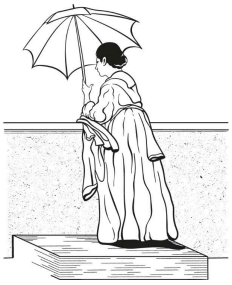
EMBAROGED 3 SEPTEMBER 2026

THE
ILSE SCHWEPCKE
PRIZE



Independent publishers lead newly-announced 2026 Ilse Schwepcke Prize shortlist

The finalists of the 2026 Ilse Schwepcke Prize for women's travel writing have been chosen. The prizes, which award a book each year published in English and another in German, have announced their shortlists, each selected by independent juries.

The jury for the English-language prize selected five titles, including three from independent publishers:

- Hannah Kent, *Always Home, Always Homesick* (Picador, Pan Macmillan)
- Joanna Pocock, *Greyhound* (Fitzcarraldo Editions)
- Judith Scheele, *Shifting Sands: A Human History of the Sahara* (Profile Books)
- Hazel Sheffield, *Frontierlands: Britain's Survival in the Making* (Torva, Transworld)
- Helen Watson, *Tea and Grit: A Bicycle Journey along the Silk Road* (Bradt Travel Guides: Journey Books)

In a statement announcing the shortlist, the jury wrote: 'Reading the many books submitted for the 2026 Ilse Schwepcke Prize has been literary nourishment of the very finest kind: savoury, varied and endlessly surprising. Travel writing embraces many approaches; the best of it expands the mind and extends our horizons. The Ilse Schwepcke Prize celebrates travel writing by women, a genre that is unique in the narratives it sets forth, the details it notices, and the adventures it offers. In 2026, the unifying characteristics of the wonderful shortlist unanimously agreed by the judges are courage, compassion, engagement and integrity. We – and you – accompany the shortlisted writers for thousands of miles, in an arc that encompasses Iceland and Africa, Central Asia, North America and England, and our understanding of the world and our humanity are deepened by each and every one of these five books.'

The jury of the English-language prize was chaired by Fiammetta Rocco, Emeritus Director of the International Booker Prize and former culture editor of *The Economist*. Fiammetta was joined by bookseller Arabella von Friesen of John Sandoe Books, and writer Jacky Colliss Harvey.

The shortlist will be celebrated on Thursday 24 September at John Sandoe Books in London.

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On 9 October, one author will be crowned winner of the prize and will receive £5,000 in a ceremony at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The winner of the prize's sister award in Germany, Der Ilse Schwepcke Preis, will be awarded €6,000 at the same ceremony.

The German-speaking jury included the winner of the 2025 Ilse Schwepcke Preis, Millay Hyatt, bookseller Maria Klöcker and journalist Martina Wimmer. Between them, they chose a shortlist of four books:

- Marianne Jungmaier, *Kontinentaldrift* (Otto Müller Verlag)
- Anneke Lubkowitz, *Rebellinnen zu Fuß* (Kein & Aber)
- Caro Matzko, *Alte Wut* (Piper)
- Antje Rávik Strubel, *Kein Schnee, nimmermehr* (Residenz Verlag)

The Ilse Schwepcke Prize is administered by the Society of Authors.

For more information about the prizes please visit:
UK: https://www.ilseschwepckeprize.co.uk/
GER: https://www.ilseschwepckepreis.de/

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