

**BOOKMARK 2019-20**

# **Trustees Report**

including  
**Monitoring & Evaluation**

April 2020

[www.bookmarkblair.com](http://www.bookmarkblair.com)

Scottish Charity Number SC045599

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# TRUSTEES REPORT AND MONITORING & EVALUATION [M&E]

## Overview

**B**OOKMARK's 8th Book Festival contained an ambitious series of events and projects running from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

The focal point was the main Festival Weekend in October – which was again extended across 3 days. with 2 Authors on the Friday evening followed by the Provost's Reception, 5 Authors on Saturday followed by an informal Tapas evening hosted by BOOKMARK and attended by authors and guests, followed by 4 events on the Sunday.

Outwith the main Festival Weekend, BOOKMARK 2019 Launch event was held in July, 'Meet the Author' events were held in May, June, August, November, February, following the AGM, and March 2020.

## BOOKMARK in the Community

BOOKMARK's Authors in Schools was once again held at Alyth Primary School where they were joined by children and staff from Meigle and Kirkmichael schools.

As in previous years BOOKMARK worked in partnership with Blairgowrie High School to produce a 'Fringe Event' at the school in the week running up to the Festival. Reports from these events can be read on pages 5-7.

Once again the BOOKMARK Chair and Committee received a wealth of very positive comments from authors, Chairs and members of the public regarding the high calibre of speakers, the layout and flowers on the 'stage' at the Campus and the professionalism of the committee and volunteers. Gail Wylie, BOOMARK Chair, when summing up BOOKMARK 2019, gave thanks to Jaclyn Meikle and the staff at Blairgowrie Community Campus (BCC), the ongoing partnerships with Horsecross Arts for technical assistance, and with Waterstones Perth, who once again provided an excellent, well-staffed and stocked Festival Bookshop, Something Special for the wonderful flower arrangements, the excellent food suppliers and Team BOOKMARK. Comments and suggestions were noted and will be considered when planning BOOKMARK 2020.

## Headline Statistics

- There were 2227 Attendees at the 17 BOOKMARK events run between April 2019 and March 2020
- 242 of the Attendees were young people who attended the 'Authors in Schools' events.
- 480 + approximately 85 adults (staff, parents and BOOKMARK members) attended BHS Fringe Events.
- 64 Monitoring and Evaluation cards were returned by attendees over the Main Festival Weekend (197 in 2018).
- 60.94% of responders supplied additional comments.
- Only 5 responders make critical comments – 2 each concerning lack of refreshments within the venue/additional seating area, lack of toilet and parking provision and booking fees incurred when booking through Eventbrite. The Committee are already discussing these comments and hope to improve the catering services next year.

## Recommendations

- The Executive Committee should start planning for BOOKMARK 2020 and funding applications should be submitted as soon as possible.
- BOOKMARK should continue to use Blairgowrie Community Campus as the venue for the Main Festival.
- Address the problems regarding catering, parking and toilet signage.
- Authors in Schools should move to another venue this year.
- BOOKMARK should continue and develop its partnerships with Horsecross Arts and Waterstones, Perth.

## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOKMARK 2019/20 PROGRAMME

### April 13 - Meet the Author Event

**Marion Duffy**, former **BOOKMARK** Committee member, turned author, discussed her latest novel, which she co-wrote with Elaine Atkins under the name of Mirren Jones, *Never Do Harm*. Marion read her novel, a psychological thriller to a captivated audience of members, guests and writers. Following afternoon tea, Marion hosted a creative writing workshop to ten budding writers. **BOOKMARK** hopes to encourage more workshops in the future.

### May 11 - Meet the Author Event

Crime writer, **Douglas Skelton** came to St Catharine's to discuss his latest and much acclaimed thriller *Thunder Bay*. Following afternoon tea, Douglas presented one of his 'You the Jury' events where he took some real-life cases, changed the names and locations, offered the basic facts and it was up to the audience to decide if the offender was 'guilty' or 'innocent'.

### June 1 - Meet the Author Event

**BOOKMARK** was delighted to bring two of its Patrons, **Magnus Linklater** and **Rosemary Goring** together when they discussed their views and analyses of Scotland: its past, present and its future. The focus of this afternoon's event was the iconic work *Scotland: A Concise History* written by **Fitzroy Maclean** and brought up to date by Magnus Linklater. During afternoon tea the audience were able to continue the conversation with both Rosemary and Magnus.

