FEATURING
The Rise and Rise of Crime Fiction
Darren McGarvey
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Look up showcase in a dictionary and it will tell you that it is ‘a situation or event that makes it possible for the best features of something to be seen’. So, what are the best features of Scottish publishing right now?

Throughout this magazine you’ll find stories of success, innovation and creativity. You’ll find writers and publishers confronting the hard truths of the world we live in – whether in the raw, unflinching and unputdownable phenomenon that is Scottish crime writing, or in the searing polemic of Darren McGarvey’s award-winning memoir Poverty Safari. What you’ll also find is a quiet – and sometimes not so quiet, sometime deliberately noisy – confidence and assurance. A belief in the innate value of writers and writing; a conviction that readers today don’t just want, but need, good books; and the ability to make those books a reality.

What this adds up to is a vibrancy, diversity and agility within Scottish publishing today that is as great as – to my mind, greater – than anything we’ve seen for at least the past decade. More publishers, more writers, more ideas, more stories. The world already knows Scotland as a place of stories. People are coming in record numbers to put themselves at the heart of landscapes that have called to them from the pages of books or the light of the cinema screen. But what we also want people to know – or, rather, remember – is that Scotland is a place of publishers, of writers, of thinkers, of poets. Familiar names, yes. But so many new ones as well. Far too many for us to be able include them all here.

So perhaps this is less a showcase than a snapshot – a glimpse, at this particular moment in time, of some of the most exciting things coming out of Scotland. A glimpse that comes with a promise. Look again in six months, or a year, and you’ll see something else – another award-winner, another piece of audacious innovation, another ground broken. Or, better yet, don’t look away at all. Just keep your eye on Scottish publishing.
Partnerships and prize wins brought a well-earned sales growth in Scottish publishing in 2018. Kaite Welsh takes a look at a year of exciting successes.
Although a tumultuous year in world events – again – 2018 was a positive one for Scottish publishing which saw sales growth and exciting innovation across the board. According to Nielsen, the Scottish market represents 8.5 per cent of UK market by value and volume, with the value rising by 2.5 per cent between 2017 and 2018.

The runaway success story for the year was Gail Honeyman's *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, published under HarperCollins. The debut was 2018's bestselling book across the UK, selling a staggering 806,469 copies and winning a spate of prizes over the year; including the Costa First Novel and Book of the Year at the British Book Awards. Award wins have had a major impact on sales for Scottish independents too, with the success of Darren ‘Loki’ McGarvey’s *Poverty Safari*, published by Edinburgh’s Luath Press hitting the headlines.

It’s not only individual books that have been garnering awards too. In 2018, 404 Ink became the first publisher to win a Scottish EDGE business award following a stellar first year of publishing that included the zeitgeist-capturing, Margaret Atwood-approved feminist anthology *Nasty Women*. Following this up with bestselling books from Chris McQueer, and publishing exciting up-and-coming talents such as Helen McClory, has seen them consolidate what they started. Co-founder of 404 Ink, Heather McDaid, says: “We’ve published exceptional authors, won numerous awards, achieved great press and quotes for our books. Establishing a new publisher from scratch is difficult, but we’re very proud to have managed to bring something new to the industry in just two years of existence.”

Another micro press, Charco, which specialises in translated fiction from Latin America, rounded off its first full calendar year with a Creative Edinburgh Start Up of the Year Award, while co-founder, Carolina Orloff, was named the Saltire Society Emerging Publisher of the Year.

That isn’t to ignore the impressive work done by the larger publishers. Canongate, one of the biggest players in the scene, had only good news – and some interesting trends – to report. “The most noticeable things about our 2018 was how the turnover growth was spread across more titles than in previous years and less reliant on one or two ‘hero’ titles,” noted Publishing Director, Francis Bickmore. “In the penultimate week of the year we had 33 titles in the BooksScan top 5,000 and 14 were selling over 1,000 copies.” They also noticed a “satisfactory” growth in backlist sales. Big names did play a key role - Bickmore describes “stellar performances” from Matt Haig, who had bestsellers on four separate bestseller lists for four different books (including his first ever children’s bestseller), Samin Nosrat, whose *Salt Fat Acid Heat* became a hit Netflix series and Leonard Cohen whose *The Flame* performed well domestically and internationally. This saw them win Scottish Publisher of the Year at the Saltire Awards, and making the shortlist “for a generous dollop of National Book Awards, British Book Awards [and] Books Are My Bag Awards.”

