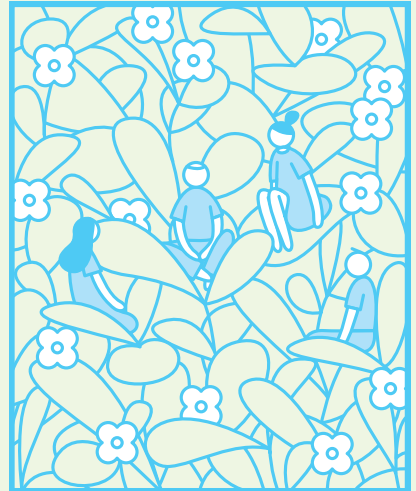
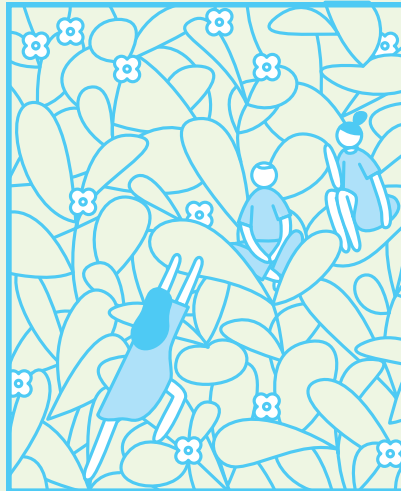
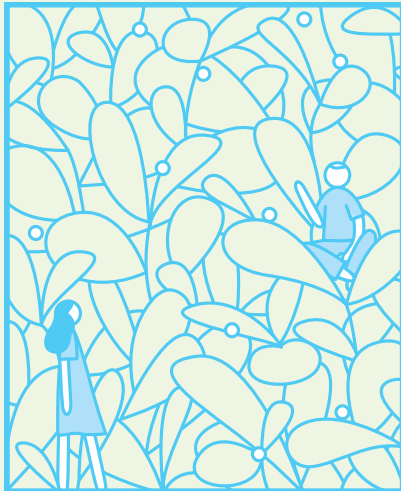




ANNUAL  
REVIEW 2019

# Edinburgh International Book Festival



“ LIKE A BEACON IN THE DARK.  
EVERY YEAR IT BRINGS HOPE,  
LIGHT AND INSPIRATION TO ME AND  
TO THE WORLD. I COUNT MYSELF  
VERY LUCKY THAT IT IS MY LOCAL. ”

MARY PAULSON-ELLIS, AUTHOR



“ WE CAME JUST TO SEE WHAT  
WAS GOING ON AND STAYED  
ALL DAY... A GREAT EVENT, WITH  
GREAT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM  
IMPORTANT WRITERS. ”

AUDIENCE MEMBER







DERAY MCKESSON

# WHY THE BOOK FESTIVAL MATTERS



The Book Festival offers creative, interactive experiences with the world’s finest writers and thinkers.

It’s a place where people can reflect on, interrogate and understand their relationship to society and each other. Children, young people and adults can think carefully; admit doubt and uncertainty; speculate and express themselves in a climate of mutual respect.

Our theatres, cafés and bookshops have been alive with discussion about climate crisis, populist politics and the demise of the American Dream. Music, performance, laughter and impassioned conversation have brought people together. What’s clear is that people are thirsty for face-to-face encounters with experts and visionaries – new voices, with new stories, from new places. The Book Festival is unquestionably answering a deep public need for grassroots democratic discussion and we champion freedom of expression and discourse as integral to a healthy society.

Audiences tell us they leave events feeling more informed and engaged, that they feel part of a celebratory community; we will continue to help people to connect with each other.

“ THE BOOK FESTIVAL IS AMAZING, FULL OF GREAT IDEAS, CHANGING MINDS AND HEARTS. ”

AUDIENCE MEMBER





# STORIES THAT MADE WAVES



ARUNDHATI ROY

## ARUNDHATI ROY INTERVIEWED BY FIRST MINISTER NICOLA STURGEON

In her inaugural Book Festival appearance, the Booker Prize-winning author of *The God of Small Things* discussed her career as a writer and political activist with the First Minister. As the conversation turned to global politics - particularly the current unrest in Kashmir - Roy reflected: "If Kashmir is occupied by an army, right now India is occupied by a mob".

## HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST ATTACKS TOXIC POPULISM AND NATIONALISM

Turkish writer and human rights activist Elif Shafak gave an insightful and impassioned interview with BBC special correspondent Allan Little, in which the two debunked the idea that any country is immune from the destructive influences of nationalism. The Booker Prize shortlisted author criticised the rise of "toxic populism", describing it as a "fake answer to real problems".

## "A PRISONER IN MY COUNTRY"

Palestinian writer Nayrouz Qarmout explored the meaning of 'home' for migrants and refugees in a thought-provoking event alongside Karine Polwart, Ali Smith and Val McDermid. Qarmout, whose request for a visa to attend 2018's Book Festival was denied by the Home Office, reflected on the need for collective action, saying: "Suffering and revolution is a collective experience. If I rebel, then we exist". *The Sea Cloak*, Qarmout's debut short story collection, was the second bestselling book at this year's Festival.

## THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP: A 'CULT OF CELEBRITY'?

Fresh from his fifth-place finish in the Conservative Party leadership race, Rory Stuart told audiences that "the idea of leadership has become fairytales". He claimed the answer to the challenges facing the country, including Brexit and increasing polarisation, was not a "heroic vision" of a leader based predominantly on fame, but rather a moderate individual focused on the actual business of government.

## CARRIE GRACIE TAKES ON THE GENDER PAY GAP

"The cover up is worse than the crime" declared former BBC China Editor Carrie Gracie as she spoke openly about her role at the centre of a public campaign for workplace equality in 2017, which saw her stand up for wage parity with her male counterparts at the BBC. Gracie introduced her book *Equal* in front of an enthralled crowd, stressing the need for justice in the battle for pay parity.

