

## SCOTTISH BOOK TRUST APPOINTS NEW PATRON

### Top Scottish crime writer Val McDermid joins prominent charity

Scottish Book Trust, the national charity transforming lives through reading and writing, has appointed a new patron, the prominent Scottish writer Val McDermid.

A long-time supporter of the charity's work, Val is one of the biggest names in crime writing and her novels have been translated into 40 languages, selling over 15 million copies worldwide.

Val will lend her support to Scottish Book Trust to help inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work.

McDermid, who was born in Fife, studied English at St Hilda's College, Oxford, where she was one of the youngest undergraduates ever enrolled there and the first student to be admitted from a Scottish state school. After graduation, she became a journalist and worked briefly as a dramatist. Her first success as a novelist was in the late 80's.

Val has created many notable characters such as journalist, Lindsay Gordon; private investigator, Kate Brannigan; and psychologist, Tony Hill. *The Mermaids Singing*, the first of McDermid's Tony Hill and Carol Jordan series (which was later adapted for the highly successful television drama *Wire in the Blood* starring Robson Green) won the Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger for Best Crime Novel of the Year.

Scottish Book Trust's programmes impact on hundreds of thousands of people across Scotland every year, from babies to adults, and the national charity believes books, reading and writing have the power to change lives.

Historical patrons of the charity also include Edinburgh-based author Alexander McCall Smith and prominent children's author Julia Donaldson.

Amongst other activity, Scottish Book Trust works with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classroom activities, organising children's book prizes, the First Minister's Reading Challenge and bringing a huge range of exciting author events directly to schools all over Scotland.

For adults, a digital storytelling programme seeks to gather stories and build digital skills in adults in various areas of Scotland, and a reading programmes uses reading to empower, engage and connect socially isolated older people.

Scotland's writing talent is nurtured with bursaries, mentoring and professional development to ensure that creative opportunities are open to people of all backgrounds. The charity also works with teenagers to provide creative writing and illustration development opportunities and delivers a range of author events to encourage people to read and write for pleasure. As well as promoting Scottish literature worldwide, each November, Book Week Scotland brings a week-long, national celebration of books and reading to every community in Scotland.

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

“As the reach of Scottish Book Trust continues to grow, we are delighted to welcome renowned and well respected Scottish author Val McDermid onboard as our Patron. Val has, for many years, had a genuine connection to our work and a strong personal interest in our aims and values. It is wonderful to recognise our relationship formally with a Patronage.

“Research shows that a love of reading and writing inspires creativity, and also benefits employability among young people, supports better mental health and wellbeing, and is one of the most effective ways to help children escape the poverty cycle. Simply put, a love of reading changes lives.”

**Val McDermid, author and Patron of Scottish Book Trust, said:**

“Any writer would be proud and delighted to be invited to be Patron of Scottish Book Trust. The work they do across Scotland, supporting readers and writers across the generations, is key to building our future. It’s a charity that works with children and parents, with teachers and libraries, with avid readers and potential readers alike, and supports both established and aspiring writers. The enterprise and commitment Scottish Book Trust demonstrates enriches all our lives and I’m delighted to be part of their campaigning work.”

ENDS

**Notes to Editors**

Please direct all interview requests to [Keara.Donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com](mailto:Keara.Donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com) or call 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.

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

## **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)

## **Val McDermid**

Dubbed the Queen of Crime, Val McDermid has sold over 15 million books to date across the globe and is translated into over 40 languages. She is perhaps best-known for her *Wire in the Blood* series, featuring clinical psychologist Dr Tony Hill and DCI Carol Jordan, which was adapted for television starring Robson Green. She has written three other series: private detective Kate Brannigan, journalist Lindsay Gordon and, most recently, cold case detective Karen Pirie. She has also published in several award-winning standalone novels, two books of non-fiction, two short story collections and a children's picture book, *My Granny is a Pirate*.

McDermid continues to be a remarkably versatile writer. She is also an experienced broadcaster with regular and hugely popular appearances on TV and radio. She is highly sought after as a speaker at literary festivals and other events across the country and overseas.

A regular broadcaster with BBC Radio, Val has written dramas and presented programmes on Radio 4 and was also a huge success on the evergreen Desert Island Discs. In early 2017 Val's latest BBC Radio 4 drama series, *Resistance*, aired to great acclaim. It was produced as part of the Wellcome Trust's Experimental Stories project and is currently being developed as a graphic novel. Val has fronted features for BBC Two's The Culture Show and appeared several times as a panellist on BBC Question Time. She further added to her broadcasting credentials in late 2016 by captaining the winning University Challenge alumnae team!

She has won many awards internationally, including the CWA Gold Dagger for best crime novel of the year, the CWA Cartier Diamond Dagger, the Grand Prix des Romans D'Aventure, the Lambda Literary Foundation Pioneer Award in 2011, the Stonewall Writer of the Year and the LA Times Book of the Year Award. In 2012 she became a Celebrity Mastermind champion. In 2016 she received the Outstanding Contribution to Crime Fiction award at the Theakston's Old Peculiar Harrogate Crime Festival and in 2017 she was elected a Fellow of both the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Val has previously served as a judge for the Women's Prize for Fiction, was Chair of the Wellcome Book Prize in 2017 and has just finished her tenure as a judge on the 2018 Man Booker Prize. She is the recipient of five Honorary Doctorates and is an Honorary Fellow of St Hilda's College, Oxford. Her *story Resurrection: Message from the Skies* was a landmark conceptual installation in Edinburgh in January 2018. 2018 has also seen her return to writing for the theatre after more than thirty years with *Margaret Saves Scotland*, a play for the popular A Play, A Pie and A Pint series.