The Black & White list has seen a number of bestsellers in 2018, giving them a record-breaking year. Managing Director, Campbell Brown, pays particular tribute to *My Name is Doddie*: “Doddie Weir’s inspirational, funny and life affirming autobiography tackled his battles on the rugby pitch for Scotland and his current, serious health...
issue with Motor Neuron Disease (MND), and is on the longlist for the Telegraph Sports Book Awards 2019. His positive message has propelled the book up the bestsellers charts and his fundraising for MND research has seen his Foundation raise more than £1million in less than 12 months.” Black and White have also sold an impressive number of rights, including a “brilliant” North American sale of Nina de Pass’s debut *The Year After You* to Delacorte Press, Scout Press in the US picking up Kirstin Innes’s *Fishnet*, and Gabriella Bennett’s *The Art of Coorie* in France.

Saraband effectively programmed our festive entertainment with Amanda Thomson, author of *A Scots Dictionary of Nature* and Claire O’Callaghan, author of *Emily Bronte Reappraised*, appearing prominently on Channel 4 and the BBC. TV and radio coverage commemorating the centenary anniversary of the *Iolaire* disaster saw Saraband’s Donald Murray, whose novel *As The Women Lay Dreaming* explores the aftermath of the sinking of the *Iolaire*, featuring in many of these documentaries. Television also ensured that Highlands-based Sandstone had a good year too with the continued success of the Babylon Berlin series broadcast by Sky Atlantic. Last year also saw their novel *Sweet Fruit, Sour Land* by Rebecca Ley win the Guardian’s Not the Booker prize, while nature writing gave them critical acclaim and bestsellers in Andy Howard’s *Secret Life of the Mountain Hare* and Cameron McNeish’s *There’s Always the Hills*, which also won The Great Outdoors Book of the Year.

Outside traditional publishing, the impressive Scottish museums and galleries scene have produced some hits. The National Museum of Scotland’s *Rip it Up: The Story of Scottish Pop*, a whistle-stop exploration of the musical culture of Scotland, from Lonnie Donegan to Calvin Harris, accompanied the exhibition of the same name and both received considerable media coverage, book sales and visitor numbers.

The diverse nature of publishers and publishing in Scotland is to be celebrated and BHP have been leading the way in the country’s graphic novel scene, including a partnership with 404 Ink with the publication of *We Shall Fight Until We Win*. Last year also saw their publication *Freedom Bound*, on Scotland’s involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, delivered into every secondary school in Scotland.

Last year also saw the ambitious cross-partnership collaboration celebrating the centenary of beloved Edinburgh author Muriel Spark. Beginning with the National Library of Scotland’s ‘The International Style of Muriel Spark’ exhibition and Polygon’s publication of all 22 of Spark’s novels in a collectible series, the year carried on with partnerships with bookshops, libraries and book festivals across the world including the Edinburgh International Book Festival with a Muriel Spark strand throughout the August festival and a sell-out event at Edinburgh’s Usher Hall. The project culminated in the Scottish Government providing funds for every single library in Scotland, and every single school library in Edinburgh, to have a full set of the centenary Sparks.

It’s these partnerships that make Scotland stand out and the Royal Botanic Gardens of Edinburgh feels proud to be part of the wider publishing sector here. RBGE’s Publisher, Simon Spanton, says: “I’ve been struck by how creative and energetic Scottish publishing, both mainstream and specialised, is and how this is met and encouraged by equal innovation and effort by book retailers. The willingness to