## "I CANNOT THINK OF A THING THAT I HOLD IN MORE CONTEMPT THAN THE TABLOID PRESSES OF THIS COUNTRY."

Whilst exploring his Booker-longlisted novel *Lanny*, Max Porter's conversation with Festival Director Nick Barley turned to the history of witch hunts by tabloid newspapers against innocent people. He described the "stranglehold" they have over the ideological structure of the UK, comparing it to "the great evils of history", including Nazism, and stressing the need for moral intervention.

RORY STUART



ELIF SHAFAK



MARY ROBINSON

## "A MAN-MADE PROBLEM THAT REQUIRES A FEMINIST SOLUTION"

The Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, called for a climate solution based on equality during a profound discussion of her book *Climate Justice*. The global humanitarian and author added that this solution must, and gladly does, include men, and advised that we follow the example set by young climate activists in banding together as a human race to tackle this existential threat.

## "I DIDN'T MAKE THIS ABOUT RACE, RACE MADE IT ABOUT ME."

So said author and Black Lives Matter activist DeRay Mckesson as he recounted his 400-day protest against the police shooting of Michael Brown Jr. "We put our bodies on the line because we knew that was the only way we'd bring attention to the crisis." Mckesson had the audience riveted as he urged the need for action against racism, stating: "We want to figure out what you're willing to risk so that people can experience freedom".

## GINA MARTIN INSPIRES YOUNG ACTIVISTS

With no legal background, Gina Martin launched a successful campaign to criminalise 'upskirting' following a traumatising incident of a stranger taking photos inside her clothes. During her much-talked-about event, Martin presented her book *Be the Change* as a toolkit to empower young activists, after which she gave an interview to a 17 year-old student concluding "we need to give young people respect too".

## LAUGHTER AND HOPE FROM A RUGBY LEGEND

"I can't touch my head now, but I can drink a pint" said Doddie Weir, as the former sports star spoke to a sell-out crowd about living with motor neurone disease. In a laughter-filled event that ended with a standing ovation, Weir revealed his My Name's Doddie Foundation has raised £3.5 million over the past two years to provide research and support to others suffering from motor neurone disease.

## MALORIE BLACKMAN ADVOCATES FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO LIBRARIES

Malorie Blackman, one of the UK's most influential children's authors, returned to the Book Festival with *Crossfire*, the latest novel in her bestselling Noughts & Crosses series. In a conversation that traced her stellar literary career, Blackman championed access to public libraries as the best way to increase social mobility for everyone stating: "I wouldn't be sitting here now if it wasn't for my local library."



GINA MARTIN



DODDIE WEIR



MALORIE BLACKMAN

## HORRID HENRY TURNS 25

Francesca Simon celebrated the 25th birthday of her most successful creation *Horrid Henry* with a capacity crowd of children and their families. As well as showcasing Simon's irreverent humour, particularly evident in Henry's latest adventure *Up, Up and Away*, the interactive event also saw the award-winning author share tips with aspiring writers in the audience.



# DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JOKHA ALHARTHI



IAN RANKIN & PHIL JUPITUS

“ **QUITE SIMPLY THE BEST – THE BEST CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME, BOOKSHOP, AUDIENCES, ATMOSPHERE, STAFF... AND THE WONDERFUL DEMOCRATIC AUTHORS' YURT MAKES EVERYONE WELCOME, REGARDLESS OF FAME/STATUS/ AGE/KIND OF WRITING.** ”

JULIA GREEN, AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

## If aliens landed on Earth today, what might they learn about the state of the planet?

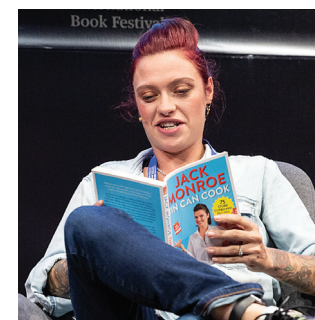
Having stared in wonder from the upper atmosphere at the blueness of the oceans and the majestic weather formations, it wouldn't take long for them to see that Earth is under the hegemony of human beings. Beyond the twinkling lights of the cities, the vectors of motorways criss-crossing the continents and the huge swathes of land given over to industrialised food production, the aliens would discover that the world is also intricately connected by invisible, digital means. Sadly enough, they would conclude - happening upon an iPhone and opening Facebook or Twitter - that although there are a lot of love-heart emojis, 'friends' and 'likes', a great deal of online communication consists of sneering, raging, vituperative abuse.

For good or ill, social media is changing the nature of public discourse. When Jair Bolsonaro was victorious in the recent presidential elections in Brazil, a crowd of his supporters chanted "Facebook, Facebook" and "WhatsApp, WhatsApp" in recognition of their influence in Bolsonaro's campaign. Pro-Bolsonaro activists used social media to share false information criticising key political opponents, dressed up to look like neutral fact-checks. This is of course one of many elections in which social media has come to play a central role. Perhaps it is a reason for the erosion of public confidence in democracy in many parts of the world.

Against this backdrop, book festivals offer a more personal form of public discourse - one in which disagreements happen face-to-face. In contrast to social media, each festival reaches a relatively small group (in Edinburgh's case, 265,000 visits to our site over the course of the 2019 Festival). But if you add up the audiences attending the myriad book festivals across the globe, there's unquestionably a vast appetite for the deeper thought - and it's driving the continued explosive growth of new festivals each year.



