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## Scottish Book Trust celebrates publication of free *Blether* book

### A collection of true stories written by people from all over Scotland

On Wednesday 30 October, an event was held at City Art Centre in Edinburgh to celebrate the publication of *Blether*, a free book created by Scottish Book Trust for this year's Book Week Scotland celebrating a Year of Conversation. Writers from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Inverness, Oban and more had the opportunity to gather together and read their works.

At the beginning of the year, Val McDermid, patron of Scottish Book Trust launched the public participation campaign around the theme of 'blether', asking the people of Scotland to submit personal and true stories. Scottish Book Trust, the national charity transforming lives through reading and writing, encouraged people of all backgrounds and experiences to submit their work.

Tied to [A Year of Conversation 2019](#), and with an introduction by Tom Pow, *Blether* is a celebration of Scotland and its stories. Hundreds of stories from across the country were collected, and can be read online [here](#).

A panel selected 32 of the stories for inclusion in the *Blether* book, which will be distributed free to libraries and community groups during Book Week Scotland – a week-long, national celebration of reading and writing.

Published authors such as Nikesh Shukla and Chris McQueer, and *Still Game's* Jane McCarry were also commissioned to write stories about what 'blether' means to them.

*Blether* will also be downloadable from Scottish Book Trust's website during Book Week Scotland, which runs from 18 to 24 November. Working in partnership with the Royal National Institute of Blind People, writers included in the book also had the opportunity to record their story for an audiobook version.

**Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said:** "We all love telling stories and sharing our own stories helps us connect with the people around us. I hope the people of Scotland enjoy the 100,000 free copies of *Blether* that Scottish Book Trust will distribute through libraries, community groups and gifting, as part of Book Week Scotland. This collection of tales celebrates what a simple blether or conversation can mean and the difference it makes to our lives, with stories written in English, Scots, Gaelic and Arabic."

**Ann Craig, from Auchmithie, Angus, said:** "I was delighted to hear my poem had got into the *Blether* book. I now live in a small fishing village in the North East but my roots are in Glasgow and this piece is how I heard the rants and bletthers daily when I was wee - by fierce women in my life and having this appear in print is a great encouragement to keep writing about what I know."

The *Blether* book includes a selection of stories about conversation and connection: in a supermarket, while walking your dog, or even as your mother is just about to pray. From small, seemingly mundane bletthers, to life-changing conversations, the book features stories from many different backgrounds and cultures.

The stories included are:

- *Squeak* by Lindz McLeod, from Edinburgh
- *Crossing the Bridge* by Kirsty Souter, from Leven
- *Catch-Up* by Catherine Wilson, from Edinburgh
- *Letter to Hettie* by Hazel-Ann Urquhart, from Dingwall
- *I See My Voice And It Is*, Group Poem by Shakti Women's Aid, in partnership with [Open Book](#).
- *Mum's the Word* by Breea Keenan, from Clarkston
- *Links Park Luminary* by Alun Robert, from Rochester
- *A Guid Blether* by Craig A Mudie, from Dundee
- *The Automation* by Mark Haw, from Milngavie
- *Mibbie Aye, Mibbie Hooch Aye* by Grace Murray, from Forfar
- *Blethers at the Berries* by Lynn Valentine, from Inverness
- *Cash* by Caron McKinlay, from Edinburgh
- *'Sup?* by Graeme Bradley, from Bellshill
- *Two Hours* by Louise Behan, Edinburgh
- *Thicker than Blood* by WJ Sharp, from Edinburgh
- *Mighty* by Lynn Fraser, from Tranent, East Lothian
- *Blether* by Chic Gibson, from Paisley
- *F,M, Other* by Laura Clay, from Edinburgh
- *Hearing Voices* by Lee Kerr, from Edinburgh
- *Breaking the Silence* by Lesley Crawford, from Edinburgh
- *Longing for a Blether* by Dini Armstrong, from Helensburgh
- *I Come From a Distant Land* by Syrian Women's Group, in partnership with [Open Book](#)
- *Twa Haufs o the Hale* by Bill Cox, from Bridge of Don
- *The Great Philosopher* by Ann Craig, from Auchmithie, Angus
- *By Change* by Carolyn O'Hara, from Prestwick
- *R-E-S-P-E-C-K* by Janet Pelerin, from Edinburgh

The commissioned stories included are:

- *The B&B Blether* by Leila Aboulela
- *Blether* by Jane McCarry
- *Latha Eile nam'Bheatha/Another Day in My Life* by Marion F. NicIleMhoire
- *Blether* by Nikesh Shukla
- *Blether* by Chris McQueer
- *Jason* by Seonag Monk and Calum Mackinnon

Initiated by the Scottish Government and supported by National Lottery funds through Creative Scotland Targeted Funding, Book Week Scotland is delivered by Scottish Book Trust and its partners from 18 November to 24 November 2019. There are hundreds of free events taking place across many different local authorities, funded by Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC).

For more information about Book Week Scotland 2019 and how you can get involved, visit <http://www.bookweekscotland.com> where you can find information about all the events taking place in your local area.



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## **Notes to Editors**

For more information, quotes, or images, please contact Keara Donnachie on [Keara.Donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com](mailto:Keara.Donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com) or 0131 524 0184.

**Scottish Book Trust** is a national charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that include:

- Gifting books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home.
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classroom activities, book awards and author events.
- Supporting Scotland's diverse writing community with our training, awards and writing opportunities.
- Funding a range of author events for the public to enjoy and promoting Scottish writing to people worldwide.

In addition to the funding we receive from the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland, we need the constant support of trusts and foundations, corporate sponsors and individual donors.

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For more information about **Book Week Scotland**, visit [www.bookweekscotland.com](http://www.bookweekscotland.com). Follow [@BookWeekScot](https://twitter.com/BookWeekScot) on Twitter, check out [#BookWeekScotland](https://twitter.com/BookWeekScot) or like the [Book Week Scotland Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/BookWeekScotland).

Book Week Scotland 2019 will be delivered by Scottish Book Trust from 18 November – 24 November. Now in its eighth year, it was initiated by the Scottish Government in 2012 and is supported by £200,000 from the National Lottery through Creative Scotland Targeted Funding and £26,500 from SLIC.

## **Creative Scotland**

In addition to general fundraising, Scottish Book Trust receives Creative Scotland support through Regular Funding. Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit [www.creativescotland.com](http://www.creativescotland.com). Follow us @creativescots and [www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland](https://www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland)