



**\*STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 20:00, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017\***

## **AMERICA IN THE SPOTLIGHT IN SHORTLIST FOR STANFORD DOLMAN TRAVEL BOOK OF THE YEAR**

**Wales, the London to Bristol railway line and landscape-inspired recipes  
from around the world among the subjects tackled by travel writers**

*London, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2017*

Two writers offering different takes on modern America in the dying days of the Obama administration are competing alongside books that take in the Welsh Hills, the London to Bristol rail line, food around the globe and the very concept of why we travel, on the shortlist for the world's most prestigious travel writing Award, announced this evening at an event at the National Liberal Club in London. The winner of the Stanford Dolman Travel Book of the Year, in association with the Authors' Club, will be announced at the Edward Stanford Travel Writing Awards ceremony on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, as part of the Stanfords Travel Writing Festival at Destinations: The Holiday and Travel Show at Olympia.

Paul Theroux, the veteran novelist and travel writer whose journeys have previously taken him to China, India, Africa, South America, Russia and elsewhere, is shortlisted for *Deep South*, his first travel book to focus on his homeland, the United States of America, and specifically the Southern states. In *Interstate*, Julian Sayerer hitchhikes from New York to San Francisco, encountering drifters, dropouts and roadside communities that reveal a troubled and divided America.

Closer to home, James Attlee (whose sister Helena was shortlisted for the same prize in 2015 for *The Land Where Lemons Grow*) travels the London to Bristol line uncovering stories and legends as well as talking to those that keep the line running in *Station to Station*. In *The Hills of Wales*, mountaineer and writer Jim Perrin looks closely at the Welsh landscape and its hills, examining their character, resonance and histories. In *Squirrel Pie*, Elisabeth Luard mixes recipes with reminiscences of her travels around the globe across four themed sections: rivers, islands, deserts and forests. Lastly, novelist Geoff Dyer's collection of essays, *White Sands*, is an exploration of why we travel, told through a series of interconnected journeys.

Chair of Judges, travel writer Sara Wheeler, said: “Reading is just as much fun as travelling, and my fellow five judges and I have immensely enjoyed perusing more than 80 submissions for this year’s Stanford Dolman Travel Book of the Year award. Notably, many of the titles recorded travels in the UK this time round; the authors, perhaps, were unwittingly getting us into the Brexit mood. We also noted titles in the vogueish foodoir category – a place recalled via the author’s meal experiences. In the end there was little blood on the NLC carpet as we argued about the shortlist, although robust views were expressed. We think it is a strong one.” The full judging panel of the Award includes writers Katie Hickman, Jason Goodwin and Jeremy Seal, Traveller magazine editor Amy Sohanpaul, and Rukhsana Yasmin of Commonwealth Writers, the cultural initiative of the Commonwealth Foundation.

Tony Maher, Managing Director of Edward Stanford Limited, said: “I have to commend the judges on their selection – there is something here for every travel writing fan. It is also pleasing that five of the six titles come from independent publishers, who consistently bring us exciting and innovative writing that helps expand the boundaries of this genre. Every title is quite unique and the judges’ decision in identifying the winner is going to be a very difficult one.”

The full shortlist, alphabetically by author, is:

- *Station to Station: Searching for Stories on the Great Western Line* by James Attlee (Guardian Books)
- *White Sands: Experiences from the Outside World* by Geoff Dyer (Canongate)
- *Squirrel Pie (and other stories): Adventures in Food Across the Globe* by Elisabeth Luard (Bloomsbury)
- *The Hills of Wales* by Jim Perrin (Gomer Press)
- *Interstate: Hitchhiking Through the State of a Nation* by Julian Sayerer (Arcadia Books)
- *Deep South: Four Seasons on Back Roads* by Paul Theroux (Penguin)

The winner of the Stanford Dolman Travel Book of the Year, in association with the Authors’ Club will receive £5,000 and an antique globe, to be presented at the Awards ceremony.

**For further information, please contact:**

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**Notes for editors**

**About the shortlist**

***1. Station to Station: Searching for Stories on the Great Western Line***

The line from London to Bristol connects two great cities, but what lies in between? London's western suburbs, the Thames Valley, acres of farmland punctuated by tourist traps and provincial towns; what could possibly be of interest in such a landscape? To his surprise, James Attlee - a regular traveller on the route - finds himself knee-deep in stories, the line awash with ghosts, from Charles I and Oscar Wilde, to T.E. Lawrence, Diana Dors, and the creator of the line himself, Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

**About the author**

James Attlee is an author, journalist and musician, as well as Editor at Large in the UK for the University of Chicago Press. He is the author of *Isolarion: A Different Oxford Journey* and *Nocturne: A Journey in Search of Moonlight*.

***2. White Sands: Experiences from the Outside World***

From “one of our most original writers” (Kathryn Schulz, New York magazine) comes an expansive and exacting book—firmly grounded but elegant, often hilarious, and always inquisitive—about travel, unexpected awareness, and the questions we ask when we step outside ourselves.

Geoff Dyer’s restless search—for what? is unclear, even to him—continues in this series of fascinating adventures and pilgrimages. Weaving stories about places to which he has recently travelled with images and memories that have persisted since childhood, Dyer tries “to work out what a certain place—a certain way of marking the landscape—means; what it’s trying to tell us; what we go to it for.”

### **About the Author**

A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Geoff Dyer has received the Somerset Maugham Award, the E. M. Forster Award, a Lannan Literary Fellowship, a National Book Critics Circle Award for criticism, and, in 2015, the Windham Campbell Prize for non-fiction. The author of four novels and nine works of non-fiction, Dyer is writer in residence at the University of Southern California and lives in Los Angeles. His books have been translated into twenty-four languages.

### **3. *Squirrel Pie (and other stories): Adventures in Food Across the Globe***

Elisabeth Luard, one of the food world's most entertaining and evocative writers, has travelled extensively throughout her life, meeting fascinating people, observing different cultures and uncovering extraordinary ingredients in unusual places. In this enchanting food memoir, she shares tales and dishes gathered from her global ramblings.

Divided into four landscapes – rivers, islands, deserts and forests – Elisabeth's stories are coupled with more than fifty authentic recipes, each one a reflection of its unique place of origin, including Boston bean-pot, Hawaiian poke, Cretan bouboutie, mung-bean roti, roasted buttered coffee beans, Anzac biscuits and Sardinian lemon macaroons.

### **About the Author**

Elisabeth Luard is an award-winning food writer, journalist and broadcaster. Her cookbooks include *A Cook's Year in a Welsh Farmhouse*, *European Peasant Cookery* and *The Food of Spain and Portugal*. She has written three memoirs, *Family Life*, *Still Life* and *My Life as a Wife*. She is currently the Trustee Director of the Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery, has a monthly column in the *Oldie* and writes regularly in *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Country Life* and the *Daily Mail*.

### **4. *The Hills of Wales***

The hills of Wales have haunted Jim Perrin for six decades. And they continue to do so still, inexhaustibly, always offering new perspectives, moods and experiences. This book records forays into both famed and forgotten upland taking in Cader Idris and the Carneddau, Corndon Hill and the Berwyn, Pumlumon Fawr and the little hills of Llŷn, and so many others. They are accounts of personal explorations, journeyings and encounters, each fragment and footstep combining to form a peripatetic literary celebration.

### **About the Author**

Jim Perrin is a writer, broadcaster and rock climber. As a writer he has made regular contributions to a number of newspapers and climbing magazines. As a climber he has developed many new routes, and made solo and free ascents of great difficulty. Among his books are *River Map* and *Snowdon: The Story of a Welsh Mountain*. He has appeared at many festivals and is the recipient of a number of awards e.g. Boardman Tasker Prize, Wales Tourist Board Wales in Print Award 2002, VisitAmerica Travel Writer of the Year, 2000.

### **5. *About Interstate: Hitchhiking through the State of a Nation***

Recruited to work on a documentary project, Julian Sayerer goes to New York convinced he has hit big time at last. Finding the project cancelled, he wanders the city streets and, with nowhere else to go, decides to set out hitchhiking for San Francisco. Revisiting this timeless American journey finds an unseen nation in rough shape. Along the road are homeless people and anarchists who have dropped out

of society altogether, and blue-collar Americans who seem to have lost all meaning in forgotten towns and food deserts. Helped along by roadside communities and encounters that somehow keep a sense of optimism alive, Interstate grapples with the fault lines in US society. It tells a tale of Steinbeck and Kerouac, set against the indifference of the vast US landscape and the frustrated energy of American culture and politics at the start of a new century.

### **About the author**

Julian Sayerer is an author, journalist, and is often called an adventurer, although normally by other people. He has cycled six times across Europe, hitchhiked across the United States, and in 2009 broke the 18,000-mile world record for a circumnavigation by bicycle. A politics graduate, Julian's writing has appeared in the *London Review of Books*, *New Statesman*, *Aeon Magazine*, and many others, including a host of cycling publications. He writes slow travel, his writing from the roadside a 12mph view of the world in passing.

### **6. Deep South: Four Seasons on Back Roads**

Travelling through North and South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas, Paul Theroux writes of the stunning landscapes he discovers - the deserts, the mountains, the Mississippi - and above all, the lives of the people he meets.

