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# The Bottle Imp

**Issue 3, May 2008**  
**The Scottish Poetry Library**  
**New Publication**

**F**ounded in 1984 by a poet, Tessa Ransford, the SPL began with two members of staff and 300 books in a single room. Almost 25 years on, it's grown to occupy a purpose-built, award-winning building in the heart of Edinburgh's literary quarter, and boasts an unrivalled collection of 30,000 items of Scottish and international poetry... Here are just a few of the Scottish Poetry Library's most recent titles:

**Handfast**  
**co-published with Birlinn Books**  
**ed: Lizzie MacGregor**  
**ISBN: 1904598242**

Those seeking memorable words for their ceremonies of marriage or commitment, or who simply want to take delight in an anthology of love poems, will find in this collection old favourites and brand new poems, in English, Scots and Gaelic, all with a Scottish flavour. They range from grand to gently humorous; they are suitable for reading aloud in church, registry, field or front room.

This anthology features an introduction by Liz Lochhead, and has been edited by Lizzie MacGregor, who, as Assistant Librarian at the Scottish Poetry Library, has had many years experience of providing the right poems for all sorts of occasions.

**Lament**  
**co-published with Birlinn Books**  
**ed: Lizzie MacGregor**  
**ISBN: 1904598528**

It is hard to put grief into words, and many people turn to poems to speak for them at this troubled time. This restorative collection of Scottish poems will help readers and listeners to accept a loss and celebrate a life, whether at formal religious or secular ceremonies, or at quiet personal commemorations. All the poems are suitable for reading aloud; they also provide an enduring source for private reflection.

Poems in Scots and Gaelic are accompanied by glossaries of unfamiliar words, or parallel translations in English, as appropriate.

This anthology features an introduction by Richard Holloway, and has been edited by Lizzie MacGregor, Assistant Librarian at the Scottish Poetry Library.

**Handsel**  
**co-published with Birlinn Books**  
**ed: Lizzie MacGregor**  
**ISBN: 190459851X**

When children are born or given a name, we want to welcome them to the world, and find a special way to express our love, hope and blessings. This is a selection of contemporary and classic Scottish poems, in Scots, English and Gaelic with appropriate translations and glossaries. Share these words with friends and families - touching and eloquent as a message sent with a baby gift, inspiring if you choose to read them aloud at a christening or any kind of naming ceremony. This anthology features an introduction by Candia McWilliam, and has been edited by Lizzie MacGregor, Assistant Librarian at the Scottish Poetry Library.

"A gorgeous little book, this; one as sweet as the life it celebrates." — The Herald

**Scotlands: Poets and the Nation**  
**co-published with Carcanet**  
**eds: Douglas Gifford and Alan Riach**  
**ISBN: 1857547403**

Scotlands: Poets and the Nation brings alive the unfolding story of Scottish national identity through its poetry. It opens with the anonymous Celtic poet who wrote of 'Scotland with its wonders'; it concludes with Iain Crichton Smith's secular prayer for a country that is 'fresh and glittering and contemporary' as it moves into a new era. From Robert Burns to Kokumo Rocks, from Lady Nairne to Jackie Kay, the collection celebrates the enduring strengths of Scottish identity and imagination. The book contains a comprehensive introduction by Douglas Gifford, Chair of Scottish Literature at Glasgow University and Honorary Librarian of Walter Scott's library, and Alan Riach, Head of the Department of Scottish Literature at Glasgow University and himself a poet.

[www.thebottleimp.org.uk](http://www.thebottleimp.org.uk)

The Bottle Imp is the ezine of the Scottish Writing Exhibition [www.scottishwriting.org.uk](http://www.scottishwriting.org.uk)  
and is published by the Association for Scottish Literary Studies [www.asls.org.uk](http://www.asls.org.uk)

### **100 Favourite Scottish Poems**

**co-published with Luath Press**

**ed: Stewart Conn**

**ISBN: 1905222610**

100 Favourite Scottish Poems brings together the best and best-loved of Scottish poetry. From anonymous medieval ballads to the renowned work of Sir Walter Scott and Edwin Morgan, the cream of the nation's poetry – from the Borders to Shetland – is represented in this carefully chosen anthology. *100 Favourite Scottish Poems* includes the Top 20 of the nation's favourite poetic pieces, chosen by BBC Scotland listeners in a recent web poll. Scotland's most famous poets are represented – Robert Burns, Hugh MacDiarmid, Sorley MacLean, Muriel Spark, Iain Crichton Smith, Liz Lochhead, plus many more. Also available in a hardback, large print edition.