KARINE POLWART, ALI SMITH, NAYROUZ QARMOUT & VAL MCDERMID



JACK MONROE



HILARY COTTAM

One exceptional example at the 2019 Book Festival in Edinburgh was the series of discussions called Home/Less, presented by Val McDermid. Looking at homelessness in the context of what 'home' actually means, Val's events ranged from the crisis of street sleeping through to questions about migration. In one unforgettable session, Val interviewed Scottish writer Ali Smith alongside Nayrouz Qarmout who had made the difficult journey from Gaza City. Also on stage was Karine Polwart, whose songs often tell of migrants and travellers. Anyone present will have felt the extraordinary power of these writers and thinkers to help make sense of a complex topic.

In my role as Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival I am privileged to travel to many other festivals. It's clear, whether I'm at an event in Chengdu, Bogotá or the small Swiss Alpine town of Bellinzona, that audiences have a strong desire to feel better informed; to understand and make sense of complex ideas.

It's also clear, wherever I go, that humans are deeply concerned about the growing climate catastrophe. If the power of the human imagination played a big role in getting us there, we're certainly going to need our imaginations to find a sustainable solution. That's why the theme of the 2019 Book Festival was 'We Need New Stories'.

In order to harness the imagination as a resource for the common good, we also need a strong civil society to operate alongside responsible government. Book festivals are a mental workout for civil society, helping it stay fit and healthy. Regardless of political leaning or social class, a visit to a book festival should be an opportunity to question, to speculate, to imagine better.

Once again, the Edinburgh International Book Festival enjoyed a record-breaking year in 2019 and I'm deeply indebted to the permanent and temporary staff, as well as the authors and interviewers who participated with such enthusiasm. But above all we are keen to ensure that events are attended by the most diverse possible audience. For me it remains a key priority to ensure that alongside its quality and its courageous programming, the Book Festival is open, accessible to all people, wherever they hail from. Everyone, including aliens, is welcome.

Nick Barley, Director

Nick Barley



BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH



“ **ONE OF THE THREE OR FOUR GREAT LITERARY FESTIVALS IN THE WORLD, A GATHERING THAT IS STILL ABOUT BOOKS AND WRITING RATHER THAN MERE CELEBRITY, WHERE PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH IDEAS AND WITH ONE ANOTHER.** ”

JOHN BURNSIDE, AWARD-WINNING SCOTTISH POET AND AUTHOR



COLSON WHITEHEAD & KIRSTY WARK





# AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK ROOTED IN SCOTLAND

HEIR OF THE CURSED



MACASTORY

## PUTTING EDINBURGH ON THE WORLD STAGE

The Edinburgh International Book Festival sits at the heart of Scotland's literary world, bringing authors, audiences and publishers together in Edinburgh and in communities across the country. We also play an influential role in presenting Scotland and its capital city to audiences and decision-makers far beyond our shores. We are a founding member of Festivals Edinburgh, Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature and the Word Alliance, working collaboratively to enhance Edinburgh's reputation as a literary hub, top cultural destination and the world's leading festival city.

## LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Our programme of events and activities which take the Book Festival on the road to communities around Scotland has grown into a bold series of partnerships and collaborations which help greater numbers of local people get involved in the Book Festival experience. Much of the work has been made possible by the support of players of People's Postcode Lottery and the PLACE programme.

Our Citizen programme began in earnest in 2019. This new project, spearheaded by Scottish-based writers in residence working in communities and schools in areas across Edinburgh, has sought to bring people together to reflect on the places they live in as well as ideas around belonging, identity and community. Through everything from informal conversations in the café at partner venue North Edinburgh Arts, to sessions in high schools around the city, to a free day of events for the whole community in May, Citizen has grown and helped draw out fascinating untold stories of life around Edinburgh. Both our writers in residence - novelists Eleanor Thom (communities) and Claire Askew (schools) - brought the discussions and many of the people involved into the August Book Festival too, and we're excited to see where these ideas and conversations may go and how they might develop in 2020.

We were delighted to end the year on a high as images from a short, day-in-the-life story Eleanor produced about Muirhead were put on public display in the heart of

the area, thanks to our partners at North Edinburgh Arts as well as construction company Robertson who are working on regenerating the town centre area. Written with Craigroyston Primary pupils and their families, and featuring photos taken by the participants, the display highlights the vibrancy of life in the community and will help connect more people with Citizen in the months ahead. We are now planning a new project with the families around traditional storytelling. As many of them have English as a second language, we hope it will bring an inspiring cross-cultural focus to the project for everyone involved.

We embarked on our largest tour of Scotland's prisons to date in August 2019, visiting 9 prisons for 13 events, with sessions for young offenders as well as the families of prisoners held in the visitors' room. Discussions ranged across topics including male role models in fiction to experiences of growing up in poverty, with authors like Matt Wesolowski, Kerry Hudson and Eunice Olumide spending time speaking about their books and trading stories about their lives and experiences with prisoners. These events are not only vital creative and conversational windows for prisoners but incredibly energising experiences for the authors who take part too, transforming each prison however briefly into a place

“ **GREAT PRODUCTION, EXQUISITE CREW AND ATTENTION, INTERESTING FORUM TO THINK, DISCUSS AND FEEL FREE TO FEEL, EXPRESS, AGREE OR DISAGREE. THE MEDIA ATTENTION AT HOME IS BEEN HUGE.** ”

IMANOL OTAEGI MITXELENA,  
ETXEPARE BASQUE INSTITUTE,  
SAN SEBASTIÁN



where reading and writing are not just pastimes but lifelines, modes of survival during dark days, and beacons of hope which offer a renewed sense of community.

Our community engagement work relies upon strong partnerships with other organisations committed to social inclusion, and we were pleased to continue our longstanding relationship with Open Book this year. The Edinburgh-based reading agency helped bring well over 200 attendees to the Book Festival in 2019 from groups including Shakti Women's Aid, St Andrew's Hospice and Deaf Action Scotland. This enabled many people who otherwise may never have been able to attend and experience our events to do so, while being supported and encouraged to take part.

