

NEW WRITING
NORTH
NORTHERN WRITERS'
AWARDS

Press release: embargoed until 9.45pm, Tuesday 25 June 2024

Northern Writers' Awards 2024 announced

New Writing North and their partners celebrated the 25th Northern Writers' Awards on Tuesday evening, announcing the winners of the 2024 awards.

The 25 winners are selected from 2760 entries – a record-breaking number – to England's largest and longest-running writer development programme, worth £50,000.

Each year, the awards identify some of the best unpublished writing in the country, attracting the attention of agents, publishers and producers, for whom the highly competitive programme and incredible track record of the awards marks a stamp of approval.

The Northern Writers' Awards, produced by New Writing North and supported by headline event sponsor Northumbria University, Arts Council England, and a range of partners, aim to create career-making opportunities for writers in the North of England.

This year's winners include:

Jane Claire Bradley, who wins her second Northern Writers' Award and £5000 for her short story collection-in-progress, *Teen Sprits*. Jane, from Greater Manchester, said: "New Writing North have done more to empower and support my writing journey and career than any other organisation. Winning a Northern Debut Award in 2019 was the catalyst for massive development and change in my writing craft and career, and I attribute my subsequent successes in large part to the recognition and support of that award. So I'm thrilled and so grateful to be receiving this award, which will make a massive difference to my resources and momentum as I develop my current manuscript."

Lucy Burnett, who wins a Northern Writers' Award for Poetry and £3000 to support her collection-in-progress, *The Long Wood*. Lucy Burnett, from Cockermouth, said: "I am absolutely thrilled to win this award, and the time it will give me to continue developing *The Long Wood*. The new collection-in-progress marks a significant change in direction for my writing, towards more personal themes which I've previously shied away from, so it is wonderful to both receive this mark of approval, and also the opportunity to give the work the time it deserves. I'm incredibly grateful to New Writing North and the other sponsors of this prize for organising a prize aimed at unfinished work rather than the finished article."

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AWARDS

Alicia Byrne, who wins the inaugural Tempest Prize, £1000 and mentoring with Andrew McMillan. The Tempest Prize was founded in 2023 by the previous Northern Writers' Awards winner Andrew McMillan to support new writing from the North by LGBTQ+ writers. Alicia, from Preston, said: "The art we make is so often intimate and vulnerable. Putting it out into the world can be an overwhelmingly daunting experience. To have someone look at that art and say, 'Hey, I understand that feeling. I've felt that feeling too,' is truly one of the greatest gifts a writer can be given. That is what this award has given me."

The Northern Writers' Awards centre on discovering talent and supporting new work-in-progress. They offer opportunities for writers at all stages of their careers – including forging connections with publishers and agents, mentoring, manuscript assessment, writing placements, retreats, and cash awards to buy time away from work and other commitments to write. They have previously supported the new work of over 400 talented, often unpublished, northern writers.

By supporting writers at an earlier stage than most literary awards – usually before an agent or publisher is involved – the Northern Writers' Awards offer crucial support for writers at a pivotal stage of their careers, as well as providing a pipeline of new talent to the publishing and broadcast industries.

In 2023, more than a dozen books by previous award winners were published, including *Black Fell* by Mari Hannah (Orion), *A Dark Inheritance* by HF Askwith (Penguin) and *Cuddy* by Benjamin Myers (Bloomsbury). Already this year, at least 14 more Northern Writers' Awards winners have new books out, including: *Pity*, Andrew McMillan (Canongate); *Dark Flood*, Karon Alderman (Orion Children's Books); *The Cautious Traveller's Guide to the Wastelands*, Sarah Brooks (W&N); *Determination*, Tawseef Khan (Footnote Press); *Running Away for Beginners*, Mark Illis (Scholastic); *The Wives of Halcyon*, Eirinie Lapidaki (Legend Press); *Something to be Proud Of*, Anna Zoe Quirke (Little Tiger); and *Slip*, Amelia Loulli (Jonathan Cape).

Awards offered in this round are supported by partners including Northumbria University, Arts Council England, Hachette Children's Group, Newcastle University, The North Literary Agency, Arvon, The Literary Consultancy, the writers Benjamin Myers and Andrew McMillan and the families and friends of Sid Chaplin and Matthew Hale.

Since 2023, the Northern Writers' Awards have moved to staggered, year-round submission windows due to growth in the programme, meaning that even more awards with television partners Channel 4, Rollem Productions, Bonafide Films, and Red Production Company will be announced in the autumn.

