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A Sense of Place: Scotland

Illustration by Kate Leiper, from *An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Castle Legends* by Theresa Breslin.

Editorial

In this issue we look north to Scotland.

Since the Union of the Crowns and James the VI and I, we have been seen as one; James' vision was a Great Britain. Somehow there is an unspoken assumption that we have the same history. Certainly, growing up in Scotland, our history lessons centred on the Battle of Hastings, the Wars of the Roses and the Armada. However, I also knew there was another story. My history was embellished with the colour and excitement of H.E. Marshall who brought me St Columba trekking across Caledonia to convert the Picts, Macbeth and Birnam Wood (before I even knew Shakespeare), Alexander III, and Robert the Bruce and the spider ('if you do not first succeed, try, try again'). I wept at the Battle of Flodden where 'The Floo'ers o' the Forest are a' wede away', my heart stirred to the tales of Black Agnes and Kate Barlass, I fled with Bonnie Prince Charlie after Culloden. It is interesting to note that these were all in Marshall's *Scotland's Story* (nd); the tales associated with south of the border before 1603 or after are in *Our Island's Story* (nd).

What about the fiction . . . the books I read? Looking back I find I was often reading stories based in a Scottish landscape. There was, of course, *The Eagle of the Ninth* (1954) following Marcus and Esca north of Hadrian's Wall. A favourite author was Jane Oliver. I adored *The Eaglet and the Angry Dove* (1957) – a story set on Iona with St Columba, *Bonfire in the Wind* (1958) that introduced me to the Covenanters and Grizel Baillie – a real girl who did carry food to her father hiding from the English troops and whose recipe books I saw much later at Mellerstain House; such a thrill to meet a childhood character. Then there was Mary, Queen of Scots and her dramatic escape from the fearsome Douglas family and Loch Leven Castle in *Queen Most Fair* (1959).

I was not aware of the authors as people (you were not in those days, you just waited anxiously for the next book) or questioned whether they were Scottish themselves. Marguerite de Angeli, certainly wasn't, but *The Black Fox of Lorne* (1956) took me on a thrilling adventure shipwrecked on the west coast. Naturally there was Stevenson and, yes, that Wizard of the North, Walter Scott whom my father loved. So we read together *Marmion: A Tale of Flodden Field* (1808) and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). It was not until I became a children's librarian that I consciously met Scottish authors – in particular Mollie Hunter whose *The Stronghold* was the Carnegie winner in 1974. Here it is not the usual story set during the Tudor or Stuart time but much further back on Orkney with those mysterious brochs. Her other novels are as interesting, introducing the reader to unusual corners of our island's story, while *The Dragonfly Years* (1983) and *I'll Go My Own Way* (1985) are precursors of the young adult novel. Or there was Frances M. Hendry and her Quest series and Eileen Dunlop to name two. I am delighted to find that I share some of the same memories as Theresa Breslin. But where are these authors now? Are they still on the shelves of Scottish libraries? What is it like today?

The books I read were presented in received English – well why not? – this was (and is) the norm! Dialect was reserved for the minor characters. But there is another narrative. There is the Scots language itself – and I have on my shelf both Jamieson's *Etymological Dictionary of the Scottish Language* (1808) in four thick volumes as

well as *The Scottish National Dictionary* (1931) in fascicules; such a wealth of words.

In this issue of *IBBYLink,* both Mairi Kidd and James Robertson introduce us to the inspiring work being done to ensure young Scots today have access to this specific heritage. Julie Bertagna tells us how, as an author, she responded to what she felt was a gap in the landscape. If we are reminded about the richness of the Scots' language so we are also reminded of the richness of the traditional tales as Ann Lazim explores the selkie legend and the stories it has inspired. I hope you will feel as excited as I do.

Ferelith Hordon

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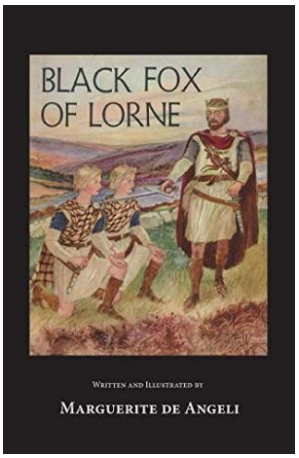
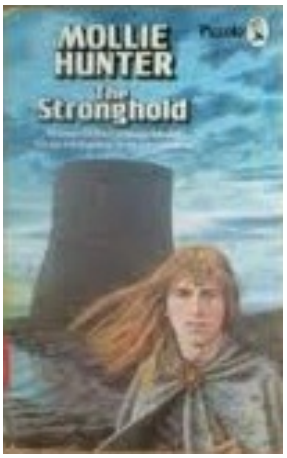
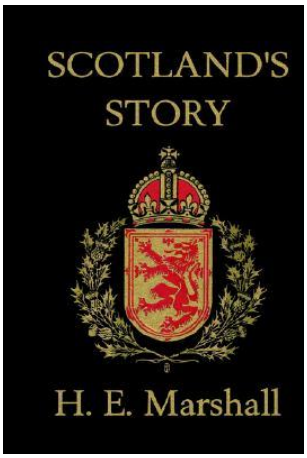
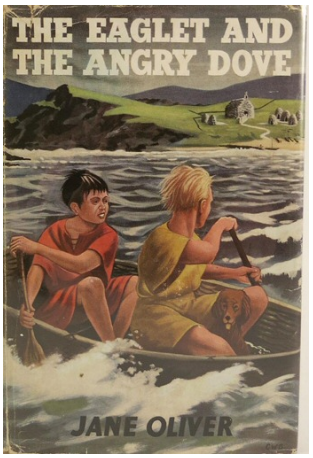
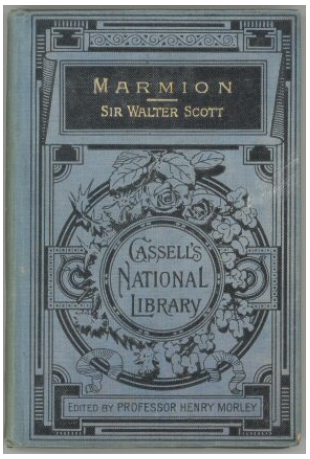
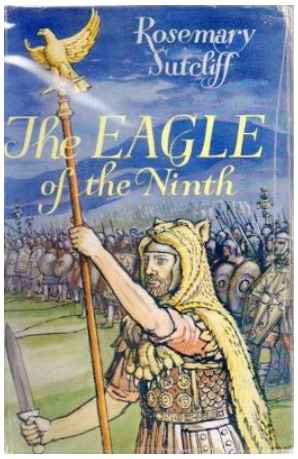












Covers of some book mentioned in the Editorial.

In this issue

Dreaming Big Dreams: Children's Literature in Scotland

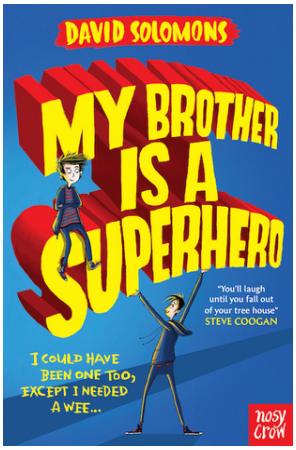
Mairi Kidd is Head of Literature, Languages and Publishing at Creative Scotland, working with individual writers, publishers and literary organisations to support Scotland's vibrant ecology of books and writing. She was formerly Managing Director of award-winning indie Barrington Stoke. She has a commitment to breaking down barriers to reading and promoting equalities in publishing and has spoken and written on these subjects in the media and at festivals including Hay, Cheltenham and Edinburgh. She has lectured in publishing at the University of Stirling and has provided consultancy on EDI and publishing practice to a range of clients including Amnesty International UK. She is a fluent Gaelic speaker and a writer and translator.

Scotland is a small, rainy country in the north of Europe where umbrellas turn inside-out and wheelie bins fly around in the wind. Scotland doesn't have a big population, but it has produced an incredible number of important scientists, writers, inventors, doctors and other thinkers, and more still have come to live and work here. Perhaps the chilly weather and long, dark winter nights keep people inside by the fire and inspire them to dream big dreams . . .