### July 20 - Festival Launch

**BOOKMARK** was delighted to welcome **Shaun Bythell**, bookshop owner and force behind the **Wigtown Book Festival** who discussed his sequel to the highly acclaimed and hugely popular *Diary of a Bookseller*. After refreshments and a very special Raffle to celebrate this year's Launch – Gail Wylie, **BOOKMARK** Chair revealed **BOOKMARK 2019 Festival Programme**. The Box Office opened for the sale of 'Early Bird' tickets and weekend passes. This year the Committee agreed to a substantial discount on Early Bird tickets, especially the Weekend Pass and to extend the period to one week after the Launch. This was a huge success and, as a result, **BOOKMARK** sold an amazing 75 passes overall.

### August 31 - Meet the Author Event

For this event, **BOOKMARK** went to the Community Wing at Alyth Primary School where Poet and Writer, **Gerda Stevenson** and **Jenny Alldridge** presented *Inside & Out – the art of Christian Small* a collection of Jenny's mother's art that inspired Gerda's poems. Both Gerda and Jenny stayed on for afternoon tea and were delighted to discuss Christian's art, which was on display at the venue, and Gerda's poems.

### September 18 - Authors in Schools

This year's Authors in Schools (AiS) event for Primary-aged children from Alyth, Meigle and Kirkmichael took place on 18th September, generously hosted by Alyth Primary School. The combined schools' **84 P1-3** pupils had an enthusiastic session with authors **Lyn McNicol** and the exceedingly naughty *Badger the Mystical Mutt*; **78 P4-5** children were spell-bound by **A.H. Proctor's** little witch *Thumble Tumble*, including a highly interesting scientific experiment involving tasting jelly beans; and the **80 P6-7** kids had a riotous time joining in with **Stuart Reid's** antics with his books' character, *Gorgeous George*.

Drama and creative writing sessions plus a writing competition, sponsored by **BOOKMARK**, which received a number of excellent entries, added to the children's enjoyment. Thanks to the Provost, Dennis Melloy, for visiting the school and supporting **BOOKMARK**.

The comments from children and staff included: “The jelly bean experiment was a good way to learn how your tastebuds work”; “She [A.H. Proctor] was very inspiring because she’s written so many books and I want to be an author”; “I loved practising different voices in stories”; “Super enthusiastic presentation from Laura”; “Having Badger there brought the book to life”; and “I really enjoyed reading the book in school. Even better hearing it today and meeting Badger”.

Author Laura Cameron Jackson wrote afterwards “Badger the Mystical Mutt and his authors visited Alyth primary school as part of the **BOOKMARK** Book Festival. From the moment we arrived we were warmly welcomed and nothing was too much trouble. The session itself went very well and was well organised by all involved. The children were very well behaved and interacted fully with our session. We loved it!”

Angela Proctor said after her visit “I had a magical time at the fabulous Blairgowrie Book Festival. The children had come well prepared with some awesome (and fairly tricky) questions to 'Ask the Author'. It was clear to see these children meant business, and books were their specialist subject. It was wonderful to meet so many children with a passion for reading and the creativity displayed by these young people was literally off the scale! ". Report by Jennifer Geddes, AiS Co-ordinator.

### AiS 2019 Gallery



## September 30-October 3 - BOOKMARK Fringe Event

Blairgowrie High School had another very successful Literacy Week with a diverse group of visitors: **Ash Dickinson** who was hugely popular with S1 pupils last year returned to the school to speak to S3; **Metaphrog**, award winning graphic novelists gave a hands on talk to S1; and **Jonathan Meres**, creator of the 'Life of Norm' series, entertained S2s by telling jokes and serenading them with his guitar.

As well as author visits, we also held a twilight session for parents where Suzanne Graham launched BHS new reading scheme which aims to get more pupils reading for pleasure. Throughout the week, which was also National Poetry week, departments across the school ran literacy focused events – spelling competitions, poetry readings and a No Pens Day.

Numbers:

All of S1 was involved in the Metaphrog visit – 160 pupils

All of S2 was involved in the Jonathan Meres visit – 150 pupils

All of S3 was involved in the Ash Dickinson visit – 150 pupils

20 Senior pupils were involved in the popup book event.

Adults – All Parents of pupils in S1-S3 were invited to the Literacy Twilight session.

Thanks again to **BOOKMARK** for supporting our Fringe Festival. Bringing writers, poets and an illustrator to the school is a great way to inspire our students and bring reading to life. Report by Eleanor Rutherford Head of English.



The Events Group hard at work selling books during Literacy Week. Great opportunity for pupils and staff to grab some holiday reading.



Metaphrog – Award Winning Comic book authors show share their writing secrets with S1 pupils

## Main Weekend Festival Events

### Introduction

Waterstones Perth once again set up a wonderful, well stocked pop up shop in the Campus where all the authors' books were on display plus a number of other popular titles suitable for all ages and preferences. The bookshop was open throughout the weekend and located adjacent to the authors book signing area. **BOOKMARK** receives a commission on all books sold.

