



EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01hrs GMT WEDNESDAY 11th JANUARY 2017

Celebrated panel of judges announced as the BBC NATIONAL SHORT STORY AWARD 2017 calls for submissions

Bestselling author JOANNA TROLLOPE; Baileys winner EIMEAR MCBRIDE; short story writer and IMPAC Award winner JON MCGREGOR and Man Booker Prize shortlistee SUNJEEV SAHOTA join DI SPEIRS, Books Editor at the BBC

WWW.BBC.CO.UK/NSSA

The BBC National Short Story Award with BookTrust calls for submissions for the 12th year today with No.1 bestselling author, **Joanna Trollope** chairing the judging panel for the 2017 award. Trollope, known as one of the most insightful chroniclers and social commentators writing today is also a long-time short story writer. Her eagerly anticipated 20th novel, *City of Friends*, will be published in February 2017.

Trollope is joined by an esteemed panel of award-winning writers and literary specialists: Baileys Prize winner, **Eimear McBride**; IMPAC Award winner, short story writer and academic, **Jon McGregor**; Encore Award winner **Sunjeev Sahota**; and returning judge **Di Speirs**, Books Editor at BBC Radio. All the judges are eager to read the best, and most innovative, works of short fiction from new and established writers. Last year's winner was **K J Orr** for her story 'Disappearances' with previous alumni including Lionel Shriver, Zadie Smith, Hilary Mantel and William Trevor.

The BBC National Short Story Award is one of the most prestigious for a single short story, with the winning author receiving £15,000, and four further shortlisted authors £600 each. The 2017 Award is open to UK residents or nationals, aged 18 or over, who have a history of publication in creative writing. The full Terms and Conditions will be available and submissions accepted online at www.bbc.co.uk/nssa from **9am Thursday 26th January 2017**. The deadline for receipt of entries is **9am Monday 6th March 2017**.

Joanne Trollope, Chair of the BBC National Short Story Award Judging Panel, said:

"It's an enormous pleasure and honour to be chairing the BBC Short Story Award for 2017. I am a huge fan of the short story as a genre, not least because it manages to create such a peculiarly intimate relationship between writer and reader, and I believe that relationship to be immensely

important to good writing. There is nothing like a short story, really, to humanise literature, from the greats of the past – Chekov, de Maupassant, William Trevor – to the greats of the present. It is wonderful to see the genre revive as it has, in no small part thanks to awards like this one. And the revival has revealed many hitherto unknown talents in this far from easy, if rewarding, genre. I look forward so much to reading the entries for 2017 – who knows what we will discover?”

Di Speirs, Editor of Books at BBC Radio and judge of the Award since its launch, said:

“I’m hugely excited about the twelfth BBC National Short Story Award – we have a wonderful panel of judges and given the great discoveries and delights of past years, I confidently predict there will be a huge range of stories, inspirational, entertaining and challenging, in our reading pile. I am really looking forward to reading authors new and old, and to bringing their work to BBC Radio 4’s eager audience of short story lovers.”

The shortlist will be announced on BBC Radio 4’s Front Row at **7.15pm on Friday 15th September 2017** (subject to change). Readings of the shortlisted stories will broadcast on BBC Radio 4 from **Monday 18th to Friday 22nd September** and the stories will be published in an Award anthology published by Comma Press. Interviews with the shortlisted writers will air from **Friday 15th September 2017** on Front Row. The announcement of the **BBC National Short Story Award 2017 with BookTrust winner** will be broadcast live from the Award ceremony on BBC Radio 4’s Front Row from 7.15pm on **Tuesday 3rd October 2017**.

THE JUDGES ON THIS YEAR’S PANEL ARE:

Eimear McBride trained at Drama Centre London. Her debut novel *A Girl is a Half-formed Thing* received a number of awards including the Goldsmiths Prize, the Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction and Irish Novel of the Year. She occasionally writes and reviews for the Guardian, *TLS* and the New Statesman. Her second novel *The Lesser Bohemians* was published in September 2016 by Faber & Faber. She lives in Norwich.

Jon McGregor is an award-winning writer and academic. He won the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award in 2012, the largest prize for a novel published in English and has twice been a runner-up in the BBC National Short Story Award. A writer of novels and short stories, Jon’s short story collection *This Isn’t the Sort of Thing That Happens to Someone Like You* is out now and his new novel, *Reservoir 13* is published by 4th Estate in April 2017. He is a Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Nottingham, where he edits *The Letters Page*, a literary journal in letters. He lives in Nottingham.