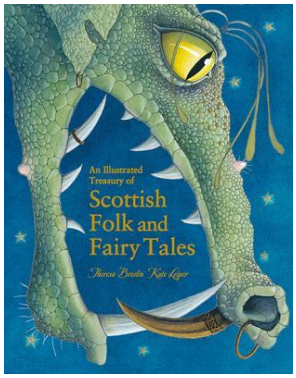
I recently began a children's non-fiction title with these words. Among the output of its thinkers, Scotland has, of course, produced a remarkable number of classics of children's literature. David Balfour and Long John Silver, Ratty and Mole, the multi-hued fairies and Peter Pan are just a few of the characters dreamed up by Scottish firesides who have gone on to shape the way we think about stories for children and young people. Without George MacDonald we might not have Narnia, or Middle Earth; within the Scottish canon itself, Stevenson was heavily influenced by R.M. Ballantyne, particularly *The Coral Island* (1858). Peter Pan has recently lent his name to Scotland's new centre for children's literature and storytelling, Moat Brae House in Dumfries. Joanna Lumley acted as a patron for an £8 million fundraising campaign to save the house – where Barrie played with his childhood friends – from demolition. The centre offers visitor facilities, an education suite and the chance to

explore the garden Barrie described as ‘enchanted land’ and ‘the genesis of that nefarious work’ that has become a byword for childhood itself.

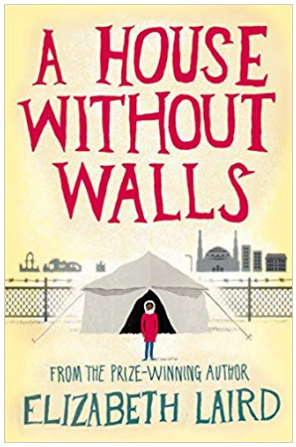
In the modern era no visitor could miss the fact that J.K. Rowling ‘came to live and work’ in Scotland, dreaming up a certain boy wizard in an Edinburgh café. The Potter souvenir shops in the capital now give even the tartan outlets a run for their money, and the Glenfinnan Viaduct draws tourists from across the globe. Another modern children’s classic, *The Gruffalo* (1999), is fondly embraced as Scottish since its author Julia Donaldson was a much treasured resident of Bearsden for many years – there’s a sculpture trail around Kilmardinny Loch to mark her importance to the town. Less well-known is the fact that *The Gruffalo* publisher Kate Wilson travelled in the opposite direction, moving from Edinburgh to London many years ago. Kate Wilson remains a great champion of Scottish authors and illustrators, publishing Pamela Butchart, Ross Collins, David Solomons and others quite brilliantly at Nosy Crow.



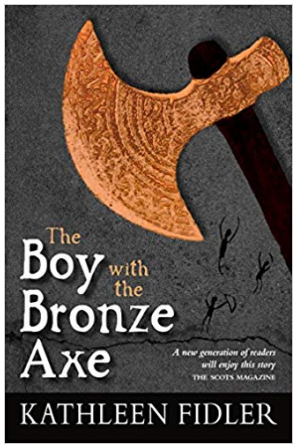
And so we reach the present day, when Scotland has a host of household names and those well on the way to being so. Starting with those Nosy Crow authors, David Solomons saw instant success, winning the Waterstones Children’s Prize and the British Book Industry Award’s Children’s Book of the Year in 2016 with *My Brother Is a Superhero* (2015). Pamela Butchart’s Baby Aliens series has been joined by a raft of other early readers and middle-grade titles, and she recently scooped the prize gig of writing the *Secret Seven* ((2018) with endorsement by the Blyton estate. Ross Collins has dozens of books to his name – including a number of collaborations with fellow Scottish author Vivian French – of which *There’s a Bear in my Chair* (2016), *This Zoo is not for You* (2018) and *This is a Dog* (2019) are unmissable, as are Ross’s deadpan events. Other picture-book and young-fiction creators include Debi Gliori, Catherine Rayner, Chae Strathie and Emily Dodd – the latter two creating both fiction and non-fiction for the youngest readers. Scientist Gill Arbuthnot – who has tended to write for older children – has recently entered this market with the gorgeous *Balloon to the Moon* (2019).



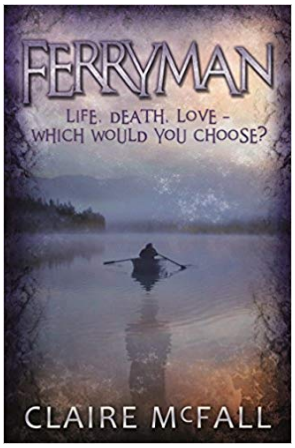
For the same age range, Scotland's traditional stories have been recently gathered in stunning treasuries by Theresa Breslin and Kate Leiper: *An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Folk and Fairy Tales* (2012), *An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Mythical Creatures* (2015) and *An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Castle Legends* (2019). Mairi Hedderwick's Katie Morag has made the jump to TV stardom on CBeebies and happily some of her creator's older work has been revived – Jane Duncan's Janet Reachfar books, with their stunning Mairi Hedderwick illustrations, are well worth a look.



For 8–12s Ross MacKenzie's Nowhere Emporium series are brilliant and Elizabeth Laird opens the mind's eye to life across the globe in titles including *A House without Walls* (2019) and *The Fastest Boy in the World* (2014). 8–12 fiction in Scotland has a glorious history but there is a challenge in the stewardship of this backlist, which has not fared particularly well. In the 1980s and 1990s the Canongate Kelpies imprint set about bringing together a huge range of titles set in Scotland and from Scottish authors. The appeal of these books was not limited to Scotland – in a recent conversation I discovered that Frank Cottrell Boyce vividly recalls the magic of Lavinia Derwent's *Sula* (1989) and its sequels.



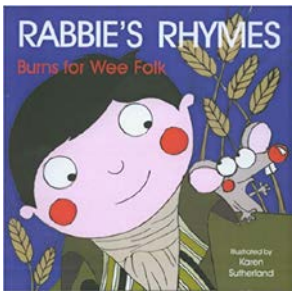
Like the Canongate Classics, another 1980s and 1990s initiative to get neglected Scottish literature back into print, the Kelpies struggled as the book market became tougher in the late 1990s. Floris Books has revived the imprint in recent years with a mixture of new commissions, debuts sourced via an annual competition and backlist, but only a small selection of older work has made it back into print. Kathleen Fidler's *The Desperate Journey* (2012) and *The Boy with the Bronze Axe* (2012) are available – and hugely useful in classrooms studying the Highland Clearances and Neolithic peoples – and George MacKay Brown's *Fankle the Cat* (2012) remains in print. Mollie Hunter's gorgeous historical and folklore-influenced work lies neglected, as does the work of Allan Campbell MacLean and Frances Mary Hendry. Joan Lingard is still writing and her Kevin and Sadie books of The Troubles in Belfast are viewed as modern classics, but much of her Scottish-set backlist also languishes forgotten.



Teen and young adult have strong voices, with established work by Catherine MacPhail, Theresa Breslin and Cathy Forde joined in recent years by Claire McFall – whose *Ferryman* (2013) was an enormous surprise hit in China and is set for big-screen adaptation – Elizabeth Wein and Estelle Maskame. Anecdotally, however, this is not an area in which either Scottish authors or Scottish publishers find it easy to break into the conglomerate-dominated publishing market, and London-published titles dominate the shelves in Scottish shops.

Our three-voiced country

Scotland is a country with three indigenous languages. You've made it this far in the article, and so we'll agree you're familiar with English. Next up is Scots, spoken by 1.3 million people according to the last census. As a sibling of English, Scots tends to be the subject of ongoing arguments, both linguistic and political–cultural, about its status. Reading and writing in Scots can be politically freighted, but for many young people, is transformative in raising attainment. Learning to read is, after all, easier when you speak the language on the page.

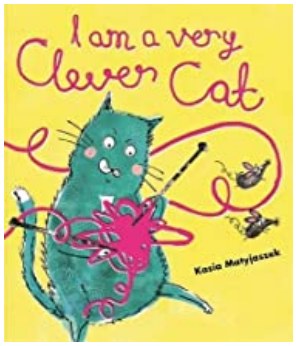


In recent years children's publishing in Scots has been buoyed up significantly by the Itchy Coo imprint of Black & White publishing. Lively translations of A.A. Milne, *Asterix* (2013) and Roald Dahl – *The Eejits* (2008), *The Sleekit Mister Tod* (2008) and *Geordie's Mingin Medicine* (2007) – have joined original titles for young children including *Katie's Ferm* (2007) and *Rabbie's Rhymes* (2008). James Robertson's translation of *The Gruffalo* (2012) has been a particular hit, spawning a raft of versions in different dialects of Scots from Glaswegian to Orcadian, Dundonian and Shetlandic:

> **A moosie taen a daandir throo thi daip, derk waid. A tod saa that moosie an that moosie looked gaid. (*The Dundee Gruffalo*)**
>
> **Ida hert o a forest deep an dark, a perrie broon moose guid oot for a waak. (*The Shetland Gruffalo* (2015))**

The organisation Into Film has toured the Scots dialect Gruffalos to children and teachers across the country in partnership with quality improvement agency Education Scotland, but publishers Black & White report an uphill struggle getting Scots books into schools, and seek both formalised inclusion of Scots on the curriculum and more responsive arrangements for school book supply.

