

Book Week Scotland 2014 – How to save our libraries



Today, on the first day of Book Week Scotland 2014, Marc Lambert, Director of Scottish Book Trust, has commented on the imminent threat to libraries in Scotland and what can be done to help save libraries at the heart of every community.

Marc Lambert, Director of Scottish Book Trust, said:

“This Book Week Scotland I want to launch a call to action to local authorities and schools. Every child when they start nursery, primary and secondary school should be introduced to their local library and receive automatic membership. If children and young people learn early on to love their library, they will become library users for the rest of their lives. This relationship, between the individual and their local library, is one of the most important there is, benefitting the individual in many different and wonderful ways throughout the whole of their life.”

“At the same time, libraries must be enabled to advertise and communicate with their customers and potential customers better. In order to survive the local authority cuts that are coming and prosper in the 21st Century, libraries need to reach out to their local communities in more evident and assertive ways. Survival for libraries is not just a matter of meeting the technological changes of the digital age. Like any business, it’s about the relationship one has and the services one delivers to one’s customers.”

“Book Week Scotland, the national celebration of reading, wants to celebrate the hard work of librarians and shout about how fantastic libraries are. Over the next week, library users across the country will be invited to write a love letter to

their local library explaining how much they mean to them, and libraries will display the letters they have received.”

Further to celebrating the place libraries occupy in people’s hearts, Book Week Scotland will also shine a light on the place they occupy in communities. Five large library artworks will be unveiled across Scotland during the week, with the aim of making the chosen libraries visible and valued in their local areas. The artworks have been inspired by a very special love letter to libraries, Dear Library, written by best-selling author Jackie Kay. The artworks will be appearing in: North Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, Edinburgh and The Shetland Islands.

For those who want to use Book Week Scotland as a chance to get their teeth into reading, the Reading Pledge campaign will serve as a motivation to pick up that book you’ve been meaning to read, share a book with your child each night or simply pass on a much-loved book to a neighbour. People can choose from a list of pledges or create their own, share them on social media and then carry out the pledge during the week.

Hundreds of free book-related events will pop up in a diverse range of locations across Scotland, including some of Scotland’s best-loved writers and illustrators appearing in libraries, a programme funded by The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC).

For those who would prefer to spend the week in splendid isolation getting lost in some beautiful stories, 150,000 free copies of a short story and poem collection written by Scottish people, Scotland’s Stories of Home, will be distributed throughout the week via libraries, bookshops and other outlets. Schools will also receive an e-publication featuring Scottish pupil’s stories of home.

In addition to this, three free picture books will be gifted to every Primary 1 pupil in Scotland. The Bookbug Primary 1

Family Pack will introduce children who are just beginning their reading journey to some of the best new Scottish children's books . The books comprise the shortlist for the Scottish Children's Book Awards 2015: Robot Rumpus by Sean Taylor and Ross Collins, Princess Penelope and the Runaway Kitten by Alison Murray and Lost for Words by Natalie Russell.

Young children can also get into the Book Week Scotland spirit by tuning in to watch two of Britain's best loved poets, Roger McGough and Valerie Bloom, bringing rhythm and rhyme to life Steve Cole, author of Astrosaurs and Cows in Action, who will tour schools around the country during the week.

Everyone will be able to find out who their ideal fictional lover is with the fun personality quiz Who's your literary love match? Launched today the whole world can get loved up with Book Week Scotland by discovering if Mr Darcy, Sherlock Holmes or Scarlet O'Hara would be their ideal partner.

In a fitting end to a week celebrating the wonders of the written word, Scottish Book Trust will reveal the nation's favourite ever character from Scottish books – will Harry Potter swoop to victory, will Miss Jean Brodie sweep the board, or will they both be frightened off by The Gruffalo? For over a month book lovers of all ages have been choosing from a shortlist of 50 characters, but now there's only 48 hours left to vote. [Vote here on the Scottish Book Week website](#)

Jenny Niven, Portfolio Manager for Literature, Publishing and Languages at Creative Scotland, said:

“Scotland's biggest celebration of books and reading is upon us! Too often we expect reading will somehow fit in amongst everything else in our busy lives. We encourage everyone in Scotland this week to begin your relationship with books all over again. Make time to reread your favourite authors, ask your friends and colleagues to recommend new ones, and of

course spend some time going to any one of the literally hundreds of events happening all across Scotland this week to meet writers first hand.”

“Working with partners across the country Scottish Book Trust has once again delivered a fantastic programme of events that will celebrate, spark, and reignite peoples love affairs with books and reading – so please take the Book Week Scotland ‘Reading Pledge’ now and get involved.”

Amina Shah, CEO of the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) said:

“Book Week Scotland gives us an opportunity to demonstrate and celebrate the role that libraries play in relation to literacy, developing a love of books and reading and giving people opportunities to get together in the heart of their communities to share their love of reading. Libraries also play an important role in helping to improve opportunities for individuals and communities through free access to books, information and learning. This week, I would urge people of all ages to show their love for libraries by going along to their local library and joining in this national celebration of books and reading.”

Initiated by the Scottish Government and supported, along with a Readers in Residence programme in libraries, by £250,000 from Creative Scotland, Book Week Scotland will be delivered by Scottish Book Trust. Book Week Scotland in libraries is funded by The Scottish Library and Information Council.