

ELHB@20 - THE ELIZABETH LONGFORD PRIZE FOR HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY IN JUNE 2023

Following the death in October 2002 of the eminent historical biographer, the Countess of Longford, her granddaughter Flora Fraser and Peter Soros, Flora's then husband, founded the Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography which they sponsor as Chair and Patron. Over the course of a long career Elizabeth Longford published to great acclaim *Victoria R.I.* (1964), *Wellington: Years of the Sword* (1969) and *Wellington: Pillar of State* (1972) among many other books. The Prize, which commemorates her name, celebrates historical biography combining scholarship and narrative drive and is given annually. Each year's Winner receives £5,000 and a bound copy of Elizabeth Longford's memoirs, *The Pebbled Shore* (1986). Originally administered by the Society of Authors, the Prize is now managed in-house.

Flora Fraser, Chair of the Prize writes:

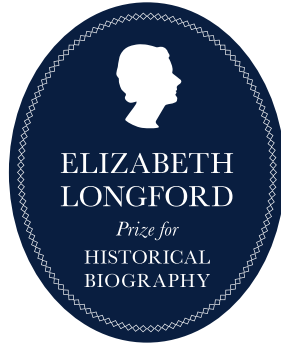
'My grandmother introduced me to the joys of researching in the Royal Archives at Windsor, where she had spent stimulating hours studying papers for her *Victoria R.I.* She undertook similar archival research for her two-volume life of the Duke of Wellington. Her books sing with a poetry all of their own, for she paid as much attention to style as to their scholarly foundations. The twin aims of the Prize are to annually recognise similar excellence in historical biographies of today, and commend them to the general reader as well as to other historians. Peter and I are greatly indebted to my mother, Antonia Fraser, Chair Emerita, and to Professor Roy Foster, Chair of Judges, for their leadership these twenty years in pursuit of those aims and also to those other eminent historical biographers and historians who have served as Judges with energy and panache. It has been a delight to come to know all twenty Winners and to read so many excellent books!'

The Prize is judged by a panel of distinguished historical biographers and historians. The noted historical biographer, Lady Antonia Fraser – Elizabeth's daughter and Flora's mother – was Founding Chair of Judges in 2003 and continues as a Judge. Professor Roy Foster succeeded her as Chair in 2008, and they are joined by Flora Fraser, Richard Davenport-Hines and Professor Rana Mitter. The Prize publishes a shortlist each year in May and the Chair of Judges speaks to the merits of the winning book at an Award Ceremony in June. In 2023 the shortlist will be announced on May 16 and the Winner on June 12.

This year sees the 20th anniversary of the Prize, and a gathering of past and present Winners and Judges will also take place at Flora's home in June to mark the occasion. Details of all Winners can be found below and also at www.elhb.uk.

Professor Roy Foster, Chair of Judges, comments:

'The Elizabeth Longford Prize not only rewards excellence in the art of historical biography; over twenty years it has helped shape ideas about what constitutes the genre. The Prize has recognised definitive studies of monarchs and politicians, but also of ostensibly 'minor' figures who made an unexpected impact on history, and of historians who changed the way we interpret the past. Above all, we have looked for the ability to reconstruct an individual life in its full historical context with psychological astuteness, personal insight and a decisive command of narrative form. This is the hallmark of Elizabeth Longford's own work, which enabled her to reach both a specialist and a general readership – another governing principle in choosing works to be considered for this Prize.'



Further information on the Prize and Elizabeth Longford (please also see www.elhb.uk).

Elizabeth Longford's celebrated writing career spanned over thirty years. Her first book, *Jameson's Raid: A Prelude to the Boer War* was published in 1960. She went on to write a number of highly acclaimed and prize winning historical biographies including *Victoria R.I.* (1964), a scholarly and readable life of Queen Victoria and a magisterial two volume biography of the Duke of Wellington, *Wellington: Years of the Sword* (1969) and *Wellington: Pillar of State* (1972). Elizabeth Longford also wrote on Byron and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and published her autobiography, *The Pebbled Shore* in 1986, a bound copy of which is given to every winner of the Prize.

Previous winners of the Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography

- 2022 – *George III: The Life and Reign of Britain's Most Misunderstood Monarch* by Andrew Roberts
- 2021 – *JFK: Volume I: John Kennedy: 1917-1956* by Fredrik Logevall
- 2020 – *Conservative Revolutionary: The Lives of Lewis Namier* by DW Hayton
- 2019 – *A Certain Idea of France: The Life of Charles de Gaulle* by Julian Jackson
- 2018 – *Isabella of Castile: Europe's First Great Queen* by Giles Tremlett
- 2017 – *Citizen Clem: A Biography of Attlee* by John Bew
- 2016 – *The Lost Imperialist: Lord Dufferin, Memory and Mythmaking in an Age of Celebrity* by Andrew Gailey
- 2015 – *A Spy Among Friends: Kim Philby and the Great Betrayal* by Ben Macintyre
- 2014 – *Margaret Thatcher: The Authorized Biography, Volume 1: Not for Turning* by Charles Moore
- 2013 – *Queen Anne: The Politics of Passion* by Anne Somerset
- 2012 – *How to Survive the Titanic: The Sinking of J. Bruce Ismay* by Frances Wilson
- 2011 – *Edward Heath: The Authorised Biography* by Philip Ziegler
- 2010 – *The Frock-Coated Communist: The Revolutionary Life of Friedrich Engels* by Tristram Hunt
- 2009 – *Florence Nightingale: The Woman and Her Legend* by Mark Bostridge
- 2008 – *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* by Rosemary Hill
- 2007 – *Henry VIII's Last Victim: The Life and Times of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey* by Jessie Childs
- 2006 – *Pétain* by Charles Williams
- 2005 – *Making Friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's Road to War* by Ian Kershaw
- 2004 – *Mad Madge: Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, Royalist, Writer and Romantic* by Katie Whitaker
- 2003 – *The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling* by David Gilmour

**For Press enquiries, please contact Katie Hambly
at katie.hambly1@btinternet.com or 07875 088371**