Gaelic is a Celtic language, close cousin of Irish and Manx and more distant relative of Welsh, Breton and Cornish. Today it is spoken by around 60,000 Scots and popular misconception (or downright discrimination?) has it that it is neither naturally a written language, nor a national one, having always been confined to the Highlands and Islands. It is true that it has been supressed in education and the political life of Lowland Scotland for centuries, but its literary output is impressive and international in viewpoint – its literature for adults, that is. For younger readers, a push to originate picture books, fiction and more in the 1970s and 1980s has gradually fallen by the wayside and instead translated picture books proliferate. Some of these are very good indeed, both in the original and in Gaelic (the *Hugless Douglas* translation is a masterpiece), but there are significant gaps in terms of early readers, 8–12s and teens. Much, much more is needed, to a strategic framework that articulates and works towards an offer spanning what children need to become readers.



Incoming languages have their place in Scotland too, and New Scots are a key part of our future. In children's books Polish-born illustrator Kasia Matyjaszek has recently begun taking her beautiful work out to Polish-speaking families via Glasgow's Book Festival Aye Write and other providers. She is fabulously talented and one to watch – find her work in *I Am A Very Clever Cat* (Templar, 2016) and *The Fourth Bonniest Baby in Dundee* (Floris, 2016).

So what might we look for from our new centre at Moat Brae, ready to give Scottish children's literature its day in the sun?

The promotion of reading for pleasure in Scottish schools is alive and well – the First Minister's Reading Challenge and Scottish Book Trust's Live Literature support for author visits and Authors Live programming with the BBC are significant interventions in this area – but there is clearly work to be done in ensuring our output of Scottish-authored work grows apace.

In a related point, we know that conditions are challenging for all writers across the UK. We need to advocate for better; in Scotland this means both better investment by publishers, and better access to the UK and global books, and adaptation marketplaces. Author support can take other forms, too, and while we in

Scotland manage Fellowship and other programmes for writers of literary fiction, we have not engaged with the place of children's writers in this ecosystem. This is definitely an area in which we could up our game.

Edinburgh International Book Festival has been working with the charity PAMIS (Promoting a more inclusive society) to make book events accessible to children and adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities, and Scottish artist and storyteller Ailie Finlay is another pioneer in this area. This is an example of the sort of inclusive practices we could develop much further, to spread the joy of literature to those currently excluded.

The Scottish Government's National Performance Framework enshrines support for and access to culture as a priority for all public sector policy areas. There is a case to be made here for the very real power of children's books and ways to think about delivering in other policy areas – health, for example, or justice – through cultural initiatives, from prescribing poetry to help tackle stress, to empathy building to tackle problems with violence. We could lead the way in these areas.

Diversity is an area in which we are demonstrably not succeeding in this country. We need more stories, to ensure that our literature is *of* and *for* all of us. The recent *Breaking New Ground* (2019) publication found only one writer of colour working in children's and young adult's in Scotland – and she is a university student originally from London, who may stay or not after graduation. We need a concerted effort to develop our Scottish BAME authors, those from backgrounds of socioeconomic challenge and those with other protected characteristics. In this we may have to consider a growing suspicion that being Scottish and, say, BAME may represent an intersection at which a person is invisible to the wider book industry, which may see both of those separate identities in limited and prescribed terms. Our backlist is not managed, studied or promoted. We could learn to tell the story of our children's literature much better, for now and for the future. There is life before and after Harry Potter.

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Braw Books for Bairns o Aw Ages

James Robertson is the author of six novels, four collections of short stories and many other books for both adult and younger readers. His novels include *Joseph Knight* (2003) and *And the Land Lay Still* (2010), both Saltire Scottish Book of the Year winners, and *The Testament of Gideon Mack* (2006), which was longlisted for the Booker Prize. For his 2014 collection *365: Stories* he wrote a story every day, each 365 words long, for a year. This led to a collaborative project with musicians Aidan O'Rourke and Kit Downes, including a travelling installation and, throughout 2020, the option to receive a daily story and tune for free: https://three-six-five.net.

It is more than 20 years since two writers first began to discuss the possibility of setting up a Scots language imprint as part of a wider project to make Scots more audible, more visible and more accepted within the Scottish education system. One of those writers was myself, the other was Matthew Fitt. Matthew had succeeded me as writer-in-residence at Brownsbank Cottage, the former home of the poet Hugh MacDiarmid, who had revitalised Scots as a literary language in the twentieth century. We shared a deep admiration for MacDiarmid's work, and it was therefore appropriate that the first conversation we had about our own Scots project took place under the roof which had sheltered him for the last three decades of his life.

Whereas Matthew grew up in a Scots-speaking household in Dundee, I was born in Kent and my family only moved to Scotland when I was six. English was the language used in our house, but throughout my childhood I was always conscious of this other language going on round about me: to move house was to *flit*, the shopping was *the messages*, a light drizzle was *smirr*, snow was *snaw*, your father was your *faither,* your head your *heid*, your armpits your *oxters*, your toes your *taes* and your little finger your *pinkie* – and you might get a *skelf* in it rather than a splinter, or *stave* it, not jar or sprain it. There were countless words, phrases and pronunciations that distinguished the speech of people I heard in the street, on buses and in shops from my own language, and I found this both fascinating and puzzling. Years later, discovering MacDiarmid's poetry cleared a route for me to begin to write in Scots myself. It was also key to my understanding that Scots was not just a spoken language but one with a

long and rich literary history, and that the connection between the oral and the written had been severely weakened, especially in the education system.

So although we started from different places, Matthew and I both habitually used Scots in our fiction and our poetry, whether we were writing for adults or younger readers. We often worked in schools where many of the children were natural Scots speakers, but we were conscious that the provision of Scots language materials at this period (the late 1990s) was not only limited in terms of quantity and quality but was also completely haphazard. Whether Scots was read, written or studied in the classroom was entirely dependent on the enthusiasm or interest of individual teachers. As a result, most Scottish children were given only occasional access to Scots texts or – in many schools – none at all.

Furthermore, spoken use of Scots was usually systematically excluded from the classroom. Physical punishment for speaking Scots in school had ceased in the 1980s, but children were still routinely humiliated, derided or 'corrected' for speaking in their own tongue, and there was considerable institutional hostility to the language. Only each January, in the run-up to the annual Burns Night celebrations, were Scots texts accessed, usually for the purpose of recitation. The resources used were often well-used photocopies of single poems, by Robert Burns and others, which from their condition had little appeal to young people and from their content had little direct relevance to their lives. This led to the perverse situation that Scots, the language used to a great extent by many Scottish children in their daily lives, had no place in their formal education – except on or around the day celebrating the birth of the national bard, whose spoken and written language was Scots!

What is Scots? There has been a long and, frankly, at times quite tedious debate about this. To be absolutely clear, Scots is not Gaelic, which is an entirely distinct and separate Celtic language, whereas Scots belongs to the Germanic family of languages. Some linguists argue that it is a dialect of English, others that although it derives from the same Northumbrian Old English roots it retained or developed enough characteristics to be called a language in its own right.

If it is *only* a dialect, then it is certainly a remarkably strong one, since it has its own set of distinctive dialects (including for example Shetland, Doric, Glaswegian and Dundonian), a huge written and oral literature stretching back 700 years, and two multi-volume dictionaries to catalogue its vast vocabulary.

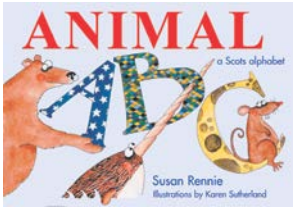
Whatever it is, it exists. A few years ago Polish academic Kasia Michalska produced a *Scots–Polish Lexicon* (2014). She did so after realising that many of her compatriots, arriving in Scotland under the impression that they were coming to an English-speaking country, struggled to understand not only the accents but also the vocabulary and syntax of many of the people among whom they were living and working.

