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JUDGING PANEL FOR 2021 ROYAL SOCIETY SCIENCE BOOK PRIZE ANNOUNCED

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– Professor Luke O’Neill

#SciBooks

The five-strong judging panel for this year’s Royal Society Science Book Prize, sponsored by Insight Investment, is revealed today, Wednesday 21st July 2021.

The Prize – which celebrates the very best in popular science writing from around the world – will be chaired in 2021 by world-leading immunologist, presenter and writer, **Professor Luke O’Neill FRS**. He is joined on the panel by representatives from across the worlds of science and culture: television presenter, **Ortis Deley**; mathematician and Dorothy Hodgkin Royal Society Fellow, **Dr Anastasia Kisil**; author and creative writing lecturer, **Christy Lefteri**, and journalist, writer and film maker, **Clive Myrie**.

For 33 years, the Prize has promoted the accessibility and joy of popular science writing. It has celebrated some truly game-changing reads: books that offer fresh insights on the things that affect the lives we lead and the decisions we make, from neurodiverse perspectives on everyday living (*Explaining Humans* by Dr Camilla Pang, 2020) to gender bias (*Invisible Women* by Caroline Criado Perez, 2019) and the harms humans are wreaking on the planet (*Adventures in the Anthropocene* by Gaia Vince, 2015, and *Six Degrees* by Mark Lynas, 2008). In 2021, the judges renew their search for the most compelling science writing of the last year, at a time when the power of effective science communication is valued more highly than ever before.

Chair of judges, **Professor Luke O’Neill, FRS**, commented: “I’m delighted to be chairing the judging panel for the 2021 Royal Society Science Book Prize. Science communication has always been very important, to entertain, inform and inspire. This has never been more relevant than this year, with scientists engaging with the public across all media on a daily basis because of Covid-19. A tremendously interesting number of books have been nominated

this year, across a huge range of topics, making our job very enjoyable but also challenging. Science communication is clearly in very good hands.”

A shortlist of six titles, from a record number of more than 240 submissions published between 1st July 2020 and 30th September 2021, will be announced in September. The winner of the 2021 Prize will be revealed at a ceremony in November. The winner will receive a cheque for £25,000, with £2,500 awarded to each of the five shortlisted authors.

Angus Woolhouse, Global Head of Distribution at Insight Investment, sponsor of the Prize, said: “It’s hard to think of a time when engaging science communication has been needed more. It takes skill and passion to write about science in a way that is appealing and accessible to a broad audience, and to challenge conventional thinking by providing original perspectives on subjects which may previously have been viewed as fact. Insight are privileged to support this prestigious prize. We congratulate The Royal Society and the talented authors entering the Prize this year. We hope as many people as possible get to enjoy the shortlisted books.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. About the Royal Society:

The Royal Society is a self-governing Fellowship of many of the world’s most distinguished scientists drawn from all areas of science, engineering, and medicine. The Society’s fundamental purpose, reflected in its founding Charters of the 1660s, is to recognise, promote, and support excellence in science and to encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity.

Follow the Royal Society on Twitter ([@royalsociety](https://twitter.com/royalsociety)) or on Facebook (facebook.com/theroyalsociety).

2. About the sponsor:

Insight Investment is a leading global investment manager, founded in 2002 and headquartered in London. Insight primarily manages money for pension schemes by providing liability-driven investment strategies and investing in fixed income and currency and multi-asset.

Insight takes responsible investment seriously. It was a founding signatory to the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) and has been integrating environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations into decision-making processes for more than a decade. Insight’s approach is underpinned by the belief that ESG issues are important drivers of investment value. In 2020, Insight was awarded A+ ratings by the PRI for strategy and governance, and for the integration of responsible investment-related issues in categories relevant to Insight. More information about Insight Investment can be found at: www.insightinvestment.com

3. About the judges (in alphabetical order):

Ortis Deley

Ortis Deley is in his ninth year of hosting Channel 5's *The Gadget Show*. As well as appearing on our screens weekly on *The Gadget Show*, Ortis has also been part of Channel 5's *Police Interceptors* team, presenting specials both alone and alongside Rick Edwards. He also contributed to *Ancient Top 10* for the History Channel, a programme which looked at the origins of technology.

Having started his career on Trouble TV as a main anchor, Deley then moved across to CBBC as the anchor on the very popular *Short Change*. Quickly becoming part of the CBBC family, he went on to present *Why 5*, *X-perimental*, *Making It*, *Xchange* and *Live & Kicking*, all for CBBC. Deley's love of science and technology began when he was a child who was very much into sci-fi and comic books. He also has an honours degree in Pharmacy and is a qualified personal trainer.

Anastasia Kisil

Dr Anastasia Kisil is a Dorothy Hodgkin Royal Society Fellow, working on mathematical methods in acoustics and metamaterials. Her research interest is motivated by the need to find new ways to decrease noise pollution. She is particularly interested in looking at adaptations found in nature, for example, in silent flight of owls. She previously briefly held the Dame Kathleen Ollerenshaw Fellowships also at University of Manchester. Prior to that she was awarded a stipendiary three-year Research Fellowship at Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge. Dr Kisil has obtained her master's and PhD degree from Trinity College, Cambridge. She regularly organises and leads networking events and conferences supported by major scientific bodies, such as a one-month Isaac Newton Institute programme, ICMS webinars and BIRS scientific program. Additionally, she is leading a special interest group in EPSRC UK Acoustics Network and the newly established EPSRC UK Metamaterials Network.