NEW WRITING
NORTH
NORTHERN WRITERS'
AWARDS

The 2024 Northern Writers' Awards winners are:

Northern Writers' Awards for Fiction

Jane Claire Bradley, from Greater Manchester

Northern Debut Awards for Fiction

Beth L. Thompson, from Prescot

Cindy Withjack, from Malton

Northern Debut Award for Young Adult Fiction

Letty Sharpe, from Wallsend, Tyne and Wear

Northern Writers' Awards for Poetry

Lucy Burnett, from Cockermouth

Roma Havers, from Manchester

Northern Debut Awards for Poetry

Tom Branfoot, from Bradford

Jazmine Linklater, from Manchester

Callan Waldron-Hall, from Liverpool

Hachette Children's Novel Awards

Sophie Clarke, from Darwen

Gavin Crippin, from Manchester

Northumbria University Student and Alumni Award

Stephen McGowan, from Sunderland

Tempest Prize

Alicia Byrne, from Preston

Sid Chaplin Awards

Adam Barrett, from County Durham

Jessica Holmes, from Durham

Finchale Award for Short Fiction

Abby Walker, from County Durham

Northern Promise TLC Awards

Paula Blair, from Newcastle upon Tyne

Daisy Costello, from Newcastle upon Tyne

Arvon Award

Laura Tisdall, from Whitley Bay

NEW WRITING
NORTH
NORTHERN WRITERS'
AWARDS

Young Northern Writers' Awards: Winner (11-14)

Eeva Tudor, from Cramlington

Young Northern Writers' Awards: Winner (15-18)

Cory Gourley, from Newcastle upon Tyne

Young Northern Writers' Awards: Highly Commended (11-14)

Yaqub Rahman, from Gateshead

Young Northern Writers' Awards: Highly Commended (15-18)

Isabella Merino Garzon, from Sheffield

Matthew Hale Award: Winner

Ebony Marshall, from Newcastle upon Tyne

Matthew Hale Award: Highly Commended

Mikael Ali, from Newcastle upon Tyne

Comments from judges:

Ashley Hickson-Lovence, novelist and Northern Writers' Awards judge, said: "It was a complete honour to be a Northern Writers' Awards judge this year. Congratulations to all the worthy winners; thank you for allowing me into your respective worlds. But whether you took home the top prize or not, this is just the beginning of the journey. Keep going."

Rachel Mann, literary agent and Northern Writers' Awards judge, said: "It was an absolute pleasure to read through this year's longlists, and discuss their many merits with Ashley. Each entry was wonderful in its own way reflecting the wealth of literary talent we have in the North."

JJ Arcanjo, novelist and Hachette Children's Novel Awards judge, said: "It has been a genuine honour to be a part of the Hachette Children's Novel Award judging panel and getting to read the brilliant stories penned by our talented shortlist of Northern writers. Huge congratulations to our two winners - your stories were clever and fun and, perhaps most importantly, got us all very excited for the future of children's books."

Comments from partners:

Will Mackie, Senior Programme Manager (Talent Development) and Programme Leader (MA in Publishing) at New Writing North: "Now 25 years old, the Northern Writers' Awards are more essential and relevant than ever. Our programme continues to offer transformational support to writers in the North of England as we evolve trusted models of talent development and forge lasting connections with the book trade. The

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long-term investment in writing talent made by New Writing North and our partners has contributed to an enlivening and diversification of literature and publishing, benefiting readers and writers of all ages and backgrounds. We're delighted to be introducing our 2024 winning writers at this year's awards and are hugely grateful to our lead partners at Northumbria University and all the funders, donors and supporters who make these awards possible."

Dr Neil Percival, Acting Director of Cultural Partnerships at Northumbria University:

"The Awards embody principles that are at the heart of both our organisations: nurturing talent at the earliest stages, giving hope and encouragement at the moments where it is most needed, and breaking down career barriers for many who would previously have been excluded. These Awards are always an inspiration and after 25 years, the success and expansion of the scheme speaks for itself. We look forward to seeing many more northern writers of promise get the exposure and the boost they deserve."

Aliyana Hirji, Commissioning Editor, Enid Blyton Entertainment and Fiction,

Hachette Children's Group: "New Writing North's Northern Writers' Awards are so essential to finding new voices that better represent the breadth of talent across the UK and we are proud to sponsor the Children's Novel Award. It was an honour to be part of the judging panel this year; each talented entry allowed us to enter new worlds and insights – and led to very spirited and excited conversations. Congratulations to the winners, and to all the writers on the shortlist, whose stories were lively, full of twists and took us on unexpected journeys!"

Read more about the winners on the [New Writing North website](#).

ENDS

For all media enquiries, contact Carys Vickers, carys@newwritingnorth.com

Notes to Editor

[Find bios and quotes from all winners here](#)

For information on the judges for the Northern Writers' Awards 2024, visit <https://newwritingnorth.com/northern-writers-awards/judges/>

New Writing North

Writing talent is everywhere. But opportunities are not. That's why New Writing North exists. To identify and nurture talent. To inspire a love for creative writing and reading. To create life-changing chances for people across the North. Through our programmes, events, and activities, we find and support talented people of all ages and backgrounds

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AWARDS

to access creative opportunities and to enable them to flourish. Find out more at newwritingnorth.com. Donate: justgiving.com/newwritingnorth.

Northumbria University

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards) Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally. Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk