

## Samaritan Group win Penguin/Orange Reading Group Award

<http://www.penguin.co.uk/readers>

<http://www.orangeprize.co.uk>

London, August 19th 2003, Penguin and Orange are pleased to announce the winner of the Penguin/Orange Reading Group Prize 2003. This is the second year the prize has run and, again, it was promoted through Penguin's Readers' Group site [www.penguin.co.uk/readers](http://www.penguin.co.uk/readers), the Orange web site [www.orangeprize.co.uk](http://www.orangeprize.co.uk), local libraries and the Readers' Group magazine, *newBOOKSmag*. The aim of the prize is to find the reading group that demonstrated the most imaginative and diverse reading as a group.

There were over 100 entries from groups all over the UK – meeting places ranged from pubs and wine bars to church halls and community centres. Some groups had been in existence for as long as 35 years. The eventual winner, in the face of stiff competition, was **The Ealing Samaritans' Reading Group**. The group is comprised of 4 men and 9 women. Their jobs include: a London Underground train driver, a British Airways Stewardess, a builder, a phlebotomist, a TV producer and someone who works in a paper mill. They meet every month at The Ealing Samaritan Centre in West London to discuss their chosen books. Before winning the award, the group did not know each other's surnames, such is the nature of Samaritan work.

**Judith Roscoe** who submitted the group's entry summed up their feelings on winning the prize:

"We are all over the moon about winning this award. We all enjoy our meetings immensely and to win an award for something we enjoy so much is fantastic. And what an award it is!"

The competition was judged by Penguin author **Gilda O'Neill**; Kate Jones founder of [www.penguin.co.uk/readers](http://www.penguin.co.uk/readers), **Miranda McKearney** Director of The Reading Agency; **Tessa Hilton**, Editor at Large of Woman and Home magazine and **Guy Pringle**, editor of *newBOOKSmag*.

**Gilda O'Neill** comments:

"I've judged everything from literary prizes to school poetry competitions and never  
... the ... .. The ... .. of the ... .. that it

was very difficult to choose a winner, but, in the end, we had to go with the group that not only seemed to meet the criteria almost perfectly - a passionate focus on the books, combined with individual determination that members would get their personal choice of book read - but it was the group of which we thought we would most like to be members. We all agreed on that point - no higher accolade.”

#### Judging criteria

Entrants were asked to write about their reading group, how they choose what to read, difficult books they have tackled, books they have loved, where they meet and any activities they carry out to reflect what they are reading. The judges were looking particularly for original book choices, entries that would inspire timid readers and any innovative ideas.

The group won a trip to the Edinburgh Book Festival, lunch with a Penguin author and £200 of Penguin books. The group also attended a prize-giving Penguin/Orange author event. Jackie McGlone chaired a panel discussion with authors Ali Smith, Val McDermid, Kate Atkinson and Esther Freud on their Desert Island books.

To read all 10 shortlisted entries, including The Ealing Samaritans' winning entry log on to [www.penguin.co.uk/readers](http://www.penguin.co.uk/readers)

**If you would like to interview the winning group or would like more information on Penguin's involvement with readers groups please contact Louisa Symington**

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Notes to Editors

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- Penguin is one of Britain's top brand names. It is ranked as the 10<sup>th</sup> greatest media brand in the world (The World's Greatest Brands ed: Nicholas Kochan, Interbrand).
- The Penguin brand went online in 1995 and penguin.co.uk was re-launched with a brand new look in October 2000, covering a wide range of books and authors, from Zadie Smith and Steven Pinker to Jamie Oliver and Nick Hornby. Site statistics show consistent growth in visitors to penguin.co.uk, with visitor figures since re-launch up by 90% and page impressions increased by 70%.
- Penguin's Readers' Group website [www.penguin.co.uk/readers](http://www.penguin.co.uk/readers) was launched in March 2001 and now has nearly 5000 subscribers

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- In August 2000 Orange plc was acquired by France Telecom, leading to the creation of Europe's second largest mobile operator. The new Orange has operations in 20 countries across Europe and beyond, and aims to have a presence in markets covering 1.5 billion people worldwide by 2005.
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- Information about Orange can be found on the Orange website at [www.orange.co.uk](http://www.orange.co.uk) and media information can be found at [www.orange.com](http://www.orange.com)

**For further information, call the Orange media centre on 020 7884 2000**