Language definition is not just a matter of linguistics, it has political and cultural dimensions too. Depending on one's viewpoint, Scots is as close to English as Norwegian is to Danish, or as distinct from it as Catalan is from Spanish. It depends, often enough, on the strength or density of the Scots used by an individual or by the community in which they live. Like any other language, there are urban and rural varieties of Scots with different words, idioms and pronunciations. There are also many interesting connections with other European languages, as for example this table of selected Scots, Danish and English words shows:

Danish	Scots	English
barn	bairn	child
bygge	big	build
flytte	flit	move (house)
græde	greit	weep
kende	ken	know
fra	frae, fae	from
hel	haill	whole
efter	efter	after
hus	hoose	house
ud	oot	out
kirke	kirk	church

Many Scots words come from other languages such as French (*fash*, to worry or make angry, from *fâcher*; *sybie*, spring onion, from *ciboule*), or Flemish (*bucht*, a sheep pen; *doited*, daft; and *redd*, to tidy up, all come from this source), imported from the continent along with people and traded goods. Gaelic, too, has given us many Scots words, such as *ben*, *glen*, *loch* and *strath*. All languages are fluid, at least until they die, and new Scots coinages keep cropping up. Most recently, for example, the long-running saga of Brexit has been aptly described as a *clusterbourach*.

That Scots is nowadays used in conjunction with English, and that many speakers switch from one to the other depending upon the circumstances or to whom they are speaking, is not in doubt. Nor is this surprising given the official status and strength of English in every walk of life, from education to newspapers and broadcasting. This means that not everybody refers to Scots *as* Scots: some people identify themselves as speakers of 'Fife' or 'Hawick', 'slang' or 'bad English'. Yet when questions on Scots were asked, for the very first time, in the National Census in 2011, some 1.9 million people, or 38% of the population, said they could speak, read, write or understand Scots. This compares with about 87,000 people with similar skills in or knowledge of Gaelic. Self-identifying Scots speakers numbered 1.6 million, making Scots by some distance the second most spoken language in the whole of the UK after English.



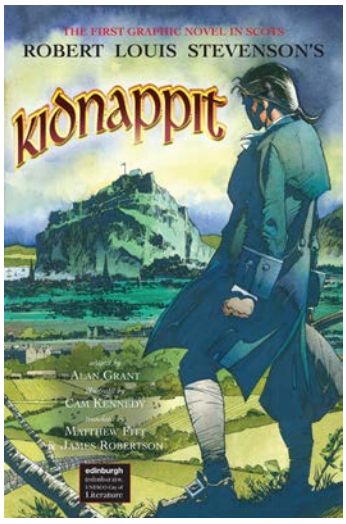
Matthew Fitt and I believed that there was an educational need, a cultural hunger and an untapped market for books in Scots for children. Any new imprint, however, would have to compete with the many, colour-illustrated, attractively designed books in English already available to young Scottish readers. We therefore needed some serious investment to match these production values, and to establish a programme of school visits and teacher training to overturn scepticism and prejudice in the education system.

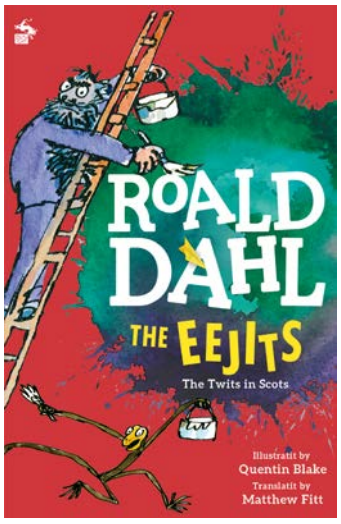
We were fortunate to have the support of Gavin Wallace, the Literature Director of the Scottish Arts Council (the predecessor of Creative Scotland). He advised us to go into partnership with an existing publisher who already had the necessary marketing, distribution and editorial expertise. We teamed up with Edinburgh-based Black &

White Publishing and in 2001 successfully applied for a large National Lottery-funded grant to run a two-year programme of publishing and outreach work. In 2002 Itchy Coo published its first six titles.

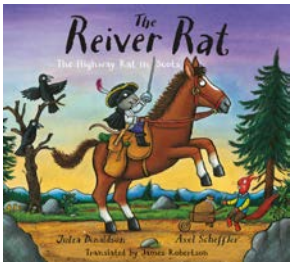
The imprint logo (see p.13), designed by one of our most popular illustrators, Karen Sutherland, shows a cheery black-and-white cow kicking its back legs up in the air. 'Coo' is an almost universally understood Scots word, but the term itchy-coo has another, subtler meaning. The online *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (https://dsl.ac.uk) defines it as 'anything causing a tickling, *specif*. the prickly seeds of the dog-rose or the like put by children down one another's backs'. We wanted our books to provoke just that kind of ticklish sensation, and not just among the youngest readers: our strapline was that we were making 'braw books for bairns o aw ages'.

In those first two years we published 15 titles, some of which – such as Susan Rennie's *Animal ABC* (2002) and *A Wee Book o Fairy Tales* (2003) by Matthew and myself – have been reprinted several times and have sold many thousands of copies. Perhaps more significantly, Itchy Coo demonstrated that there *was* a market for books in Scots, and that when Scots was introduced into the classroom pupils responded with recognition and enthusiasm. Since then, there has been something of a transformation, especially in primary schools, in official attitudes towards Scots. Recognising and engaging with the language that many children bring to school, rather than repressing it, encourages their linguistic curiosity and versatility, helps with inclusion and challenges the idea that their words or pronunciation have little value.





Meanwhile, beyond the school gates there was a growing demand for more books in Scots. In the 17 years of Itchy Coo's existence we have produced more than 70 titles, including the first ever Braille book in Scots, the first ever graphic novel entirely in Scots (*Kidnappit* (2007), a version of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic adventure story), a much loved series of board books and a range of books in translation. The first of these was Matthew Fitt's *The Eejits* (2006), translated from Roald Dahl's *The Twits* (2008). This was a huge success and has been one of our best sellers.



We have gone on to publish another five Dahl titles, most recently Anne Donovan's version of *Matilda* (2019). Another favourite source has been the work of Julia Donaldson, who initially suggested to me that I try to translate *The Gruffalo* into Scots. After a couple of false starts I managed to produce a text that I felt did justice to the original, and *The Gruffalo in Scots* appeared in 2012. Along with *The Gruffalo's Wean* (2013), *The Reiver Rat* (2015), *Room on the Broom in Scots* (2014) and others, it has sold tens of thousands of copies. We have published *Diary of a Wimpy Wean* (2018), *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stane* (2017), *Winnie-the-Pooh* (2010), translations of books by David Walliams, Alexander McCall Smith, and three Asterix titles. The appetite of younger readers for reading in Scots does not seem to be diminishing. Other publishers have entered the Scots market, which was one of our objectives when we set out all those years ago – to make the publishing of books in Scots both possible and normal.

This is not to underestimate the challenges that Scots faces in a globalised world where the power and reach of English is so enormous. We have learned much from comparing and contrasting the situation of Scots with that of other 'minority', 'lesser-used' or 'regional' languages like Basque, Frisian and Catalan. Although Scots is recognised as a language by both the Scottish and UK governments, it does not yet have the full legal rights enjoyed by Gaelic, and its close, often intertwined relationship with English means that there will continue to be debate over its status. Nonetheless, the outlook for Scots as a published and written language is far healthier than was the case a generation ago, and so long as people continue to want to read it and write in it, and most importantly continue to speak it in all its varieties,

then the shelves of our bookshops and libraries will go on being brightened by books in Scots.

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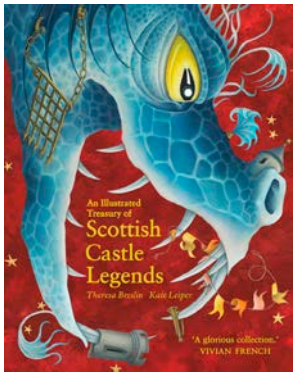
The Making of a Scottish Author

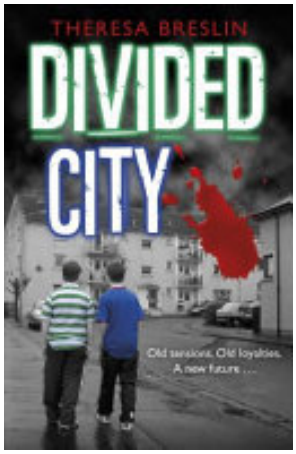
Theresa Breslin O.B.E., winner of many literary awards, including the prestigious Carnegie Medal, is the popular, critically acclaimed author of over 50 titles covering every age range. Her books have been adapted for TV, stage and radio, and are translated worldwide. Her work includes folk tales, humorous books, fantasy and time-slip adventures, historical novels, modern issues, texts suitable for challenged and EAL readers, short stories, poetry and plays. She is an Honorary Fellow of the Association for Scottish Literary Studies. In March 2019 she was awarded Scottish Book Trust's Outstanding Achievement Award. She is an active advocate for libraries and in June 2019 received an O.B.E. for services to literature.



One of my earliest memories is of 'joining the library' which, at that time, was a big old house in the local park near where I lived. My hometown, Kirkintilloch, was a fort on the Antonine Wall – one of the furthest northern points settled by the Roman Empire. The fort was situated right next to the library, the highest part of the town. In the Middle Ages a castle was built on the same site. As a child, this sense of being surrounded by history exhilarated me, and looking at the artefacts left behind by our ancestors was fascinating. I imagined the Syrian archers shivering as they guarded the Roman Wall while snow blew across from the Campsie Hills, and the soldiers on the castle barricades peering down in the dusk at the campfires of their enemies. It was even more exciting when I learned that a bag of ancient coins had been found in the park! On my way to the library, I always kept a sharp lookout for the glint of silver or gold in the hope of finding a hidden hoard. I never did. But, when I look back now, I see that I did plunder a huge mass of treasure. Not crowns or precious jewels, but the books I browsed and borrowed to read. The non-fiction books took me, by word and picture, up mountains, through jungles and over oceans. I decided that when I grew up, I'd be an explorer and travel to these places. Fiction by authors such as D.K. Broster, George MacDonald, Alan Campbell McLean and Rosemary Sutcliff wrapped me in other worlds: stories of dragons and daring deeds, mystery and magic, and tales of kings and queens and castles. Looking back, I can see the direct influence which brought about such titles of mine as *Across the Roman Wall* (2005) and the series of Treasury books:
An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Folk and Fairy Tales

(2012), *An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Mythical Creatures* (2015), *An Illustrated Treasury of Scottish Castle Legends* (2019).

When I was in primary school a shining star which sent a shaft of light into my mind and my heart was the teacher who used the last hour on a Friday afternoon to share stories. No 'Golden Time' in those days! Instead of our modern schooling schedule where the last hour on a Friday is used for child-chosen creative pursuits we had this amazing teacher who would read out to the class, week after week, chapters from longer, more difficult books. When the book was finished, another fabulous adventure would begin. We were allowed to put our heads on our desks, to close our eyes and rest, and even the most hyperactive child would pause to listen. And so I fled through Highland glens with *Kidnapped* (1886) David Balfour and Alan Breck Stewart; explored a *Treasure Island* (1883) in the company of Jim Hawkins, Long John Silver and Ben Gunn; and jousted at tournaments in the castles of *Ivanhoe* (1890), greeting Lady Rowena and Rebecca – and many, many more. I'm sure this gave me a sense of narrative, of the musicality of language and embedded story structure.



In my secondary school we had truly inspirational history and English teachers who probably went off-piste in the curriculum. I was not particularly studious and dates in history eluded me. I was more interested in the stories. We were exposed to a wide range of literature, essays, plays and poems. Creative writing was encouraged with contributions to the school magazine, drama groups put on plays and pupils were taken on outings to the theatre. The experience of seeing *Macbeth* at the Citizens Theatre was an absolute highlight of my school life. Never did I dream that in the future I would sit in the same theatre and watch a theatrical production of a book I had written (*Divided City* (2005)). These activities encouraged and developed a life-long love of story, produced in all its forms.

My childhood home was full of books; non-fiction on every topic: history, biographies, science and geography, and also a wide range of fiction – e.g. *Short Stories of Sherlock Holmes* (1982) by Arthur Conan Doyle, *Wee MacGreegor* (1902), *Peter Pan and Wendy* (1911), and heaps of traditional folk and faerie tales, like *The Well at*

the World's End (1951), fables, myths and legends, stories of all kinds, plays and poetry. My father had a good memory for poems and would recite these to amuse his children.

I'll tell you of the Ancient Gaels,
The ones the gods made mad.
All their wars are happy,
And all their songs are sad.

Being descended on one side of my family from a long line of Ancient Gaels I have a particular affection for stories and songs of doomed heroes and heroines. My siblings and I especially loved the more melodramatic ones, the contests of wits, the battles, the bravery, the stirring declarations, the noble deeds. I thrilled to the ballads and stories told to us by our parents. The family favourite, often acted out by myself and my brother and sisters, being 'Lord Ullin's Daughter' by Thomas Campbell. Long suffering aunts and uncles were coerced into watching our presentation of the Highland Chieftain's attempt to elope with his true love. Fleeing from the wrath of the girl's father, Lord Ullin says:

And fast before her father's men
Three days we've fled together,
For should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather.

Stirring stuff!

With my own recollections now on early childhood I realise the debt I owe to my parents and our extended family that I am familiar with the literature of my heritage, the great poetry of Scotland, from medieval anon texts to Robert Burns and Walter Scott.

I will be eternally grateful that, from an early age, I was imbued with narrative and a love of language, all of which has had a major influence on my work. Hearing first voices – primary voices – means that I am 'informed by Scotland' and thus as a writer 'formed' by its people, culture, geography, history, landscape and literature.

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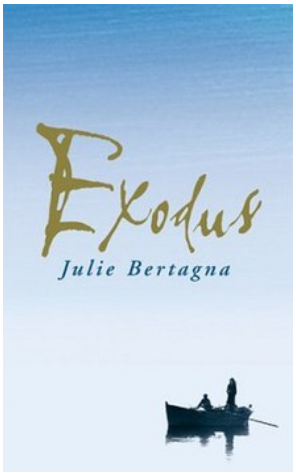
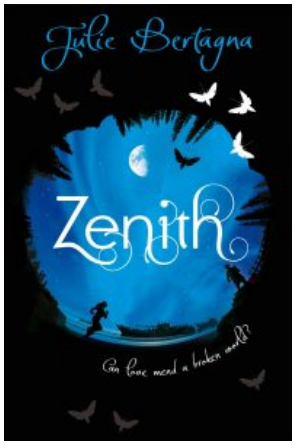
Breaking New Ground in Young Scottish Fiction

Julie Bertagna has written highly acclaimed books and short stories for children and young adults, published in over 20 countries around the world. Her award-winning Exodus trilogy ('brilliantly imagined stories of love and survival, set in a frighteningly realistic future') was one of The List's Best Books of the 21st Century, won a Friends of the Earth Eco Prize for Creativity and a Santa Monica Green Prize for Literature, and shortlisted for the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year. Five of her young adult novels have been nominated for the Carnegie Medal. Other major shortlists include the Blue Peter Book Award and the Booktrust Teenage Prize. Scottish awards include the Scottish Children's Book of the Year and the Catalyst Book Prize. *The Ice Cream Machine* was made into a children's TV series for Channel Five, with a version by the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee. *Wildheart*, a graphic novel on pioneer environmentalist John Muir (illus. William Goldsmith) was recently awarded a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard in the USA. She is currently writing her first adult novel alongside a younger book, and working with a screenwriter to adapt *Exodus* for TV. She is an experienced mentor for Scottish Book Trust's New Writer Awards.

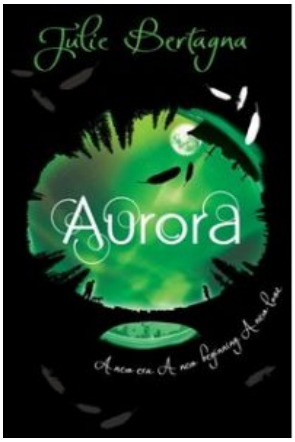


Almost every day right now, someone contacts me on social media to say how young climate activist Greta Thunberg reminds them uncannily of Mara, the teenage heroine of my eco-epic Exodus trilogy (2003; 2007; 2011), set in a futuristic Scotland. Greta gave me goosebumps the very first time I saw her, a teenager fighting to save her world, as she did indeed seem to be the embodiment of the fictional character I first imagined 20 years ago.