Christy Lefteri

Brought up in London, Christy Lefteri is the child of Cypriot refugees. She is a lecturer in creative writing at Brunel University. Her novel, *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, is an international bestseller, selling well over a million copies worldwide and published in over 40 countries. *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* won The Aspen Literary Prize (for an influential work of fiction that illuminates a vital contemporary issue and demonstrates the transformative power of literature on thought and culture). It was the runner up for The Dayton Literary Prize and won the Prix de l'Union Interalliée for Best Foreign novel in France. Lefteri's new novel, *Songbirds*, was published in the UK on 6th July 2021.

Clive Myrie

Clive Myrie is a multi-award-winning journalist, writer and film maker, and one of the BBC's most experienced foreign affairs correspondents, having served as Asia, Africa, Washington and Europe Correspondent. He is now a regular presenter of the One, Six and Ten O'Clock News bulletins on BBC One, and of news shows on the BBC News Channel. As well as making domestic and foreign affairs features for BBC News, he also makes programmes for Radio 4 and *Panorama*. His numerous awards include three Royal Television Society Awards, including this year both Journalist of the Year and Presenter of the Year. Myrie was born in Bolton, Lancashire and studied law at the University of Sussex.

Luke O’Neill (Chair)

Luke O’Neill is Professor of Biochemistry in the School of Biochemistry and Immunology, Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. He is a world expert on innate immunity and inflammation. He is listed by Thompson Reuters/Clarivates in the top 1% of immunologists in the world, based on citations per paper. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy, EMBO (European Molecular Biology Organisation) and a Fellow of the Royal Society.

His awards include the Royal Dublin Society / *Irish Times* Boyle Medal for scientific excellence, the Royal Irish Academy Gold Medal for Life Sciences, The Society for Leukocyte Biology (SLB) Dolph O. Adams award and the European Federation of Immunology Societies Medal.

Luke also has a passion for communicating science to the public. He has a weekly radio slot on *The Pat Kenny Show* on Newstalk in Ireland. He has published 3 best-selling books with Gill Publishers: *Humanology: a scientist’s guide to our amazing existence*; *The Great Irish Science Book*; and *Never Mind the B#ll*cks Here’s the Science*, which was a winner at the Irish Book Awards in 2020.

4. About the prize:

Set up in 1988 as the "Science Book Prizes", The Royal Society Science Book Prize sponsored by Insight Investment, was named the Rhône-Poulenc Prizes for Science Books from 1990 - 2000, the Aventis Prizes for Science Books from 2001 – 2006, the Royal Society Prize for Science Books from 2007 – 2010 and the Royal Society Winton Prize for Science Books from 2011 – 2015.

5. Complete list of past winners of the Prize:

- 2020: *Explaining Humans: What Science Can Teach Us about Life, Love and Relationships* by Camilla Pang
- 2019: *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* by Caroline Criado Perez
- 2018: *Inventing Ourselves* by Sarah-Jayne Blakemore
- 2017: *Testosterone Rex* by Cordelia Fine
- 2016: *The Invention of Nature* by Andrea Wulf
- 2015: *Adventures in the Anthropocene* by Gaia Vince
- 2014: *Stuff* by Mark Miodownik
- 2013: *The Particle at the End of the Universe* by Sean Carroll
- 2012: *The Information* by James Gleick
- 2011: *The Wavewatcher’s Companion* by Gavin Pretor-Pinney
- 2010: *Life Ascending* by Nick Lane
- 2009: *The Age of Wonder* by Richard Holmes
- 2008: *Six Degrees* by Mark Lynas
- 2007: *Stumbling on Happiness* by Daniel Gilbert
- 2006: *Electric Universe* by David Bodanis
- 2005: *Critical Mass* by Philip Ball
- 2004: *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson
- 2003: *Right Hand, Left Hand* by Chris McManus
- 2002: *The Universe in a Nutshell* by Stephen Hawking

- 2001: *Mapping the Deep* by Robert Kunzig
- 2000: *The Elegant Universe* by Brian Greene
- 1999: *The Man Who Loved Only Numbers* by Paul Hoffman
- 1998: *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond
- 1997: *The Wisdom of Bones* by Alan Walker and Pat Shipman
- 1996: *Plague's Progress* by Arno Karlen
- 1995: *The Consumer's Good Chemical Guide* by John Emsley
- 1994: *The Language of the Genes* by Steve Jones
- 1993: *The Making of Memory* by Steven Rose
- 1992: *The Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee* by Jared Diamond
- 1991: *Wonderful Life* by Stephen Jay Gould
- 1990: *The Emperor's New Mind* by Roger Penrose
- 1989: *Bones of Contention* by Roger Lewin
- 1988: *Living with Risk* by the British Medical Association Board of Science