

Embargoed until 00.01, Wednesday 13 November 2019

Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship 2020 Open for Applications

Marking Robert Louis Stevenson Day (13 November), Scottish Book Trust, the national charity changing lives through reading and writing, is delighted to announce that the Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship for professional writers is now open for applications. Previous fellows include novelist Bernard MacLaverty, Makar Liz Lochhead, author and journalist Phil Miller, and poet and performer Michael Pedersen.

Writers based in Scotland are encouraged to apply, and the Fellowship awards successful applicants with a retreat to Grez-sur-Loing in France, a village that Robert Louis Stevenson himself visited frequently.

The Fellowship was initiated in 1994 by Franki Fewkes, a Scottish RLS enthusiast then living in France, and is supported by Creative Scotland. It provides residencies for four fellows for one month each, in a self-catering studio apartment at the Hôtel Cheillon International Arts Centre at Grez-sur-Loing. Travel and accommodation are paid for, and there is a grant of £300 per week to cover living expenses.

Grez-sur-Loing is situated at the edge of the Forest of Fontainebleau, France, and was first visited by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1875. He also met his future wife, Fanny Osbourne, at the Hôtel Cheillon. Grez-sur-Loing was attractive to Stevenson due to its well-established community of writers and artists, and he spent three happy summers there.

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said:

"This is a wonderful opportunity for established writers to gain some time away in a beautiful location to focus on their writing. The roll call of Fellows is a prestigious list and shows the variety of work we have supported. We hope many more Scotland-based writers will apply for the chance to write at this iconic and inspirational place, which had such an impact on Robert Louis Stevenson's own life."

Bernard MacLaverty, a 2019 Robert Louis Stevenson Fellow, said:

"Grez-sur-Loing is a wonderful place to write. This year I spent the month of June there, thanks to the Fellowship from Scottish Book Trust, working on a book of short stories. John Lavery's bridge and river are at the bottom of the garden. The wonderful Fontainebleau forest is a bus ride away. I also found myself catching up on Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, *Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde*, *Kidnapped* – what a superb writer he is. And what a great time I had."

Mairi Kidd, Head of Literature, Languages & Publishing, commented:

“Writers are vital to Scotland’s creative and social landscape here in Scotland. We know that many writers struggle to find and to fund time to write and the Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship offers precisely that, in a peaceful and inspiring location linked to the life of one of our greatest literary talents. We look forward to welcoming the new recipients of the Fellowship to the stellar list of previous writers.”

For details of how to apply for the Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship, and for full eligibility criteria, please visit <https://www.scottishbooktrust.com/writing-and-authors/robert-louis-stevenson-fellowship>.

The closing date for Robert Louis Stevenson Fellowship 2020 applications is Wednesday 29 January 2020 (noon).

Notes to editors:

For all media enquiries including photos of Fellows and the writing retreat, please contact Keara Donnachie on keara.donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com or 0131 524 0184 / 07956 773 749.

Scottish Book Trust

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.

www.scottishbooktrust.com @scottishbktrust www.facebook.com/scottishbktrust

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. Follow us @creativescots and www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland

Robert Louis Stevenson

Born at 8 Howard Place on 13 November 1850, Robert Louis Stevenson is one of Edinburgh's great writers. He spent much of his life in his native city of Edinburgh whose striking setting and distinctively split character – half ordered, Neo-classical avenues, half shadowed, medieval wynds – inspired many of his best-loved works such as *Treasure Island* (1883), *Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde* (1886) and *Kidnapped!* (1886). Stevenson was also a travel writer and essayist, and moved around the world extensively, eventually coming to a rest in Upolu, Samoa, where he died. He was nicknamed 'Tuisitala' or 'Teller of Tales' and is beloved in Samoa to this day. His Requiem is inscribed on his tomb on Mount Vaea.

RLS Day

Robert Louis Stevenson was the most versatile of writers – poet, essayist, travel writer, children's author, historical novelist and humourist who also found time to pen some of the finest letters in the English language. His life story, from Edinburgh to the South Seas, was every bit as exciting as his novels – and he crammed it all into 44 years. Now each year his November 13 birthday is celebrated in his home city with a series of events viewable at www.rlsday.wordpress.com