



ANNOUNCEMENT
WINNER: SCOTTISH CRIME BOOK OF THE YEAR
THIS INFORMATION IS EMBARGOED UNTIL 9.15pm, Saturday 12/09/2015

Bloody Scotland Crime Writing Festival is delighted to announce that **Craig Russell's** novel *The Ghosts of Altona* has won the fourth annual Scottish Crime Book of the Year. The award was presented to the winner at a ceremony at the Bloody Scotland Festival in Stirling on Saturday 12th September, by chairman of the judges Magnus Linklater and Peter May, author of the 2014 winning book.

With a clever storyline that jumps skilfully between contemporary Hamburg and the same city in the early 20th century, *The Ghosts of Altona* sees Russell's long-running detective Jan Fabel haunted by the discovery of a body from his first-ever case fifteen years ago, that of a cruel, beautiful student obsessed with the gothic.

Craig Russell said:

'It goes without saying that I am absolutely delighted that *The Ghosts of Altona* has won the Bloody Scotland Crime Novel of the Year. I was very happy simply to have been shortlisted for the second time—which I took as a sign that I must be doing something right! The fact that the Bloody Scotland award is founded on the recommendations of readers themselves makes it a very special, very significant accolade—and to win out of a shortlist like this year's, which included some of the finest crime writers in Scotland, is a huge, huge honour.

I think it's significant that a novel so clearly not set in Scotland can win the Bloody Scotland award. One of the greatest things for me in my career has been the success my novels have had abroad—the third Fabel film will be screened on ARD1, Germany's equivalent of BBC1, exactly one week after the award—and you could argue that *The Ghosts of Altona* is as un-Scottish as you can get, but I actually believe that there is no more Scottish a trait than to look out into the world, to have an interest in others like us, and unlike us.'

Journalist Magnus Linklater issued this statement on behalf of the panel of judges:

'Despite an exceptionally strong shortlist, the judges' decision was unanimous this year – we were all very impressed with *The Ghosts of Altona*. Craig Russell is a fine writer and we loved the complex, dark and unpredictable story. The quality of the writing was so strong there was a feeling that this book would stand up against any other literary prize-winning title, with its well-woven plots and sub-plots, thoughtful exploration of the nature of trauma and interesting uses of symbolism. *The Ghosts of Altona*, written by a Scot, but truly capturing the spirit of a city like Hamburg at different times throughout history, is a great example of Scottish writing's international spirit.'

Also on the judging panel were **Sally Magnusson**, the author and broadcaster and **Caron McPherson** of Waterstones Argyle Street in Glasgow. The other books on the shortlist, which was chosen by a panel of readers from a longlist of 55 books, were as follows:

***Paths of the Dead*, Lin Anderson**

***DM For Murder*, Matt Bendoris**

***Dead Girl Walking*, Chris Brookmyre**

***Thin Air*, Ann Cleeves**

***Death Is A Welcome Guest*, Louise Welsh**

The festival is also delighted to announce that Jamie Groves won the annual Bloody Scotland International Short Story Competition with 'The Mystery of the Mallaig Train', receiving £1000 and a weekend pass to the festival. Over 100 entries were submitted this year.

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Dom Hastings, Director, Bloody Scotland, said:

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'I was enormously impressed with the quality of writing on this year's shortlist – Bloody Scotland is delighted to be able to award this prize to Craig Russell, for weaving a beautifully-written, sensitive and eerily gothic tale. We're also very happy to be able to recognise new talent, and see big things in the future for Jamie Groves, the winner of our short story competition.'

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Craig Russell, the best-selling author of the Jan Fabel thrillers, set in Hamburg, and the Lennox thrillers set in 1950s Glasgow, has worked as a police officer, freelance writer and creative director. His Fabel novels were inspired by his long-standing interest in the language, culture and people of Germany. The Lennox novels, set in 1950s Glasgow, were inspired by Russell's fascination for the period and love of the unique character of the city. His novels are translated into twenty-three languages worldwide. In 2007, Craig Russell was awarded the highly prestigious Polizeistern (Police Star) by the Polizei Hamburg, the only non-German ever to receive this award. He was nominated for the 2007 CWA Duncan Lawrie Golden Dagger, the world's biggest literary award for crime writers, as well as the SNCF Prix Polar in France. In 2008, Craig Russell won the CWA Dagger in the Library. In 2013, he was nominated for the CWA Ellis Peters Historical Dagger.

The **Scottish Crime Book of the Year Award** was founded in 2012 to recognise and reward excellence in Scottish crime writing. Crime fiction, crime non-fiction and anthologies of short crime stories are all eligible, provided that the author is domiciled or born in Scotland, or that the work is set in Scotland. Waterstones will promote the prize and the shortlisted books, in stores across Scotland. The award includes a prize of £1000. Previous winners include Peter May with *Entry Island* in 2014, Malcolm Mackay with *How A Gunman Says Goodbye* in 2013 and Charles Cumming with *A Foreign Country* in 2012.

The **Bloody Scotland International Short Story Competition**, also in its fourth year, offers new and aspiring writers an opportunity to explore the darker sides of life for an opportunity to win a weekend pass to the Bloody Scotland Festival and £1,000, one of the largest prizes available in a short story competition of this kind. This is a fantastic opportunity for emerging writers with past shortlistees and winners of the award going on to acquire literary agents and publish novels. As this year marks the 125th anniversary of Agatha Christie entries were invited that had a nod to Christie's work. Writers were free to interpret the theme however they wanted, although the story had to be crime fiction.

Bloody Scotland is Scotland's International Crime Writing Festival and takes place in a number of venues in Central Stirling each September. Established in 2012, the festival aims to showcase the very best Scottish and international crime writing, nurture the next generation of writers through masterclasses and provide opportunities to highlight Scottish crime writing on an international stage.

The 2015 Festival runs from 11-13 September. Tickets for the Festival are available from www.bloodyscotland.com, by phone on 01786 27 4000, or in person from the Tolbooth Theatre Box Office, Stirling (phone and box office: Tuesday to Saturday 10am–6pm, closed Sunday and Monday).

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