

BOOKMARK
Blairgowrie, Rattray &
The Glens Book Festival

Report 2015



Blairgowrie, Rattray & The Glens
BOOK FESTIVAL

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
• Headline Statistics	
• Recommendations	
INTRODUCTION	4
AIMS	5
OVERVIEW OF BOOKMARK 2015	5
• Outreach in the Glens	
• Outreach in Blairgowrie	
• The festival events	
• Involvement of the local community and businesses	
• Marketing	
EVALUATION METHODS	8
QUANTITATIVE FEEDBACK	9
QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK	10
• Comments from festival authors and event leaders	
• Comments from festival attendees	14
• Comments from outreach events	17
FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS	20
WEBSITE USE	25
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	25
APPENDICES	26
• Appendix 1 Key Personnel	
• Appendix 2 Calendar of Meetings	
• Appendix 3 Festival List of Events	
• Appendix 4 Summary of Online Transactions	
• Appendix 5 Funders and Sponsors	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BOOKMARK 2015, the third Blairgowrie, Rattray and the Glens book festival, was comprised of 14 events which were attended by 736 people. Very positive comments have been received from the participating authors and event leaders regarding the organisation of the festival and from attendees regarding the quality of the events on offer and the content of the programme. The festival has succeeded in meeting the aims that were set. Constructive comments and suggestions were received from authors, event leaders, attendees, coordinators, volunteers and the executive committee which will be considered in planning the 2016 Festival.

Headline statistics

- 100% Positive impression of the third BOOKMARK book festival
(Events rated as 'very good' or 'good' in a multiple choice questionnaire)
- 97% Positive impression of the venues
(Venues rated as 'very good' or 'good' in a multiple choice questionnaire)
- 736 Attendees at the festival
(Estimate based on headcounts at events and visitors to the Play, Read, Talk bus)
- 577 Young people took part in outreach events
- 5,201 Unique visits to the Festival website www.bookmarkblair.com
(Between 5th October 2014 and 5th October 2015)

Recommendations

- 1. The Executive Committee should start planning for BOOKMARK 2016**
- 2. Funding applications should be submitted as soon as possible**
- 3. BOOKMARK should urgently explore an alternative main venue**
- 4. St Catharine's Centre should be the venue for the children's programme**
- 5. BOOKMARK should continue to use local suppliers as much as possible**
- 6. BOOKMARK should seek funding for a professional PR/marketing post**

Introduction

The idea of a book festival was conceived by members of a Blairgowrie book club in the summer of 2012. A feasibility study aided by Perth and Kinross councillor Caroline Shiers and Helen Smout of Perth and Kinross Cultural and Community Services identified a wide range of interested groups including over 80 book groups, many of which were supported by Perth and Kinross Library services. It was concluded that this literary demand offered an opportunity to support and extend the cultural life of the area. Blairgowrie, now the largest town in Perthshire, seemed an ideal centre in which to meet this demand in the form of a book festival. An executive committee was formed and local library surveys were made to establish the most popular genres and authors. Other book festival organisers were consulted to establish the appropriate routes to setting up a festival committee, to check that all organisational aspects had been covered and that the correct policies were in place, consistent with the demands of Perth and Kinross Council [PKC].

The first BOOKMARK festival took place in October 2013 and was heralded as a great success. This was followed by an enlarged festival in 2014 which had the theme of 'Place'.

This year's festival was, as usual, launched by separate adult and children's events. These were followed by a pre-festival event in the Glens. Also, as in previous years, the festival weekend in October was divided into adult events and parallel children's events. New for 2015 was a series of children's and adults' creative writing workshops in the Glens, Blairgowrie and Rattray.

During 2014/2015, a development officer, Drew Campbell, was appointed to build stronger links with local groups in Rattray and the Glens, explore ideas for future festivals and ultimately secure long-term sustainability for BOOKMARK. He also arranged for BOOKMARK to apply for and achieve charitable status (SCO45599). He was funded by a grant from Awards for All, a community fund managed by the Big Lottery.

This year, the committee appointed a Membership Secretary. Her role will be to encourage as many people as possible to become members of BOOKMARK. Membership demonstrates a commitment to support this community-based organisation and gives individuals a stake in the organisation's future. Members will be entitled to a range of benefits, including advance information, selected discounts and 'members only' events.

Details of Key Personnel and the meetings held in relation to planning the 2015 festival can be found in **Appendices 1 and 2** respectively.

AIMS

The overall aim of BOOKMARK is to establish a sustainable annual book festival in Blairgowrie, Rattray and the Glens.

- To promote and encourage the enjoyment and appreciation of literature in all its forms and create an opportunity for authors and readers to mix informally and share their interest in books.
- To seek to engage with children particularly those of preschool and primary ages to foster a love of words and story-telling thereby nurturing their imaginative development and their understanding of the world around them.
- To form links and work together with other agencies such as schools, youth and community arts organisations.
- To encourage tourism into the area and raise the cultural profile of Blairgowrie, Rattray and the Glens.
- To encourage local businesses to engage with BOOKMARK events.

OVERVIEW OF BOOKMARK 2015

Outreach in the Glens

Joan Lennon, last year's Writer in Residence took BOOKMARK into the Glens. She led two sessions in creating poetry for Primary 5 and Primary 6 pupils in Kirkmichael, the children writing their own haikus and shape poems. She also organised a series of writing workshops for adults in Kirkmichael and Bridge of Cally. These events culminated in a BOOKMARK anthology entitled Points in Time.

For younger Kirkmichael children in Primary 3 and Primary 4, Sylvia Troon organised a very successful puppet making workshop.

These events were funded by SSE Drumderg community fund.

Outreach in Blairgowrie

Local children's author David McPhail ran a series of sessions designed to encourage reading development in No 5 Davie Park, a centre run by PKC's Social Work department. These were funded by the Rotary Club with match funding from Castle Water.

Joan Lennon ran workshops for pupils in the English Department of Blairgowrie High School.

Janice Galloway visited Blairgowrie High School on Friday 2nd October.

The anthology, *Points in Time*, was illustrated by pupils from the Art Department of Blairgowrie High School.

The Festival Events

The festival began with launch events in June and September.

Firstly, adult BOOKMARK was launched on 26th June in Blairgowrie Library. Guest author was one of Scotland's most popular storytellers, Jess Smith, author of six entertaining books recalling her upbringing in a travelling family. The BOOKMARK 2015 programme was launched and tickets went on sale.

Secondly, to launch children's BOOKMARK, on 4th September the inspiring author/illustrator Nick Hesketh entertained over 90 Primary 6 and 7 children from Newhill and St Stephen's Primary Schools in Blairgowrie.

As in last year's festival, a special pre-festival event, timed to coincide with Perthshire Open Studios, was held at Straloch Garden Studio, Enochdhu on 12th September. This year the speaker was Keith Brockie, a freelance artist specialising in wildlife and natural history who has had many books published featuring his own wonderfully detailed illustrations.

The events for adults took place on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd October in the Royal Hotel, Blairgowrie.

The Friday evening session started with a talk by Janice Galloway, one of the UK's most gifted and versatile writers. This was followed by a welcome from the Provost of Perth & Kinross, Liz Grant, who hosted a drinks reception to mark the opening of BOOKMARK 2015.

On the Saturday morning, there were talks and readings from crime novelist Alex Gray, chaired by Karen Campbell and from motorcyclist and travel writer Geoff Hill. The afternoon session saw the return of two BOOKMARK favourites, author Karen Campbell and plant expert Kenneth Cox. They were followed by the well-known war correspondent, politician and author Martin Bell OBE. This event was chaired by BOOKMARK's Patron, Fiona Armstrong.

The Blairgowrie and District Motor Cycle Club sponsored Geoff Hill and The A. Proctor Group Ltd sponsored Martin Bell.

An additional event hosted by Joan Lennon launched the BOOKMARK publication *Points in Time*, the product of the creative writing workshops in the Glens.

Sessions were followed by book sales, book signings and opportunities for attendees to chat with the authors and presenters in a separate area, THE HUB [usually the Glens restaurant in the Royal hotel].

This year most of the children's BOOKMARK events took place in the St Catharine's Centre. The exception was an extremely popular 'Red of the Dead' event for age 10+ on the Friday afternoon in Cargill's Restaurant, Blairgowrie with author/illustrator Nick Hesketh. The Saturday programme involved interactive sessions with children's authors Catherine McPhail, Barry Hutchison, David MacPhail and illustrator Kate Leiper. For pre-school children a PlayTalkRead bus was available in the Wellmeadow, Blairgowrie. The children's events this year were funded by Foundation Scotland. See **Appendix 3** for a list of events

Involvement of the local community and businesses

In the months leading up to the festival weekend BOOKMARK volunteers attended the Blairgowrie Highland Games and the Strathmore and the Glens community market selling second hand books to raise funds for BOOKMARK and handing out hundreds of programmes.

In a further fundraising event, Chrissie & Simon Fairclough, Gin Club Scotland helped BOOKMARK celebrate Perthshire's first ever gin festival. (World Gin Day!). This event which took place in the The Dalmore Inn, raised £723.50 for BOOKMARK.

A group of young people (Jam Entertains) once again took charge of lighting and sound in an impressive and professional manner.

A local student Briana Freed-Smith who is studying Journalism at Glasgow University, reported on some of the events, her second time as BOOKMARK's blogger.

In October, a BOOKMARK volunteer encouraged local merchants to decorate their shop windows with a BOOKMARK theme ('Paint the Town Red') in the run-up to the main festival. She also organised a bookmark design competition for local school children. Author David MacPhail chose the winners and the prizes were signed copies of books of their choice.

Local businesses were used as far as possible including the Royal Hotel, Blair Copy Shop, Astute Printing, FinDonIT web design, Howe's, Jam Entertains, Cargill's Bistro and Something Special Florist.

Marketing

Marketing tools used were local and regional newspapers and radio, posters, flyers and bundles of programmes in shops, libraries, hotels and the Visitor Information Centre, a 'bag drop' in schools, a session handing out programmes at Tesco supermarket and the Discover Blairgowrie website and its associated magazine and newsletter as well as the Blairgowrie and East Perthshire Tourist Association [BEPTA] website. Advertising further afield utilised our own website, social media and online event sites such as 'The List' and 'Book Festivals

Scotland'. Banners were displayed in the Wellmeadow and sail flags were prominent outside venues. Blairgowrie Library mounted a comprehensive BOOKMARK display.

PKC featured the festival in their 'What's On' brochure. Discover Blairgowrie had articles about the festival and put the festival in its calendar of events. VisitScotland also had BOOKMARK on its website. Perthshire Open Studios and Blairgowrie Highland Games [BHG] gave the festival advertising support and BHG gave space in its programme.

A new venture for this year, BOOKMARK rented a shop from 18th May for 8 weeks to promote the festival. Another shop was rented for the week beginning 28th September.

AA road signage, funded by PKC, directed attendees to the Royal Hotel.

Free car parking was made available by PKC in the playground area of the former Hill Primary School in Upper Allan Street, close to the Royal Hotel.

EVALUATION METHODS

Feedback from the outreach events was obtained from reports by the organisers, comments from school teachers and questionnaires completed by some participants.

Feedback from attendees at the festival weekend was obtained by issuing postcard-sized questionnaires (evaluation cards).

Information regarding the geographic distribution of attendees was obtained from online booking transactions and ticket sales in Blairgowrie.

The proportions of men and women, boys and girls were estimated by means of head counts at events.

Authors and other event leaders and members of the committee were invited by email to give feedback regarding how successful they felt the events had been and any improvements that they thought could be incorporated next year. A debrief meeting of committee members was held on 26th October.

Google Analytics was used to monitor activity on the www.bookmarkblair.com website from October 2014 to October 2015.

QUANTITATIVE FEEDBACK

604 tickets were sold, 144 from the Blairgowrie Library, 71 from the Visitor Information Centre, 139 online, 137 from the BOOKMARK shops, 13 by post, 35 directly from the treasurer, and 65 on the day. 38 Children and 37 adults visited the Play, Talk, Read bus.

136 evaluation cards were returned at events.

How did you hear about BOOKMARK?

The most common means was word of mouth (36%) followed by poster (10%), flyer (10%) press (9%), school (9%), library (8%), social media (4%), email (5%), website (3%), and others such as the Visitor Information Centre, Blairgowrie and District Motor Cycle Club (6%).

Gender distribution

Adult events: Male...27% and Female...73%, a slight reduction in the proportion of males from those attending in 2014. The Geoff Hill event on motorcycling and the Martin Bell event attracted the highest numbers of men.

Children's events: Male...45% Female...55%, not very different from 2014 when it was Male...50% Female...50%.

Time to Write Workshops: 9 women and 3 men (9 from the Glens, 3 from Blairgowrie).

Geographic distribution of attendees

The 387 tickets sold from the Blairgowrie Library, Visitor Information Centre, BOOKMARK shops and directly from the Treasurer were assumed to be for local attendees, [those living in Blairgowrie/Rattray]. Of the 152 tickets sold online and postally 88 were also bought by people living in Blairgowrie/Rattray area. Of the rest, 42 were for attendees from outwith Blairgowrie/Rattray but within Perthshire and the remainder, 22, for attendees outwith Perthshire. Thus 88% of tickets were for local attendees and 12% of tickets were for attendees who lived outwith Blairgowrie/Rattray area. See **Appendix 4** for details of places and numbers of tickets obtained from online and postal transactions. We were unable to ascertain where those 65 people who bought tickets at the door had come from.

Further feedback from completed evaluation cards:

The events were rated 87% very good and 13% good.

The programme was rated 82% very good, 17% good and 1% average.

The venue was rated 73% very good, 24% good and 3% average.

We have received extremely positive feedback about the friendliness and helpfulness of our stewards and we are very grateful to them for devoting time to the Festival. Stewards were readily recognized by their red BOOKMARK T-shirts.

QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

Comments from festival authors and interviewers

Positive comments	Suggestions for future festivals
<p>JESS SMITH I was overwhelmed by the welcome the team arranged for me, a wonderful presentation, better than any I have ever enjoyed in the past. Colourful! The library was given a complete overhaul of flowers and books. Most importantly, everyone made me feel like a visiting guest author, and to me that meant so much. I shall never forget the entire day. The audience shared their own memories, and some of an interesting nature.</p>	<p>JESS SMITH</p>
<p>KEITH BROCKIE I found the audience very receptive and enjoyed the questioning throughout as it keeps the whole talk ticking along. The BOOKMARK personnel were very helpful and welcoming, the venue was very nice despite the weather.</p>	<p>KEITH BROCKIE All in all I can't think of any improvements.</p>
<p>JANICE GALLOWAY Nothing could have been better at all with the event day and my stay in Blairgowrie. Everyone I met was kind and thoughtful, including the audience.</p>	<p>JANICE GALLOWAY</p>
<p>ALEX GRAY It was absolutely first class in every way and sincerely I wouldn't change a thing about BOOKMARK! Honestly!</p>	<p>ALEX GRAY</p>

<p>GEOFF HILL</p> <p>In a word, it was great!</p> <p>Blairgowrie is such a lovely spot in gorgeous countryside, especially in that weather you folks magically organised, and the atmosphere at the festival from both the organisers and the audiences couldn't have been any more warm and friendly.</p> <p>The hotel was spot on, the food was really lovely, the room for the presentations was excellent, the tech spot on.</p> <p>So all in all, we really enjoyed it, and if you want me back next year to do the talk on the Clancy trip, sure thing.</p>	<p>GEOFF HILL</p>
<p>KAREN CAMPBELL</p> <p>I thought the event I chaired & the one I read at both went very well - I don't think there was anything around the arrangements that could have been improved - the sound guys were excellent, there was a clock on the table for timing, the speakers all got water, there was a lovely pop-up bookshop, so all in all I think everything was there that you need for a great book festival.</p>	<p>KAREN CAMPBELL</p>
<p>KENNETH COX</p> <p>As an author who spent the whole weekend at the events I would make the following comments:</p> <p>BOOKMARK is a very friendly and well organised event. Authors well looked after and having everyone in one place is great and very social.</p> <p>All the authors I spoke to thought it was a great event and clearly the organising committee love books and authors which</p>	<p>KENNETH COX</p>

<p>is exactly as it should be. Congratulations to all concerned at BOOKMARK.</p>	
<p>MARTIN BELL BOOKMARK is a great festival and I hope it goes from strength to strength.</p>	<p>MARTIN BELL My only regret was that there was no space for 30 people who wished to attend my talk. I wonder if some thought might be given to expand the venue to take a few more people, perhaps by revising the health & safety regime which keeps the numbers down to a mere 90.</p>
<p>FIONA ARMSTRONG I thought it was a very strong line-up of authors and what I saw on the Saturday was excellent - the BOOKMARK volunteers were so friendly and helpful and there was lots of refreshments for the authors. Really enjoyed.</p>	<p>FIONA ARMSTRONG I think it was a pity that we couldn't have opened up the side of the room and had more folk in for Martin's lecture - there was a waiting list and people have said to me they tried to get tickets... What about cookery writing authors? (Nick Nairn, Graeme Pallister etc). Invitation to Prof Sue Black to attend with other crime writing authors to whom she gives advice eg Val Mc Diarmid, Quentin Jardine etc. More Ken Cox - he has much more to say.</p>
<p>NICK HESKETH I must first take this opportunity to thank all involved for the lovely time we had on Friday evening. Good talk, good company and excellent haggis balls – a perfect event in every way. Re my slot in Cargill's Restaurant. Firstly, I was incredibly impressed by the numbers. It's tough enough getting children to attend such a thing outside of school – but on a Friday, at 4.30? Miraculous!</p>	<p>NICK HESKETH I had a wonderful time and can't think of a single thing to criticise or would wish to be improved.</p>

<p>Flip chart, paper and pens, as well as a jug of (iced) water, everything I'd asked for was there (something I don't take for granted). And the children were not only well behaved, but respectful and actively involved. The venue was welcoming and, given its primary function, laid-out extremely well for the session.</p>	
<p>KATE LEIPER I really enjoyed this festival. It was very well organised, both in the build up to the event and while I was there, and the volunteers were very friendly, helpful and approachable. I also appreciated the smaller scale of the festival as this allowed me to meet and talk to other presenters. Often larger festivals are a bit more impersonal and it isn't necessarily so easy to meet and mingle. The space that I did my presentation in was a perfect size and Tracey and Caroline were very welcoming.</p>	<p>KATE LEIPER To be honest I can't think of any improvements you need to make.</p>
<p>CATHERINE MACPHAIL I had a lovely morning at the BOOKMARK Festival. Thank you, the children were amazing.</p>	<p>CATHERINE MACPHAIL I think, however, a designated table for signing books should be available. It would mean after the event the author could sit at the table, and when the children bought books they could bring them to have them signed. On Saturday, I was trying to sign books, moving items aside to make room, and someone had to bring me a chair. Just a little thing, but it would make things so much easier.</p>
<p>DAVID MACPHAIL It was great to be involved. It's such a well-run festival and everyone is very</p>	<p>DAVID MACPHAIL The one improvement you might want to consider is introducing a dedicated</p>

friendly and very flexible. For example, my last minute request for a flip-chart was no problem for the ladies at the venue. St Catharine's is a lovely venue.	signing table for the authors. Even just a small area of the book table set aside with a chair, as it's good to have somewhere to do this.
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Comments from festival attendees

Positive comments	Suggestions for future festivals
<p>GENERAL COMMENTS Excellent programme, good bookshop and superlative organisation. I liked the stage setting. Tea and coffee arrangements much better this year. Just a note to congratulate all the people who work so hard to put the varied programme together. The library booking system worked well.</p>	<p>GENERAL SUGGESTIONS Don't change a thing. Signage coming from Alyth good initially then less obvious. Ditto parking at Hill Primary. Disliked the room. A bit bare and hot. The 'Programme' is well presented, but could the cost be reduced with paper/card of less quality? Many people use the internet anyway.</p>
<p>JESS SMITH LAUNCH EVENT Excellent talk from a born storyteller. Very interesting to hear about the history. Fascinating talk. Looking forward to attending several events in October.</p>	<p>JESS SMITH LAUNCH EVENT Unfortunately the situation of the screen in the Library meant that I was totally unable to see the film.</p>
<p>KEITH BROCKIE FRINGE EVENT A very natural easy presentation of a fascinating subject.</p>	<p>KEITH BROCKIE FRINGE EVENT</p>
<p>CHILDREN'S LAUNCH EVENT Some comments from Blairgowrie school children: Alyssa: "I really liked the way he acted out the stories he was telling. It made them come to life for us and it was really funny."</p>	<p>CHILDREN'S LAUNCH EVENTS</p>

<p>Monique: "Nick really entertained us when he was talking. It wasn't boring and I think that's a good quality in a writer."</p> <p>Hamish: "I really liked Nick's talk because it was fun and helped me with ideas for my writing. I am going to use the 'third person' more in my stories to make them more interesting".</p> <p>Caitlin: "Nick's talk was very entertaining and he showed us how enthusiasm and describing the setting carefully helps our story make sense to others"</p> <p>Some comments from teachers:</p> <p>It was a very successful visit and we would love to have him back again. The children learnt a lot and hopefully their story writing will improve as a result.</p> <p>Nick had his entire audience completely captivated including pupils that are normally difficult to engage in education. He spoke effectively and gave usable tips and hints about story structure, writing technique and how to create setting in story writing.</p> <p>His discussion regarding an 'ordinary voice' and changing this into an 'author's voice' was very helpful to pupils.</p> <p>Thanks to BOOKMARK, my son and daughter both asked to join the library after they had attended the Nick Hesketh event on Friday afternoon. I'm delighted they loved it</p>	
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<p>so much.</p>	
<p>ADULT BOOKMARK EVENTS All excellent speakers. Enjoyed all. It was fabulous to hear Janice read from her book 'Jellyfish'. A great evening. Janice Galloway was brilliant. Liked Janice Galloway. An interesting talk about her thoughts about life. She engaged with the audience very naturally and fluently. Alex Gray gave a wonderful insight into the way her novels and characters developed and her involvement with them. Karen Campbell was fabulous. Looking forward to reading 'Rise'. Karen Campbell was inspiring. Her talk and readings from 'Rise' were memorable. Kenneth Cox very inspiring. I've just moved to Blair and starting a new garden from scratch. Who better to listen to than Ken Cox? Ken Cox a good speaker. Very relevant to this area. I found both the events I attended very interesting.</p>	<p>ADULT BOOKMARK EVENTS Could we get Ian Rankin? Some more events on Sunday would be splendid.</p>
<p>CHILDREN'S BOOKMARK EVENTS It was terrific. Liked drawing dragons. I liked it all. It was very good. I liked when I was getting killed. The wifi was very good.</p>	<p>CHILDREN'S BOOKMARK EVENTS Maybe time to write would be good. Make it last longer. Have clip boards to write on so not kneeling and drawing on chair seats. A more child friendly evaluation form would be a good idea. Smiley faces maybe.</p>

<p>Very well advertised through schools.</p> <p>I would like to say how much we enjoyed the Play Talk Read bus that was put on as part of your festival. The staff were excellent with the kids and were thoughtful and attentive, providing a range of stimulating and varied entertainment that appealed to a broad range of ages. Our son was at the younger end of the spectrum at 21 months, but was fascinated by the play materials available through Play Talk Read, including chalk, stickers, books, puppets and musical instruments. The staff were attentive and interactive with both the children and the adults, without being overbearing or intrusive. When there were several children on the bus at once, the staff put on an interactive show with stories, singing, puppets and blankets. Our son looked delighted and Alan had the older kids in stitches. Although he is just a toddler, Ben was easily entertained and happy for over two hours. I'm sure you can imagine how much we appreciated that as parents! I'm also sure the Play Talk Read staff will have considered the day a success, as it seemed well attended throughout the morning.</p>	<p>The staff said they also have a double decker PTR bus which is better. I hope Play Talk Read are invited again for future BOOKMARK festivals and that the double decker is available.</p>
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Comments from outreach events

<p>CREATIVE WRITING KIRKMICHAEL SCHOOL</p>	<p>CREATIVE WRITING KIRKMICHAEL SCHOOL</p>
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<p>Comments from Head Teacher Creating the time out to be creative was fabulous and the pupils were genuinely engaged and inspired. Joan's contribution was "well beyond anything the teacher could have delivered."</p> <p>ADULT WORKSHOPS in GLENS Comments from Joan Lennon It was very satisfying to see them getting comfortable with each other, laughing and talking, and writing pieces that drew positive responses from everyone in the room. The participants got to work on their pieces, and then read them out. The writing was excellent - the stories were engaging - and each one was different. It was a privilege to listen to them. The participants' enthusiasm for trying new forms has been inspiring, and their individual voices and styles have developed in imaginative and exciting ways.</p> <p>Comments from participants The tutor author organised and planned the sessions very well so that all could take part and contribute. Sessions were informative and fun and with enough material to encourage you to write outside the class and start to develop new skills. Great sessions-would do them all again. Lively, stimulating, challenging. I loved the workshops. They were thought-provoking and illuminating-great escapism. A wonderful experience. Lively engaging tutor. Liked mix of warm</p>	<p>....would love similar sessions on <u>illustrating</u> children's stories, and possibly something on non-fiction writing.</p> <p>ADULT WORKSHOPS in GLENS</p> <p>Suggested topics for the future: cartoon, children's fiction, sonnets, poetry, fiction, play-writing. Perhaps difficult to keep up momentum over 5 months. 12 week programme might be better. Would have liked a longer course. More of them please. Would like to see more courses of this kind.</p>
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<p>up exercises and longer piece. Most enjoyable. Very interesting. Stretched creativeness. Different, enjoyable. Well run, inspiring course.</p> <p>OUTREACH BLAIRGOWRIE HIGH SCHOOL</p> <p>Comments from teachers</p> <p>Art Department. Parents and pupils gave great feedback in regards to the weekend. We are hoping to display it in the school library. The pupils were really pleased and I gave out the anthologies today which was lovely.</p> <p>English Department. The pupils enjoyed Joan's workshops immensely and some were so inspired that they completed an essay that night!</p> <p>OUTREACH: Flat 5 Project</p> <p>Comments from Project Leader</p> <p>The sessions were extremely well attended and all the children's feedback was positive, saying they enjoyed the sessions and the opportunity to meet a local author and get a flavour of what it is to write a short story. They all stated they now know what the BOOKMARK festival was all about and felt they could attend - it wasn't just something for adults. They also liked going to the library and have been back twice since then. No 15 felt this was a very worthwhile opportunity and pleased at the outcome and certainly hope to do it again in the future.</p>	<p>OUTREACH BLAIRGOWRIE HIGH SCHOOL</p>
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FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

POSITIVE COMMENTS	SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE
<p>CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME Kate Leiper was a delight to work with. Cathy MacPhail is a very talented lady whose enthusiasm and imagination really gripped the children, and an hour was not long enough for her. Some of the group wanted to start writing with her and I think this could be expanded if it was more classroom/school based activity?</p> <p>1. Pre Festival events: Seemed very well received. A couple of children were at the weekend as a result of hearing authors at school</p> <p>2. Programme: The authors we had were without exception excellent. Cathy MacPhail was fantastic and really ought to be in the main programme</p> <p>3. Venue: Worked extremely well again. We had plenty of room and flexibility of space. We "dressed" the room with props on loan from The Players and our story corner seemed well received.</p>	<p>CHILDREN'S PROGRAMME Whilst those present seemed to enjoy them immensely, I'm conscious that without the children we had with us all day we'd have been down on numbers. It is a big effort and significant cost for those small numbers and I do wonder if we'd get better value by having all the children's work embedded into school activities.</p> <p>4. Volunteers: We, once again, felt understaffed. There really is a need for there to be at least 3 volunteers on staff at each event. There was a table but due to lack of volunteers it was not easy to direct everyone at all times.</p> <p>5. Books: We struggled a bit due to the lack of an extra pair of hands. Our volunteers were a great help. We need children's books available at the main venue and St Catharine's as people would probably buy them as gifts.</p> <p>6. Timing: I, again, think the gaps between authors were too long. Especially if people had tickets for multiple events. There is a lot of hanging around and the day stretched out longer than needed. We made tea/coffee available but I would suggest the provision of refreshments/a tuck shop for kids would have been appreciated.</p> <p>7. Ticket Sales: I think we need to take a hard look at who attended the events. If it was not for children brought along by a couple of people then some of the events would have been very poorly attended. I am not sure how we improve that situation but we need an</p>

	<p>honest appraisal of it.</p> <p>8. Social Media: BOOKMARK really needs someone to deal exclusively with press and social media.</p> <p>9. Conclusion: All of our events were a great success. There was a lot of work put in by volunteers in pulling the threads together in the days leading up to it. I know that there was similar work for the events at the Royal. I am concerned at the lack of volunteers and don't think this can go unaddressed. We should be proud of our three successful years but need to reflect on improvements.</p>
<p>TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY What a lot of work everyone put in for a very successful festival.</p>	<p>TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY</p>
<p>THE HUB The Hub offers the authors a place to meet the public where they can discuss and sign their books after their session. The Hub volunteers also serves the authors and audiences with much needed refreshments and home baked goodies. Thanks to all involved! The Hub runs very well, including the cafe part in the main bar. I am sure there must be room for improvement but for the moment, it runs well.</p>	<p>THE HUB</p>
<p>INDEPENDENT WRITERS It's one thing to have a great idea and bring it to fruition, but to sustain enthusiasm and commitment for 3 years is something else. This festival always feels in very safe hands from beginning to end and beyond. It's good to know you can do your bit and not worry about everyone</p>	<p>INDEPENDENT WRITERS How about a BOOKMARK book club? It would be good to meet socially and also to widen the net.</p>

<p>else doing theirs.</p>	
<p>SCHOOLS LIAISON Thought coffee etc in the lounge was great and thought the 45 mins in between authors was good. You didn't feel rushed. I think the Team worked very hard to ensure the smooth running of all the Friday and Saturday events.</p>	<p>SCHOOLS LIAISON My only very minor comment re facing the stage was that from the seating on the left side, the tall light- on the stage - blocked part of the view of the guests on the stage. Someone made a comment as to why the main room could not have been extended to take more chairs by using the other section. I explained the stage had to be central and we couldn't cover the Fire Exit.</p>
<p>MEMBERSHIP I was trying to promote BOOKMARK membership as people came in and out of events. I had most success whilst people were in the book signing queue for the various authors. Perhaps need to think on how to maximise opportunity for next year.</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP As an aside for consideration at the next committee meeting one lady I spoke to was new to town and wanted to join a book club. She had inquired at the library but they couldn't help. Would it be appropriate to have a BOOKMARK event for local book clubs? There does seem to be quite a few and if we could make contact with them all we could perhaps get them more involved in BOOKMARK events at the Festival. All the people I spoke to seemed to enjoy themselves. we just need to get more to come! It is surprising to find out how many people in town profess never to have heard of BOOKMARK! I don't know how we get through to them, it's hard to believe they haven't seen advertising in one form or another.</p>
<p>HIGH SCHOOL LINK 1. Having the Janice Galloway visit to Blair High was brilliant, perhaps we could think about similar next time - perhaps an event on the Friday for S1/S2 pupils in the hall - a big event with a big name? You could invite</p>	<p>HIGH SCHOOL LINK 4. I felt there was nothing for smaller children - in 2014 you had Debi Gliori, and I felt this was lacking this year. How about someone like Chae Strathie, Sean Taylor or Simon Puttock? 5. There needs to be a signing table and chair</p>

<p>Primary pupils too.</p> <p>2. Cathy MacPhail was a big success - definitely worth inviting back!</p> <p>3. Caroline and Tracey were fantastic - they worked so hard (despite Tracey being choked with a cold) and did a brilliant job in ensuring the smooth running of events.</p>	<p>set up for children's writers.</p> <p>6. Do we need a bigger presence in terms of marketing to schools? I felt audiences were small (but very enthusiastic)?</p> <p>7. The children's festival feels a bit peripheral - tagged on to main programme - location bring a factor in this. Is there room to give it as more equal status with the adult programme?</p> <p>8. The lack of a public event to finish the festival seemed a shame.</p>
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Comments from the Executive Committee

Organisation: the organisational requirements of 2014/2015 have been even greater than in previous years, placing unrealistic demands on the executive. This burden had already prompted discussion and action in the form of a funding application to Creative Scotland for part-time, paid administrative help. It is our belief that if the organisation is to be sustainable, it needs to be supported by paid professionals.

Over the festival weekend, the level of organisation by the BOOKMARK team was very professional. The Hospitality team oversaw room and transport arrangements with impressive expertise, dealing with any problems calmly and speedily. The Hub team worked very efficiently to ensure book signing and supplies of refreshments went smoothly. The pop-up bookshop was well-stocked with attractive displays. Volunteers staffed and were at the doors in plenty of time to take tickets and ensure smooth seating arrangements inside the function room.

The technical team ensured all authors were miked up in plenty of time. There was a problem, however, with people sitting at the back of the audience being unable to hear the speaker, partly because of persistent noise from the kitchen, partly because the microphones are very directionally sensitive so that when an individual drops his/her head, volume is lost. There was an issue with having the correct cable for Geoff Hill's presentation but this was solved by the time Ken Cox came to set up for his session.

The Ticket office located in the hotel foyer was clearly signposted and efficiently operated throughout.

The organisation of the children's programme in St Catharine's Centre was excellent. The venue was well-signposted from the High Street as well as outside the building. The room was imaginatively decorated and the authors well-catered for. Additional volunteers would have helped relieve some of the strain on the two key organisers.

Programme (Audience & Ticket Sales): despite William McIlvanney and Theresa Breslin having to pull out from our original programme, the line-up was well-received with an average 60% audience uptake (75% for Alex Gray and Janice Galloway and Martin Bell's session over-subscribed). Audience feedback would suggest they were happy with the balance of the content of the programme which offered gardening, humour, travel as well as fiction (short stories and crime) and non-fiction. The children's programme was varied and balanced with Catherine MacPhail making an excellent replacement for Theresa Breslin. The Play, Talk, Read bus provision for the under 5s was well attended and appreciated by parents and children alike.

Having a High Street shop presence in the run up to the festival definitely boosted ticket sales although there was still a tendency to commit last-minute. The audience profile was mainly local and in the 50 plus category. We need to reach out to a wider geographical catchment. It is anticipated that the age demographic will, inevitably, remain constant (as is the case in the majority of book festivals).

Outreach programme: This formed a significant part of our year's work and accounted for an increase in organisational demands. In April 2014, funded by *Awards for All*, we appointed Drew Campbell as a Development Officer on a six month basis. As part of his remit, he liaised with a number of bodies, including No 5 Davie Park, a project run by Perth & Kinross Social Work Department. Working with local author, David MacPhail, a group of about ten children engaged in a Reading Development programme. The final outcome was the creation of their own story, 'Aliens at No 5' based on ideas prompted by readings from the author's series of books about Thorfinn 'The Nicest Viking'. Working with Blairgowrie High School, BOOKMARK is currently auctioning a plan to design and print an A5 illustrated version of the children's story. The feedback from these sessions was overwhelmingly positive and has resulted in a plan to bring the children on a regular basis to the library. Other outreach work included a visit to Newhill and St Stephen's Primaries by author, Nick Hesketh, whose input delighted pupils and Head Teachers alike.

Creative writing workshops were run very successfully by author, Joan Lennon, in Kirkmichael Primary, Kirkmichael Session House and Bridge of Cally Hall. These sessions were funded by a grant from Drumderg Community Fund and culminated in the production of an anthology of writing by participants and beautifully illustrated by artwork from pupils at Blairgowrie High School. An exhibition of an impressive range of artwork was on display over the festival weekend, attracting parents and friends of the young artists. Joan also ran workshops with senior pupils at Blairgowrie High School. Likewise, Janice Galloway's visit to the school was very enthusiastically received.

Marketing: the introduction of flyers prior to the main programme print was a success. They were light, easy to stack in small display spaces as well as readily portable by the public. The

design was clear, simple and effective. They were widely used in the shop as well as in other ticket outlets. Flyer and programme distribution would benefit from having a named person, supported by a small team, responsible for this job. The distribution of the children's programme leaflet went very smoothly, thanks to our schools' co-ordinator who ensured their safe delivery as well as speaking about the festival to pupils at assemblies. Other forms of marketing included posters, newspaper articles, radio and social media. The latter would also benefit from being overseen by a PR/Marketing professional. This is a hugely important role in informing existing audiences but, more importantly, recruiting first-time audiences as well as those from outwith the area. We did have a FB and Twitter presence but it was irregular.

Venues & Hospitality: St Catharine's operated very effectively as a venue for the children's programme. Organisers and authors all seemed happy with the arrangement.

