

Impact Report

1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023



Malorie Blackman, winner of the 2022 PEN Pinter Prize © George Torode

**ENGLISH
PEN**

**FREEDOM
TO WRITE
FREEDOM
TO READ**

English PEN is one of the world's first human rights organisations, championing the freedom to write and the freedom to read.

We are the founding centre of PEN International, a worldwide writers' association with 130 centres in more than 90 countries.

With the support of our members – a community of writers, readers, and activists – we protect freedom of expression whenever it is under attack.

We campaign for writers facing persecution around the world and offer respite residencies to international writers.

We celebrate contemporary international writing through our online magazine, *PEN Transmissions*, and we award literary grants for translating new works into English.

We bring together outstanding writers, readers and translators for unforgettable conversations and we celebrate courageous writing with annual literary prizes.

In 2022, English PEN's focus has been on defending, supporting and championing the freedom to write and the freedom to read.

Over the last year, we have led on and joined significant campaigns for both individual writers in times of risk and wider, national issues of freedom of expression. We continue to champion writers of courage, supporting and celebrating translation through events, online publications and prizes. Behind the scenes, we provide advice and guidance to writers and publishers, all the while helping shape draft legislation to ensure freedom of expression is protected by law.

This report details some of the highlights from the year gone by, made possible through your generosity.

English PEN is only as strong as its community of supporters.

It is thanks to you that we can continue to fight for the freedom to write and the freedom to read, directly supporting individual writers as well as campaigning for systemic change at policy level.

Thank you.

Ruth Borthwick, Chair of English PEN

Ruth Borthwick
© Ian Macaulay



We campaign and advocate for international writers at risk.

Founded in 1960, English PEN's Writers at Risk Programme is one of the world's longest running campaigns for freedom of expression. We campaign on behalf of writers who are persecuted, harassed, and imprisoned in violation of their right to freedom of expression.

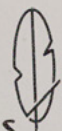
Dearest Jimmy,
I know your conditions very well due to the fact that I was just released from prison.

I am with you whole-heartedly. Please do not forget that there are thousands of people thinking about you.

Please take good care of yourself till we embrace each other.

—
NEDIM TÜRFENT, TURKEY

PENWrites



Working closely with PEN International, sister PEN centres, and other like-minded organisations, we raise awareness and provide bespoke and concrete support to at-risk colleagues – including by sending appeal letters to the relevant authorities, writing messages of solidarity, platforming their writing, and hosting vigils and events.

Over 2022–23, our Writers at Risk programme:

- Hosted **three respite residencies** for international writers, providing them with the time, space, and funds to relax and work on their own projects. Our writers in residence included writer, lawyer, and human rights defender Nurcan Kaya, journalist Buse Söğütü, and author Sema Kaygusuz.
- Sent over 280 letters from over 20 countries through our **letter-writing campaign PENWrites** to 10 imprisoned writers.
- Offered **complimentary London Library membership** to a total of seven writers from Afghanistan, Belarus, Eritrea, Türkiye, and the Philippines, thanks to our ongoing partnership with the Library.
- Appointed British-Egyptian writer and activist **Alaa Abd El-Fattah as an Honorary Member of English PEN.**

In November 2022, we warmly welcomed the news of Kurdish journalist and poet Nedim Türfent's release after more than six years in prison in Türkiye.

Nedim Türfent has been a key case of concern for PEN since his arrest in 2016, and in 2020 was appointed an Honorary Member of English PEN. Nedim Türfent was one of the first writers to be featured in PENWrites, our letter-writing campaign in solidarity with writers at risk, through which he received hundreds of messages of support from all over the world.

While in prison, Nedim Türfent also wrote 'Kuş Aynası,' a collection of poetry. Together with sister PEN centres, English PEN translated and published several of his poems with the aim of sharing and amplifying his voice, despite the attempts to silence him.

We are hugely relieved that Türfent has finally regained his freedom and remain in close contact.

'I want you to know that your letters, which have rendered iron curtains meaningless and ineffective, have filled my two-step-long cell with resistance, resolve and hope.'

Nedim Türfent

We champion literature beyond national and linguistic borders, and beyond conventional literary expectations.