### **The Thing That Mattered Most: Scottish Poems for Children**

**co-published with Black & White**

**ed: Julie Johnstone**

**ISBN: 1845020952**

What is the thing that matters most? Is it a sly kiss? An abandoned flip flop? A pebble? A rainbow in a puddle? The wolf in the park? A dreaming house? Saying sorry? Asking why? Is it in the water, in the sky, in the wild, in the country, in Scotland, in the family – or is it in your head? *The Thing that Mattered Most* is an award-winning anthology full of poems with a distinctive Scottish flavour that will delight and inspire young readers. It is the only collection of poems for children available by contemporary Scottish poets.

Almost sixty Scottish poets are represented in the collection, with poems in English, Scots, Gaelic, and Shetlandic. Each poem is accompanied by a bite-size biographical piece by the poet. An outstanding collection featuring new poems by Scotland's finest and best-loved poets, it brings together Carol Ann Duffy, Jackie Kay, Edwin Morgan, Liz Lochhead, John Burnside, Matthew Fitt, James Robertson, Kevin MacNeil, Richard Edwards, Julia Donaldson and many more.

### **Dreuchd An Fhigheadair/The Weaver's Task: a Gaelic Sampler**

**ed: Crisdean MhicGhilleBhàin / Christopher Whyte**

**ISBN: 9780953223589**

The fabric of Scotland's poetry is woven from the threads of the country's different languages. Since it became common practice for Gaelic poets to translate their own work into English,

a crucial strand in that interaction has been lacking. Seven Scottish poets with no knowledge of Gaelic were offered literal versions of contemporary Gaelic poems. In *Dreuchd An Fhigheadair/The Weaver's Task* their responses are set alongside the Gaelic originals, re-vitalising a dialogue in which both sides have much to gain.

Available from the Scottish Poetry Library:  
**inquiries@spl.org.uk**

### **Intimate Expanses**

**co-published with Carcanet ed: Ken Cockburn**

**ISBN: 0953223515**

This anthology of 25 Scottish poems, one from each year from 1978 to 2002, presents an alternative view of how the past quarter century has unfolded in Scotland. These poems document history in small things as well as in grand gestures, and range from sonnets and haiku to gargantuan list-poems. The poets include Iain Bamforth, John Burnside, Carol Ann Duffy, Liz Lochhead, Norman MacCaig, Edwin Morgan, Don Paterson, Richard Price, Iain Crichton Smith and Gael Turnbull.

Available from Amazon.com or the Scottish Poetry Library: **inquiries@spl.org.uk**

### **The Jewel Box: Contemporary Scottish Poems**

**eds: Ken Cockburn and Alec Finlay**

**ISBN: 1857547950**

A very special opportunity to hear some of Scotland's most distinguished and innovative poets reading their own work, *The Jewel Box* is a new collection of contemporary Scottish poems recorded on audio CD. Poets featured include Edwin Morgan, Don Paterson, Meg Bateman, Aonghas MacNeacail, Kathleen Jamie, and many more, writing in English, Scots and Gaelic. The selection is structured thematically and reflects what the editors felt a jewel box of Scottish poems could be, in terms of voices, sounds, a range of feelings and experiences. What is presented is a 'life journey' from childhood to death, engaging on the way with the self and the world: experiences of the local and the foreign, love and parenthood, language and memory, ageing and death. The CD is accompanied by a 36 page booklet, presenting the text of the poems as well as biographical information about the poets.

Available from Amazon.co.uk or the Scottish Poetry Library: **inquiries@spl.org.uk**

**Ten Seasons: explorations in Botanic**  
**co-published with Luath Press**  
**ed: Gerry Loose**  
**Photographs: Morven Gregor**  
**ISBN: 1905222807**

*Ten Seasons* grew out of Gerry Loose's three years as Poet in Residence at Glasgow's Botanic Gardens. This gathering of texts, along with stunning photographs, shows that poetry, although presented here on the page, in its most portable form exists off the page, on scraps of material, in stone, even in water. The book both celebrates a particular residency and offers a rich resource for the interaction of botanic gardens and creative language. Plant-lovers and poetry-lovers will find much to enjoy in its pages.

Available from Amazon or the Scottish Poetry Library: [inquiries@spl.org.uk](mailto:inquiries@spl.org.uk)

All titles are also available from  
**BooksfromScotland.com.**

Be sure to see the Scottish Poetry Library's profile page.

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The Scottish Poetry Library is open:  
Monday to Friday 11:00am–6:00pm &  
Saturday 1:00pm–5:00pm



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