## A GLOBAL IMPACT

During 2019, the International Year of Indigenous Languages, we presented Throwing Voices, a unique globe-spanning collaboration which explored how local languages, cultures and customs can reverberate across borders, through exchanges of objects and stories. These back-and-forths between authors and eventually musicians led to us staging boundary-crossing performances connecting cultures as disparate as Gaelic, Māori, Sámi, Basque and more. This work was the heart of a celebration of global languages in 2019 involving a range of international partners, which also included a series of events celebrating connections between Scotland and the Basque Country, Canada, and others.

“ **[THIS EVENT WAS] CRUCIAL TOWARDS MY REHABILITATION, LEARNT NEW COPING STRATEGIES, HELPED REMIND US THAT WE CAN CHANGE...** ”

A PRISONER'S FEEDBACK ON OUR  
EVENT IN HMP BARLINNIE

After its debut at the August Book Festival, our Playing with Books performance of Miriam Toews' *Women Talking* travelled to Canada for its North American premiere at the Toronto International Festival of Authors in October 2019, with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts and the British Council. Produced in partnership with the Royal Lyceum Theatre and adapted for the stage by playwright Linda McLean, the event explored Toews' feminist fiction classic, which has also been optioned for the big screen by Brad Pitt's production company.

Closer to home, we launched the latest chapter in the 365: Stories and Music collaboration between author James Robertson and musician Aidan O'Rourke. One wrote a story a day for a year, the other

penned complementary compositions, and with our support they unveiled an immersive sound installation allowing listeners to hear them all in August. It was the beginning of a nationwide tour that would see their songs and stories head to the Scottish Storytelling Festival, Shetland Mareel and plenty of other places in between.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING NEXT

We continue to connect with our local community through Citizen, our long-term creative programme involving conversations, events and workshops for local residents in different regions of the city and beyond. May 2020 will see a full weekend festival for schools, families and adults taking place at the Brunton Theatre in Musselburgh and at North Edinburgh Arts.

Our ambition is to expand the work we do in communities around Scotland, with a special focus on involving people who are unable to attend the Festival in Edinburgh. We have appointed a new Communities Programme Director who will be developing new partnerships to help us deliver Book Festival activities in places such as care homes, greater numbers of prisons, and rural communities, while also connecting vulnerable or isolated individuals with each other through books and ideas.

Two years ago, we sent ten writers on journeys across the Americas to bring back new perspectives. In 2020 ten more writers will embark on a journey across Africa. Travelling in pairs across vastly different regions, Donna Ogunnaiké and Wanjiru Koinange, Kei Miller and Kayus Bankole, Emmanuel Iduma and Eliza Anyangwe, Nadine Aisha Jassat and Tsitsi Dangarembga, and Amanda Thomson and Sabrina Mahfouz will traverse countries including Algeria, Angola, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Senegal and Egypt. Meeting and talking to communities along the way, our Outriders will gather insights around migration, colonial legacies, globalisation and environmental change, giving voice to untold stories through the creation of new work, which will be presented at the Book Festival in August 2020.



# 2019 IN NUMBERS

## 850 EVENTS

The August Festival comprised 850 events and we produced a further 23 events around Scotland, including 13 in 9 Scottish prisons.

## 22,365 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A huge number of families with children of all ages enjoyed events in August.

## 150,437 TICKETS

Across our programmes for adults, children and schools 150,437 tickets were bought for August Festival events and a further 2,088 for events taking place during other months.

## 265,000 VISITS

Footfall to the Book Festival Village in Charlotte Square Gardens reached a record 265,000.

## 1,206 PARTICIPANTS

Authors, illustrators, artists, performers, experts and interviewers all helped make the 2019 Book Festival a spectacular year.

## 268 SELL-OUTS

A record-breaking year for ticket sales saw 268 sold-out events and 577 selling at least 90% of their seats.

## 57% LOCALS

Residents from Edinburgh and the Lothians made up more than half of our audiences this year, with a further 23% coming from elsewhere in Scotland.

## 354 SCOTTISH AUTHORS

We welcomed 354 Scottish authors to share stories with writers from all over the world.

## 150 SCHOOLS

Our Baillie Gifford Schools Programme welcomed 12,590 school children and teachers from 150 schools, 97 of which came from outside Midlothian.

## 117 FREE EVENTS

We continued our commitment to programming a broad range of free events, including 60 for children.

## 59,075 TICKETS IN ONE DAY

The day we opened the Box Office accounted for nearly 40% of all the tickets sold for the August Festival.

## 76 COUNTRIES

The authors in our 2019 programme represented 76 nationalities, making it our most international programme to date.



## 22 TRANSLATED EVENTS

We held 22 events for adults and children in other languages, which were interpreted into English, bringing international literature to the Edinburgh stage.

## 16% NEW AUDIENCES

In 2019, 16% of ticket buyers had never been to a Book Festival event before.

## 42 BSL AND CAPTIONED EVENTS

We provided a BSL interpreter for 21 events, including 4 for children, many in response to customer requests. A further 21 events were captioned, including 5 events for children.

## 75,000 BOOKS SOLD

The appetite for books continues to increase: our independent Festival bookshops sold 75,000 books, a 2% rise on last year.

## 635 NEWS STORIES

635 pieces of coverage of Book Festival events were published across print and online media outlets, and 3,058 stories on or relating to the Book Festival appeared online across the world.

## 198 REAL LIVING WAGE JOBS

We provided work for a team of 198 people, including 170 temporary staff, all of whom were paid at least the Real Living Wage.

## 12,073 NEW FOLLOWERS

Across Facebook, Instagram and Twitter we have gained a whopping 12,073 new followers since the end of the 2018 Festival.