We do this through our PEN Translates grant for UK publishers, PEN Presents grant for sample translations, online publishing, events programming, including our annual International Translation Day, and advocacy.

PEN Translates

Since 2012, PEN Translates – English PEN’s Arts Council England-supported grant for UK publishers – has supported over 350 books from over 95 languages with over £1m of funding, developing literary diversity in the UK while ensuring translators are paid properly for their work.

In 2022–23, PEN Translates:

- supported **36 books from 30 publishers, 28 countries and 20 languages**
- gave awards for the first time to titles from **Mali, Guatemala and North Macedonia, and books translated from Macedonian, Montenegrin and Isaan Thai**
- supported **the first memoir by a Sudanese woman to be translated from Arabic to English**, and the translation of **the first LGBT Macedonian novel**
- awarded **81% of grants to small presses**
- awarded **54% of grants to publishers outside London**

PEN Translates-supported titles continue to be recognised by national and international prizes. In 2022–23, books made possible by the programme won the **International Booker Prize** – *Tomb of Sand* by Geetanjali Shree, translated from the Hindi by Daisy Rockwell (Tilted Axis Press); **TA First Translation Prize** – *Things I Didn’t Throw Out* by Marcin Wicha, translated from the Polish by Marta Sziurosz (Daunt Books Publishing); **Scott Moncrieff Prize** – *Men Don’t Cry* by Faïza Guène, translated from the French by Sarah Ardizzone (Cassava Republic); **Warwick Prize for Women in Translation** – *Tomb of Sand* by Geetanjali Shree, translated from the Hindi by Daisy Rockwell (Tilted Axis Press).

PEN Presents

After a year-long industry consultation, we launched **PEN Presents**, a programme supporting and showcasing sample translations, funding the often-unpaid work of creating samples, giving UK publishers access to titles from underrepresented languages and regions, and helping diversify the translated literature landscape.

International Translation Day

In September 2022, we held the 13th annual **International Translation Day** (ITD), expanding into a two-day programme. A day of in-person talks, workshops and live pitching at Conway Hall, London, was followed by an online day of conversations with a headline from International Booker Prize winners Daisy Rockwell and Geetanjali Shree.

We campaign to defend the right to freedom of expression and the promotion of literature in the UK.

English PEN fights for the systemic change needed to ensure everyone in England can access their right to freedom of expression, with a focus on legislation and policy.



Credit: Cat Lucas

In 2022–23 English PEN raised freedom of expression concerns regarding UK legislation, including the following:

- Human Rights Act and the Bill of Rights
- National Security Act
- Online Safety Act
- Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act

Anti-SLAPP

Over the last year, English PEN's UK campaigns work heavily focused on SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation). **SLAPPs** are lawsuits initiated by powerful individuals, with the intent of shutting down acts of public participation, such as public interest journalism, peaceful protest or boycotts, advocacy, whistleblowing, NGOs and academic comments. **SLAPPs are a serious threat to democracy as they impede the exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association.**

Throughout 2023, English PEN's role as co-chair of the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition included convening media organisations, lawyers, human rights defenders and other members of civil society together in solidarity with targets of SLAPPs. We drafted the Model UK anti-SLAPP law, in collaboration and consultation with solicitors and barristers, which was published in October 2022 and presented in the House of Parliament.

We continue to work closely with partners from across the sector to see the draft bill made into law.

'[The Model UK anti-SLAPP law] would provide even tougher requirements for cases to really show a likelihood of success'

Catherine Belton

English PEN continues to provide practical support and confidential advice to authors, academics and publishers around issues of freedom of expression.

'English PEN approached me when I was under extreme duress. Rather than being viewed as an expert in the field who had written an evidence-based book in measured tones, I was alarmed to find myself being presented by politicians and newspaper columnists as an ideologue who was denigrating British history. PEN reached out to me during this desperate time and having such a great ally gives you the courage to continue writing. My next book is now in press thanks to the support I received.'

