

PRESS RELEASE

On the evening of Thursday, 20 November 2014, Proverse Hong Kong held the "Proverse Publishing Parade", at the Helena May Institute, Central, Hong Kong.

The Parade consisted of the launch of six new works in English, introductions and/or readings by the launching authors and others, and the announcement by Dr Verner Bickley, MBE, Proverse Managing Director, Co-Publisher and Co-Founder of the international Proverse Prize, of the short-listed writers (the finalists) in the 2014 Proverse Prize competition.

In her welcoming remarks, Dr Gillian Bickley, Proverse Managing Editor and Co-Publisher, and Proverse Prize Co-Founder, outlined the history and special features of the international Proverse Prize. The Prize was founded in 2008 and the first competition took place in 2009. It is awarded every year for an unpublished single-author work of non-fiction, fiction or poetry. Unusually for literary prizes, there is no residence, nationality or citizenship requirement. The competition is open to all who are at least eighteen years old on the date they sign the entry form.

The Proverse Prize consists of publication with a cash award. Supplementary publication Prizes may be offered to excellent work.

Entries are received from all over the world. It is a distinct achievement to be recognized by the Proverse Prize Judges in this way.

If the judges so recommend, there will be a single winner of the Proverse Prize or at most two Joint-Winners. In the latter case, each jointly-winning work will be published and launched when it is ready and not necessarily at the same time as the other.

AWARD OF THE PROVERSE PRIZE 2013

Launched at the event on 20 November as Joint-Winner of the international Proverse Prize 2013 was *The Diplomat of Kashgar: A Very Special Agent: The Life of Sir George Macartney, 18 January 1867-19 May 1945*. The author, Mr James McCarthy, lives in Edinburgh, UK and regrettably was unable to be present.

PUBLICATION PRIZES

If the judges so recommend, Publication Prizes may be awarded in any year of entry for The Proverse Prize, and each is published and launched when it is ready.

Launched on 20 November were several books which have won Publication Prizes.

Hazel Brown: A Very Special Vet by Ms Jupy James, Winner of a Proverse Publication Prize 2013.

The Perilous Passage of Princess Petunia Peasant by Mr Victor Edward Apps, Winner of a Proverse Publication Prize 2013.

University Days, Winner of a Proverse Publication Prize 2010. The author, New-Zealand based Laura Solomon, was Joint-Winner of the inaugural Proverse Prize in 2009 for her young adult novella, *Instant Messages*, published in 2010.

Red Bird Summer by Ms Jan Pearson, Winner of a Proverse Publication Prize 2012.

ALSO LAUNCHED on 20 November were two books that came to Proverse as regular publishing proposals and not as entries for the Proverse Prize.

Poems to Enjoy, Book Four by Verner Bickley; Verner was present as co-host as well as author.

All Agog in China by Stuart McDouall.

All authors were warmly congratulated.

A brief report was given of the PROVERSE PRIZE 2014, as follows.

The judges have reported that the standard of some of the entries in 2014 is possibly even higher than in previous years and there was hot competition among them. Of the total number of entries in 2014, 50% were novels, 16% were single-author poetry collections and/or poetry and essay collections, 16% were creative non-fiction, autobiography and memoirs, and 16% were short story collections. The shortest work was 4,000 words (a personal illustrated memoir) and the longest was 114,000 words (a novel).

This year, entries were received from those presently living in Australia and Hong Kong. The writers include those born in those countries and also in South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the USA. Reinforcing the international nature of The Proverse Prize, the writers have lived even more variously than either their place of birth or their place of residence suggests, including Africa, Brazil, Malaya and the Middle East. There is a broad age range among the writers (the youngest was 45 and the oldest was 79, spanning a range of 34 or so years. (The widest age-range so far was in 2012, when the youngest was 24 and the most senior, 91.) At the time of entry, the existing publishing status of the writers varied between unpublished, self-published and published (including award-winning works). (The actual work submitted for the Proverse Prize is necessarily unpublished.) Some of the writers are first-time competition entrants; some have been successful in previous writing competitions. As in 2013, there is an equal percentage of women and men. 25% are repeat entrants to the Proverse Prize.

Descriptions of their occupations given by the entrants include: musician, businessman, retired geologist, teacher and artist, retired botanist, retired registered nurse, chiropractor.

