



BOOKMARK 2020-21

Trustees Report

&

Accounts

April 2021

www.bookmarkblair.com

Scottish Charity Number SC045599

TRUSTEES REPORT AND ACCOUNTS

Overview

BOOKMARK's 9th Festival, the Literary Lunch and the annual Authors in Schools unfortunately had to be cancelled due to the Covid pandemic.

Although there was no festival to organise in 2020, Gail Wylie, **BOOKMARK** Chair and her Committee, were kept busy throughout the year keeping the members and wider community up to date with virtual events that were happening within the Book Festival world; book recommendations - at least 4 books per month - covering all genres and ages were shared on the website and Social Media platforms; also many articles in the local press, thanks to Clare Damodoran at the Blairgowrie Advertiser and The Hub Magazine.

BOOKMARK Chair, Gail Wylie was invited to discussions with other book festivals, Perth & Kinross Council and Creative Scotland

- Creative Scotland 'Chairing the Narrative' - a development programme for literary chairs – Gail Wylie has been mentoring Naomi Christie from Aberdeen. Naomi has been involved with Granite Noir and other literary festivals in Aberdeen. Together, they will organise a virtual Meet the Author event with a well-known author, of Naomi's choice, that she will chair, hopefully in June or August 2021.
- After an initial talk with Anna Day of PKC, Gail Wylie was invited to join a larger meeting of PKC Culture and Communities, chaired by Fiona Robertson. James Boyle (former head of BBC Radio 4, Creative Scotland and other major arts organisations) presented an excellent report looking at how Perthshire could maximise its geographical location and pool their arts activities. A 'hotspot map' had been created to show the towns (out-with Perth) which offered the most events: Blairgowrie was the best represented. Gail Wylie expects more positive discussions to follow.
- Gail Wylie was invited to join a discussion group - regarding book festivals in 2021 and whether they should go ahead or not - with chairs from many of the larger Scottish book festivals taking part. During this discussion, Gail was encouraged by Wigtown and Edinburgh Book Festivals, in particular, to plan **BOOKMARK** 2021 in the hope that some restrictions would be lifted by October.

During 2020, Blairgowrie welcomed the opening of a new book shop, Adventure into Books and the re-opening of the second-hand book shop, Booklore. **BOOKMARK** was invited to the opening by Kate Davies of Adventure into Books with Chair, Gail Wylie, cutting the ceremonial ribbon. A good working relationship between **BOOKMARK**, Booklore and Adventure into Books has continued.

October 1 was National Poetry Day and Kate Davies and Gail Wylie joined forces to promote the event in Adventure into Books, Booklore and Blairgowrie High School. Students sent their poems and haikus for display in the book shop window.

Chair, Gail Wylie launched the inaugural **BOOKMARK Book of the Year** with the winner being announced on the day **BOOKMARK 2020** would have begun. Gail Wylie chose 6 new titles and invited 5 judges to join her - **BOOKMARK** Hon President, **Christine Findlay**, **BOOKMARK** Patron, **Rosemary Goring**, Journalist and Author, **Alan Taylor**, **Kate Davies**, Adventure into Books, and **Pat Richards**, Blairgowrie & Rattray Development Trust. The winner was *Miss Benson's Beetle* by **Rachel Joyce**. Ms Joyce received a beautiful, unique silver bookmark designed and crafted by **Sarah Cave** of Blairgowrie and an invite to **BOOKMARK 2021**, Government restrictions allowing. As a result of the quality of all the books, the runners-up received one of Sarah's in-house bookmarks - with thanks to the sponsors of these prizes.

Over the festive season, **Jan Farquhar**, Social Media co-ordinator, posted the **BOOKMARK** Advent Calendar, 12 book titles leading up to Christmas. A wonderful selection which covered all aspects of interests and genre.

February 20 - **BOOKMARK** held its virtual AGM. Twelve members attended and all Committee, Office Bearers and Trustees were voted to remain in-situ. Gail Wylie discussed the disastrous year with no events but confirmed the determination of the Committee to organise a much smaller, slimmed down festival in 2021. This may take the form of a 'hybrid' festival with some live and some recorded events. She also confirmed that **BOOKMARK Book of the Year** would continue with 6 new books and 5 new judges. Gail also confirmed BM's first virtual **Meet the Author Event** with **Richard Frazer**, Minister of Greyfriars Kirk, Edinburgh and BM favourite **Olga Wojtas**.

BOOKMARK Book of the Year 2021 is already underway, and the Committee will purchase from Adventure into Books 2 copies each of the six books shortlisted and donate them to Blairgowrie Library and Blairgowrie High School Library. All books are suitable for both older children and adults.

March 27 – 64 persons from as far away as Inverness, Jersey and County Cork joined **BOOKMARK** on Zoom to listen to a conversation between Richard Frazer and Olga Wojtas as Richard discussed his book **Travels with a Stick** charting his epic journey along the Santiago de Compostela pilgrim route and, in his words, 'what it means to be a pilgrim today'. This was a pilot event, free of charge, because it was hoped that **BOOKMARK** could tempt book lovers from across the country to 'visit' Blairgowrie and be part of the Festival. Comments from attendees were very encouraging. With cries of 'when can we have Part 2' ringing loudly, the Committee are now planning the second part to include the Launch of **BOOKMARK 2021**, in July, live. It is also hoped to record this event so those who enjoyed Part 1 on-line can continue the journey with Richard. **BOOKMARK** would like to thank Steve Johnson from Pro-Active Communities, Blairgowrie for this help and support with this event.

As the Committee awaits further Government guidelines regarding meeting in public areas and the opening of hotels and public houses, Gail Wylie confirmed **BOOKMARK's** hopes that the **Literary Lunch** with **Joshua Rozenberg** will take place but could be postponed until next year and planning continues for the 2021 Festival.

Recommendations

- When restrictions are lifted The Committee will stage a shortened version of the Festival - over two days and re-schedule the Literary Lunch.
- **BOOKMARK** should maintain a dialogue with Blairgowrie Community Campus to discuss what restrictions may be in place regarding social distancing and thorough cleaning with a view to providing as full a programme as possible.
- Review the problems regarding catering, parking and toilet signage at the venue and make changes where possible.
- Authors in Schools – may have to be postponed for another year or plan a virtual event.
- **BOOKMARK** should continue and develop its partnerships with its sponsors and supporters.

Message from Gail Wylie - BOOKMARK Chair

The motto of **BOOKMARK** is 'Go with the Flow'; a phrase which evokes the river Erich that flows through the centre of Blairgowrie, our home. It is an encouraging and forward-thinking motto, reminding us that it is often a liberating thing to be free of concerns and constraints and to look ahead, not backwards. It suggests, rather than demands, that we should be caught up in the moment for our own good.

It seems to me that it's what Book Festivals are all about. Go with the flow of ideas from all invited authors - don't just step into the stream of those you've heard of. Trust the direction of the current and meet new writers, new topics, new ways of thinking. Go with the flow and travel to other times, other countries, other ideas. Re-connect with the familiar by encountering the strange.

BOOKMARK is a unique Festival in a beautiful part of Perthshire. Let us celebrate all that it has to offer, step into that river of ideas and
'Go with the Flow'.

TRUSTEES

Gail Wylie
Rhona Christie
Kathleen Walker
Liz Mason
Caroline Shiers

COMMITTEE MEMBERS & 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
Social Media Co-ordinator, Travel and Hospitality – Jan Farquhar
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Funding & Sponsorship Co-ordinator– Kay Thomson
Authors in Schools Programme – Jennifer Geddes and Jacqui Rutherford
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