Anonymous

An Evening for Salman Rushdie

Thursday 13 October



© Rachel Eliza Griffiths

BRITISH
LIBRARY

Nigella Lawson, An Evening for Salman Rushdie
at the British Library © George Torode

Partnership with

INDEX
ON
CENSORSHIP

pen

ARTICLE19

Penguin
Random House
UK

Humanists UK

We bring outstanding writers, translators and audiences together for unforgettable conversations.

In 2022–23, our events programme continued both online and in person, reaching audiences of over 4,000 from venues including the British Library, the Southbank Centre, the London Library, Folkestone Book Festival, and the London Book Fair, for our annual English PEN Literary Salon.

Following the shocking attack on Salman Rushdie at an event in New York on 12 August, English PEN worked closely with partner organisations and key individuals to host an event at the British Library in October 2022 in recognition of Rushdie's writing and activism.

The event was supported by PEN International, Index on Censorship, Article 19, Humanists UK and Penguin UK; as organisations concerned with the protection of freedom of expression, we wanted to recognise Rushdie's tireless contributions to this global cause.

The event was hosted by English PEN Trustee **Georgina Godwin** and consisted of readings and personal reflections from the following speakers:

Philippe Sands, Mona Arshi, Alan Yentob, Pauline Melville, Julian Barnes, Monica Ali, Hanif Kureishi, Kathy Lette, Melvyn Bragg, Margie Orford, Burhan Sönmez, Meena Kandasamy, Nigella Lawson.



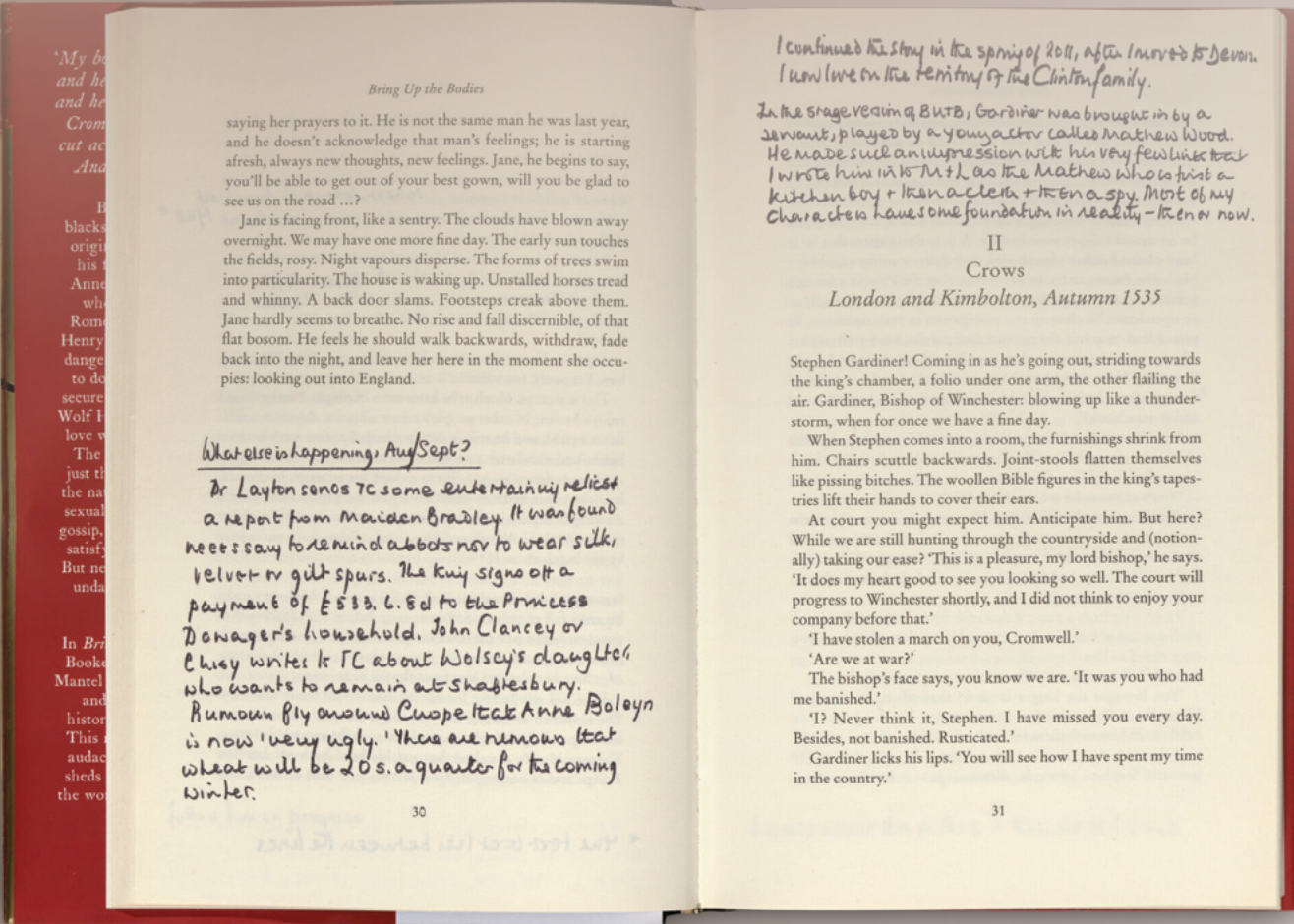
L-R sitting Hanif Kureishi, Pauline Melville, Kathy Lette, Nigella Lawson, Mona Arshi, Julian Barnes