Sunjeev Sahota’s debut novel, *Ours are the Streets*, was published in 2011 and his second, *The Year of the Runaways*, won the Encore Award, the South Bank Sky Arts Award, and was shortlisted for the 2015 Man Booker Prize. He lives in Sheffield.

Di Speirs edited the Woman’s Hour serial for three years, produced the first ever Book of the Week, and has directed many Book at Bedtimes as well as dramas. She is now Editor, Books, leading the London Readings team and also editing Open Book and Book Club on BBC Radio 4 and World Book Club on the BBC World Service. A long-time advocate of the formidable power of the short story, she has been closely involved in the BBC National Short Story Award since its inception twelve years ago and is a regular judge on the panel.

Joanna Trollope is the author of many highly acclaimed and bestselling novels, including *The Rector's Wife*, *Marrying the Mistress* and *Daughters in Law*. She was appointed OBE in 1996, and a trustee of the National Literacy Trust in 2012. She has chaired the Whitbread and Orange Awards, as well as being a judge of many other literature prizes; she has been part of two DCMS panels on public libraries and is patron of numerous charities, including Meningitis Now, and Chawton House Library. In 2014, she updated Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* as the opening novel in the Austen Project. Her 20th novel, *City of Friends*, is published in February 2017. She lives in London.

NOTES TO EDITORS

KEY DATES:

- Submissions called for the **2017 BBC National Short Story Award with BookTrust on Wednesday 11th January 2017**.
- The full Terms and Conditions and online entry form will be available from **Thursday 26th January 2017** at www.bbc.co.uk/nssa. The deadline for receipt of entries is **9am (GMT), Monday 6th March 2017**.
- The shortlist will be announced on BBC Radio 4's Front Row at **7.15pm on Friday 15th September 2017** (subject to change).
- The shortlisted stories will run on BBC Radio 4 from **Monday 18th to Friday 22nd September from 3.30pm to 4pm**.
- The announcement of the **BBC National Short Story Award 2017 with BookTrust** winner will be broadcast live from the Award ceremony on BBC Radio 4's Front Row from 7.15pm on **Tuesday 3rd October 2017**.

ABOUT THE AWARD AND PARTNERS:

- **The BBC National Short Story Award with BookTrust** aims to expand opportunities for British writers, readers and publishers of the short story and honour the UK's finest exponents of the form. **James Lasdun** secured the inaugural Award in 2006 for 'An Anxious Man'. In 2012 when the Award expanded internationally for one year, **Miroslav Penkov** was victorious for his story, 'East of the West'. Last year, the Award was won by **K J Orr** for her story 'Disappearances'. **Sarah Hall, Jonathan Buckley, Julian Gough, Clare Wigfall, Kate Clanchy** and **David Constantine** have also carried off the Award with authors shortlisted in previous years including **Zadie Smith, Jackie Kay, William Trevor, Rose Tremain, and Naomi Alderman**.
- **The BBC National Short Story Award 2017 with BookTrust** is open to authors with a previous record of publication who are UK nationals or residents, aged 18 years or over. The story entered must either have been unpublished, or be first published or scheduled for publication after 1 January 2016. The story should have a maximum of 8000 words and must have been written in English. For full details, including the Entry Terms & Conditions and Entry Form, please visit www.bbc.co.uk/nssa after 26th January 2017.
- Follow the BBC National Short Story Award 2017 with BookTrust on Twitter via **#BBCNSSA #shortstories**

- **BBC Radio 4** is the world's biggest single commissioner of short stories, which attract more than a million listeners. Contemporary stories are broadcast every week, the majority of which are specially commissioned throughout the year. www.bbc.co.uk/radio4
- **BookTrust** is the largest children's reading charity in Britain. We work to inspire a love of reading in children because we know that reading can transform lives. We give out over 5 million carefully chosen books to children throughout the UK; every parent receives a BookTrust book in the baby's first six months. Our books, guidance and resources are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. Reading for pleasure has a dramatic impact on educational outcomes, well-being and social mobility, and is also a huge pleasure in itself. We are committed to starting children on their reading journey and supporting them throughout. www.booktrust.org.uk

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE AWARD PLEASE VISIT www.bbc.co.uk/nssa

**For AWARD PRESS ENQUIRIES contact Emma Draude at emma@edpr.co.uk or
on 020 7732 4796/07801 307735**

**or for BBC RADIO 4 PRESS ENQUIRIES contact Isobel Pyrke at isobel.pyrke@bbc.co.uk
or on 020 3614 3888**