In *Exodus*, Mara tries to save her people in a drowned world of the future, but her story was inspired by a very real cry for help from a drowning island on the other side of the world.



One drenching wet day I sat in my favourite local cafe, waiting for the Glasgow rain to stop. It was 1999, before climate change was news. A snippet in a newspaper caught my eye. It was an SOS from the other side of the earth. A tiny island nation in the Pacific Ocean, Kiribati, was battling to survive storms and rising seas. The islands are so small they looked like a scatter of stones in the vast blue ocean, thousands of miles from anywhere else. Help us, the islanders cried to the outside world. Our ocean is rising. Save us from being swallowed by the sea.



The rest of the world sipped its coffee and turned the page, barely noticing this tiny story on page 22 of *The Independent.* I'm still not sure why I did. Maybe if I'd had an umbrella or the rain had eased off sooner, I would have skimmed over it too. But the rain was relentless and my notebook was full of useless scribbles about the story I was supposed to be writing. I was trapped in the cafe, looking for an escape from a story going nowhere.

So I paused, and the horror of this faraway SOS took hold.

As I walked home in my city in a rainy island nation at the opposite side of the globe, I couldn't stop thinking about the faraway islanders and their cry for help.

I began a quest to find out more about the plight of Kiribati, which was British until it gained Independence in 1979. I researched climate change and global warming and rising seas. Back then, the internet was in its infancy and there was barely any climate news, but I sourced the latest scientific papers and was aghast at what I found. I walked around Glasgow, a city of hills and valleys, imagining it struck by great floods.

I found a photo of a Kiribati child staring out at a savage sea, her village sandbagged, the sea almost at her door, an image so haunting I couldn't get it out of my head. I'd grown up in Ayrshire and Glasgow, on the (often) wild and wet west coast of Scotland. I thought of that coastline, the islands of Scotland, battling ferocious seas and storms, and tried to imagine what a future of superstorms and sea surges might do to them. What if climate change raced out of control? It seemed such an unlikely prospect, back in 1999, and yet . . . my imagination started to spin and I was gripped by an unnerving thought.

What would all our futures be if that were to happen? What if the disaster unfolding in Kiribati was a foreshadowing of a much greater global one?

All of a sudden a girl seemed to leap out of that future and into my head. She began to tell me the story of her battle to survive in a flooded world. I didn't so much write it down, I felt I was channelling her! Her story wasn't about an island like Kiribati at the far side of the world, about lives I felt I had no right to pretend I knew about. This was a voice from somewhere I knew well. A storm-wrecked Scottish island – but at the beginning of the next

century. I wanted to turn the story on its head and create a vision that would shake the readers, wake them up to a secret that was being kept about our future.

In 2099, Mara's island, Wing, in the North Atlantic, is drowning after a century of storm. Across the ocean, a boy called Fox lives in a hi-tech city that soars into the sky, way above the flooded ruins of what once was my own city, Glasgow. This teenage boy and a girl crash together like flotsam and jetsam in a tempest, through a miracle of technology, and they change the whole world.

At the top of a giant tower is the corrupt old ruler of this brave new world, Caledon, who has built a Great Wall around his sky city to keep out desperate refugees like Mara. My anti-hero Caledon pre-Trumped Trump, whom I'd never heard of back then.

As I wrote *Exodus*, the world was changing fast around me. Climate disasters began to wreak havoc. Hurricanes, wildfires, drought, ice melts at the poles, faster and vaster than expected. English friends living on Lesvos whom I'd met years ago on holiday, on an island that felt like a Greek paradise, have found themselves at the cruel heart of the refugee crisis as thousands upon thousands of child and adult refugees land, literally, on their seafront doorstep. Some wash up drowned after perilous journeys to escape war, famine, drought and all kinds of danger in their own lands – situations often intensified by climate change, as in Syria. Their perilous journeys are mirrored in Mara's futuristic plight in *Exodus*.

Most of my stories have Scottish settings because I've never forgotten the shock of delight as a ten year old on discovering that the book I'd borrowed from my local library in the suburbs of Glasgow (*The High House* (1967) by Honor Arundel) was set in Edinburgh. I'd never known such a thing before! Stories always happened somewhere else. But even in *The High House*, Emma, the young protagonist, is from elsewhere and she experiences Scotland as an outsider. There is a wonderfully rich vein of children's historical fiction set in Scotland but I sought to create a range of contemporary Scottish teen characters and stories; in Mara I particularly wanted a strong, believable, complex modern heroine – because at that point in time, there were barely any – in a story that pushed the boundaries of what young fiction could be.

As a young teacher, I had been hugely inspired by Theresa Breslin's books when I was seeking out contemporary Scottish children's fiction to engage my class of 11-year-old (mostly) reluctant readers in a challenging area of Glasgow, who just didn't see themselves or their lives reflected in the books in the school library. But Theresa Breslin's *Simon's Challenge* (1988) on schools TV (starring a young Joe McFadden) reeled them in, with its themes of redundancy, money worries and family breakdown. We watched the TV series then read the book and the children found lots to engage with, but when I cast around for more contemporary Scottish children's stories, I found them very thin on the ground.

Eileen Dunlop's atmospheric *The House on the Hill* (1987) was a favourite, and we created a fantastic class project based on Mollie Hunter's *The Walking Stones* (1976), an unusual mix of seers, standing stones and hydroelectric power which beautifully merges myth, magic and modern Scotland and opened my mind to the possibilities for exploring a new kind of Scottish children's fiction. Joan Lingard's ground-breaking stories set in Belfast and Glasgow were just too challenging for my young class, sadly.

I'd always wanted to write and had half-finished adult stories under my bed, but all of a sudden I saw that there was a great gap to be filled in contemporary Scottish stories for young readers. So I set myself a challenge. In my lunch hours, after I'd marked and prepped for the afternoon, I'd stare out of the classroom window at the enormous tower blocks surrounding the school and dreamed up my first novel, *The Spark Gap* (1996), a story of runaway Glasgow teenagers with a mystical Highland episode, inspired by the world right outside my classroom window, influenced by all of the above writers, and many others such as George Mackay Brown.

By the time I was writing my second novel, *Soundtrack* (1999), (which also combines that mix of otherworldliness, myth and modern Scotland I'd been percolating) contemporary teen Scottish fiction was really hitting its stride with Cathy MacPhail's *Run, Zan, Run* (1994) and Alison Prince's *The Sherwood Hero* (1995), alongside Theresa Breslin's Carnegie Medal winning *Whispers in the Graveyard* (2007), to be followed a few years later by

Cathy Forde, Linda Strachan and others – and recently by new talent Victoria Williamson's topical and powerful stories.

Now *Exodus* is on its fifteenth reprint, published in many languages around the world, and there's a special 15th anniversary edition, this story of how young people can change their world, even when the future seems sunk, has a whole new generation of readers.

It's truly frightening that the story has far more resonance now than when it was first published – thanks to Greta Thunberg, Extinction Rebellion and the now-critical climate crisis. But the ultimate message of the Exodus trilogy and its young characters is that the future is not set in stone – it's in your hands. Anything is possible, as Greta Thunberg is proving to us all.

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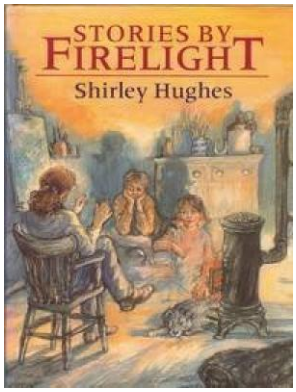
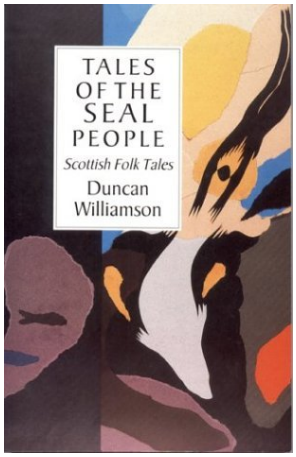
Selkies in Scotland

Ann Lazim is the Literature and Library Development Manager at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, London, www.clpe.org.uk, which holds a large collection of traditional tales retold for children. She is a member of the IBBY UK committee, a previous Chair and was co-director of the 2012 IBBY International Congress.

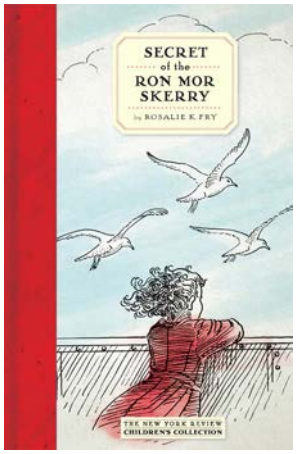


I believe my first encounter with a selkie was in a haunting retelling in Shirley Hughes' compilation of stories and poems *Stories by Firelight* (1993). A girl staying with her mother's artist friend Morag hears what sounds like a woman's voice coming from the sea. This leads to Morag telling her the sad story of a seal woman who sheds her skin, takes human form, becomes a fisherman's wife and bears him children. However, the desire to don the sealskin again and return to the sea is eventually too strong to resist.

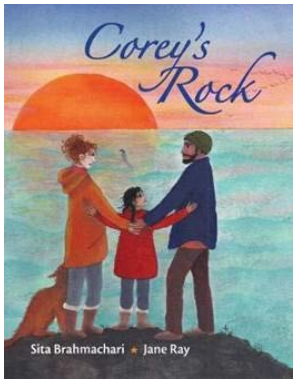


Since then, I've heard and read various versions of this tale, most of which come from the coastal regions of Scotland and Ireland. One of Scotland's foremost oral storytellers, the traveller Duncan Williamson, retold many of those which he heard directly from crofters and fishermen along Loch Fyne. Retellings of 14 of these were collected in his *Tales of the Seal People* (1992). In his introduction the opening words are 'In all my collections of stories from Scotland, the most beautiful are those that have been told to me by the fishermen and crofting folk of the West Coast. And these stories are of the seal people.' Each story is prefaced by a description of where and from whom he heard it. Many of the stories from this collection together with others published elsewhere were reprinted in *The Land of the Seal People* (2010), edited by his widow, Linda. I was fortunate to hear Duncan telling stories at one of the Federation of Children's Book Groups annual conferences in Edinburgh in 1994 and subsequently several times at the Beyond the Border Storytelling Festival in south Wales. His work as a collector of folk tales, as an oral storyteller and his collaboration with Linda to record written versions so they could be shared more widely is a significant contribution to Scottish literature for adults and children.

Haunting selkie tales have inspired many retellings for children in picture-book and novel form.

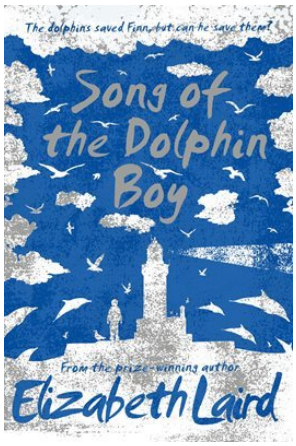


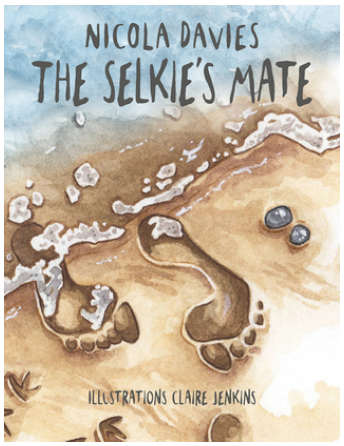
In *Secret of the Ron Mor Skerry* (2017), written and illustrated by Rosalie K. Fry, ten-year-old Fiona returns to the Scottish isles, where she spent her early years, to stay with her grandparents who have always lived there. There is a deep sadness in the family as Fiona's little brother Jamie is believed to have been lost at sea some years before. The strong connection to people and place are important in her determination to find Jamie and retain their island home, as is their mysterious ancestry related to the seal people. This evocative short novel is the book on which the evocative film *The Secret of Roan Inish* (1994), which transposes the setting to Ireland, is based.

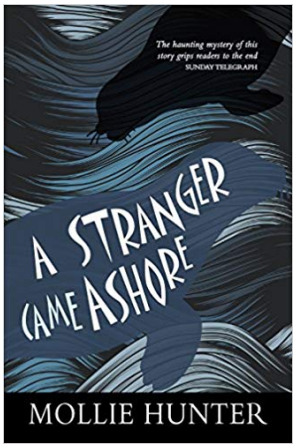


Sita Brahmachari subtly and skilfully weaves a selkie skin into another story about a lost brother, *Corey's Rock* (2018), which has a contemporary setting in the Orkney Islands. Jane Ray's luminous illustrations evoke the aquatic environment and the liminal space between sand and sea where Isla and her family are seeking a new beginning following the death of her brother Corey. Halfway through the story a Celtic knot design common to Isla's father's Yoruba heritage and her mother's Orcadian one twines across the page visually uniting the strands of her dual heritage. This book is a beautiful collaboration between an author and illustrator which brings together themes of loss and new beginnings, friendship and cultural heritage.

Elizabeth Laird has strong Scottish roots and in *Song of the Dolphin Boy* (2018), she creates a shapeshifting mother who is a dolphin rather than a seal but the link with the selkie storytelling tradition is clear. Finn lives with his father in a small coastal community in Scotland and is initially rejected by the other children in the village. After accidentally falling into the sea, he discovers why he feels different.

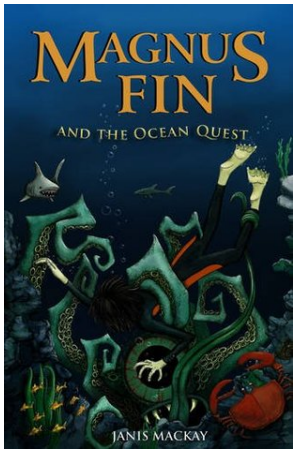




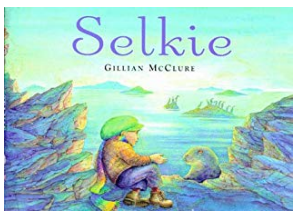


In Nicola Davies' version set on a Hebridean island, *The Selkie's Mate* (2017), one of the Shadow & Light series of illustrated short stories from folklore, a Selkie entrusts a young crofter with her sealskin, on condition that he takes care of it and returns it to her if she asks. After seven years of happiness during which time she gives birth to twins, the Selkie asks the crofter to give her back her skin. Three times she asks him, but each time he procrastinates, crafting gifts that combine natural elements of land and sea. The loss of trust wears away at their relationship until one day their children become the agents of their mother's restoration to her old life.

One of the foremost authors of Scottish children's literature, Mollie Hunter, wrote *A Stranger Came Ashore* (1975), a modern classic that draws hauntingly on selkie folklore. When Finn Learson appears in Black Ness, a village in the Shetland Isles, everyone assumes he is the survivor of a shipwreck. As the stranger insinuates himself into the community, 12-year-old Robbie starts to suspect that Finn is not who he appears to be and that his motives may be malign.

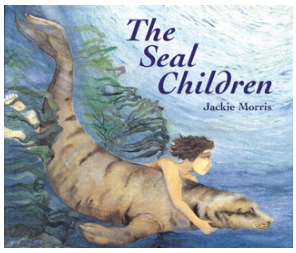


Janis Mackay was born and now resides again in Edinburgh. She spent some time living by the sea in the north of Scotland, surely the inspiration for her Magnus Fin trilogy featuring a boy who is half selkie. *Magnus Fin and the Ocean Quest* won the Kelpies prize in 2009. The trilogy continues with *Magnus Fin and the Moonlight Mission* (2011) and concludes with *Magnus Fin and the Selkie Secret* (2012). Janis Mackay has also written the text for the picture book *The Selkie Girl* (2014), illustrated by Ruchi Mhasane. Fergus, son of a Scottish fisherman, finds 'a dark shiny fur speckled with silver' on the shore and takes home his treasure, not realising it belongs to a selkie girl who has shed it while on land. She seeks him out and he returns her special skin. The two children become fast friends and selkie Shonagh ensures Fergus's father's fishing nets are always full.