Callum and Toby from Horsecross Arts returned and arranged the sound and light at the venue ensuring all the authors could be heard at the back of the hall and gave the correct ambience with effective lighting. **BOOKMARK** would also like to record that Callum was requested to find specific music and film to complement some of the authors' presentations and this was carried out willingly and efficiently.

Jillian Page and her wonderful assistants from 'Something Special' set the stage for **BOOKMARK 2019**. This setting has always inspired a number of attendees to write encouraging comments on the back of their M&E cards.

This year **BOOKMARK** invited different artisanal food vans to the Festival. Procaffeinate – who were there all weekend and supplied good coffee and a variety of home bakes. On Sunday, as well as coffee and cakes, they served hot home-made soup, sandwiches and wraps at lunch time. Wood Fired Pizza and The Spotted Pig Co were in attendance on the Saturday.

## Friday Evening

**BOOKMARK 2019** opened with Scottish born novelist **Ali Smith** chaired by **Nicola Sturgeon**, Scotland's First Minister, who discussed Ali's collection of *Seasons* books. This event was a sell-out. A very entertaining start to **BOOKMARK 2019**. Sponsor - Castle Water.

Following Ali, **Sarah Maine** discussed with **BOOKMARK Patron, Magnus Linklater**, her interesting past as an archaeologist and how the 'uncovering of bones and secrets' underpinned her novels including *Women of the Dunes*.

To round off a most enjoyable evening, The Provost, Dennis Melloy, and the **BOOKMARK** Committee, held a Drinks Reception for c60 people, including authors, guests and Festival attendees.

## Saturday

**Dean Nelson**, in conversation with **BOOKMARK Patron Ken Cox**, regaled the audience with the joys of living in India and how the Indian population managed to get around the 'art of problem solving'. *Jugaad Yatra – Exploring the Indian Art of Problem Solving*.

**Hania Allen** was joined on stage by **Joyce Caplan**, Tutor at Edinburgh University Centre for Lifelong Learning, to discuss Hania's novel – which takes place in Dundee - *Clearing The Dark* - starring the Polish Detective, Dania Gorski.

Poet, essayist and nature writer, **Kathleen Jamie** discussed *Surfacing* with fellow poet, **John Glenday**. *Surfacing*, the third in a loose trilogy, covers a remarkable range of topics. She also read a number of poems from her latest collection, *The Bonniest Companie*.

**BOOKMARK** welcomed back **The Hunterian Poets**. **Alan Riach** was joined on stage by **Mungo Campbell, John Purser** and **John Glenday** to recite a number of poems inspired by the art and objects from the collection of the Hunterian at the University of Glasgow.

Concluding a very successful Saturday afternoon **BOOKMARK** was delighted to introduce **Louis de Bernières** who discussed his latest novel *So Much Life Left Over* and his collection of poems – *The Cat in The Treble Clef* with **BOOKMARK Chair, Gail Wylie**. Sponsor - Lyon & Turnbull.

Following on from the success of the Tapas evening last year, the **BOOKMARK** committee organised another social event at a local restaurant inviting authors and guests to join them.

## Sunday

Starting off the final day of **BOOKMARK 2019** was author **Gordon Kerr**. Gordon discussed his first novel *The Partisan Heart* – a story of Italian Partisans during WWII with **BOOKMARK Chair, Gail Wyle**. Accompanying this discussion was a short film portraying a number of Partisans during their campaign with music and lyrics written by Gordon with his band 'Elsie at the Piano'.

**Clare Hunter** and **Esther Rutter** in conversation with **BOOKMARK Patron, Fiona Armstrong**, discussed at great length the history and language of yarn and fabric throughout the centuries.

**Melanie Reid's** discussion with **Sally McNair** about her horrific horse-riding accident in 2010 left everyone in awe at her courage and humour as she related the highs and lows of *The World I Fell Out Of*. Sponsor - A Proctor Group Ltd.



The finale for **BOOKMARK 2019** was the acclaimed musician and composer **Freeland Barbour** who read from his biography of Lady Nairne, *The White Rose of Gask*, one of Perthshire & Scotland's best-loved song writers. Freeland was joined by **Gerda Stevenson**, actress, director and singer songwriter who sang some of Lady Nairne's wonderful haunting songs and ended with the very apt 'Will Ye No Come Back Again' which was sung with great gusto by a very appreciative audience.

### BOOKMARK 2019 - Gallery



#### November 23 - Meet the Author Event

**Graeme Macrae Burnet** the award-winning crime writer who, with his uncle **Alasdair Macrae**, a retired Senior Lecturer of English at University of Stirling, discussed his amazing novels *His Bloody Project* and *The Accident on the A35* at another sold out event at St Catharine's Community Centre.

