

## Author Keith Gray returns to his roots for 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour



Tour dates are included in this release. If you are interested in an interview with Keith Gray or would like a reporter or photographer to attend one of the events please contact:

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Award-winning author Keith Gray will visit schools in his home county of Lincolnshire from 15 – 19 October as part of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour](#). Keith will visit over 1000 pupils from Year 7 to Year 9 during the week, including Boston High School, St George's Academy and Winterton Community Academy.

The Children's Book Tour is supported by Scottish Friendly, one of the UK's leading financial mutuals, and organised by Scottish Book Trust, a charity transforming lives through reading and writing. The tour visits both primary and secondary schools, and has enthralled more than 100,000 children across the UK since it began in 1998.

Keith Gray was born and brought up in Grimsby, and spent fifteen years living and working in Scotland. At primary school, he avoided books, thinking they were a chore and was labelled a 'reluctant reader'. This changed when he read Robert Westall's *The Machine Gunners*, and discovered a love of reading, and, not so long after, of writing too. His first novel, *Creepers* (1996), was published when he was 24, and was shortlisted for the 1997 Guardian Children's Fiction Prize.

Keith Gray has written books for children and young adults, including *The Runner*, which won The Smarties Silver Medal, and *Ostrich Boys*, which was recently adapted for the stage. He has also published several books with Barrington Stoke, which specialises in dyslexia-friendly fiction.

During the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour, Keith will use his own books and background to talk about how fiction works as a reader and a writer – what makes reading

important and how authors can create fun, engaging stories. Keith will run two different types of events: a general presentation aimed at encouraging reading and writing, and then a more in-depth workshop, with some brilliant writing tools and activities to engage pupils' imaginations. The author will also work closely with reluctant readers, and will host a smaller event for students with special education needs.

**Commenting on the tour, Keith Gray said:**

"I'm extremely excited to be returning to my old stomping ground to help promote reading and writing in the local schools. So many of my books and stories have been inspired by growing up in Cleethorpes and exploring the Lincolnshire countryside. It would be brilliant if I found a few new stories on my travels around the county, but I'll definitely be encouraging the young people I meet to tell some tall tales of their own too."

**Calum Bennie, Communications Manager of Scottish Friendly, said:**

"Young people in Lincolnshire are certain to be enthralled when Keith Gray speaks to them on his books, his inspiration and on reading and writing in general. Keith was one of the first authors on the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour and he'll be as much of a hit in Lincolnshire as he was in Scotland many years ago."

**Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, added:**

"It's fantastic to take Keith Gray back on the road for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour. We're pleased to bring him to his home county of Lincolnshire, where he will inspire the pupils with his own reading and writing journey. Keith is a fantastic example of how reluctant readers can transform into award-winning writers of the future."

**Notes to Editors**

For media enquiries, interviews and images, please contact Keara Donnachie, PR Officer on [keara.donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com](mailto:keara.donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com) or 0131 524 0184.

After every tour, Scottish Book Trust's website features case studies and resources to show the impact of the tour on the pupils we visit: [www.scottishbooktrust.com](http://www.scottishbooktrust.com)

The Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour Jamboree celebration event is available to watch on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com).

**Tour dates**

Monday 15 October



9.05am – 10.05am: Boston High School

1.30pm – 2.30pm: The Priory Ruskin Academy

### Tuesday 16 October

AM (tbc)

St George's Academy

PM (tbc)

St Peter and St Paul Catholic Academy

### Wednesday 17 October

9.30am – 10.30am: The Priory Pembroke Academy

2.30pm – 3.30pm: The Priory Witham Academy

### Thursday 18 October

8.50am – 9.50am: Ormiston Maritime Academy

1.30pm – 2.30pm: Outwood Academy Foxhills

### Friday 19 October

PM (tbc)

Winterton Community Academy

### **About Scottish Friendly**

Scottish Friendly, one of the UK's largest mutual life offices, is a progressive and modern financial services group. It provides investors and their families with a wide range of affordable investments.

Scottish Friendly has sponsored the programme for the past 20 years, touring some of the finest children's authors and illustrators including former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell, Malorie Blackman, Michael Rosen, Jacqueline Wilson, Melvin Burgess, Steve Cole, Michael Morpurgo and Sophie McKenzie.

Scottish Friendly is very engaged in the community and works with Scottish Book Trust to provide fresh and exciting content on its website: [www.scottishfriendly.co.uk](http://www.scottishfriendly.co.uk) @scotfriendly [www.facebook.com/scottishfriendly](https://www.facebook.com/scottishfriendly)



## About Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support reading and writing for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that include:

- Encouraging families to share the joy of books, singing and rhyming from birth through online resources including our Song and Rhyme Library (<http://scottishbooktrust.com/bookbug/bookbug-song-and-rhyme-library>), as well as book gifting (in Scotland).
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading by creating innovative classroom resources, book lists, activities and blogs (<http://scottishbooktrust.com/learning/teaching-resources-clpl>)
- A library of author events (<http://scottishbooktrust.com/authorslive>) for school children of all ages to watch either live or on demand with authors including Michael Morpurgo, Patrick Ness, Julia Donaldson, David Walliams and many more.

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