

I'm absolutely thrilled with the longlists for this year's Crown Awards. Brilliant story-telling from accomplished authors, fresh and exciting voices, original researches and fascinating perspectives on histories familiar and strange. It is clear that writers of all kinds are discovering rich and varied inspiration in the past, re-inventing, re-creating and re-examining it for contemporary readers. It's a pleasure and a privilege to celebrate all of these authors and their work.

Imogen Robertson – Chair, Historical Writers' Association

HWA Non-Fiction Crown 2017 Longlist

- In alphabetical order -

Daniel Beer- *The House of the Dead: Siberian Exile Under the Tsars*

Siberia doesn't seem a subject to warm to, but Daniel Beer brings important new insights with this fresh look at the history of a place better known for Soviet era exile. With excellent primary research providing considerable human detail, this is an authoritative, illuminating and compelling read.

David Bellos- *The Novel of the Century: The Extraordinary Adventures of Les Misérables*

Subject and structure come together in David Bellos' engaging book to produce an insightful and eminently enjoyable history of, and companion to, the great French novel. Easy to read, hard to put down.

Erica Benner- *Be Like the Fox: Machiavelli's Lifelong Quest for Freedom*

Almost the definition of revisionist history; Erica Benner produces a well-researched, forceful and thought-provoking biography of Niccolò Machiavelli portraying him as a complex and much maligned man with a strong sense of irony. This is a lively and engaging study told with empathy, passion and imagination.

Jerry Brotton- *This Orient Isle: Elizabethan England and the Islamic World*

In tracing the encounters between Elizabethan England and the Islamic world, Jerry Brotton has unearthed a fascinating and much neglected history that resonates powerfully today. The drama of these meetings of culture and character provide an engaging thread woven through the layers of this story. This is a huge and important story told with great brio.

David Cesarani- *Final Solution: The Fate of the Jews 1933-1949*

Deliberately narrated as history without hindsight, David Cesarani carefully builds evidence for the case that although anti-Semitism was at the heart of Hitler's worldview, Nazi policy evolved opportunistically and

often inefficiently, even chaotically. This is an important book that gives both voice and agency to victims, survivors, and perpetrators.

Lara Feigel- *The Bitter Taste of Victory: Life, Love and Art in the Ruins of the Reich*

This compelling social history is powered by the diverse narratives of a group of writers and artists arriving in Germany at the traumatic end of the Second World War, to witness or help facilitate the cultural reconstruction of a shattered nation. Written with passion and humanity, Lara Feigel explores the relationship between social history and individual perspective to provide a very accessible and engaging take on a fascinating moment in history.

Christopher de Hamel- *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts*

Carefully, at times clinically, breathing new life into a fine selection of manuscripts, Christopher de Hamel reclaims not only the value of his chosen works, but that of investing in attentive reading. On the way he reveals not only the knowledge, intentions and perspectives of his chosen authors and illuminators, but also the histories and changing value of the books as objects. The result is a beautiful and quietly passionate volume, lent appeal by de Hamel's warm humour and weight by his academic authority. One to savour a chapter at a time.

Adam Hochschild- *Spain in Our Hearts: Americans in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939*

Another well-researched, beautifully structured and vividly evoked history from Adam Hochschild. The focus on the American engagement with the Spanish Civil War enables Hochschild to present a new perspective on this fascinating conflict, but essentially this is great storytelling, lucid, often poignant, and compulsively readable.

Anna Keay- *The Last Royal Rebel: The Life and Death of James, Duke of Monmouth*

Excellent research underpins this riveting biography. Anna Keay has a cracking sense of history and drama, but also presents a new and nuanced portrait of her subject, James, Duke of Monmouth.

Daniel Todman- *Britain's War: Into Battle, 1937-1941*

By comprehensively linking Britain's various home and fighting fronts during the conflict, Daniel Todman provides an impressive new

perspective on the Second World War, while the fluid but anecdote rich narrative keeps the history engaging.

Alex von Tunzelmann- *Blood and Sand: Suez, Hungary and the Crisis that Shook the World*

Alex von Tunzelmann keeps a tight focus on the key days and personalities to navigate and illuminate the complex twin crises in Egypt and Hungary in 1956. With her excellent eye for telling detail, impressive character critique and dry sense of humour, von Tunzelmann delivers a confident and engrossing history that wears its impressive scholarship lightly.

Frances Wilson -*Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey*

In this brilliant, innovative biography, Frances Wilson evokes and illuminates her subject through the book's structure and language as well as her own historical research and literary analysis. Choosing to explore moral and emotional truths, as well as the 'hard facts' Virginia Woolf claimed were de Quincey's 'enemy', Wilson convincingly builds a rich portrait of this deeply flawed but fascinating man's very being, as well as his doing. Scholarly, imaginative, often lyrical, at times unsettling, but always captivating.

QUOTE FROM CLARE MULLEY, CHAIR HWA NON FICTION CROWN

I was delighted by the number of entries for this inaugural prize, and plunged into reading across centuries and genres. Despite a strong field, every book on this long list of 12 really stood out not just for the quality of research and writing, but for the vision of the book.

HWA Debut Crown 2017 Longlist

- In alphabetical order -

Katherine Arden - *The Bear and the Nightingale*

A fable-like tale with roots in medieval Russian history, full of both magic and psychological insight.

Emily Bitto - *The Strays*

A radical artist and his family challenge conservative 1930s Australia, but in this limpidly written story the repercussions travel down the generations.

Polly Clark - *Larchfield*

Exquisitely written, it intertwines the lives of a young Auden and a modern young writer as each struggles to find a place in the world.

Sarah Day - *Mussolini's Island*

A beautifully-told story of love, betrayal and survival in a strange and moving episode in Italian history.