## 617 EVENTS ON DEMAND

We filmed 86 events and recorded a further 30 for podcasts, all available free online. Our on-demand channels now have a library of 617 events to enjoy.

## 96% SATISFACTION

96% of our visitors said they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with their overall experience at the Book Festival.

## 1,181 HOTEL NIGHTS

Accommodating our participants added up to 1,181 nights books in 6 hotels across Edinburgh.





# OUR INDEPENDENT BOOKSHOPS



The 2019 Book Festival proved to be our biggest trading year for book sales after making significant changes to the bookshops.

We sold a whopping 75,000 books across the 18 days of the Book Festival in 2019, a 2% rise on the previous year, however the rise in overall value of the books sold was 5%. Introducing a much wider range of specially created Festival merchandise meant we sold more non-book items than ever before too, increasing the income from all sales (books and non-books) by 12%.

We are delighted that *The Sea Cloak*, the debut short story collection from Palestinian writer Nayrouz Qarmout, who returned to Edinburgh this year for her second ever trip out of Gaza, was our second bestselling book. It is published by a small independent publisher, Comma Press, making it doubly gratifying. Out of our top

10 bestselling books of the Festival, 9 were written by women, 3 were children's books and 5 linked directly to the key themes of the 2019 programme.

By merging our large children's bookshop with the busy main bookshop in Charlotte Square Gardens, we aimed to help adults, children and teenagers spend time together as a family in the same space whilst being able to browse books for their own particular ages and interests. It also allowed us to increase the shelf area and stock a greater number of book titles as well as have much-needed additional seating in the café area. We converted the George Street Bookshop into a Scottish bookshop celebrating the breadth and diversity of the

Scottish literary sector - an important step that aligns with the Book Festival's strategy and values. Whilst the changes proved to be a success overall, we still have work to do. We have gathered feedback from customers and publishers and their observations and suggestions will help us to make improvements in 2020.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who bought books from our independent bookshops and to the authors and publishers who strive to create such a diverse and inspiring range of writing and illustration.



“ GREAT ATMOSPHERE BY CENTRING EVERYTHING AROUND A SQUARE. GREAT TO BE ABLE TO CHAT AND MEET OTHER ATTENDEES. GAVE US AN INSIGHT INTO GLOBAL BOOK LOVERS. EXTENSIVE BOOKSHOPS AND LOVED THE CONCEPT OF A SCOTTISH BOOKSHOP. WE THOUGHT THIS WOULD BE A BUCKET LIST ONE-OFF THING. WE ARE ALREADY MAKING PLANS TO RETURN. FINANCES WILLING.”

AUDIENCE MEMBERS WHO TRAVELLED FROM AUSTRALIA TO VISIT



## TOP 10 BESTSELLERS

*East of Croydon*  
by Sue Perkins

*The Sea Cloak*  
by Nayrouz Qarmout

*The Wizards of Once: Knock Three Times*  
by Cressida Cowell

*Climate Justice*  
by Mary Robinson

*On the Other Side of Freedom*  
by DeRay Mckesson

*The Go-Away Bird*  
by Julia Donaldson

*In Extremis: The Life of War Correspondent Marie Colvin*  
by Lindsey Hilsum

*The Smeds and the Smoos*  
by Julia Donaldson

*Work Like a Woman: A Manifesto for Change*  
by Mary Portas

*No One is Too Small to Make a Difference*  
by Greta Thunberg

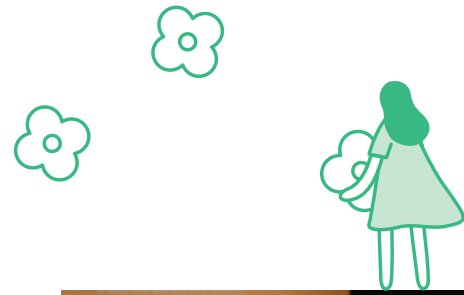
“ THE CHANGES TO THE MAIN BOOKSHOPS AND CAFE WERE INSPIRED – FELT SO MUCH BIGGER AND MUCH EASIER TO MOVE AROUND THE BOOKSHELVES.”

AUDIENCE MEMBER





# INSPIRATION, IDEAS AND LEARNING



## HEARING NEW STORIES

In 2019 we brought stories to Edinburgh from near and far; to combat the increasingly divided world around us and offer new, often unheard, solutions and perspectives to human problems. The result was a programme spanning the purely entertaining to the seriously political; a Festival bursting with inspiring events for people of every age, from every walk of life. Our Guest Selectors led the way: DeRay Mckesson, a key figure in the Black Lives Matter movement, curated *Power to the People*, a strand of events exploring how everyone has a role in creating a better society; popular Scottish crime writer Val McDermid programmed *Home/Less*, leading panel discussions with writers about the meaning of ‘home’, exploring migration, homelessness and identity.

Climate crisis was given a platform in *The Fragile Planet*, a series featuring a wealth of knowledge from writers such as former Irish President Mary Robinson, sustainability expert Mike Berners-Lee and marine biologist Alex Rogers, all supported by WWF. In *Telling Her Story* events, a diverse range of women took centre stage, while *Stories That Make Scotland* brought together some of the country’s leading thinkers to explore the nation’s future and its past.

“ **KEEP EXPANDING THE STORIES. ALL IN ALL VERY THOUGHT PROVOKING AND MIND EXPANDING – MY DAUGHTER SAID SHE FELT AS IF HER MIND HAD LIT UP LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE.** ”

AUDIENCE MEMBER

A new partnership with The New York Times helped us to pair distinguished US journalists with top writers for debates on modern-day challenges such as privacy, gender and the role of China. We also worked with other new programme partners including The Policy Institute at King’s College London, the Disasters Emergency Committee and author and social activist Hilary Cottam to examine issues ranging from humanitarian aid to radical economics and Brexit.

The 17-day Festival encompassed musical and theatrical performances, events pairing words with food and drink, performance poetry, celebrations of indigenous languages and fun stories from writers new and established. By providing a space to think about books and ideas in new and creative ways we hope to encourage more people to integrate them into their lives.

## A FESTIVAL FOR EVERYONE

We held a wide range of free events for adults and children, helping more people to enjoy the Book Festival. These included drop-in craft activities, daily storytelling, Amnesty International Imprisoned Writers events, the Edinburgh Comic Art Fair and the return of our nightly literary cabaret *Unbound with Edinburgh Gin*. A new, imaginative play area was created for children in a family-friendly corner of the Gardens, which proved popular with both family groups and school children. In addition, we priced 21 of our most sought-after events as ‘Pay What You Can’ for people who’d like to attend but face financial hardship.

Following greater promotion of the Book Festival’s British Sign Language request service, we provided more BSL interpreted and captioned events than ever before. The introduction of a team of dedicated staff to assist visitors with both visible and hidden access needs - along with the installation of a large ramp from the road up to the entrance, a new quiet space in the Gardens and improved toilets - meant we were able to look after everyone’s needs more effectively. Funded with the support of players of People’s Postcode Lottery and



ANGIE THOMAS

House of Hearing, these changes resulted in the Book Festival receiving the Euan’s Guide Award for Most Accessible Pop-up Venue for the fourth consecutive year.

Thanks to a generous benefactor, we were able to film most of the events in our largest theatre. This means we can take the conversations taking place on stage far beyond August and the confines of Charlotte Square Gardens by making videos and podcasts available online for free. To date, the Book Festival’s on-demand video and podcast channels contain 617 recordings, comprising a wildly eclectic range of live events, featuring some of the most talented Scottish and international writers of recent years.

Our writers in residence, Claire Askew and Eleanor Thom, worked with local schools and communities during 2019, holding creative conversations about what being a citizen means today. The ideas which came out of those sessions resulted in a range of events at North Edinburgh Arts in May, giving local residents the chance to share their own perspectives. It culminated in Citizen events, performances and workshops during the August Festival. A Citizen mini-festival will take place at North Edinburgh Arts and the Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh in May 2020.

Our close collaboration with the charity Open Book continues to thrive and produce magical moments. Social meet-ups, shared reading sessions and events at the Book Festival in August encouraged nearly 300 people - mostly vulnerable families and individuals - to get together in a safe and supportive place and feel part of our celebratory community. Among the 24 local groups we welcomed were the Grassmarket Community Project, Social Bite, Eric Liddell Dementia Support, the Craigmillar Syrian group and Shakti Women’s Aid.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WHO CANNOT ATTEND

Our work with the charity Open Book is expanding, not only to offer the August Book Festival as a place for vulnerable people to connect with each other through sharing books and attending events but also to offer those same opportunities to people around Scotland in their own communities.

The Book Festival started taking authors to Scottish prisons a few years ago and the impact of these events on prisoners, their families and the authors has proved incredibly rewarding. Such is the positive feedback we’ve received from everyone involved, we have continued to expand the work with the help of players of People’s Postcode Lottery and the PLACE Programme. During 2019 we took 10 authors and illustrators into 9 prisons for 13 sessions, including HMP Shotts, Edinburgh, Cornton Vale, Perth and HMPYOI Polmont. In all, 151 men, women and children took part, and some events brought children’s authors into visitor rooms so prisoners could share the experience with their families.

To give more people who cannot visit the Book Festival in August the opportunity to connect with authors and books, we have appointed a new Communities Director who is developing a programme of events to reach people who’d like to



“ **EDBOOKFEST HAS BEEN AN OASIS AND REKINDLED MY LOVE OF BOOKS, INSPIRED ME TO WRITE MY OWN BOOK AND TAUGHT ME HOW TO MAKE A GRAFFITI STENCIL... I WILL NOW SPEND THE NEXT 11½ MONTHS SAVING UP FOR NEXT YEAR’S EDBOOKFEST.** ”

A HOMELESS AUDIENCE MEMBER WHO WAS ABLE TO ATTEND EVENTS BECAUSE OF PAY WHAT YOU CAN TICKET PRICING

attend but can’t, such as those in care homes, hospitals, homeless shelters, isolated groups and rural communities.

## EXPANDING CHILDREN’S HORIZONS

We welcomed 22,365 children and families to the 249 events in our Baillie Gifford Children’s Programme, including 60 that were free. For the first time, we held events for bilingual children, responding to the growing numbers of Polish-speaking families living in Edinburgh. We partnered with organisations including Craigmillar Literacy Trust, Dads Rock and Edinburgh for Under Fives, using their expertise to deliver exciting interactive experiences.

Our Baillie Gifford Schools Programme welcomed pupils of all ages from 150 schools across Scotland, with 12,590 pupils and teachers seeing 58 events. Our Career-Long Professional Learning series brought over 500 education professionals together to inspire creative approaches to teaching and we fostered further learning with free online teaching resources. The Baillie Gifford Transport Fund helped break down barriers by supporting 99 schools to visit the Book Festival, plus every school child who attended received a £3 book voucher to spend in our bookshops.



A specially designed event for school pupils with severe learning disabilities and sensory storytelling events for families were created out of our continued work with PAMIS (Promoting A More Inclusive Society).

## SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING ARTISTS

Giving artists opportunities to develop their work, meet each other and foster new collaborations is a big part of the Book Festival. Now in its 10th year, the First Book Award saw 46 debut novelists - including those whose work had been published in English for the first time - eligible for the reader-voted prize. The 2019 winner was Argentinian writer Selva Almada with *The Wind That Lays Waste*, published in English by Edinburgh-based indie publisher Charco Press.