At the moment, however, the capacity of the function room in the Royal Hotel is limited to ninety. (We could have sold another twenty or thirty tickets for the Martin Bell event.)

WEBSITE USE

There were 5,201 visits to the website from 5th October 2013 until 5th October 2014. The number of users was 3,979 so some people visited it more than once. The average number of pages viewed per visit was 2.49, the average length of time spent per visit was 00:01:20 and the total number of pages viewed was 12,946 (12,212 in 2014). There was a peak of usage in June leading up to the launch event and another leading up to the main event in October.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BOOKMARK was made possible by grants, funding and sponsorships from PKC Library Services, Blairgowrie and Rattray Business Association, Scottish Southern Energy Drumderg community fund, The A. Proctor Group Ltd, the Rotary Club of Blairgowrie, Awards for All, Foundation Scotland, Blairgowrie and District Motor Cycle Club and Castle Water. BOOKMARK is grateful for the support of Cargill's Restaurant, Astute Printers, Blairgowrie Advertiser, Play Talk Read Bus, Blairgowrie Library, Jam Entertains, and The Hill Players. We are also grateful to The Provost's Civic Office which hosted the drinks reception on the opening night.

We are also immensely grateful for the continued support of our patron, Fiona Armstrong.

Thanks also to the Royal Hotel, the speakers, event leaders, and especially the BOOKMARK team of coordinators, volunteers and members who have helped to make the festival such a success.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

COMMITTEE 2015

Chair – Christine Findlay

Treasurer – Meg Luckins

Secretary – Jean Squires

Executive member and Hub coordinator – Kathleen Walker

Glens co-ordinator – Petrina Menzies

School liaison/Risk assessment – Liz Mason

Travel and Hospitality– Jan Farquhar and Heather Russell

Children’s programme – Caroline Shiers and Tracey Gellatly

High School link – Suzanne Graham

Publishers and book sales– Louise Gow

Independent writers – Marion Duffy

Monitoring and Evaluation – Gillian MacMillan

Membership – Rhona Christie

Libraries liaison – Sandra Birse

APPENDIX 2: CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

AGM

15.01.2015 Royal Hotel

Committee Meetings

27.01.15, 12.03.15, 18.05.15, 30.06.15, 14.09.15

Other Meetings

Meetings were held with Consultant Drew Campbell, Creative Writing workshop author Joan Lennon, Royal Hotel Blairgowrie, representatives of other book festivals, Louise Finlayson BOOKMARK’s website manager, Susan Guild at Community Connect in Rattray, social workers from PKC community flat, individual committee members re their area of responsibility, Clare Damodaran from the local press, Astute Printers, Kay Seal re competitions and ‘Paint the Town Red’, Sam Kennedy from the art department at Blairgowrie High School, Pete Wishart MP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Provost Liz Grant.

In addition, the Executive Committee meets frequently.

APPENDIX 3: FESTIVAL - LIST OF EVENTS

June 26th	Jess Smith	Adult Launch Event
September 4th September 12th	*Nick Hesketh Keith Brockie	Children's Launch Event Sketching Wildlife in the Wild
October Friday 2nd	CHILDREN'S BOOKMARK Nick Hesketh ADULT BOOKMARK Janice Galloway	CHILDREN'S BOOKMARK Red of the Dead ADULT BOOKMARK An Hour with Janice Galloway
October Saturday 3rd	ADULT BOOKMARK: Alex Gray *Joan Lennon Geoff Hill Karen Campbell Kenneth Cox Martin Bell OBE CHILDREN'S BOOKMARK: Kate Leiper Catherine McPhail Barry Hutchison David MacPhail	ADULT BOOKMARK: Keep the Midnight Out 'Time to Write' book launch Falling off Motor Cycles – a Beginner's Guide You Can't Outrun Your Shadow Garden Plants for Scotland The End of Empire CHILDREN'S BOOKMARK: How to Draw your Dragon Write to Excite Fiends, Bear-things and the End of the World The Nicest Viking

**Denotes free event*

APPENDIX 4: TOWN / TICKET NUMBERS OBTAINED FROM ONLINE AND POSTAL TRANSACTIONS 2015

Towns	Number of transactions	Number of tickets
ONLINE	ONLINE :	ONLINE:
Blairgowrie PH	11	67
Perth PH	2	6
Alyth PH	4	6
Kirriemuir* DD	2	3
Cupar, Fife* KY	1	3
Birnam/Dunkeld PH	3	5
Meikleour PH	1	2
Meigle PH	1	4
Clunie PH	1	6
Dundee* DD	1	2
Edinburgh* EH	1	1
Polmont/Falkirk* FK	2	4
Carnoustie* DD	1	2
Dunning, PH	1	1
Auchterarder, PH	1	2
Kinfauns, PH	1	2
Pitlessie*, Fife KY	1	2
Ratray, PH	7	19
Forfar*, Angus DD	1	2
POSTAL:	POSTAL:	POSTAL:
Blairgowrie	1	2
Dundee DD	1	3
Crieff PH	1	1
Murthly PH	1	7
Totals	47	152

*Denotes outwith Perthshire

88 tickets sold for Blairgowrie and Ratray orders

42 tickets sold to people in other parts of Perthshire

22 tickets sold to people beyond Perthshire

APPENDIX 5:

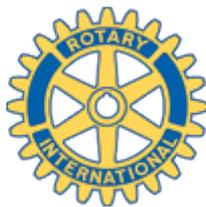
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