

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, the Orange web site 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, **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
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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