

Read All About it! Book Week Scotland 2015 is Nigh

By Helen Croney



The full programme for Scotland's fourth national celebration of books and reading has been announced, with a huge range of activities and events set to take place across the country during Book Week Scotland 2015, all rooted in this year's central theme of transformation.

Books have long been celebrated (and sometimes feared) for the power that lies between their covers — just a few pages of the written word can harbour the ability to overthrow regimes or determine the life chances of generations of families. Books can allow us to experience different worlds and cultures, to question our current way of thinking and to form our own belief systems. In its most ambitious programme to date, Book Week Scotland 2015 will work with a wide range of partners to celebrate the transformative power of books through a diverse series of events, projects and activities.

Commenting on the 2015 programme, Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said:

The huge personal benefits in health and wellbeing that flow from spending just a short time each day lost within a book are now widely documented and understood. But it seems that people still remain to be convinced. Can a book really transform the way we feel? Can it lighten your mood, ensure a better night's sleep, steal away loneliness? This year we are challenging Scots from all walks of life to try this miracle cure out for themselves — and to share their stories and results with us in a celebration of all the things books and reading can do.

This challenge sits at the centre of Book Week Scotland, but the full programme is many and varied, and offers something for everyone on a national basis. For example we will be working in parallel with Scottish Adult Learners Week to further explore and celebrate books' capacity to effect real, long-lasting change in people's lives. This exciting association will include an award recognising learners' achievements in reading.

The message is, whoever and wherever you are, Book Week Scotland is for you.

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, said:

Book Week Scotland is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate reading and literature. The pleasure of reading cannot be underestimated. As well as broadening the mind and nourishing the soul, reading provides a range of mental health and wellbeing benefits that should not be ignored. More than two thirds of Scots read for pleasure and we are committed to encouraging more Scots from all backgrounds and of all ages to read more. Book Week Scotland offers that opportunity to make that commitment to reading and it has something that will appeal to everyone.

This year's Book Week Scotland will be underpinned by a rich and varied events programme for all tastes and ages. Several new strands have been introduced for 2015, including Libraries Transformed, a selection of creative events across Scotland designed to challenge the public's perceptions of what libraries are. Author events will abound with Scotland's best-loved writers and illustrators visiting libraries in every local authority, a programme funded by The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), and appearances from such bookish heavyweights as Diana Gabaldon, Kate Mosse, A.L. Kennedy, Michel Faber, Val McDermid, Arne Dahl and The Girl on a Train author Paula Hawkins. Those who prefer something a bit different should look out for special appearances from top names such as Brian Blessed and Cathy Rentzenbrink in unusual locations across

the country.

As part of the theme of transformation a new campaign called #ThankBooks has been launched, encouraging members of the public to share how books or people from the world of books have inspired them or changed their life. Celebrities and authors such as Alan Cumming, Ian Rankin, Louis De Bernieres, Andy McNab and Greg Proops will also reveal their own #ThankBooks.

A more practical interpretation of the theme will be found in the Reading Spaces project — organisations across Scotland will be encouraged and supported to transform neglected areas of their office into a dedicated reading area, where staff can retreat to enjoy some relaxation and escapism with a good book.

For those who have an interest in discovering a range of Scottish voices, 150,000 free copies of a short story and poem collection written by ordinary Scottish people, *Journeys*, will be handed out during the week via libraries, bookshops and other outlets. Audio and ebook versions will be available to download from the Book Week Scotland website.

If you want to use Book Week Scotland as a chance to recharge your reading habit, the brand new Read Instead quiz will serve as a motivation to put down your phone or TV remote and pick up that book you've been meaning to read.

In a fitting end to a week celebrating the wonders of the written word, Scottish Book Trust will reveal the most shareable quote from a book. Word lovers can choose from a shortlist of forty quotes at the Book Week Scotland website. The top three quotes that people would most like to share with their friends will be revealed on 26 November.

For more information about Book Week Scotland 2015 and how you can get involved, visit our website, where you can find information about all the events taking place in your local area, vote for your favourite quote from a book, submit your own #ThankBooks and discover all sorts of ideas to help you celebrate and share whatever it is you love to read.

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.



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