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**Scottish publishers’ awards**

| 1. | *Poverty Safari* by Darren McGarvey (Luath Press) winner of the Orwell Book Prize 2018 |
| 2. | *Die, My Love* by Argentinian writer Ariana Harwicz, translated by Sarah Moses and Carolina Orloff (Charco Press) longlisted for Man Booker International Prize 2018 |
| 3. | Chris McQueer’s *Hings* (404 Ink) winner of the Saboteur Award 2018 for Best Short Story Collection |
| 4. | *The Blackbird Diaries* by Karen Lloyd (Saraband) winner at the Lakeland Book of the Year Award 2018 for the Bookends Prize for Arts and Literature |
| 5. | *One Button Benny* by Alan Windram, illustrated by Chloe Holwill-Hunter (Little Door Books) winner of Bookbug Picture Book Prize 2018 |
| 6. | *My Name is Not Refugee* by Kate Milner (Barrington Stoke) winner of the Klaus Flugge Prize 2018 |
| 7. | Denise Mina’s story ‘Nemo Me Impune Laccisit’ from Bloody Scotland (Historic Environment Scotland) winner of the CWA Short Story Dagger 2018 (Crime Writers Awards) |
| 8. | *Solar Bones* by Mike McCormack (Canongate) winner of the 2018 International Dublin Literary Award |
| 9. | *Sweet Fruit, Sour Land* by Rebecca Ley (Sandstone) winner of the 2018 Guardian Not the Booker Prize |
| 10. | *The Seabird’s Cry* by Adam Nicholson (Collins) winner the Wainwright Golden Beer Prize 2018 |
try new things seems key going forward. For us, working in the public sector, it’s been exciting to discover the potential for different institutions to cooperate with each other in promoting our books – the nature of what each institution does means we’re never in competition and can, instead, work together to show that excellent books can come from a wide spectrum of sources.”

This kind of collaboration looks set to continue in 2019 with an exciting collaboration between Floris Books and Historic Environment Scotland, each bringing their own expertise to a series of children’s books that celebrate Scottish history. Katy Lockwood Holmes, Floris Books’ Managing Director, says: “We’re delighted to be embarking on a joint publishing programme to encourage children to engage with Scotland’s history through fun, family-friendly books.”

What else will 2019 bring? Waverley Books’ Liz Small is encouraged by Scotland’s tourist footfall and Waverley’s expansion into European markets in 2018, and hopes Scottish publishing’s growing international outlook will lead to greater export success. Both Barrington Stoke and Edinburgh University Press will be celebrating milestone anniversaries. And everyone is relishing building on their lists. Canongate’s Francis Bickmore notes that “it would be great to see the kind of unified fiction renaissance for Scottish literary fiction like we had in the 1990s and which Ireland seems to be enjoying at the moment.” With publishers like these as the vanguard, this might just be our year.

Scotland international
Five books in translation to look out for in 2019

*Trout, Belly Up* by Rodrigo Fuentes, Charco Press

*An Orphan World* by Giuseppe Caputo, Charco Press

*The Fatherland Files* (book 4 of the Babylon Berlin series) by Volker Kutscher, Sandstone Press

*Nakedness* by Zigmunds Skujinns, Vagabond Voices

*Värgamae* by A.H Tammsaare, Vagabond Voices
The abundance and variety of Scottish crime fiction authors mean they are garnering attention and acclaim at home and abroad. Lee Randall explores the rise and rise of the genre.

It’s official! Crime fiction is Britain’s favourite literary genre according to statistics released by Nielsen BookScan. An impressive chunk of this popular – and lucrative – market originates in Scotland, home of Tartan Noir. Scotland boasts an above average pool of writing talent, plus supportive independent publishers, ever-alert to the emergence of new voices in crime writing.

Interviewed 10 years ago, Denise Mina raised points that remain pertinent today: “If you throw a brick on Sauchiehall Street you’ll hit someone writing a crime novel. We are attracted to why people are deviant. That makes us good at dark stories. Publishers are aware there is a big movement and are looking for the next new Scottish crime writer. The crime fiction coming out of Scotland at the moment is the best in the world.”

Tartan Noir superstars are global household names, enjoying pride of place on bestseller lists. They include Val McDermid, Denise Mina, Ian Rankin, Chris Brookmyre, Stuart MacBride, and latterly, Graeme Macrae Burnet, whose 2016 Man Booker Prize short-listing fixed the world’s gaze on Scottish indie Saraband’s Contraband imprint.

