

New memorials to be unveiled in Makars' Court



It has been described as Scotland's answer to Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, with the words of the country's finest writers preserved in stone for posterity.

Now [Makars' Court](#), which lies between the High Street and The Mound will have will two more wordsmiths to add to its illustrious ranks with the unveiling of memorials to poets George Campbell Hay (1915 – 1984) and William Soutar (1898 – 1943) later today.

Anne Artymiuk, a doctoral student at Scotland's University of the Highlands and Islands, has fundraised to create the tribute to George Campbell Hay. She was joined by Gillian Findlay from the City of Edinburgh Council's Writers' Museum. An original composition has been written by Scottish Opera Emerging Artist Liam Patterson especially for the occasion and a recording of the song, with vocals by Scottish Opera baritone Andy McTaggart, will be played. A recording of Alasdair Whyte singing Hay's Gaelic song, *Luinneag*, will also be played during the ceremony.

Councillor Richard Lewis, Culture Convener for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Makars' Court is a highlight of the Old Town tourist trail and the addition of these two new inscriptions celebrates these poets' skills in their craft. Scotland – and not least its City of Literature capital – has produced an extraordinary number of accomplished writers and Makars' Court is an excellent place to pay tribute to them and celebrate their work.

"Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, these flagstones for George Campbell Hay and William Soutar continue the city's

long-held appreciation of great Scottish writing.”

Both members of the Scottish Literary Renaissance, Campbell Hay and Soutar are acknowledged for their influence and lasting legacy in Scottish literature. The commemorations have been created with the support of the Makars’ Court Committee of the Scottish Saltire Society and sponsors Anne Artymiuk and the Friends of the William Soutar Society.

Anne Artymiuk said: “Hay was a major Scots poet of the twentieth century, one of the few writers Scotland has had who wrote, and wrote well, in all three of Scotland’s languages. His profile has been low, probably because after the Second World War, which inspired some of his best work, he struggled with mental illness.

“The publication, in 2000, of his collected poems and songs, edited by Michael Byrne has helped to make his work known to a wider audience. I am delighted to see the tribute set in stone and am very grateful to everyone for their support, in particular the Scottish Opera and their Emerging Artist Liam Patterson for their enthusiasm. Liam’s original musical commission and Andy and Alasdair’s voices bring Hay’s tribute to life.”

The tribute to Campbell Hay will be the first ‘dual language’ tribute at Makars’ Court, with quotes in English and Gaelic. It will read:

George Campbell Hay (1915 – 1984)

The hert’s the compass tae the place

That ye wad gae whan land ye lea.

Cha chuir ceann is cridh’ air iomrall thu.

Bi iomlan is bi beò.

(From *The Hert’s Aye the Pairt Aye...* by George Campbell

Hay. Published in *Collected Poems and Songs of George Campbell Hay (Deorsa Mac Iain Dheorsa)*, edited by Michel Byrne. Edinburgh: EUP for the Lorimer Trust, 2000.)

Soutar's stone, sponsored by the Friends of the William Soutar Society, will be unveiled next week (Friday 28 April at 11.30 am).

Iain Mackintosh, speaking on behalf of the Society, said: "In his lifetime, some critics regarded Soutar as the foremost poet writing in Scots – superior to his friend MacDiarmid. He was an influential figure in the Modern Scots Renaissance.

"His Bairnrhymes have done much to keep the language alive by delighting generations of Scottish children, their appeal as fresh today as when they were first published. He left behind some hauntingly lovely short lyrics (in Scots and English), and some fascinating (much anthologised) diaries recording his life as an invalid, bedridden for 13 years."

Soutar's inscription will read:

William Soutar (1898 – 1943)

I thocht the hale o the world was there

Sae sma in a small room

(From *Ballad* by William Soutar. Published in *Collected Poems*, edited by Hugh MacDiarmid. London: Andrew Dakers, 1948, p432.)

In recent years there have been several new stones added. In 2013 the council agreed to commemorate [Gavin Douglas](#) and in 2010 unveiled a new stone for [James Allan Ford](#).