

# **Celebrating Book Week Scotland this week and beyond**

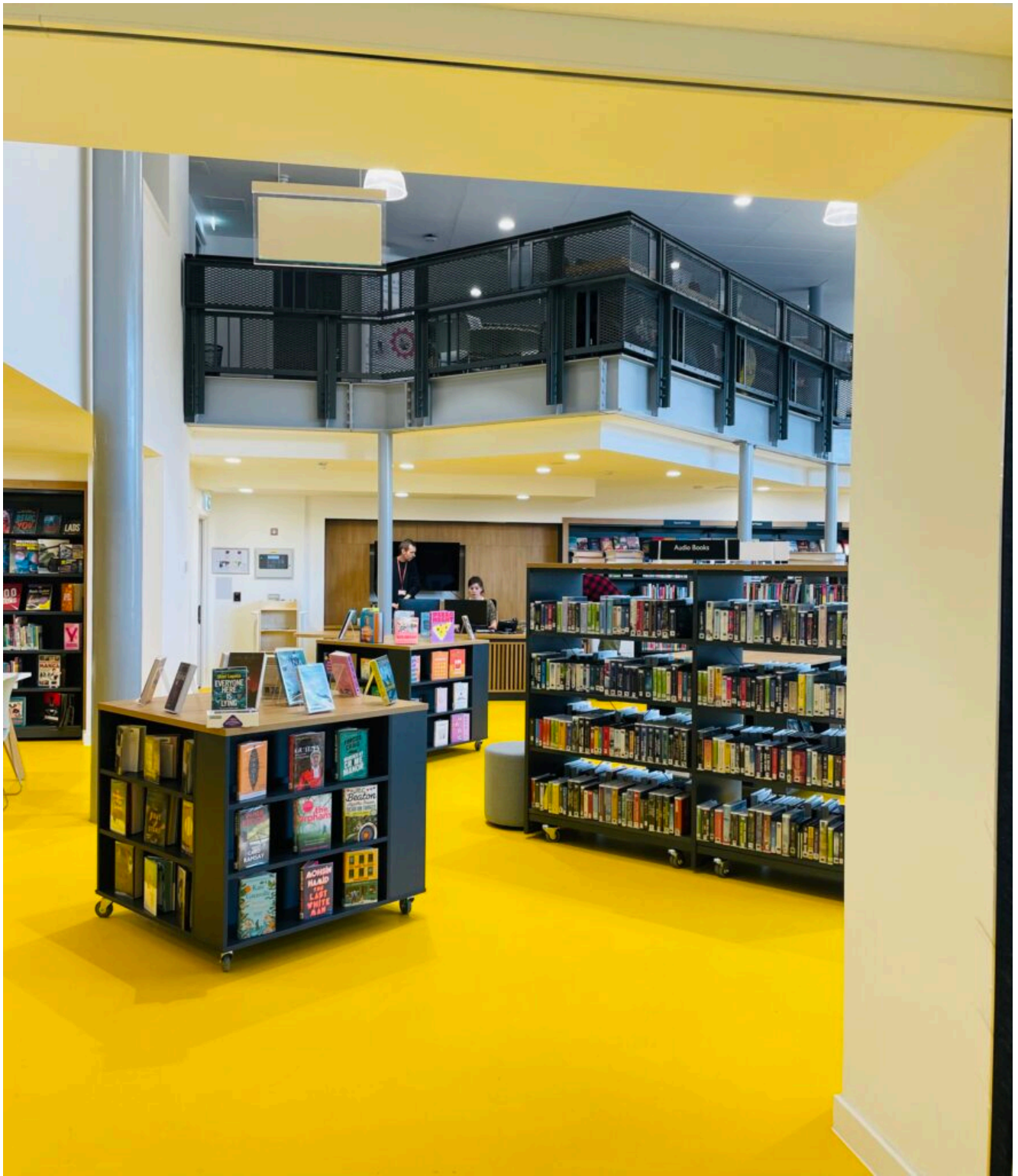
**This week we celebrate the thirteenth year of Book Week Scotland, a yearly celebration across the country of reading.**

