THE ELIZABETH LONGFORD PRIZE FOR HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY 2024

Shortlist announced

It is now twenty-one years since Peter Soros, Patron, and Flora Fraser, Chair, founded the annual Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography in 2003, in affectionate memory of Flora’s grandmother. The Prize is awarded to a historical biography which, like Elizabeth Longford’s own work, combines scholarship and narrative drive. Judged by historians and historical biographers, it remains the only literary prize in the UK awarded specifically for historical biography. The roll-call of distinguished Winners 2003-2023 can be found at elhb.uk/winners, and the ELHB 2024 Winner will be announced at Flora’s home on Wednesday 12 June 2024.

The Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography and Judges Professor Roy Foster (Chair), Antonia Fraser, Chair Emerita and daughter of Elizabeth Longford, Flora Fraser, Richard Davenport-Hines and Professor Rana Mitter are delighted to announce today the five books shortlisted for the Prize in alphabetical order by author:

Deborah E. Lipstadt,
_Golda Meir: Israel’s Matriarch_ (Yale)

Kal Raustiala,
_The Absolutely Indispensable Man: Ralph Bunche, the United Nations, and the Fight to End Empire_ (OUP)

M.W. Rowe,
_J.L. Austin: Philosopher and D-Day Intelligence Officer_ (OUP)

Jackie Uí Chionna,
_Queen of Codes: The Secret Life of Emily Anderson, Britain’s Greatest Female Code Breaker_ (Headline)

Jackie Wullschläger,
_Monet: The Restless Vision_ (Allen Lane, Penguin)

Professor Roy Foster, Chair of Judges, writes of the Shortlist:

‘Over twenty-one years the Elizabeth Longford Prize has extended and redefined the concept of lives that change history. The 2024 shortlist carries this forward. We have chosen a short but substantial book about a formidable and controversial female world leader who helped create a nation, leaving a pioneering but deeply divisive legacy; a profile of a major diplomat who embodied the UN and its values, which is simultaneously a powerful commentary on racial issues and attitudes in the twentieth century; an eye-opening portrait of a painter who fundamentally changed the way we see things, and even how we understand time; and two intriguing biographies of people who combined distinguished scholarly lives with secret but profoundly important careers in Intelligence during World War II. All these books show that an individual life can cross barriers and partake in different worlds, often in ways no less historically influential for being unrecognised in their own time. In each case their life-stories have been told with scholarly rigour and narrative verve, qualities which characterise Elizabeth Longford’s own work and that of previous winners of this Prize.’
Acclaim for the shortlisted books:

**Deborah E. Lipstadt and Golda Meir: Israel’s Matriarch (Yale)**

‘Engaging writing and fresh perspectives on key moments … An important and captivating short biography of a unique figure in modern Jewish life.’ *Literary Review*

‘Lipstadt offers a distilled, delicate account of Meir’s remarkable dedication to her nation that encourages a learned reckoning with her complex legacy.’ *New York Times Book Review*

**Kal Raustiala and The Absolutely Indispensable Man: Ralph Bunche, the United Nations, and the Fight to End Empire (OUP)**

‘This study is indispensable for understanding the era … A great read.’ *Choice*

‘Bunche was among the most feted African Americans of the mid-twentieth century; in his obituary, the New York Times labelled him “the very personification of the United Nations” … A straightforward and engaging political biography.’ *International Affairs*

**M.W. Rowe and J.L. Austin: Philosopher and D-Day Intelligence Officer (OUP)**

‘A superb biography ... Dense and readable.’ *Tom Stoppard, Books of the Year 2023, Times Literary Supplement*


**Jackie Uí Chionna and Queen of Codes: The Secret Life of Emily Anderson, Britain’s Greatest Female Code Breaker (Headline)**

‘A thoroughly researched and highly readable account of a woman who may have appeared to the world as the epitome of ordinary, but was in truth anything but.’ *Physics World*

‘Anderson’s role in the war effort, and her very substantial contributions to modern musicology, are now rightly recorded.’ *The Irish Mail on Sunday*

**Jackie Wullschläger and Monet: The Restless Vision (Allen Lane, Penguin)**

‘Jackie Wullschläger brings Monet to life with chilling immediacy … This is a captivating biography of great emotional warmth, delicacy and pictorial intelligence …’ *Hilary Spurling*

‘A tour de force. This beautifully written and meticulously researched brings Monet to life as a man, and fundamentally changes our understanding and appreciation of his work.’ *Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery*