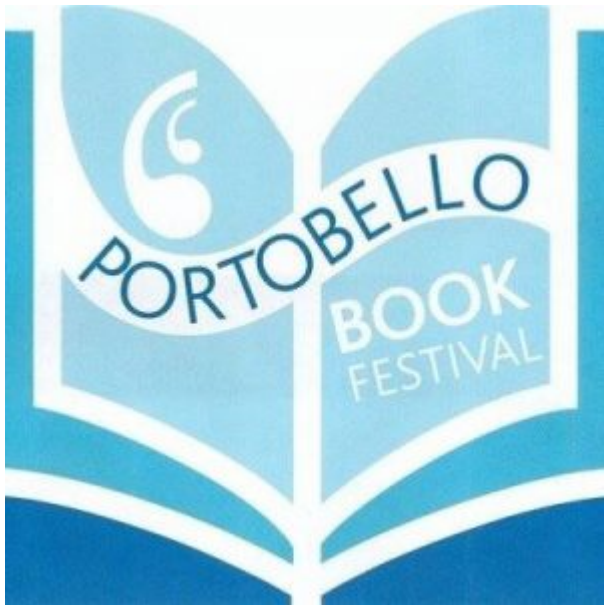


Portobello Book Festival 2019

The Edinburgh International Book Festival may have packed its tents and said goodbye to the circus for another year, but the 11th Portobello Book Festival is still to come!

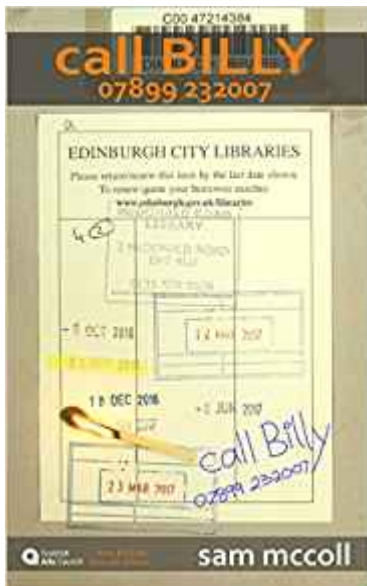


Offering a wide range of events – every one of them totally free – over the first weekend of October, this festival is very much a local one for local people. It's arranged by a group of dedicated volunteers and local library staff, many of the speakers are from the Lothians, and tickets are ONLY available in person from Portobello Library – so you have to put a little bit more effort in, but who doesn't enjoy a visit to 'Edinburgh's seaside' anyway?



James Robertson – image: Scottish Book Trust

This year you can meet a wide range of authors, from Michel Faber (*The Crimson Petal and the White*, *The Book of Strange New Things*, *Undying*) to James Robertson (*365 Stories*, *And the Land Lay Still*, *The Testament of Gideon Mack*), Catherine Simpson (*When I Had A Little Sister*, *Truestory*), Lisa Ballantyne (*Little Liar*), Michael Pedersen (*Oyster*, *Play with Me*) and Sandra Ireland (*The Unmaking of Ellie Rook*).



You can talk crime with Emma Salisbury, Harriet Smart, Ian Rankin and Doug Johnstone, and you can talk Edinburgh with Sam McColl (*Call Billy!*) and Alex Brown (*Hit Me*), writers who draw us into a city that's both flawed and raw. Or if what you're looking for is an escape from that city, you can find it in

The Spirit of the Hebrides, photographs and poems by Alastair Jackson and Kenneth Steven inspired by Sorley MacLean (Hallaig). This unique and beautiful book looks at the link between people and the land, and how identity is shaped by wild places. Alastair will talk about MacLean's influence on his and Kenneth's work.



If you're a writer struggling to find a publisher, or if you're just interested in the radical changes that have taken place in the industry over the last few years, **New Opportunities in Publishing** is the session for you. Self-published author Marianne Wheelaghan (*The Blue Suitcase*) and Knights Errant Press publisher Nathaniel Kunitsky, who works with queer and under-represented writers, will join magazine and newspaper designer Neil Braidwood to discuss latest developments. Or if it's writing itself that you need help with, how about a Saturday morning workshop with award-winning local nature and travel writer JL Hall (*Wild Soul Walks*)?