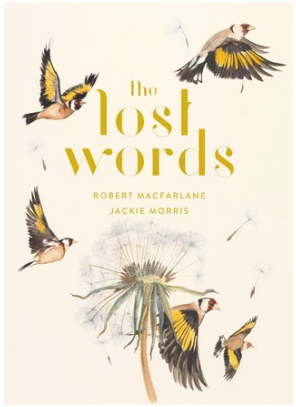
Friendship rather than romance is also at the heart of Gillian McClure's picture book *Selkie* (2015), in addition to themes of trust and co-operation between beings of the land and of the sea. Peter lives with his granny by the edge of the sea in Scotland. Longing to visit the nearby Seal Island, he follows the oysterman who knows a safe way to cross when the tide is low. Peter discovers that the

oysterman is plotting to catch a selkie, believing that she will teach him the language of the sea and reveal to him its riches. Will Peter be able to help Selkie escape from the oysterman's clutches? The entrancing illustrations, frequently framed by seashells and sea creatures, emphasise the overlapping of watery and terrestrial worlds.



Jackie Morris sets her picture-book version *The Seal Children* (2016) in a Welsh coastal village close to where she lives. The selkie in this story never forsakes her children Ffion and Morlo and both emerge into new lives as a result of their mother's love. Blues, mauves and greens blend as land, sea and sky merge in the evocative illustrations in this beautiful book which won the Tír na nÓg Welsh children's book award and was published in a new edition in 2016.

My fascination with selkie stories has lead me to seek out these tales in a variety of forms and I sometimes chance on other people who are similarly enchanted who give me clues to further variations. I've already mentioned the film *The Secret of Roan Inish* and *Secret of Ron Mor Skerry* the book that inspired it. Kathryn Graham's article 'Seaweed Soup: The Secret (Ingredients) of Roan Inish' (2000) explores the links between the film and the book. Ireland is also the setting for the animation *Song of the Sea* (2014), another selkie tale made 20 years after *The Secret of Roan Inish*.



In one of the most recent dives into the world of selkies I came across the song 'Selkie-boy' included in the *Spell Songs* (2019) inspired by *The Lost Words* (2017) by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris. I am sure that the magic of the selkie will continue to inspire storytellers, writers, artists and musicians for aeons to come.

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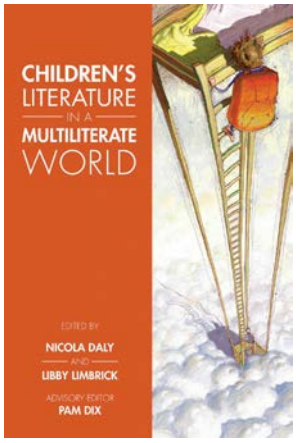
Review

Children's Literature in a Multiliterate World



This fascinating book brings together some of the papers that were first presented as part of the 35th IBBY International Congress in New Zealand with the theme of 'Literature in a Multiliterate World'. With such a rich theme it is not surprising that the editors of the book had to be very discriminating in their selection of material to be included and they are to be commended in their decision to further subdivide the papers into two sections.

The first section contains papers that focus on the ways in which children's literature can enhance intercultural understanding. The first papers from Australia and Samoa explore the importance of place, especially with regard to the establishment of identity. The first looks at depictions of home and how young readers understand the concept, while the Samoan chapter tackles the complex issue of children's literature in Samoan society and its place within what is largely an oral culture. The importance for young readers encountering material in their own language and recognising realistic representations of their own lives opens up this complex area and can be used almost as a mini case study for cultures in many post-colonial contexts. Another chapter curates and examines the work of Allen Say, the son of a Japanese mother and Korean father who lives and works in America. His personal experience of a complex cultural identity is played out in many of the protagonists in his picture books and the chapter is well named in part of its title of 'Complicated Identities'. The two books covered in the close reading deal with issues of finding or forming an identity that is individual and hybrid and which requires negotiation. Later chapters in this section examine the role of children's literature in seeking to generate empathy, particularly using Theory of Mind approaches. The chapter by Trish Brooking explores Theory of Mind

through a thematic approach using picture books that focus on children's rights, while Joanne Purcell adopts a developmental approach examining three picture books with different target audiences. The focus in this chapter is very much on the illustrations and how these can be interpreted by readers to provide insight into the mindset of the characters in the stories and thus how empathy can be encouraged and developed in young readers.

The chapters in the second section of the book focus more on the practical embodiment of some of the theoretical approaches discussed in the first section and consider how children's literature is being used to enhance intercultural understanding. The chapters in this section are a fascinating mix of focused and direct approaches such as the chapter exploring emotional literacy through metafictive picture books, specifically the work of the author and illustrator Emily Gravett in a bilingual reading context, to the much broader perspectives of an examination of Maori literacies in contemporary society, or examining intercultural understanding through talk and play using children's engagement with global children's literature as a catalyst. The final two chapters focus on developing reading in very different cultural and linguistic contexts: a multilingual reading programme in Flanders and a multilingual reading and writing programme in South Africa inspired by a storytelling approach. The common elements in these chapters include careful examination and reflection on the key issue of language and home and additional languages in a diverse world. There are differences and commonalities that can be traced through all these chapters.

As someone who spends a good deal of time involved with the education of beginning teachers and tackling the thorny issue of developing literacy skills as well as working with scholars of children's literature, this book was a strange mixture of very familiar territory with Rudine Sims Bishop's metaphor of 'mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors' being used a number of times to illustrate how children's books can and should be used especially in classroom settings. Similarly the use of Theory of Mind also felt quite comfortable because it is used quite frequently within our teaching context. However, where it was used it was effectively contextualised and summarised and used carefully to

consider the development of empathy in young bilingual learners, in general readers encountering the experiences of refugee children and developmentally across an age range.

Far more interesting, engaging and at times shocking were the chapters where I learned something new. The stand out chapter was Elisa Duder's chapter about Maori literacies. Not only was this reader well outside her comfort zone but I was left in complete awe of the complex literacy environment of Duder's partner and son and the wealth of understanding of story and tradition, of song and painting that is required of the literate person in their own spiritual community centre and others. The use and understanding of landscapes to help understand the background and history and all at the same time as encountering the New Zealand English language environment. As a teacher the depiction of the sharing of this tradition and understanding through personal and family intervention was an education and the cumulative nature of the process was an example I wish some of my students could better understand.

Another standout chapter, for very different reasons, was the chapter on multilingual reading and writing in South Africa. Some of the debates described here around the skills-driven approaches to the teaching of reading are depressingly familiar, but the range of languages and the lack of resources to celebrate and represent them was very sad. The reach and grip of apartheid is still evident but what seems more worrying to me is the pace of change – or rather little change – to address the situation. The description of the multi-generational storying approach advocated by PRAESA (Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) was uplifting and has such potential. I can envision this making a significant difference to children's desire to read when the stories they encounter are so much more relevant to their lives and experiences. Building on already strong oral storytelling traditions can only be a move for the better.

Also worthy of mention in reviewing this book is the extraordinary range of backgrounds and experiences of the writers of the chapters. From well-established international academic names such as Kathy Short to emerging academics such as Soumi Dey from Glasgow by way of India, from teacher educators to librarians, the

common element is an interest in and enthusiasm for children's literature in all modalities and for multiple purposes. At the centre of all the chapters in this book and in Cao Wenxuan's acceptance speech for the IBBY Hans Christian Anderson Award is the recognition of the importance of and potential for children's literature to make an impact on the lives of young readers. Whether this is in the form of opening the door to literacy practices or whether it is in developing children's affective domain or whether it is simply in celebration of the sheer pleasure of reading, the level of commitment and scholarship from these writers is glaringly obvious. Scholars in the area of children's literature will find this a useful addition to the academy.

Work cited

Daly, Nicola and Libby Limbrick (eds) (Advisory Editor Pam Dix) (2018) *Children's Literature in a Multiliterate World*. London: UCL IOE Press, illustrated, pb/sb 978 1 8585 6878 2, £24.99, 204pp. [Age range 18+. Keywords: academic; student; general reader; global reach; identity; belonging; empathy.]

Dr Maureen A. Farrell, University of Glasgow

The UK section of the International Board on Books for Young People

The next issue of *IBBYLink* is *IBBYLink* 58, Spring 2020 and will be on the theme of the November 2019 conference 'A World of Information: Children's Non-Fiction Books in the Digital Age'.

Articles on other subjects are also welcomed. Contributions to Ferelith Hordon: fhordon@aol.com.

If you are interested in becoming a reviewer for *IBBYLink*, contact Lina Iordanaki: linaiordanaki@gmail.com. New reviewers are always welcome.

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