#### February 1 - AGM and Meet the Author Event

**BOOKMARK** held its first sold out event of 2020 when it welcomed **Sandra Ireland** and **Angie Crawford**, Scottish Book Buyer for Waterstones, to discuss Sandra's novel *The Unmaking of Ellie Rook*. This followed on from the Annual General Meeting where a good number of members and Committee members came to hear about the successes of the 2019 Festival and to hear of the plans for **BOOKMARK 2020**.

## March 14 - Meet the Author Event

**BOOKMARK** once again welcomed one of its favourite authors – **Olga Wojtas**. Olga was launching her new novel *Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Vampire Menace*. Olga is a wonderful reader of her work and the audience had a highly entertaining afternoon listening to the further exploits of Olga's hapless time-travelling librarian.

## March 31 - Extra Authors in Schools

**BOOKMARK** had arranged to invite two further authors to attend Coupar Angus Primary School as an extra AiS event. However, due to Covid-19 it was agreed to postpone and arrange a date in the future.

## LOCAL BUSINESSES

This year **BOOKMARK** was able to procure 3 wonderful artisanal catering outlets; Procaffeinate, Wood Fire Pizza and The Spotted Pig Company serving amazing hog roast sandwiches. However, taking into consideration comments made by attendees and committee members regarding long queues at lunch time, the Committee will review the catering facilities for next year.

The committee always support local businesses wherever possible, including Blair Copy Shop, Jillian Page at Something Special Flowers, Kelly McIntyre Photography and Video, The Sorting Office, Ballathie House Hotel and The Dalmore Inn.

This year **BOOKMARK** held a Silent Auction, due to the generous offerings made by local businesses, including Wood Leisure, Norman Laing & Co, Blairgowrie Golf Club, Little's Restaurant and Cargill's Restaurant in response to a request for donations at the Launch. The Silent Auction raised £590 towards **BOOKMARK** funds.

## MARKETING

Blairgowrie High Street businesses once again decorated their windows red in preparation for **BOOKMARK 2019**. The Committee would like to thank the businesses and its volunteers for continuing this tradition.

The Committee rented a shop for two weeks on the High Street facilitating ticket sales and enquiries. It was extremely helpful in marketing, promoting events and introducing **BOOKMARK** to those who had never attended events in the past.

Committee members and volunteers visited other Perthshire, Angus and Fife towns, eg, Dunkeld, Pitlochry, Alyth, Perth City, Dundee and St Andrews and surrounding areas distributing flyers and posters in shops, eating places and TICs. Flyers were also handed out at Blairgowrie Community Markets and Perth Farmers' Markets throughout the summer.

## FUNDRAISING

**BOOKMARK's** Meet the Author events are the main fundraisers for the Book Festival. They keep people's interest in the Book Festival throughout the year and brings visitors to the area on a regular basis.

**BOOKMARK** commissioned a number of jute shopping bags with the **BOOKMARK** logo to sell to members and guests to emphasize the importance of not using one-use shopping bags and as a means of raising funds for future events.

## MEMBERSHIP

Becoming a Member and Friend of **BOOKMARK** supports the organisation in its aims to promote and encourage the study, appreciation and knowledge of literature in Blairgowrie, Rattray and The Glens. Members are entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting, receive priority booking opportunities, discounts and special offers on certain **BOOKMARK** events and activities. As of today membership stands at 130. This further involves the community and raises revenue for our charitable activities, eg, Authors in Schools.

## EVALUATION METHODS

Feedback from attendees was obtained by issuing and collecting postcard-sized Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) cards in respect of each 'event' at the main Festival.

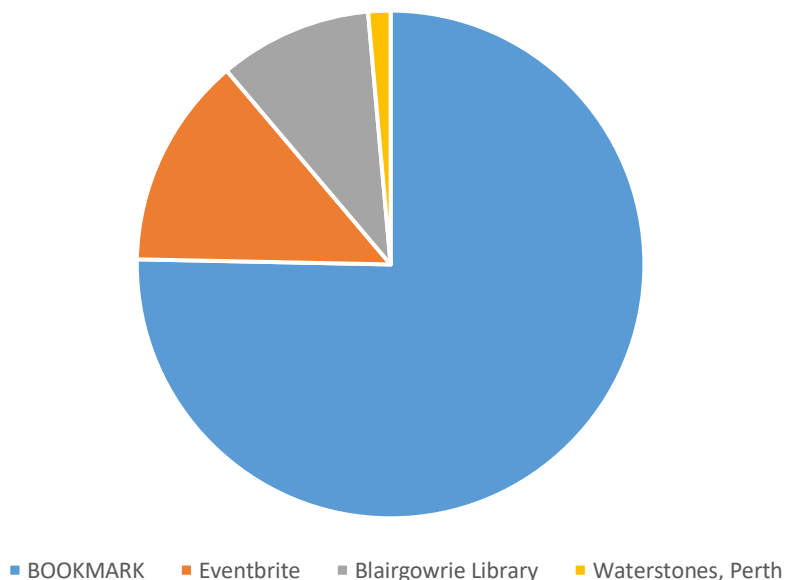
Authors, Chairs, coordinators, volunteers and the executive committee were invited by email to give feedback on how successful they felt the events had been and make suggestions for improvements that could be incorporated next year.

## QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE FEEDBACK

### Ticket and Book Shop Sales

In 2019 **BOOKMARK** sold tickets through Eventbrite for the first time. They were also sold through Waterstones Perth, Blairgowrie Library, **BOOKMARK** events and via the pop-up shop in the 2 weeks immediately prior to the Festival. Tickets were also sold by post, through friends and social/book groups in and around Blairgowrie.

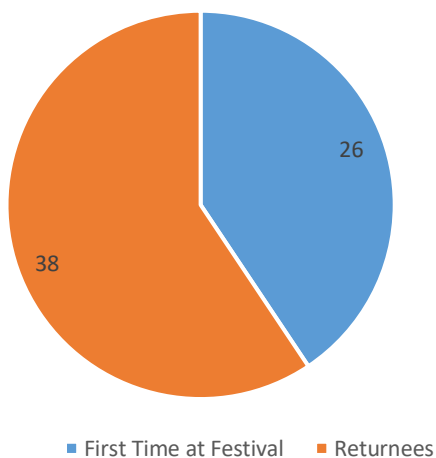
1548 Tickets were sold for the 11 main Festival Events - 75 of which were Weekend Passes



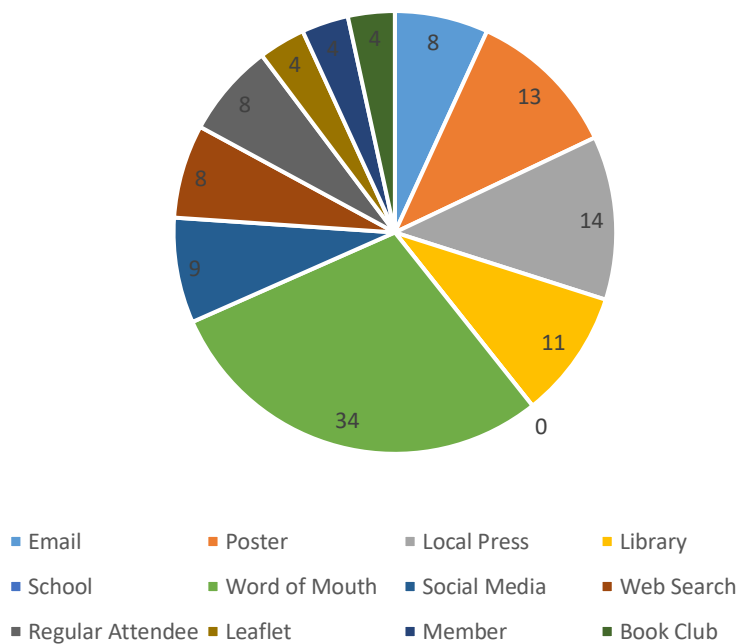
## Monitoring and Evaluation Card Responses General

Out of 64 M&E cards, all attendees were over 30, 25% were filled in by men and 54% left email addresses to be added to **BOOKMARK**'s contact list

