

## **BILL BRYSON REVEALS LONG-LIST FOR 2005 AVENTIS PRIZES FOR SCIENCE BOOKS GENERAL PRIZE**

[www.aventisprizes.com](http://www.aventisprizes.com)

Winner announced 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005

The Royal Society will tonight announce the long-list for this year's Aventis Prizes for Science Books' General Prize, which celebrates the very best in popular science writing for adults.

The formal announcement will be made by Bill Bryson, chair of the General Prize judging panel and winner of the 2004 General Prize for his book 'A Short History of Nearly Everything'.

The five-strong judging panel selected a long-list of thirteen books:

**Critical Mass: One Thing Leads to Another** – Philip Ball (*William Heinemann*)

**The Ancestor's Tale** – Richard Dawkins (*Weidenfeld & Nicholson*)

**Why Life Speeds Up As You Get Older** – Douwe Draaisma (*Cambridge University Press*)

**Matters of Substance: Drugs – and why everyone's a user** – Griffith Edwards (*Penguin, Allen Lane*)

**The Long Summer: How Climate Changed Civilisation** – Brian Fagan (*Granta*)

**Pandora's Breeches: Women, Power & Science in the Enlightenment** – Patricia Fara (*Pimlico*)

**The Earth: An Intimate History** – Richard Fortey (*HarperCollins*)

**Deep Simplicity: Chaos, Complexity and the Emergence of Life** – John Gribbin (*Penguin, Allen Lane*)

**Aspirin: The Story of a Wonder Drug** – Diarmuid Jeffreys (*Bloomsbury*)

**Status Syndrome** – Michael Marmot (*Bloomsbury*)

**Hippocratic Oaths: Medicine and its Discontents** – Raymond Tallis (*Atlantic Books*)

**Brainwashing: The Science of Thought Control** – Kathleen Taylor (*Oxford University Press*)

**The Human Mind** – Robert Winston (*Bantam Press/ Transworld Publishers*)

Chair of this year's General Prize Judging Panel and winner in 2004, Bill Bryson, said: "It was an honour to Chair this year's Prizes after winning last year and I now know what a difficult job it is choosing a long-list! The quality of books submitted to the Prizes this year was again superb with entries from a fascinating range of subject areas, including brainwashing, the physics of society and drug control."

The long-list includes **Robert Winston**, chair of the 2004 General Prize judging panel and the only author to have books long-listed for both the General and Junior Prizes for this year's awards.

**Richard Dawkins** also makes his third appearance on the long-list for his book 'The Ancestor's Tale'. Previously he has made it to the short-list twice, once in 1996 for 'River out of Eden' (Weidenfeld and Nicholson) and again in 1997 for 'Climbing Mount Improbable' (Viking).

No one on the long-list has won the General Prize before.

The General Prize judging panel consists of Bill Bryson, author and winner of the General Prize in 2004 (chair), Lisa Burke, forecaster and Sky News weather presenter, Sian Ede, renowned UK authority on art and science interactions, Mark Lythgoe, broadcaster, neurophysiologist and lecturer and Ruth Padel, scholar, poet and Chair of the UK Poetry Society.

The Prizes are managed by the Royal Society, the UK national academy of science and generously supported by the Aventis Foundation, a German charitable trust established by a predecessor of sanofi-aventis, a world leader in pharmaceuticals.

Bill Bryson's announcement of the General Prize long-list and his lecture on his winning book 'A Short History of Nearly Everything' can be viewed via the Royal Society website at [www.royalsoc.ac.uk/live](http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/live).

For more information on the Aventis Prizes for Science Books please visit the website at [www.aventisprizes.com](http://www.aventisprizes.com).

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About The Royal Society**

The Royal Society is an independent academy promoting the natural and applied sciences. Founded in 1660, the Society has three roles, as the UK academy of science, as a learned Society and as a funding agency. It responds to individual demand with selection by merit not by field. The Society's aims are to:

- strengthen UK science by providing support to excellent individuals
- fund excellent research to push back the frontiers of knowledge
- attract and retain the best scientists
- ensure the UK engages with the best science around the world
- support science communication and education; and communicate and encourage dialogue with the public
- provide the best independent advice nationally and internationally
- promote scholarship and encourage research into the history of science

For more information, visit the web site at [www.royalsoc.ac.uk](http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk)

### **About The Aventis Foundation**

The Aventis Foundation is generously supporting the Aventis Prizes for Science Books.

The Aventis Foundation is a German charitable trust established by a predecessor of sanofi-aventis, a world leader in pharmaceuticals. The Aventis Foundation serves to promote music, theatre, art and literature, projects in the social and political arena with a focus on healthcare, as well as science, research and higher education. For more information visit the website at [www.aventis-foundation.org](http://www.aventis-foundation.org)

### **About sanofi-aventis**

The sanofi-aventis Group is the world's 3rd largest pharmaceutical company, ranking number 1 in Europe. Backed by a world-class R&D organization, sanofi-aventis is developing leading positions in seven major therapeutic areas: cardiovascular disease, thrombosis, oncology, diabetes, central nervous system, internal medicine, vaccines. The sanofi-aventis Group is listed in Paris (EURONEXT : SAN) and in New York (NYSE : SNY).

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