We held 51 workshops and masterclasses designed to get beyond the covers of iconic books and to inform the work of budding creative writers. These proved immensely popular, with 38 sessions selling out.

The Book Festival’s successful Outriders project exploring different regions of the world continues - this time in Africa. We are sending 5 pairs of writers on journeys across this rich continent, where they will meet other writers and communities, gathering insights and perspectives around migration, colonial legacies, globalisation and environmental change. Each of our Outriders will give voice to untold stories through the creation of new work, which will be presented at the Book Festival in 2020.





# GETTING GREENER



The Book Festival is a thriving hub of conversation and ideas, which brings a diverse range of people together for creative discussions. It has become a valuable forum where authors, audiences and leading environmentalists can share knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the environmental crisis and what action can be taken. We aim to promote best practice in the field, working to ensure that how we run the Festival reflects our green values.

## SHARING KNOWLEDGE

The Book Festival invited a range of speakers to share knowledge on environmental issues, giving audiences the opportunity to engage with the champions of sustainability and learn more about what we can all do to help look after the planet.

In 2019 we created a strand of events called The Fragile Planet, bringing together specialists, scientists and activists to ask: how can we avert disaster? Highlights were former Irish president Mary Robinson discussing climate justice, science journalist Fred Pearce talking about water resources and marine biologist Alex Rogers, consultant on BBC's Blue Planet II, sharing his knowledge of the oceans. Sustainability expert Mike Berners-Lee offered practical advice on how we can avoid calamity and award-winning Norwegian Professor of Life Sciences Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson discussed our fragile ecosystems. In the New York Times debate series, Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Josh Haner, who has documented the realities of climate change across the globe, presented his work in Carbon's Casualties, followed by a discussion exploring possible solutions.

We also celebrated the wonders of the natural world with nature writers and explorers such as Erling Kagge, Kathleen Jamie and Robert Macfarlane; and we worked with WWF, who supported a range of events offering positive stories about what's already being done to protect our planet.

Our Green Team, a cross-departmental team of year-round staff, champion sustainability throughout the year, attending workshops and the Green Arts Conference hosted by Creative Carbon

Scotland, communicating issues and the latest thinking across the organisation - sparking ideas for improvements and changes to the way we work.

## REDUCING, REUSING, RECYCLING

We continued to work with Vegware on their Close the Loop initiative, which sees all used compostable Vegware packaging and food waste from the Festival site and our offices turned into high-grade compost in weeks, converting waste into food for future crops. Our caterers used compostable packaging, plates, cups, glasses and cutlery in all cafés and bars on site.

We actively encourage visitors to use our prominent recycling and composting facilities, including installing specially designed child-friendly bins to support young children in adopting a recycling mindset. Art materials used in craft activity events were recycled, non-toxic and biodegradable wherever possible and staff, participant and media passes were biodegradable with lanyards made of sustainable bamboo fibre. Staff uniforms used fairly-traded and, where available, biodegradable materials. Uniforms are also re-used each year.

“ SO WELL ORGANISED AND THE SMILING STAFF CREATE A BUZZING FESTIVAL ATMOSPHERE. ”

AUDIENCE MEMBER



Drinking-water taps were installed across the Festival to encourage visitors to not buy plastic bottles. We continue to get milk delivered to the office in glass bottles from a local dairy to reduce our use of plastic. The empty bottles are returned to the farm for reuse.

Other site improvements included the gifting of leftover wood and materials to other festivals and organisations for reuse and repurposing. Where laminate plywood was used, we replaced it with timber, which is easier to recycle. The carpets in our Garden Bookshop and Party Pavilion were changed and are now stored for use in future years. We also installed more LED lighting on site to replace the less efficient halogen bulbs.

In addition, we ensure Book Festival toilets are connected to mains sewerage, avoiding the use of chemicals and waste collection vehicles and our paper-wrapped office toilet rolls are from the plastic-free, eco-friendly Who Gives A Crap, a company that donates half their profits to people in need.

## CARBON FOOTPRINT

The Book Festival is a Green Arts Venue and our Green Team work with the Festivals Edinburgh Environmental Group and Creative Carbon Scotland closely, helping us to measure and record our carbon emissions. 19,839 kg of waste (around 91% of the total) from our site was recycled, diverting 8340.93 kg of CO2(e).

We used smaller, more efficient generators on the Festival site which provided power on demand rather than running continually, thus reducing our carbon footprint significantly.

All our staff use an online expenses claim system which records the carbon impact of travel undertaken each year.



“ UP TO AND INCLUDING THE FINAL DAY YOUR TEAM WERE ROLE MODELS IN POLITENESS AND CUSTOMER CARE. I ATTENDED MORE THAN IN PAST YEARS SO I MAY HONESTLY REPORT HOW IMPRESSED I WAS WITH THEIR COLLECTIVE PERFORMANCE. ”

AUDIENCE MEMBER

## WHAT'S NEXT?

We are exploring using new generators to supply cleaner energy to the Festival site and further reduce our carbon footprint. Research with festival-goers and participants is being carried out into a cup deposit scheme alongside the other Edinburgh Festivals, with the aim of rolling it out across the city in the near future.

As part of our ongoing green communications strategy, we will be sharing our green values more widely with participating authors and audience members through a range of communication channels.

All suggestions relating to our green initiatives are welcomed. Please email [admin@edbookfest.co.uk](mailto:admin@edbookfest.co.uk)



# A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

Our central ethos is to make sharing books and ideas accessible to as many people as possible. Our donors help us keep the Book Festival open to all.

Support from individuals, corporate sponsors and trusts and foundations generates 48% of the income needed to deliver a world-class Book Festival each year. Thank you so much to all those listed on the opposite page, as well as our Patrons and Friends and those who chose to make their donations anonymously - it's no exaggeration to say that we couldn't do it without you.