Not all countries afford their writers the freedoms we enjoy in Scotland – many are censored, imprisoned or even murdered for speaking out. In **Fighting for Freedom of Expression Across Borders**, Scottish PEN will bring together leading writers to read work that people have tried to silence.



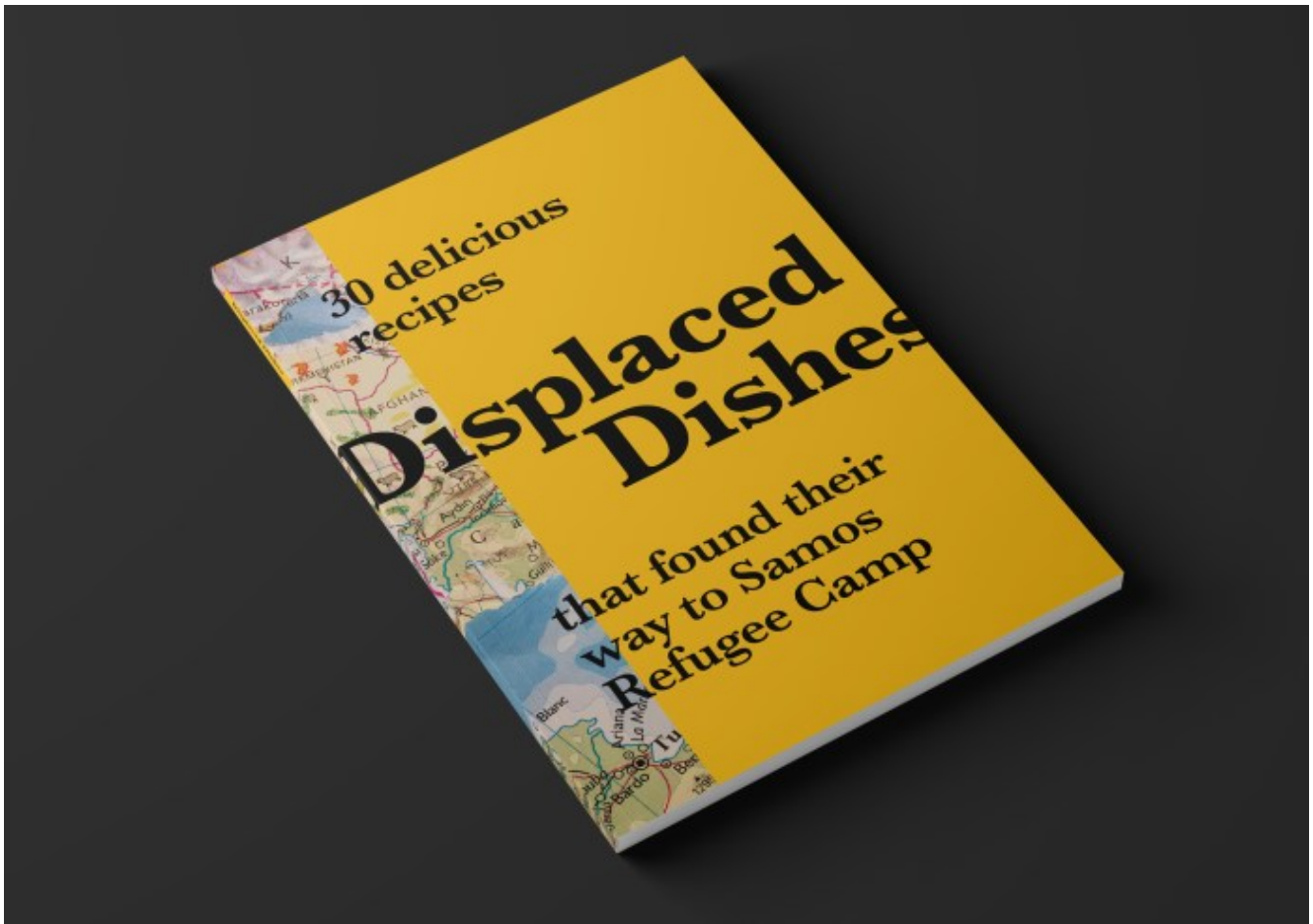
More nature is on offer in **Scottish Plant Lore**, when Royal Botanic Garden botanist Greg Kenicer (*Scottish Plant Lore; An Illustrated Guide*) will share some fascinating facts about our ancient and modern Scottish flora. Did you know that the taxonomic name for the thistle means something like ‘donkey’s fart’? Me neither.