The South is a place of contradictions. There is the warm, open spirit of the soul food cafes, found in every town, no matter how small. There is the ruined grandeur of numberless ghostly towns, long abandoned by the industries that built them. There are the state gun shows and the close-knit, subtly forlorn tribe of people who attend and run them. Deep in the heart of his native country, Theroux discovers a land more profoundly foreign than anything he has previously experienced.

### **About the author**

Paul Theroux was born in Medford, Massachusetts in 1941. He has written many works of fiction and travel writing, including *The Last Train to Zona Verde*, *Dark Star Safari*, *Ghost Train to the Eastern Star*, *Riding the Iron Rooster*, *The Great Railway Bazaar*, *The Elephanta Suite*, *A Dead Hand*, *The Tao of Travel* and *The Lower River*. *The Mosquito Coast* and *Dr Slaughter* have both been made into successful films. Paul Theroux divides his time between Cape Cod and the Hawaiian islands.

### **About the Edward Stanford Travel Writing Awards**

Launched in 2015, the Edward Stanford Travel Writing Awards seek to celebrate the best travel writing, and travel writers, in the world. In its first year, it consisted of the Stanford Dolman Travel Book of the Year, in association with The Authors' Club and the Edward Stanford Award for Outstanding Contribution to Travel Writing. The winner of the 2015 Edward Stanford Award for Outstanding Contribution to Travel Writing was Bill Bryson.

The category list was expanded this year to cover other areas of print and online travel writing. The award categories for 2016 consist of: The Stanford Dolman Travel Book of the Year, in association with The Authors' Club, Edward Stanford Award for Outstanding Contribution to Travel Writing, Specsavers Fiction (with a Sense of Place), Wanderlust Adventure Travel Book of the Year, National Book Tokens Children's Travel Book of the Year, Lonely Planet Pathfinders Travel Blog of the Year, Destinations Show Illustrated Travel Book of The Year, Food and Travel Magazine Food & Travel Book of the Year, London Book Fair Innovation in Travel Publishing, and Bradt Travel Guides New Travel Writer of the Year.

### **About the sponsors**

#### **1. The Authors' Club**

Founded by the novelist and critic Walter Besant in 1891 as a place where writers could meet and talk, the Authors' Club also welcomes publishers, editors, agents, journalists, academics and anyone professionally involved with literature. Early members included Oscar Wilde, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, Arthur Conan Doyle, JM Barrie, Jerome K Jerome, Ford Madox Ford, HG Wells, Compton Mackenzie, Thornton Wilder and Graham Greene, while guest speakers included Emile Zola, Mark Twain, Rudyard

Kipling, Winston Churchill, Bram Stoker, TS Eliot and Clement Attlee. (Recent guests have included Deborah Moggach, Miranda Seymour, Robert MacFarlane, Matthew Sweet, Amanda Craig, Blake Morrison, Susie Boyt, Charles Spencer, Lisa Appignanesi and June Whitfield.) The Club celebrated its 125th anniversary in November 2016.

## **2. Bradt Travel Guides**

When Hilary Bradt set out to explore South America in 1973, little did she realise that the journey would lead to the creation of what is now the largest independent travel-guide publisher in the UK. Bradt Travel Guides has a reputation for 'getting there first' – indeed, over half their guides have no direct competition – but, with more than 200 titles in print, they have the mainstream destinations covered too.

Whatever the country, Bradt's expert authors seek out those special spots off the beaten track. It's an approach that makes Bradt the choice of passionate travellers from Kate Humble to Michael Palin, and its books have won a host of awards (including Top Guidebook Series of 2016 in the Wanderlust Travel Awards). After 43 years, Hilary herself is still very much involved, and the company as committed as ever to publishing pioneering guides to exceptional places. [www.bradtguides.com](http://www.bradtguides.com)

## **3. Destinations Show**

With a 23-year legacy, Destinations: The Holiday & Travel Show, in association with *The Times*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Times Travel Magazine*, has established itself as the World's largest consumer travel event. Over 68,000 passionate travellers flock to our events at Olympia London and Manchester's EventCity to meet with over 640 leading and independent travel brands and tourist boards. The Destinations Show in London also presents the Stanfords Travel Writers Festival; a showcase of the very best travel authors sharing their inspiring stories and experiences over four days of talks, panel sessions and book signings.

## **4. Food and Travel magazine**

*Food and Travel magazine* is the world's leading gastronomic tourism title and serves an ever-growing number of consumers who want to meet and eat with the locals, explore an area's markets and cultural highlights and use the local services of a destination. Their tourism spending spreads deep into the local economy of each place they visit, creating real tourism wealth. They want to know what local ingredients the chefs are using, to sample the street food and visit local producers.