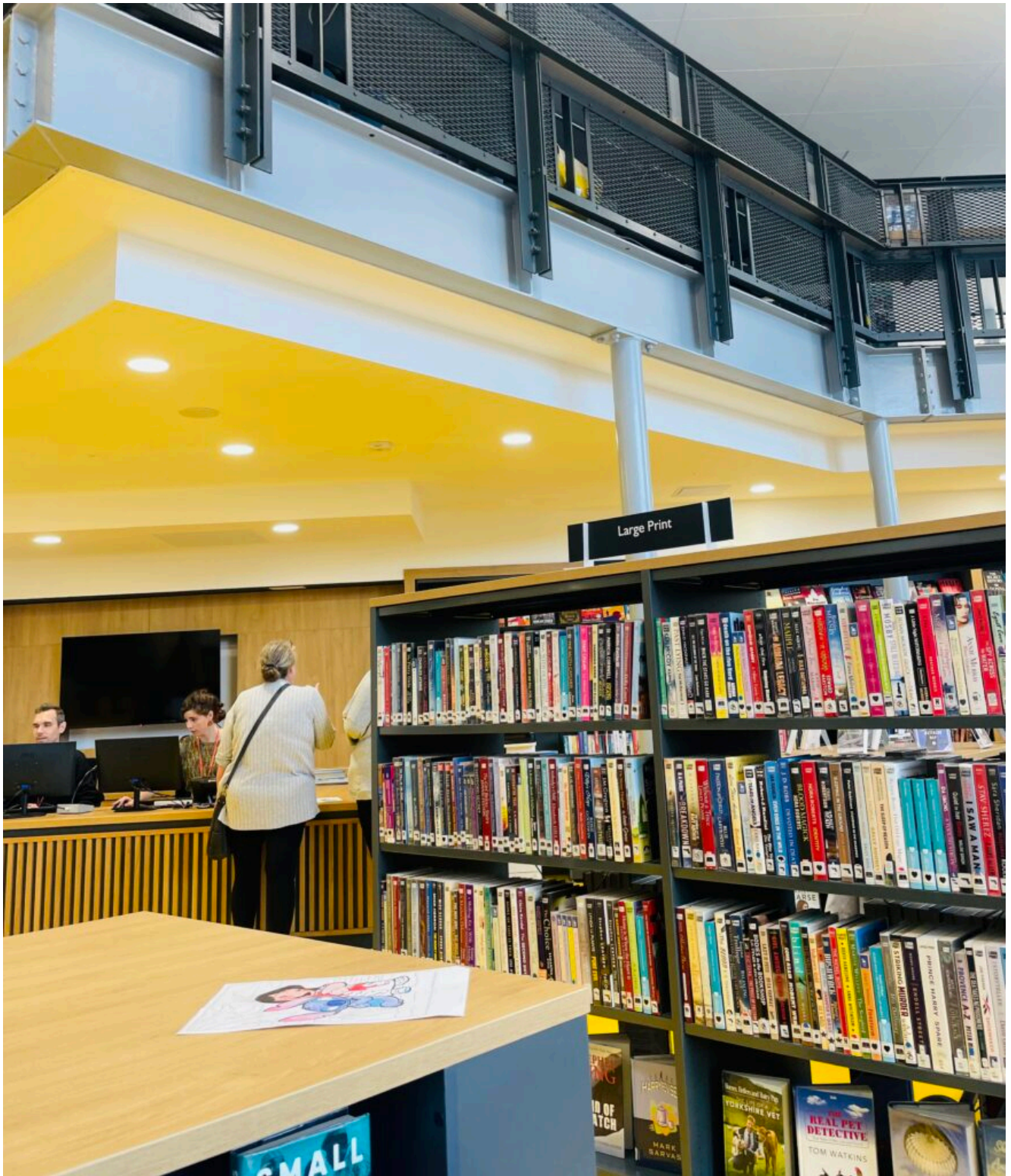
This celebration of books demonstrates the importance of books and access to libraries in Scotland. The Scottish Book Trust organises

hundreds of events in recognition of reading and books to reflect Scotland's love of reading.

While Scotland's love for books is apparent, public libraries remain essential for education and improving literacy, and they play a far more crucial role in the Lothians region, contributing to creativity, social inclusion, and well-being.

Despite the national importance of reading, libraries are under threat. In Aberdeenshire, its council has regrettably announced the closure of 13 facilities. This threat to libraries is not new, with public libraries in Scotland reducing at a closure rate of one in five over the past 15 years. This closure in Aberdeen is not without opposition, with residents petitioning to save their libraries. Edinburgh, as UNESCO's City of Literature, remains fortunate to not have closed any libraries, instead opening new facilities, like Muirhouse Library, which opened this month at MacMillan Hub.









With Edinburgh as a City of Literature, we continuously celebrate reading and the love of books. Books are the life and soul of the city, as demonstrated

through the global influence of Scottish authors like Ian Rankin and Conan Doyle. This global impact is furthered through international events like Edinburgh's International Book Festival, bringing together authors and community members to celebrate human connection.

Edinburgh has been and remains a centre for literature, with new libraries like Muirhouse remaining central to the community, bringing residents together with authors, like writer Sara Sheridan, who is visiting Muirhouse in December.

Alongside promoting reading and creativity, libraries are the lifeblood of the Lothians region, with residents brought together through free coffee mornings and youth programming. These community events are far and wide, with quiz nights and gaming clubs held weekly at Muirhouse Library, free NHS hearing aid battery replacement available at West Calder Library, and craft groups gathering at Leith Library, with computer and printing services available throughout the region's libraries.

Going forward, we need to ensure Scotland's love of books and reading remains protected, with libraries built and not closed. Books and libraries are not just for education and literacy, but for social inclusion and well-being.



Pennywell Early Learning and Childcare Centre and North Edinburgh Arts on left at Macmillan Square. PHOTO Alan Simpson