Dr Verner Bickley announced the Short-listed Writers (Finalists) for The Proverse Prize 2014.

He stated first that, as in previous years, entries had been received from around the world and the judges had pronounced the standard of entries to be very high.

The Longlist -- five semi-finalists -- was announced in August this year.

The judges have recommended four of these five as Finalists -- for the Shortlist.

The short-listed writers (the finalists) are:

- Philip Chatting (for a collection of short stories);
- Celia Claase (for a poetry and essay collection);
- Virginia MacRobert (for a novel);
- Jan Pearson (for a novel).

Congratulations were accorded to all four writers, three of whom were present, for achieving distinction in the 2014 Proverse Prize! One short-listed writer, Virginia MacRobert, now lives in Tasmania, Australia and was unable to be present.

The next stage of the 2014 competition – to select, from the Shortlist, the Winner or at most two Joint-Winners of the Proverse Prize 2014, as well as to decide the winners of Publication Prizes (if any) – should be completed by the first quarter of 2015; and more will be said about these authors and their work at that time.

The Proverse Prize Administrators congratulated the finalists and also all entrants for their considerable effort in completing a book-length work, perfecting it and submitting it for an international competition.

DO YOU WANT TO ENTER?

It was suggested to guests that each of them might wish to write one book or more. Perhaps they themselves might consider entering for the Proverse Prize.

To be kept informed of the progress of the annual Proverse Prize cycle, send a request to join the mailing-list for the free Proverse ENewsletter, issued about every six weeks, by emailing <info@proversepublishing.com>.

The point was emphasised that, although entries should be submitted in English, translations into English are warmly encouraged.

INTRODUCTION OF PROVERSE AUTHORS

In addition to the authors of books being launched, several other Proverse authors were present and were introduced:

The writers were: Elbert Lee, “Rain on the Pacific Coast”; Jason Polley, author of “refrain” and “cemetery miss you”; Catherine Zhang, author of the bilingual book, “Mila the Magician”; Gillian Bickley (myself), author, most recently, of “China Suite” and “Perceptions”. Roger Uren, author of “To Eastern Lands”, was also visiting from Australia.

THE SIX NEW BOOKS

Dr Verner Bickley then introduced the talks by authors session. This included those books being launched, some of which had come to Proverse through the Proverse Prize and others directly to Proverse as publishing proposals.

In four varied and most interesting presentations, Victor Apps, Verner Bickley (present as co-host as well as author), and Jupy James introduced their books and Mr Roger Medcalf introduced “All Agog in China” by Stuart McDouall, presently in England.

Dr Verner Bickley read a message from Mr James McCarthy, sent from Edinburgh. Dr Gillian Bickley introduced “University Days” by Laura Solmon, who lives in New Zealand.

AVAILABILITY OF BOOKS

The books are distributed in Hong Kong and overseas by the Chinese University Press of Hong Kong, Shatin, Hong Kong and are already available for order from the CUHK Press website, <www.chineseupress.com>. There is a useful search function and, to find the book you are interested in, simply type the book title in the search box.

Books can also be purchased using PayPal from the Proverse Hong Kong website <<http://www.proversepublishing.com>> (From the Index at the top of the home page, select, Fiction, Non-Fiction, Educational, Children’s Books, Travel, (Auto-)Biography /Memoirs, Poetry, etc. as appropriate and scroll down to find the title you want.)

The books will also be available from several online retailers.

The books will, in due course, be on the shelves of bookstores in Canada, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Malaysia. They will be available for order from bookstores in the UK.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To know more about Proverse, submitting a publishing proposal to Proverse, and/or entering for the international Proverse Prize, visit the Proverse website: <http://www.proversepublishing.com> or take a look at the publishers' pages at the back of most Proverse books.

To be put on the free E-Newsletter list, email info@proversepublishing.com, subject line "E-Newsletter subscription request".

FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES OR TO ARRANGE AN AUTHOR'S VISIT to your school, club or reading-group, or to speak to or meet with any other interested audience, please email: info@proversepublishing.com with the subject line, "Author's visit".

AUTHOR'S PORTRAITS are available from Proverse. To enquire about these, please email info@proversepublishing.com with the subject line, “Authors’ portraits”.

Photos of the Proverse Publishing Parade, 20 November 2014, including of winning authors in 2013, will be available on the Proverse website, www.proversepublishing.com

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