The concept of gastronomic tourism has taken on increased importance around the world as destinations have realised that one of the unique elements that distinguishes them from their competitors is their culinary offering. Whether it is produce that is unique to the area or the way in which ingredients are combined, a destination's cuisine is often the entry point to its culture.

The award-winning UK edition launched in 1997 and is distributed in 44 countries. Local language editions are published in Germany, Mexico, Turkey, Arabia, Italy and from 2017, Portugal.

## **5. London Book Fair**

The London Book Fair (LBF) is the global marketplace for rights negotiation and the sale and distribution of content across print, audio, TV, film and digital channels. Taking place every spring in the world's premier publishing and cultural capital, it is a unique opportunity to explore, understand and capitalise on the innovations shaping the publishing world of the future. LBF brings you direct access to customers, content and emerging markets. LBF 2017, the 46th Fair, will take place from 14 – 16 March 2017, Olympia London. LBF's London Book and Screen Week will run for the third year, with the book fair as the pivotal three-day event within a seven-day programme. London Book and Screen Week will begin on Monday 13 March. For further information, please visit: [www.londonbookfair.co.uk](http://www.londonbookfair.co.uk)

## **6. Lonely Planet Pathfinders**

Lonely Planet live and breathe travel. Inspired by their community's tales from the road, Lonely Planet created Pathfinders to evolve an ever-expanding network of travel experts.

Real stories from real people – people with a passion for exploring the world – are an endless source of inspiration for travellers. Blogs and social media play an increasing role in the travel planning process.

Lonely Planet wants to nurture this travel documenting talent and share the best content with the global audience.

### **7. National Book Tokens**

The only gift cards accepted in all major bookselling chains and independents across the UK and Ireland, including: WH Smith, Waterstones, Blackwell, Easons, John Smith, Foyles, Stanfords and all good independent bookshops. They can also be spent online and on eBooks

The perfect gift for any occasion, from birthdays and Christmas to congratulations and Mother's Day; from exam results and Father's Day to back-to-school or perhaps as a simple "thank you". The perfect gift for recipients of all ages, from toddlers excited by the massive range of fantastic children's books in their local bookshop, to life-long booklovers, with time to browse and find something new.

[www.nationalbooktokens.com](http://www.nationalbooktokens.com)

### **8. Specsavers**

Specsavers is a partnership of almost 2,000 locally-run businesses throughout the world – all committed to delivering high quality, affordable optical and hearing care in the communities they serve.

They have long been a champion of books, having sponsored the Specsavers Book Club on More 4, the Specsavers Crime Thriller Book Club and Specsavers Crime Thriller Awards on ITV3, the National Book Awards and the recently announced Specsavers Bestseller Awards.

Specsavers also supports the Bord Gais Energy Irish Book Awards.

### **9. Stanfords**

Edward Stanford Limited was founded in 1853 by Edward Stanford in Charing Cross Road in London. In 1901 the Company moved to its current flagship location in Long Acre, Covent Garden. Famed throughout the World as a publisher of maps, Stanfords expanded into retail following the move to Covent Garden. To this day Stanfords stocks the largest range of maps in the World as well as travel guides, the World's largest selection of globes and other travel related product. It has a further shop in Bristol, a website and a specialist Business Mapping Service based in Manchester. Edward Stanford Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Edward Stanford Group Limited.

### **10. Wanderlust**

The proudly independent, multi-award winning *Wanderlust* travel magazine launched 23 years ago. It is the UK's leading magazine for people with a passion for travel combining the right mix of wildlife, activities and cultural insight – not to mention inspirational writing and photography. Travel author Bill Bryson said, "There simply isn't a better magazine for the serious traveller."

Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief, Lyn Hughes, was lauded by *The Times*, as one of the "50 Most Influential People in Travel", and it is her passion, specifically for sustainable tourism, that continues to focus the Wanderlust Travel Media business on providing exciting content, about exploring the wonders around throughout the world.

[www.wanderlust.co.uk](http://www.wanderlust.co.uk)

### **About Agile Ideas**

Launched in Bath in 2004, Agile Ideas is an independent, project management agency specializing in Book-based Prizes, Awards and Promotions. Since helping to create the commercial platform for the original Richard & Judy Book Club, Agile Ideas has project managed and helped administer many properties including; The Wainwright Golden Beer Literary Prize, The Bord Gais Energy Irish Book Awards, The Specsavers CrimeThriller Awards, The Cross Sports Book Awards.