L-R standing Melvyn Bragg, Monica Ali, Alan Yentob, Georgina Godwin, Margie Orford, Meena Kandasamy, Burhan Sönmez

First Editions, Second Thoughts: An Auction in support of English PEN

This exclusive event, delivered in partnership with Christie’s, comprised annotated first edition books and works of art from internationally renowned contemporary artists and authors. Each work was personally annotated by the artist or author to include their insights, recollections, thoughts or illustrations, creating a unique and covetable collector’s item.

The sale comprised more than 80 annotated First Edition books by internationally renowned writers, including work by Margaret Atwood, Hilary Mantel, Salman Rushdie, John le Carré, Sebastian Faulks, Ben Okri, Ian McEwan, Bernardine Evaristo, and Philippe Sands, and art works from highly esteemed artists Anish Kapoor, Tracey Emin, Antony Gormley, Claudette Johnson, Ai Weiwei and Edmund de Waal.



Hilary Mantel, *Bring Up the Bodies* © Christie’s



‘The process of publication (however welcome and necessary) is a process of estrangement. Annotation gives your book back to you, but presents it multiplied. [...]A special kind of memory comes into play – how you were when such a phrase arrived, where you were: the way the light fell into the room. [...] You realise, if you didn’t know it already, that there’s another book behind the book, and behind that, a series of shadow volumes, stretching back to infancy, before you could write at all.’

Hilary Mantel

Our prizes recognise and award contributions to literature and freedom of expression and bring attention to global cases of persecution and censorship.

In 2022–23, we presented three awards to outstanding writers – the PEN Pinter Prize, the PEN Hessel-Tiltman Prize, and the PEN Ackerley Prize. Funded by and in honour of former PEN members and significant literary figures, these prizes recognise excellence in historical nonfiction, literary autobiography, and a courageous and unflinching approach to the written word.

- **Malorie Blackman won the 2022 PEN Pinter Prize, held at the British Library. She named Dr Abduljalil Al-Singace, an award-winning academic, activist, and blogger from Bahrain, the 2022 Writer of Courage.**
- **Frances Stonor Saunders won the 2022 PEN Ackerley Prize for her memoir *The Suitcase: Six Attempts to Cross a Border* (Jonathan Cape).**
- **Francesca Stavrakopoulou won the 2022 PEN Hessel-Tiltman Prize for *God: An Anatomy* (Picador)**



‘There are many fearless authors who write for young adults and children, tackling complex issues in an entertaining, informative, understandable, and unflinching way. That’s why I know that, although I may be the first author of children’s and YA books to receive this prestigious award, I certainly won’t be the last.’

Malorie Blackman, 2022 PEN Pinter Prize



**We provide a platform
for international
and translated
literature, essays
and interviews.**

PEN Transmissions is English PEN's online magazine for international and translated literature. In 2022–23, personal essays and interviews on *PEN Transmissions* reached 29,000 readers in 163 countries.

