

## Highclere Castle Book Readers and Writing Awards 2026

June marks the opening of entries to this years' Book Readers' and Writing Awards. The Readers awards are in their third year, and this is the inaugural year for the Writing Awards.

For the **Book Readers' Awards**, - the book review can be a newly published novel, a non-fiction title or a renowned classic fitting into one of five categories. Entrants must write 1000 words maximum on their chosen novel

The five categories include;

Travel:- aimed at the adventurer, anything from a travelogue or a classic guidebook.

Biography:- this could be a book about a favourite hero, icon, author or historical figure. A great category for readers to share their immersion and understanding of a favourite person.

History:- this category includes social history, ancient or modern, military history or personal diaries.

Novel:- whether it's a classic or purely a favourite piece of narrative, the options are endless.

Children's book:- The choice is vast whether it's a classic or a contemporary children's story.

The winner of each category will win £500 with the five runners up taking home £100.

Last year's inaugural awards saw 2200 entries from an international base.

The Writing Awards are in their inaugural year and

### The Highclere Castle Book Festival Writing Prize 2026

To mark the inaugural year of the Writing Prize, budding writers are challenged to inhabit the mind and spirit of a famed author of the past. Whether inspired by the quiet intensity of a governess, the wit of a social observer, or the brooding sensibilities of a romantic poet, entrants must compose a diary entry as though they themselves were that writer, capturing not only their voice, but their time.

Each submission, no more than 1,000 words, should unfold as a private reflection: intimate, immediate, and true to the era in which the chosen writer lived. Consider the concerns of the day, the constraints of society, and the inner life that shaped their work. What would they confide to the page, when no one else was listening?

We are not looking for imitation alone, but imagination, writing that breathes with authenticity while revealing something new.

Entries will be judged on originality, voice, historical sensitivity, and emotional depth. The winner will be announced at the Highclere Castle Book Festival in October.

Take up your pen. Assume another life. And write as though history itself were watching.

Entries to both competitions close on Friday 18th September and winners will be notified before the prize giving on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October at the Highclere Castle Book Festival. Prizes will be presented by Lady Camarvon and Elizabeth Kirby from Hampshire Life.

Terms and conditions for entrants can be found at: [www.highclerecastle/bookreadersawards](http://www.highclerecastle/bookreadersawards).