

## JG BALLARD Novelist

Novelist, essayist and short-story writer J(ames) G(raham) Ballard was born in Shanghai, China on the 15<sup>th</sup> November, 1930. His family was interned by the Japanese during the Second World War, returning to Britain in 1946. Ballard read Medicine at King's College, Cambridge, and later studied English at London University. He worked as a copywriter and was stationed in Canada with the Royal Air Force.

His first short story was published in 1956. This and many other short stories were published in science fiction magazines and were heavily influenced by the surrealist movement. The short story is seen by many critics as central to Ballard's work, originating and developing themes and obsessions that progress through into his novels. The dislocated sense of time and space in these stories is located in his childhood experience of war and provides many of the images that have become associated with Ballard's fiction: wrecked machinery, deserted beaches, crashed cars, abandoned buildings and empty, desolate landscapes - 'still-life arranged by a demolition squad' as Ballard himself described his settings in an interview with BBC Radio 3 ('Nightwaves' 30 October 2001). *Complete Short Stories* was published in 2001.

His early novels include *The Drowned World* (1962), *The Wind from Nowhere* (1962), *The Drought* (1965) and *The Crystal World* (1966). These were followed by more experimental novels, such as *The Atrocity Exhibition* (1970), *Concrete Island* (1974) and *High-Rise* (1975), establishing Ballard's reputation with both readers and critics as a cult avant-garde writer. His 1973 novel *Crash*, in which a car-crash provokes a disturbing series of obsessions in the narrator, was made into a film by David Cronenberg.

Ballard's acclaimed and best-selling novel *Empire of the Sun* (1984) brought him to wider public attention. The novel drew directly on his childhood wartime experiences and won the *Guardian* Fiction Prize, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction) and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction. It was made into a film by Steven Spielberg in 1988.

*Cocaine Nights* (1996), a thriller set in a community of expatriates living on the Spanish Costa del Sol, was shortlisted for the Whitbread Novel Award. His novel, *Super-Cannes* (2000), a vision of corporate dystopia set in the south of France, won the Commonwealth Writers Prize (Eurasia Region, Best Book). His novel, *Millennium People* (2003), is a tale of violent political protest and social change and his novel *Kingdom Come* was published in 2006. His autobiography, *Miracles of Life*, was published in 2008.

JG Ballard passed away on the 19<sup>th</sup> of April, 2009.

Casarotto Ramsay  
& Associates Limited

Waverley House  
7-12 Noel Street  
London W1F 8GQ

T +44 (0)20 7287 4450  
F +44 (0)20 7287 9128  
[www.casarotto.co.uk](http://www.casarotto.co.uk)

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- The Disaster Area** Cape, 1967
- The Day of Forever** Panther, 1967
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- The Four-Dimensional Nightmare** Gollancz, 1963
- The Wind from Nowhere** Gollancz, 1962
- The Drowned World** Gollancz, 1962

## PRIZES AND AWARDS

- 2000 **Commonwealth Writers Prize (Eurasia Region, Best Book)** *Super-Cannes*
- 1996 **Whitbread Novel Award** (shortlist) *Cocaine Nights*
- 1984 **James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for fiction)** (joint winner) *Empire of the Sun*
- 1984 **Guardian Fiction Prize** *Empire of the Sun*
- 1984 **Booker Prize for Fiction** (shortlist) *Empire of the Sun*