David Dyer - *The Midnight Watch*

Takes one of the great puzzles of the Titanic disaster, and evokes and imagines the truth in clear, spare prose.

Martin Holmén - *Clinch*

Chandler in reverse, with the protagonist the alleged criminal in a compelling 1930s Scandinavian-noir whodunnit.

Lynne Kutsukake - *The Translation of Love*

An evocative exploration, through intertwined stories, of the American occupation of post-war Japan.

Anna Mazzola - *The Unseeing*

A taut psychological puzzle, rich with the atmosphere of pre-Victorian London, and based on real events and people.

Abir Mukerjee - *A Rising Man*

Delightful and splendidly-written whodunnit set in and beyond the Raj in the historical pivot-point of 1920s Calcutta.

James Terry - *The Solitary Woman of Shakespeare*

Gold rush Indian Territory becomes the Forest of Arden in this very funny but also subtle story of one woman's determination to shape her life.

Amy Stewart - *Girl Waits with Gun*

Both historical romp and vivid, thought-provoking evocation, with a particularly endearing heroine.

Beth Underdown - *The Witchfinder's Sister*

An enormously compelling and deftly-told story set at the heart of the great Essex witchhunts.

QUOTE FROM EMMA DARWIN, CHAIR OF HWA DEBUT CROWN

Historical fiction presents some of the biggest challenges a writer can choose to grapple with, so it's been a delight to discover so many new writers doing just that. This exciting longlist is full of new voices, new places, and new takes on famous events and classic themes.

**HWA Endeavour Ink Gold Crown 2017 Longlist
[Sponsor: Endeavour Ink]**

- In alphabetical order -

Sebastian Barry - *Days without End*

A violent, mesmerising Western, this superb book deserves its many admirers. An unforgettable, distinctive voice forces the reader to turn an unflinching gaze on the horrors of war. This book is savage and horrifying yet suffused with tenderness.

MJ Carter - *The Devil's Feast*

A sumptuous novel, set in the kitchens of a Victorian's Gentleman's club. MJ Carter's detecting duo find themselves in unfamiliar territory; the hot, creative and decadent world of fine dining. A sensuous treat of a book.

Giles Kristian - *Wings of the Storm*

"His best book yet," said one judge of Kristian's epic, Skaldic Viking tale. This is the concluding part of a trilogy soaked in blood, salt and Viking lore. No-one today is writing of battles and adventure with more brio and style than Kristian. The final battle scene is epic and utterly transporting.

Ian McGuire - *The North Water*

A vivid and visceral exploration of life on a whaling ship, *The North Water* impressed the judges with its grit and dark beauty. The protagonist's flaws and moral failings are raw and entirely believable. A novel of immense power that lingers long after the last, gory page is turned.

Kei Miller – *Augustown*

A Jamaican fable of immense power and beauty. The author's background as a poet is evident in every line of stunning, patois-infused prose. *Augustown* is epic in its scope, yet entirely intimate in its

descriptions of character and place. The judges' loved Kei Miller's vibrant and original voice.

Steff Penney - *Under a Pole Star*

A dazzling tale of desire and ambition set in the white wilds of the Arctic. An unforgettable heroine, a thrilling plot and immaculate, shining prose. A book to transport, delight and admire. Penney's descriptions of the seductive dangers of the Far North are extraordinary – best read with a duvet and a warm fire.

Sarah Perry - *The Essex Serpent*

A bestseller that deserves the hype, *The Essex Serpent* is a novel bursting with ideas, with rounded, passionate characters. The Victorian age is recreated with all its complexities and none of the clichés. The judges were awed by the sheer beauty and richness of Perry's prose, and her ability to sweep the reader breathlessly through complex explorations of mythology and religion, science and rationalism.

Rachel Rhys - *Dangerous Crossing*

This taut thriller impressed the judges with its clever setting and sense of historical perspective. Murder threatens and secrets lurk aboard a ship sailing across the world; while the looming threat of another great war serves to ratchet up the tension. A page-turning meld of history and murder.

William Ryan - *The Constant Soldier*

A heart-breaking tale of love during the Holocaust, this had at least one judge in tears. *The Constant Soldier* has the pace of a thriller but is underpinned by intellectual heft and a justified moral outrage. Beautiful, exhilarating and perfectly judged.

Andrew Taylor - *Ashes of London*

This is a masterclass in historical detective writing; a wonderful marriage of plot, setting and historical detail. The judges loved Taylor's evocation of seventeenth century London, and the vivid descriptions of the fire. You can hear the crackle and hiss of the fire as Medieval London burns, leaving a mysterious corpse behind.

Steven Uhly, translated by Jamie Bulloch - *Kingdom of Twilight*

A book of huge ambition and scope, ranging from the dying days of World War 2 to the creation of Israel, with a huge cast of characters. An important, powerful epic, which speaks of man's capacity for horror and for hope. A superb exploration into the nature of humanity.

Robyn Young - *Sons of the Blood*

A mystery, wrapped in a riddle, rolled in a mesh of political intrigue and corruption. Young's new series follows the battle for the throne between Henry Tudor and Richard III. She writes with gusto and verve; and the plot twists admirably, always anchored by a vivid sense of the extraordinary times her characters experienced.

QUOTE FROM ANTONIA SENIOR, CHAIR HWA GOLD CROWN

"We are hugely excited by this long-list, which shows the incredible breadth of talent in historical fiction today. There are detectives and Vikings, soldiers and chefs, Reverends and whalers; a huge range of utterly memorable characters living in extraordinary times. The longlist is an historical smorgasbord of reading experiences; from the cosy to the gory, the poetic to the downright sexy. The judges felt honoured to have gorged on such delights."