book of the Year 2010 Longlist

Horatio Clare	<i>A Single Swallow</i>	Vintage
Jasmine Donahaye	<i>Self-Portrait as Ruth</i>	Salt Modern Poets
Philip Gross	<i>I Spy Pinhole Eye</i>	Cinnamon Press
Emyr Humphreys	<i>The Woman at the Window</i>	Seren
Peter Lord	<i>The Meaning of Pictures</i>	University of Wales Press
Mike Thomas	<i>Pocket Notebook</i>	Heinemann
Nikolai Tolstoy	<i>The Oldest British Prose Literature: The Compilation of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi</i>	Edward Mellen Press
Alun Trevor	<i>The Songbird is Singing</i>	Parthian
Richard Marggraf Turley	<i>Wan-Hu's Flying Chair</i>	Salt Modern Poets
Terri Wiltshire	<i>Carry Me Home</i>	Macmillan New Writing

The authors on the Welsh-language longlist are Siân Melangell Dafydd, John Davies, Hywel Griffiths, Caryl Lewis, Haf Llewelyn, D. Densil Morgan, Sian Owen, Manon Rhys, Cefin Roberts and Manon Steffan Ros.

### Notes to editors:

#### Wales Book of the Year Award

- The Wales Book of the Year prizes are awarded annually to the best Welsh language and English language works in the fields of creative writing and literary criticism. They are administered by the Academi with funding from the Arts Council of Wales.
- Prizes are awarded for the best books published in the previous calendar year, with £10,000 each awarded to the two winning titles. The two runners up in each category also receive £1,000.
- The award began in 1992. Previous English-language award winners include **Dannie Abse** (*The Presence*, 2008), **Lloyd Jones** (*Mr Cassini*, 2007), **Robert Minhinnick** (*To Babel and Back*, 2006), **Owen Sheers** (*The Dust Diaries*, 2005) and **Niall Griffiths** (*Stump*, 2004).
- The 2009 winners were **Deborah Kay Davies** for *Grace, Tamar and Laszlo the Beautiful* (Parthian) and **William Owen Roberts** for *Petrograd* (Barddas).

## Academi

- Yr Academi Gymreig is the Welsh National Literature Development Agency and Society for Authors. It was established in 1959, following discussions between Bobi Jones and Waldo Williams.
- In 1998 the Society's role increased greatly when it won the Arts Council of Wales franchise to become Wales' National Literature Promotion Agency.
- The Academi works in partnership with Tŷ Newydd Writing Centre in Llanystumdwy. The Academi works with the support of the Arts Council of Wales.
- The Academi is responsible for organising the Wales Book of the Year award, literary events (conferences, dinners, poetry tours, lectures), writers' bursaries, Writing Squads and various support schemes.
- Chief Executive is the writer and literary entrepreneur Peter Finch.
- The Academi has joined the Urdd, Diversions, Welsh National Opera and other organisations at the Wales Millennium Centre where it runs the Glyn Jones Centre.

**For further information, please contact:**

**The Welsh Academi**  
**Peter Finch, Chief Executive**  
**Meleri Mair Thomas, Literature Officer (and Welsh language award)**  
Mount Stuart House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FQ  
Phone 029 2047 2266  
Fax 029 2049 2930  
Email: [post@academi.org](mailto:post@academi.org)  
[www.academi.org/book-of-the-year](http://www.academi.org/book-of-the-year)

**Midas Public Relations (English language award)**  
Margot Weale, tel 0207 361 7881  
Email: [margot.weale@midaspr.co.uk](mailto:margot.weale@midaspr.co.uk)  
[www.midaspr.co.uk](http://www.midaspr.co.uk)

Author photos and jacket images are available on request.

## Wales Book of the Year 2010 – The Longlist

**Horatio Clare**

**A Single Swallow**

**Vintage**

*'Remarkably insightful and entertaining, with Clare proving himself to be the most enthusiastic, open-minded, intelligent and incorrigibly romantic of travellers.'* *Mail on Sunday*  
From the slums of Cape Town to the palaces of Algiers, through Pygmy villages where pineapples grow wild, to the Gulf of Guinea, across two continents and fourteen countries – to a barn in Wales, this epic journey is nothing to swallows, they do it twice a year. But for Horatio Clare, writer and birdwatcher, it's the expedition of a lifetime.

**Horatio Clare** is the author of *Running for the Hills* (nominated for the Guardian First Book Award and shortlisted for the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year) *Sicily through Writers' Eyes* and *Truant: Notes from the Slippery Slope*. His travel writing has been commissioned by *Condé Nast Traveller*, the *New Statesman* and the *Telegraph* and he has worked as producer for BBC Radio 3's 'Nightwaves' and 'The Verb.' He divides his time between Wales and Italy.

**Jasmine Donahaye**      **Self-Portrait as Ruth**      **Salt Modern Poets**  
'*Jasmine Donahaye's existential quest takes many routes that lead to arresting poems, the best of which catch you by the throat.*' Dannie Abse

A provocative collection of poetry exploring the subject of Israel-Palestine in sharp, accessible poems that avoid the conventional language or orientation of either Zionist or Palestinian solidarity. Jasmine Donahaye has published poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction and scholarship. Her first collection, *Misappropriations*, was shortlisted for the Jerwood Aldeburgh First Collection Prize in 2006, and her monograph *The Wales-Israel Tradition* will be published in 2010 by the University of Wales Press. She lives near Aberystwyth.

**Philip Gross**      **I Spy Pinhole Eye**      **Cinnamon Press**

Simon Denison uses a pinhole camera to transform that most mundane of objects – the footings of electricity pylons - while Philip Gross's poems explore the act of seeing and interpretation in a collaborative work that is meditative, playful and profound. **Philip Gross** is the author of twelve poetry collections, an award-winning poet, including the T S Eliot Prize 2010, as well as a fiction writer, dramatist and Professor of Creative Writing at Glamorgan University. He lives in Cardiff. **Simon Denison** is a lecturer in the history and interpretation of photography at Birmingham City University's Institute of Art and Design and the author of two photographic books, *The Human Landscape* (2002) and *Quarry Land* (2005).

**Emyr Humphreys**      **The Woman at the Window**      **Seren**  
'*A Welsh writer of European stature, Emyr Humphreys is at the height of his powers.*'

Stevie Davies

From the widow alone in the rectory drawing room to views across the sunny expanses of post-war Europe, Emyr Humphreys offers this urbane, mature collection of stories. His protagonists look back over the patterns of their lives and forward too, for the chance to untangle family relationships, rekindle lost loves, or find a home for themselves in familiar yet fresh surroundings. **Emyr Humphreys** is the author of twenty novels in English and Welsh, and has also published collections of stories and poetry. He has written screenplays and adapted other works for television and radio, in addition to producing and directing in both of those media. His novels have won the Arts Council of Wales Book of the Year, Hawthornden and other prizes. He lives in Anglesey.

**Peter Lord**      **The Meaning of Pictures**      **University of Wales Press**  
'*A must-buy for those who know of Lord's stunning contributions to Welsh culture*'

*Western Mail*

This book is about Welsh pictures painted between the 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and why they matter today. It mainly concerns how pictures are understood by the people who use them - patrons, museum curators, and the general public - rather than by the painters themselves, and asks how a tradition of art is created, and what effect it has on how a nation sees itself. **Peter Lord** is an established author and authority on Welsh art, and was research fellow at the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies from 1996 - 2003. He currently holds a part-time research fellowship at Swansea University. He lives in Aberystwyth.

**Mike Thomas**      **Pocket Notebook**      **Heinemann**

'*Pocket Notebook stuns like a truncheon, grips like a pair of handcuffs, crackles with charge like a taser. Reading it is like being caught up in a riot: exhilarating, terrifying – it has an unstoppable momentum.*' - Niall Griffiths.

A black comedy following policeman Jacob Smith's very public breakdown and subsequent fall from grace, all of which he meticulously records in his police notebook. **Mike Thomas** is a 38-year-old serving police officer and freelance writer who has published travel articles web shorts and short fiction. Currently studying for a Masters degree, he is married with two children. *Pocket Notebook* is his first novel.

