

Booker celebrates golden touch of first winner's wife

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PH Newby's trophy was sprayed gold. Recent winners get a perspex panel

The gold paint obsession of the wife of the first Booker Prize winner is to be celebrated with a recreation of “the long-forgotten” trophy created for the literary award more than 50 years ago.

Joan Newby, whose husband PH Newby won in 1969 with *Something to Answer For*, spray-painted the 60cm high trophy gold. It was used by the family as a plant stand and key holder. The trophy, designed by Jan Pienkowski, the illustrator of the *Meg and Mog* children's books, was later cut down in size and it is unclear whether it was in the 1970s or 1980s that winners stopped receiving one. Up until last year, the winners, on top of the £50,000 first prize, got a perspex panel.

Following the death of Pienkowski this year, the Booker Prize Foundation tracked down the trophy and enlisted the help of the Factum Foundation, which uses high-resolution digital recording to recreate cultural heritage. While the original was silver, the recreation will be gold. It will also be smaller.

“When I was growing up I remember it being used to put keys in,” Gabriel Schenk, Newby's grandson said. “And my grandmother had sprayed it gold. She went through a phase of spraying everything gold — she would have sprayed her daughters gold if they had stood still long enough.”

According to Booker legend, Pienkowski used an art deco lamp he bought at Portobello Market in London as the basis for the design. Schenk was convinced the original lamp's "pair" appeared in an episode of *Poirot*.

Schenk took the trophy to an *Antiques Roadshow* event. "It was described as having a bum bypass," he said. "There is no bottom on the woman at all. But it is an incredible shape. I think they said it was priceless, or at least impossible to put a value on."



Jan Pienkowski designed the trophy
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Gaby Wood, director of the Booker Prize Foundation, said they had wanted to commemorate Pienkowski, adding that the design may be slightly adapted to, for example, perhaps alter what the "Booker Girl" is holding and there will be a competition to choose the name of it.

Adam Lowe, founder of the Factum Foundation, said the original had been recorded using high-resolution photogrammetry to capture "shape and surface".

A stereolithography 3D printing system was used to create a resin replica. "We will cast it in pewter and goldplate it," he said. "It will be a nice, heavy, golden trophy."

The trophy is to be presented to the winner on October 17. The shortlisted writers are Claire Keegan, Percival Everett, Alan Garner, NoViolet Bulawayo, Shehan Karunatilaka and Elizabeth Strout. All six will receive £2,500 and a specially bound copy of their novel.

Lowe said that unlike other cultural statues such as the Oscars, the Booker Trophy "is actually a great design".

"It is a beautiful way to celebrate books and sculpture." And the spray-painting habits of writers' spouses.