We want to say a special thank you to our new Major Sponsor in 2019, The New York Times, whose sponsorship aligns perfectly with the Book Festival's aim to be a truly international festival with global reach. As well as contributing to a fascinating and provocative debate series, The New York Times also sponsored our Main Theatre, where over 73,000 people attended events. We greatly look forward to continuing the partnership in 2020.

We are indebted to our wonderful Benefactors, Patrons and Friends for the generous support they have provided in 2019. Every donation they make goes

towards keeping the Book Festival fair, engaging and wide-ranging for writers and readers alike.

We want to specially acknowledge James and Morag Anderson. Their significant annual donation helps us engage with authors, audiences and cultural colleagues all over the globe, meaning we can keep diversifying our programming. We also extend special thanks to Benefactors Mark and Claire Urquhart whose generosity enabled us to film all our Main Theatre events for the first time, allowing more people the chance to see them. We also want to thank those Benefactors who supported specific authors and events in this year's programme.

We are incredibly fortunate to receive support from players of People's Postcode Lottery, who help us take the Book Festival to audiences who might never otherwise have the opportunity to engage with our work.

Huge thanks also go to Creative Scotland, the City of Edinburgh Council, the Scottish Government's Edinburgh Festivals Expo Fund and all our Programme Partners for their ongoing enthusiasm and support.

To absolutely everyone who has supported our work in 2019: thank you on behalf of the entire Book Festival team. You make an incredible difference to what we do.



“ IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER BEEN AND SO MUCH BETTER THAN I COULD HAVE EVER EXPECTED. THERE'S A GREAT FAMILY FEEL TO IT ALL. ”

 FAMILY VISITOR



## SPONSORSHIP IN ACTION

In 2019, we entered a new sponsorship agreement with Baillie Gifford, our Lead Sponsor since 2015. Between 2019 and 2021, Baillie Gifford is increasing its support to help us enhance our offering for families and school pupils and provide a more welcoming and accessible Festival through the provision of additional free activities.

With Baillie Gifford's support in 2019, we created and built a fantastic new Children's Area. This beautiful, interactive space was located outside the Story Box and the Imagination Lab - two of our venues for younger audiences. It provided a vibrant, secure gathering point for families and children and received high praise from our visitors, in particular from first-time attendees to the Book Festival.

We're thrilled we've been able to evolve this part of our site, thanks to Baillie Gifford.

## FUNDERS



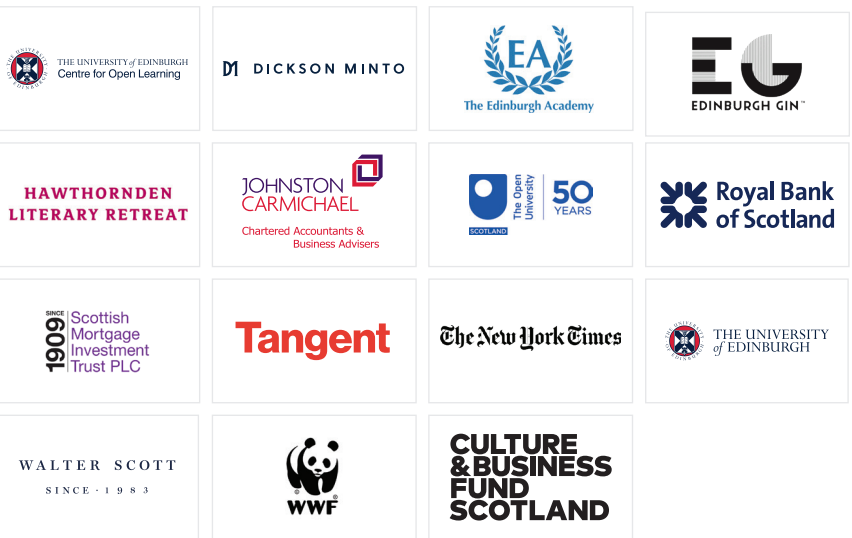
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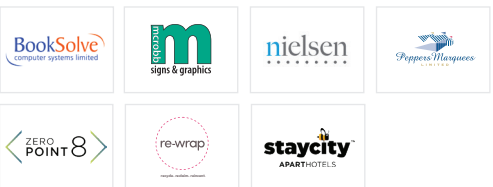
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And all those who wish to remain anonymous

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Jane & Bernard Nelson  
Brenda Rennie

And all those who wish to remain anonymous

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## WITH THANKS

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is sited in Charlotte Square Gardens by the kind permission of the Charlotte Square Proprietors. We would like to thank the publishers who help to make the Festival possible, Essential Edinburgh for their help with our George Street venues, the Friends and Patrons of the Edinburgh International Book Festival and all the other individuals who have donated to the Book Festival this year.



# NEXT BOOK FESTIVAL

15 - 31 August 2020

Programme announced on 11 June

## TAKING THE BOOK FESTIVAL ON THE ROAD

See the blog for where we'll be next:  
[ontheroad.edbookfest.co.uk](http://ontheroad.edbookfest.co.uk)



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Live recordings of events are available  
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our website:

[www.edbookfest.co.uk/look-and-listen](http://www.edbookfest.co.uk/look-and-listen)

And on a variety of other channels:

YouTube, Acast, Spotify,  
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### SUPPORTING OUR WORK

For details about sponsoring the Book  
Festival, how to become a Friend or making  
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The Development Team  
[+44 \(0\)131 718 5666](tel:+44201317185666)  
[admin@edbookfest.co.uk](mailto:admin@edbookfest.co.uk)

Edinburgh International Book Festival  
5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh EH2 4DR

The Edinburgh International Book Festival Ltd has its  
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