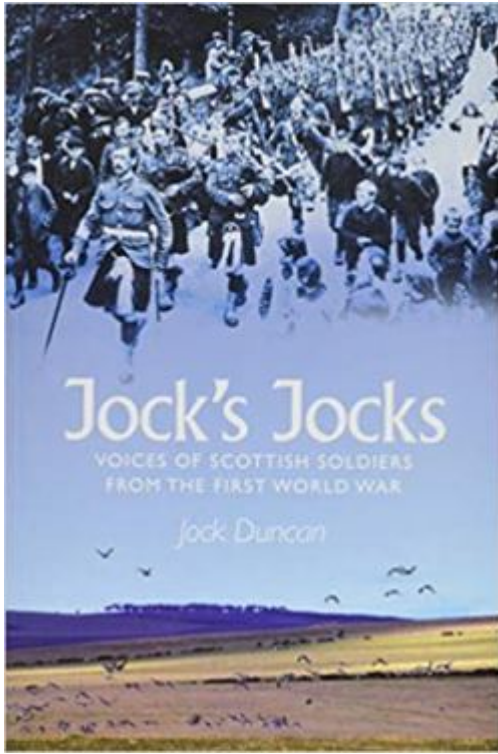
Alan Hepburn

Rewilding may only have become a ‘thing’ when conservationist and activist Dave Foreman thought it up in 1990, but in the 28 years since then it’s become a very big thing indeed. Local teacher and Education Director of SCOTLAND: The Big Picture, Alan Hepburn (*Scotland: A Rewilding Journey*) is a passionate

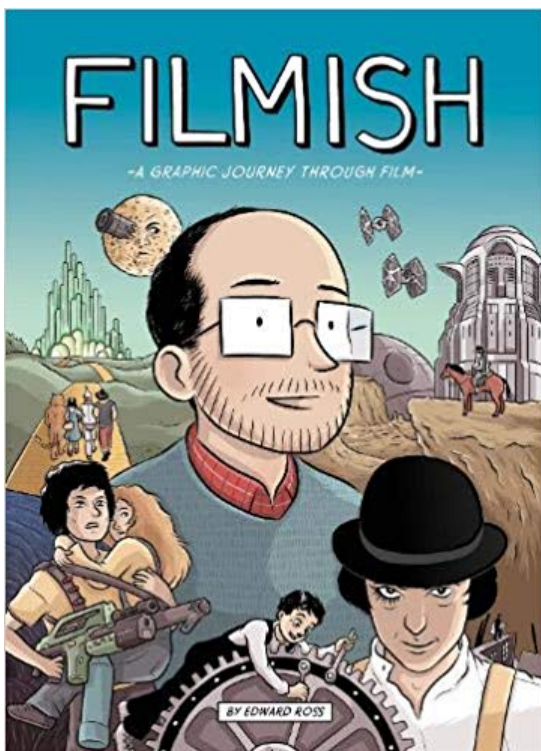
advocate of reconnecting young people with nature; he'll talk about inspiring and informing the next generation of rewilders (children are very welcome at this event).



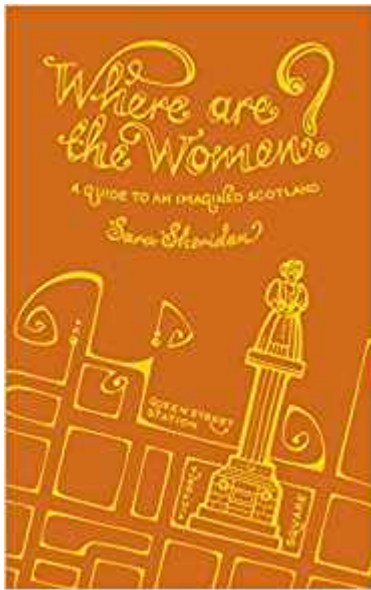
When people are separated from their homeland, culture and family, recipes from home can provide a lifeline of hope. Pamela Gregory was working with Samos Volunteers (who provide aid to refugees in the Samos Refugee Camp) when she decided to collect people's recipes from home for a fundraising cookbook. *Displaced Dishes* not only introduces us to new food ideas; all of the dishes are accompanied by succinct memories and tips from the contributors themselves, creating a vivid snapshot of the ongoing tragedy of the European refugee crisis. Pamela, along with Gica Leoning, will talk about the camp, and how the book came into being.



