



Man Booker Prize 50th Anniversary Reception at Buckingham Palace: Luke Ellis' speech

05 July 2018 – Anniversaries offer something rare in a world as frantic as ours: a chance to step out of the onward rush of time, to pause for a moment, to look back, to take stock. As we celebrate this golden jubilee of the world's foremost literary prize, it's hard not to be struck by a sense of huge admiration for what the Man Booker has achieved. Poring over the list of winners is like reading the history of the development of the modern novel and of contemporary thought. The last 50 years has been a period of extraordinary change in the way we live our lives, and we recognise that literary fiction, at its best, has risen to the challenge, and managed to answer some of the great questions posed by our times. These Man Booker novels have made us laugh, question, pause, think... But they've done something more than that: they've given us new modes of understanding ourselves and our relation to others, they've encouraged readers across the world to think deeper, harder, more creatively about the most complex issues we face. And not in 140 characters.

I'm often asked why an investment firm like Man Group should want to be so closely associated with a literary prize, as if the world were divided into discrete silos and we ought to stick to a certain stereotype. The first thing to say is that this Prize is about excellence. One of our key beliefs at Man is that good isn't good enough – we want to be excellent in everything we do. A few years ago a leading business publication carried out a survey into the most competitive careers available to graduates. Novelists came in at number two, while finance was fourth. Being at the very top of these industries takes something very special, something more than hard work or intelligence or indeed privilege. We believe in measuring ourselves against the very best and that doesn't just mean in a narrow, parochial sense. We value excellence and we want to celebrate it. Yes even from Harry Kane. Furthermore, we believe reading gives us a better understanding of the world, and this broad understanding of the world can only make us better at what we do, whatever role we have.

I believe that businesses like ours have an essential duty to support progress in education at every level: from prizes like this which recognise global talent, to local initiatives in schools and universities. It is the right thing to do: social responsibility must sit firmly within all companies' priorities if we are to address the many challenges and injustices facing our world today.

One of the most admirable things about the Man Booker is the way that it hasn't stood still, hasn't rested on its laurels. The world has changed dramatically since the prize was instigated. Novels have changed, too. And it's right that the prize should reflect these changes. We're extremely proud to have sponsored this prize over the past 16 years and, in that time, we've seen winners from a diverse mix of countries and backgrounds. The extending of the prize to include all novels written in English and the establishment of the Man Booker International Prize are merely recognition of something we all know – that great ideas don't respect boundaries, that real excellence wants to perform on the widest stage possible.

I'd like to end by noting one final source of excellence who rarely get a mention – that of the many who work to administer the prize, who have helped to maintain its position as the world's most coveted literary accolade. I'd like to thank Baroness Kennedy, Gaby Wood and Dotti Irving, and the many others who work so passionately alongside them. I'd like also to remember the great work of Ion Trewin, whom we remember with such fondness, and who lives on through the Prize, whose identity he did so much to shape.

Now, please raise your glasses to the past fifty, glorious, inspirational years of this extraordinary prize, and to the next fifty.

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About Man Group

Man Group is a global active investment management firm, which runs \$112.7bn* of client capital in liquid and private markets, managed by investment specialists based around the world. Headquartered in London, the firm has 15 international offices and operates across 25 jurisdictions. Our business has five specialist investment engines, which represent the range of our capabilities: Man AHL, Man Numeric, Man GLG, Man FRM and Man GPM.

These engines house numerous investment teams, working collaboratively within the framework of Man Group, with a high degree of investment autonomy. Each team benefits from the strength and resources of the firm's single operating platform, enabling their primary focus to be seeking to generate alpha for clients. The teams invest across a diverse range of strategies and asset classes with highly specialised approaches, with long only and alternative strategies run on a discretionary and quantitative basis in single and multi-manager formats. Our clients are at the heart of everything we do and we engage in close dialogue with our investors as strategic partners, to understand their particular needs and constraints. Man Group's investment teams are empowered and supported by our institutional infrastructure and technology, which aims to facilitate the most efficient exposure to markets and effective collaboration across the organisation.

Through the Man Charitable Trust and sponsorship of the Man Booker Prizes, Man Group is committed to promoting literacy and numeracy on a global scale, and to supporting charitable causes more broadly.

Man Group plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange under the ticker EMG.LN and is a constituent of the FTSE 250 Index. Further information can be found at www.man.com.

**As at 31 March 2018. All investment management and advisory services are offered through the investment "engines" of Man AHL, Man Numeric, Man GLG, Man FRM and Man Global Private Markets (GPM).*