

Brave composer Patrick Doyle honoured at Fletcher of Saltoun Awards

The Saltire Society presented its prestigious annual Fletcher of Saltoun Awards on Thursday 6 March 2025 at a ceremony in Edinburgh's New Town.

The Award for Arts and Humanities went to multi award-winning film and television composer Patrick Doyle.

The Award for Science went to internationally renowned soil forensic specialist Professor Lorna Dawson CBE FRSE.

The Awards for Public Life were made to noted scientist and human rights activist Sir Geoff Palmer KT, OBE, CD, and to acclaimed broadcaster, filmmaker and writer Paul Murton.



Paul Murton Pic Greg Macvean 06/03/2025

Saltire Society – Fletcher of Saltoun Awards 2024, Rathbones offices on George Street, Edinburgh



Professor Sir Geoff Palmer, Pic Greg Macvean 06/03/2025
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Recognising the innovators and entrepreneurs shaping the cultural landscape of Scotland, previous Fletcher of Saltoun Awardees include Sir Chris Hoy, Sir James MacMillan and Professor Lady Sue Black, Baroness Black of Strome.

At an exclusive ceremony held at Rathbones, George Street, Edinburgh, well-known faces from Scottish cultural life gathered to honour the 2024 winners.

Susan Garnsworthy, Convenor of The Saltire Society, said: “For almost 90 years, the Saltire Society has championed Scottish culture, and with the Fletcher of Saltoun Awards we recognise innovators and authorities in their fields. It is an immense honour to add the names of each of our distinguished awardees to the Awards’ roll of honour.

Individually, they embody exceptional dedication and accomplishment and we do hope that their Awards remind us all of Scotland's potential at home and on the world stage."

Arts and Humanities awardee Patrick Doyle has scored over 60 feature films, collaborating with many renowned directors including Robert Altman, Ang Lee, Brian De Palma and Kenneth Branagh. He has been nominated for two Academy Awards, two Golden Globes, one BAFTA and two Césars, and won an Ivor Novello Award for his theme for Kenneth Branagh's Henry V. In 2023, he was asked to compose the Coronation March for the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Patrick Doyle said: "I am very grateful and honoured to receive such a prestigious Award, and to join the incredible array of talent who have been awarded in the same category before me. It is a privilege."

Science awardee Professor Lorna Dawson of the James Hutton Institute is an expert advisor and witness with a high public profile deriving from her forensic research contributions to major criminal cases, including the re-trial in Edinburgh's infamous World's End murders, when soil samples studied by Professor Dawson secured the conviction of Angus Sinclair after changes to Scotland's double jeopardy rules. She is a respected science communicator and has worked with broadcasters including the BBC as an advisor and contributor.

Professor Dawson said: "It is an absolute honour to have been chosen to receive this Award. Science has long played an important role in Scottish culture, with a tradition of delivering innovative research and effective engagement. Our trusted Criminal Justice System relies on robust scientific evidence at its core, and it is my privilege to play a part in criminal and civil case work. I would like to thank the many people from that collective for their support and collaboration, from Police Scotland to the Scottish Crown

Office. This could not have been achieved without support from my family, and my many colleagues within the Scottish research institutes and environmental science and agricultural organisations, who all play an important part in keeping our Scottish society rich and vibrant.”

Public Life awardee Sir Geoff Palmer is Chancellor of Heriot-Watt University. Specialising in grain science, Professor Palmer developed the barley abrasion process while a researcher at Heriot-Watt, winning the American Society of Brewing Chemists Award of Distinction. He was Scotland’s first black professor and was knighted in the New Year Honours list in 2014. In addition to his academic work, Professor Palmer is a prominent human rights activist and active in charity work in the community. In 2007 he was named among the ‘100 Great Black Britons’ and remains on the 2020 list of the same name.

Professor Palmer said: “It is a great honour to accept this Award on behalf of the Scottish communities which we serve.”

Public Life awardee Paul Murton is a Scottish television presenter and broadcaster, filmmaker, and historian. He is best known for his BBC series Scotland’s Clans, Grand Tours of Scotland, Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands and Grand Tours of Scotland’s Lochs. His books include The Highlands, The Viking Isles and The Hebrides.

Paul Murton said: “I am surprised and delighted to receive the Fletcher of Saltoun Award, named after a man of strong and patriotic convictions who dedicated his life to furthering the interests of his beloved Scotland.”