Over 100 years ago, men were separated from their homes on the farms of Scotland's countryside as they left for France, Flanders and Gallipoli. Folksinger Jock Duncan spent over 50 years interviewing the Jocks – Scottish veterans of the Great War. In **Jock's Jocks: Voices of Scottish Soldiers from the First World War**, editor Gary West will share some of their fascinating tales.



When I was a child, the only scientists I'd ever read about were Professor Branestawm and the surprisingly easily caught villains in the *Famous Five*. In *Picture-Book Professor*, Melissa Terras highlights the fact that children's literature almost always portrays academics as white, male and elderly – 'the stereotype of the male, mad, muddlehead'. In his book *Filmish*, graphic novelist Edward Ross uses comics to explore themes in cinematic history and to tackle serious issues like sexuality, race, censorship and propaganda. Terras and Ross will discuss how representations of academics and scientists affect our attitudes towards expertise, science and knowledge. Meanwhile in **Shifting Sands? Making Change Make Sense**, academics involved in antisemitism, penology and global health will look at how the conventional thinking of the past is being challenged in the contemporary world, and ask if we can be sure about anything anymore?



Edinburgh author Sarah Sheridan is perhaps best known for her Mirabelle Bevan crime novels, but her latest book is fiction of a different kind. *Where are the Women? A Guide to an Imagined Scotland* creates a country in which our environment, built and natural, is named after women, not men. Orkney's famous landmark becomes The Old Lady of Hoy, the West Highland Way ends at Fort Mary, and suffragettes adorn the plinths in central Glasgow. And in **Are We There Yet?** Jenni Calder, Regi

Claire and Claire Squires look at women writers' progress towards equality – just how far along are we?

As dementia affects more and more families, two speakers challenge our traditional assumptions about this devastating disease. When internationally esteemed engineer and amateur artist Edward McLaughlin received his diagnosis in 2002, he retreated for a long time into inactivity and depression – but when he eventually took up art again, he discovered to his amazement that he now saw the world, and in particular colours, quite differently. He has used this enriched sense of colour to create works exploring the complexity and shifting nature of individual identity as they illuminate his own extraordinary personal voyage of discovery. Christeen Winford's book *Vivid Rebellion: the Art of Edward McLaughlan* tells his story.



Agnes Houston MBE was diagnosed with younger-onset dementia in 2006; finding little information or support, she began a quest for knowledge to understand what was happening to her. Her new book *Talking Sense: Living with sensory changes and dementia* is a handbook for those looking for information on sensory challenges, and overturns the idea that dementia is primarily about memory loss. Meanwhile in *A Doctor's Notes on Medicine and Human Change*, Edinburgh GP Gavin Francis talks about his fascination with the human body, Antarctica, and his books *Adventures in Human Being* and *Shapeshifters: A Doctor's Notes on Medicine and Human Change*.



Gavin Francis

The festival kicks off on Friday evening with a cabaret-style event **First Words...Last Lines**, featuring Gareth Williams, James Spence, Jo McFarlane and Alex Callaghan – and refreshments!

So this October, take the bus along to Portobello and enjoy a weekend of wonderful words (and pictures.) Books by participating authors will be on sale from Blackwell's Bookshop Bookstalls. And remember, events may be free but donations are much appreciated to help with the costs of this excellent event.

The Portobello Book Festival will run 3-6 October 2019, with sessions at Portobello Library, Portobello Baptist Church, Jameson Gate, Dalraida and The Portobello Bookshop. Tickets are available from the library (*14 Rosefield Avenue) during opening hours. For more information visit www.portobellobookfestival.wordpress.com.