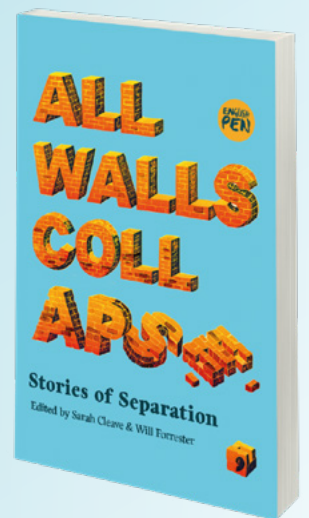
Across the year:

- We commissioned essays and interviews by 31 writers and translators in 26 countries and featured voices as diverse as Zadie Smith, Mona Arshi, Yara Rodrigues Fowler, June Bellebono, Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai, Pajtim Statovci, Malorie Blackman, Ann-Helén Laestadius, Rogelio Braga, Norman Erikson Pasaribu, Momtazi Mehri, Julian Barnes and Malorie Blackman
- We published work in collaboration with StAnza Poetry Festival, the International Booker Prize, Essex Writers House and Metal, and the AKO Caine Prize.

All Walls Collapse

In June 2022, we published *All Walls Collapse: Stories of Separation* in partnership with Comma Press. The specially commissioned anthology of new short fiction in translation marks 10 years of PEN Translates and was developed as part of English PEN's Centenary.

With Comma Press, we toured *All Walls Collapse* at major UK literary festivals, with events including: Hay Festival (Anton Hur, Geetanjali Shree and Krisztina Tóth); London Book Fair (Constantia Soteriou and Lina Protopapa); Edinburgh International Book Festival (Geetanjali Shree and Daisy Rockwell); WOMAD Festival (Larissa Boehning and Lyn Marven with Georgina Godwin); At Reform Radio, Manchester (Maya Abu Al-Hayyat); Cheltenham Literature Festival (Paulo Scott with Ann Morgan); Manchester International Book Festival (Juan Pablo Villalobos and Paulo Scott with Yara Rodrigues Fowler).



Your support helps us protect freedom of expression and promote literature across borders.

We are deeply grateful to our community of members, supporters and partners who help us to celebrate great literature and the transmission of ideas in myriad ways.

We've been celebrating the written word and defending freedom of expression for 100 years, and we want to continue doing so for many more to come. But our work can only continue thanks to the generosity of our members, partners and donors, whose support allows us to keep going. If you would like to find out more about how you can help, please contact Charlotte Aston, Head of Development at: charlotte@englishpen.org

Core Funders



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ENGLAND**



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Pushkin Press

Project Partners and Supporters

From venues and festivals to publishers and philanthropists, we're proud to have worked with a wide range of partners on delivering our programmes and projects over 2022-23, including:

Article 19

Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society

Bates Wells

Blavatnik Family Foundation

Bloomberg Philanthropies

Booker Foundation

British Council

British Library

Brixton Review of Books

Christie's

Comma Press

Folkestone Book Festival

Fondation Jan Michalski

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Index on Censorship

Metal

National Centre for Writing

New Writing North

Nottingham, UNESCO City of Literature

Off The Shelf, Festival of Words

Open Society Foundations

RSF

Ruth Maxted

Society of Authors

Southbank Centre

University of Exeter

Governance & Management

English PEN is a company limited by guarantee number 5747142 (England and Wales) and a registered charity, number 1125610. We are governed by a board of trustees who are appointed to our board following an open recruitment process and ratified by our members at the AGM each year.

Director

Daniel Gorman

Honorary President

Philippe Sands (until April 2023)

Margaret Busby (since April 2023)

Trustees

Ruth Borthwick (Chair)

Aki Schilz (Vice Chair)

Arifa Akbar

Milena Büyüm

Cathy Galvin (resigned 15 May 2023)

Georgina Godwin

Ted Hodgkinson

Guy Gunaratne

Dan Miller

Shazea Quraishi

Samantha Schnee (resigned 8 December 2022)

Joanna Stocks

Can Yeğinsu



**“PEN isn’t a luxury.
It’s a necessity.”**

Margaret Atwood

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