

Writer in Residence



Mr Robertson is the author of acclaimed novels *The Testament of Gideon Mack* and *Joseph Knight*, the latter garnering the Angus-based writer both the Saltire Society and Scottish Arts Council Book of the Year awards.

His diverse body of work includes Scots translations of children's classics such as Roald Dahl's *Fantastic Mr Fox* and, more recently, a new No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency book for younger readers by Alexander McCall Smith.

The new Edinburgh Napier post has received substantial funding from The Binks Trust for four years. A fresh appointment will be made each Easter.

Mr Robertson, who was the first writer-in-residence at the Scottish Parliament, will spend two to three days each week writing at the University's iconic Craighouse Campus, where students on its new MA in Creative Writing will be able to turn to him for advice and guidance.

The groundbreaking course, which was launched last autumn, embraces commercial genres such as science fiction, fantasy and crime writing and was the first in the UK to offer specialist modules in writing for computer games and comics.

It also replaced traditional workshop-based teaching with one-to-one mentoring and piloted a unique reader-in-residence post, currently held by Scottish literary editor and author, Stuart Kelly.

Mr Robertson said: "I am very pleased to be the first writer-in-residence on the Creative Writing programme at Edinburgh Napier. The course is dynamic and innovative, practical yet intellectually demanding, and has been designed to take full account of the many challenges that face anybody wanting to make a living as a writer today.

"Over the years, I've been a publisher's sales rep,

bookseller, editor and publisher, and as a writer my work has also been diverse, so I hope I can offer useful insights and advice to the students. I also fully expect to gain much from working with them in such a stimulating, creative environment.”

The Edinburgh Napier MA in Creative Writing is run by former literary agent Sam Kelly and acclaimed screenwriter and author David Bishop, a former editor of UK comic 2000AD.

Ms Kelly said: “For us, hosting a high-profile working author alongside our students is a way of extending the community of the course, and adding a new influence to our ongoing debates about writing. James embodies all the qualities we were looking for and, thanks to generous funding from the Binks Trust we have been able to make our vision a reality.

She added: “With this course we really feel we have started a small revolution in how the teaching of creative writing is approached. James’ primary role will be to develop new work while he is here and to speak to students about his projects. I’m delighted he is joining us and certain that he will bring even more to the post than we expect.”