### BOOKMARK 2019 - First Time at Festival and Returnees

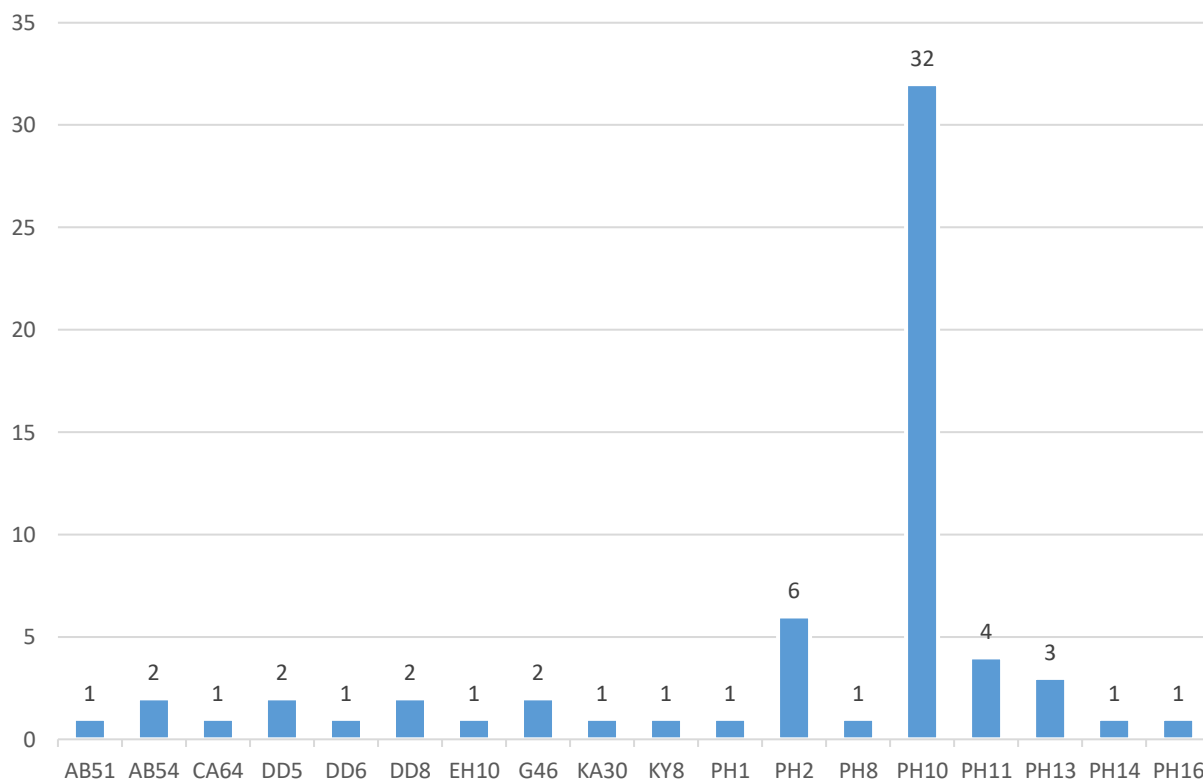


### BOOKMARK 2019 - How did you hear about BOOKMARK...



## Geographic Distribution -

### BOOKMARK 2019 - Percentage of attendees by their Post Codes



## Quotes from Authors and Chairs

**Ali Smith** (Via a postcard!)

THANK YOU for a really fine night at **BOOKMARK**...and for all the warmth, from start to finish, at Blairgowrie.

**First Minister** (from her team)

The First Minister enjoyed the event, as did we.

**Rosemary Goring – BOOKMARK Patron**

...the session with Ali Smith and Nicola Sturgeon really set the tone, what a coup that was. A fabulous opener. Alan and I had such a good time...not even a flat tyre on the way home could spoil the fun we had.

**Sarah Maine**

What a delightful weekend! I had such a nice time...It was a lovely and supportive audience and I really enjoyed the event and talking to people throughout the weekend. Thank you so much for inviting me and for your warm hospitality – all the way from a lovely goody bag (raspberry gin!) to the delightful Ballathie House and lots of stops in between. You and your enthusiastic committee are real stars so please pass on my thanks to all on delivering a tremendous weekend.

**Dean Nelson**

I would like to thank you for inviting me and for making Pamela and I so welcome...We had a wonderful time...**BOOKMARK** is a wonderful festival and if you ever need someone to chair a session or help in any way, I'd be delighted.

**Ken Cox – BOOKMARK Patron**

Very well done on the programming and organisation of the Festival. Most impressive again and getting Nicola Sturgeon to interview Ali Smith was a triumph. Proud to be associated with **BOOKMARK**.

**Joyce Caplan**

What an excellent, professional festival. Well done!

**Hania Allen**

...thank you for inviting me to **BOOKMARK** and for looking after me so well. I had a super time...I'll definitely keep **BOOKMARK** well within my radar!

**Louis de Bernières**

...I very much enjoyed my time in Blairgowrie, and my interview with you. I put on several pounds from all the scoffing!...thanks to everyone involved.

**Fiona Armstrong – BOOKMARK Patron**

Well done to the team on the Festival.

**Sally McNair**

Huge plaudits for a fantastic feat of organisation!

**Gerda Stevenson**

I love the welcome that the excellent, professional **BOOKMARK** team of wonderful women gives to its authors and its ability to always bring together a terrific audience – really very special.

**Freeland Barbour**

It was a real treat to be a guest at the Festival and we were so well looked after, so enormous thanks to everyone involved. I really enjoyed it...Congratulations to you all for putting on these terrific festivals and warm thanks for inviting us to be part of it.

And from two members of the audience who came for the weekend from Edinburgh (and who are frequent attendees of the EIBF)

Each talk was interesting, humorous and informative and even full of hope for the future...Everyone involved, back and front of house, was friendly and helpful and it felt like being in a band of friends all weekend.

What a truly great weekend that was! That was the best Book Festival I've ever been to. The amount of thought and work you had all put into it really showed and everyone was so friendly, helpful and kind.

**Quotes from Monitoring and Evaluation Cards****Positive**

- Excellent presentation , interesting discussion, stories. Pleasure to sit among likeminded people. Thanks to organisers and volunteers.
- 1 Friday 18.00-19.00 – Ali Smith with Nicola Sturgeon excellent dialogue about The Seasons covering 'society' and the environment. However, being near the back there was a bit of difficulty hearing all Ali said but got the main parts of the discussion. 2 Friday 19.30-20.30 – Sarah Maine with Magnus Linklater. I found the expertise of Sarah's archaeology with fiction very interesting. Some excellent anecdotes. 3 Sunday 6 October 13.30-14.30 – Melanie Reid and Sally McNair, wonderful and amazing human being – 'black humour' great.
- Very interesting, enjoyable and enlightening experience in a first-class venue. Many thanks
- Most enjoyable event as it was last year. So well run and well set out. Great venue. Many thanks to all the volunteers. Loved the food vans too. Looking forward to next year!
- A great range of speakers and chairs. It's a joy to come and join in the buzz of chatting and discussing reading and books – and the ideas and issues they inspire.

- Very much enjoy BOOKMARK and the attendant food vans and Waterstones. The people in red are very helpful and friendly, making people feel welcome. The programme was well thought out with a wide range of interest – so good to see the authors one has read for years and meet new faces also.
- Very entertaining.
- Well organised, great atmosphere, cheery volunteers, excellent venue, well done all round, fantastic job!
- We enjoyed the lively conversation between your presenter/BOOKMARK chairperson and author Louis de B. Will definitely return! (and tell our friends!)
- A marvellous discussion hosted by Fiona Armstrong in a super way.
- Ali Smith/First Minister interview – excellent.
- Ali Smith Nicola St Excellent.
- Excellent, 1<sup>st</sup> class speakers, well organised, friendly stewards – thank you.
- Setting for the event was lovely well laid out.
- Nicola Sturgeon/Ali Smith event was superb .
- Melanie Reid – Excellent!
- This has been a wonderful Book Festival. Congratulations to all who made it possible with their hard work. Looking forward to next year. One fly in the ointment – nothing to eat if one is staying for 3 or 4 talks. You should maybe warn people.
- First time at BOOKMARK was last year and we enjoyed it so much, we came back this year.
- Loved the greenery and well done on attracting big names – Nicola and Ali Smith – they were fantastic!!

## Criticisms and Suggestions (All)

- The overhead projection could be turned off during the conversations. Somewhere to sit inside for coffee, etc, between presentations.
- Thank you for laying on a homely and informal Festival – enjoyable, as always. Sad that toilet facilities are so limited – there's not a lot you can do about this. It would be excellent if you could provide light refreshments inside the premises, with more extensive seating areas – but there may be a good reason why this can't be done.
- Enjoy the 'buzz' about books and so glad it exists! – and that you involve the schools. Your pamphlet is perfect – all that is necessary and well designed with all details – but – is 24 hr clock necessary or does everyone else think this! (takes ages working out that 15.30 is ½ past 3 – or is it?!) Is anyone really going to arrive at 3.00am? Road directions good until very end when ended with the car on a football pitch. My fault! Thanks to Waterstones, thanks for reasonable priced tickets and thanks! (this attendee came from PH10 district and said she was over 80)

## Message from Gail Wylie, BOOKMARK Chair Goodbye 2109 - and Hello 2020

With our final author event of 2019, Graeme Macrae Burnett, being another sell-out, **BOOKMARK** would like to thank all our audiences for making 2019 the most successful year yet. In an earlier article, I wrote that **BOOKMARK** is a Festival with a future - and that future is now assured.

**BOOKMARK** Book Festival in October welcomed larger numbers than ever and received extremely positive messages from writers, interviewers and members of the public. What all of the committee and our volunteers endeavour to do is to encourage conversation within a small, welcoming space which is large enough to house argument, discourse, agreement and discussion. In October, there were people in our audience who entered into conversations about topics entirely new to them; from sewing and knitting to Indian space missions. Devoted history readers listened to novelists; non-readers enjoyed the conversations; those allergic to poetry confessed themselves won over. Well-known writers such as Ali Smith and Louis de Bernières loved their time in Blairgowrie because of the engaged audiences and the strong sense of community they felt. Melanie Reid said that she left **BOOKMARK** with ‘a warm glow’. Many of those involved have asked to come back – and they will! But we also have to look ahead for new ideas, new writers, new ways of engaging with readers. In 2020 we’re having a Literary Lunch on a Sunday in June; we’ve invited well-known as well as debut writers – after all, no writer is immediately famous. Our topics over the year will range from Scottish legend to our relationship with animals. Nature and the outdoors feature, as does photography and crime fiction set in an exotic past. And we’re only at the start of our programming ideas. None of this would be possible without the support of everyone who attends our events. Word of mouth is the most effective way of telling the world about **BOOKMARK** – if you’re already a fan please spread the word. If you’ve never been to any of our events, why not give us a try? Our first event in 2020 is the perfect introduction to **BOOKMARK**. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, after our AGM (which will be short but to the point!) **Sandra Ireland** will read from and talk about her acclaimed novel *The Unmaking of Ellie Rook*, which caused quite a stir this year. You’ll hear about our plans for the year in more detail, meet all those involved – and enjoy a delicious afternoon tea as well. All tickets are available in advance, details on our website. I look forward personally to welcoming you in 2020.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**BOOKMARK 2019** was made possible by donations, funding and sponsorships from Castle Water, PKC Events Fund, The A Proctor Group, Lyon & Turnbull, Drumderg Community Fund, Scottish Book Trust, The Gannochy Trust and other private donors.

**BOOKMARK** would like to thank Horsecross Arts for their outstanding contribution to the sound and light at the Campus. Waterstones Perth, ticket seller and who, through the great enthusiasm of Anne-Marie Connor, shop manager and Angie Crawford, Scottish Book Buyer, stocked and manned the Festival Book Shop which enriched the experience of our audience who were able to browse through the many books on sale. Thanks also to Blairgowrie Library, Craig Dennis and Jade Lowry, for selling a great number of tickets for the Festival and creating a most amazing display highlighting the authors and their books. Thanks to all the contributors of the Silent Auction including Wood Leisure, Norman Laing & Co, Blairgowrie Golf Club, Little’s Restaurant and Cargill’s Bistro. Another great Festival experience is our culinary food vans. Thanks to Wood Fire Pizza and The Spotted Pig Company and especially to Procaffeinate for feeding our authors, festival goers and volunteers all weekend.

**BOOKMARK** is grateful for the continued support of Something Special Florists, Treehouse Print, Clare Damodoran from The Blairgowrie Advertiser, Kelly McIntyre Photography and Alison Powrie who manages **BOOKMARK’S** social media facility. Thanks also to Bourtree Jam, Perthshire Preserves, Taystful Chocolate, Joyce Moulton and Jan Farquhar who contributed all the ‘goodies’ for the authors goody bags. We are also grateful to The Provost for hosting the drinks reception on the opening night and for the continued support of our patrons, Fiona Armstrong, Ken Cox, Rosemary Goring and Magnus Linklater.

Thanks also to the staff at the Blairgowrie Community Campus, Ballathie House Hotel, The Dalmore Inn, the authors and especially the **BOOKMARK** team of coordinators, volunteers and members who have helped to make the Festival such a success.

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS



Hon President – Christine Findlay  
 Chair and Trustee - Gail Wylie  
 Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Trustee – Rhona Christie  
 Secretary and Trustee - Kathleen Walker  
 Risk Assessment and Trustee - Liz Mason  
 Trustee – Caroline Shiers  
 Author Liaison – Christine Fraser  
 BOOKMARK Presenter – Jean Squires  
 Green Room – Christine Fraser, Jan Farquhar, Jacqui Rutherford  
 First Aid – June Hastings  
 Funding & Sponsorship Co-ordinator– Kay Thomson  
 Authors in Schools Programme – Jennifer Geddes and Jacqui Rutherford  
 Travel and Hospitality - Jan Farquhar, June Hastings and volunteers Linda Clark, Aileen Davidson, Anne Glass and Ian Hastings  
 Festival Meeters & Greeters – volunteers, Sheila and Howard Sadd, Catriona Innes  
 High School Link – Eleanor Rutherford

## Sponsors & Funding



## BOOKMARK 2019/20 Events and Attendances

Event	Tickets	Guests	Total
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April 13 – Marion Duffy + Writing Workshop	35		35
May 11 – Douglas Skelton	37		37
June 1 – Magnus Linklater and Rosemary Goring	40		40
July 20 – BOOKMARK 2019 Launch with Shaun Bythell	50	2	52
August 31 – Gerda Stevenson & Jenny Alldridge – Alyth Community Wing	30		30
September 18 - Children’s Authors in Schools (AiS)	242	8	250
September 30-October 3 - BOOKMARK Fringe at Blairgowrie High School	480	30	510
<b>4-6 October - MAIN FESTIVAL</b>			
PKC Provost’s Reception		60	60
Tickets sold for BOOKMARK 2019 Festival weekend	1016	20	1036
Tapas evening	39	8	47
November 23 - Graeme Macrae Burnet	45	2	47
February 1 - AGM with Sandra Ireland	47	1	48
March 14 – Book Launch with Olga Wojtas	33	2	35
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2094</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>2227</b>