Rights to Burnet’s novels have sold in a wealth of foreign markets including German, French, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Russian, Czech, Greek, Portuguese, Estonian, Romanian, Turkish, Farsi, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, US/Canada, Australia/NZ, and India (in English), while a deal with Latvia is pending. That’s an impressive roster of foreign contracts for any publisher, much less a small, independent outfit based in a small country.

Saraband Managing Director, Sara Hunt, says: “I think the label ‘crime’ is so broad—represented by work from legends McIlvanney, McDermid and Rankin, to Mina, Brookmyre, Welsh and their contemporaries, with a little Scandi Noir influence, some very literary offerings, and a number of highly original outliers. It allows for a wealth of talent to find places within it.

“Scotland does boast an incredible embarrassment of riches in the sheer quality of the authors. There’s a strong cohort of writers holding up a lens to society (Doug Johnstone is a good example), crossing

“Tartan Noir superstars are global household names, enjoying pride of place on bestseller lists.”
boundaries (Michael Malone, for instance) and thrilling, scaring or entertaining readers (too numerous to mention, by far).”

For further proof of our appetite for local talent, examine the sales figures of former Strathclyde policeman Denzil Meyrick (Polygon), 2018’s most successful Scottish author published by a Scottish press. Meyrick’s novels are moving past our borders, reaching a larger audience across the UK and overseas, notably in Germany. Another example is the success of Claire MacLeary (Contraband). Since debuting in 2017, accolades for her Aberdeen-set novels include reaching the long lists of both the McIlvanney prize, and Good Housekeeping magazine’s crime novel of the year.

The fourth bestselling Scottish crime novel of 2018, Close Quarters, by Angus McAllister, was self published. He’s since signed with Polygon, who’ll release Murder in the Merchant City, his new book this spring. Self publishing was also the way into print for James Oswald, author of the successful Inspector McLean and the Constance Fairchild series, now published by Wildfire.)

Sandstone Press publish German author Volker Kutscher’s Babylon Berlin series, set in Weimar Germany (translated by Edinburgh-born Niall Sellar). Sales of the books were boosted by the popularity of a critically-acclaimed television programme based on Kutscher’s work. Sandstone also publish William McIntyre and Lesley Kelly, up-and-coming Scottish writers earning favourable reviews in the press and from bloggers. Their novels are set in Linlithgow and Edinburgh respectively.

In May, Canongate – already home to Ambrose Parry (aka Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman) and newcomer Alan Parks – launches Black Thorn books. Their first releases will be Catherine O’Connell’s psychological thriller The Last Night Out, and The Savage Shore by David Hewson. Hewson’s novels have sold more than 200,000 copies worldwide, while rights to O’Connell’s novel have already been sold in France, Italy, Germany, Brazil, Portugal and Spain.

Francis Bickmore, Canongate’s Publishing Director, says, “Since 1977, when McIlvanney blended Chandler, Camus and Calvinism with a whisky chaser in his masterpiece Laidlaw, Scotland has carved out an unparalleled reputation for crime fiction. Since Hogg and Stevenson, Scottish literature has been occupied with duality, reconciling our sacred and profane urges. Most crime fiction is drawing attention to injustice, and this fits with the Scottish philosophical tradition.”

Birlinn’s Marketing & Publicity Director and Deputy MD, Jan Rutherford, says, “The strength of Scottish crime fiction is quite simply down to the quality
of writing. The biggest change in recent years has been the growth in audio sales. In 2019 readers will be delighted to know there will be a new Denzil Meyrick novel out in July, and we are delighted to bring Douglas Skelton to a wider readership in March, with his superb new novel, *Thunder Bay*. Crime fiction is moving more mainstream and is being taken more seriously by festivals and critics across the UK – which can only be a good thing! Bloody Scotland is a particular high point in the Crime Writing calendar.”

Frances Bickmore cited the spirit of camaraderie among crime writers, whose veterans enthusiastically support and encourage new authors. Nowhere is that more evident than at Scotland’s crime fiction festivals, most notably Bloody Scotland, founded in 2012 by writers Lin Anderson, Gordon Brown, Craig Robertson and Alex Gray. It’s worth noting that Bloody Scotland also established a dynamic relationship with Kolkata Literature Festival, which has seen Koklata extend invites to agent Jenny Brown, and authors such as Abir Mukherjee, Doug Johnstone, and Val McDermid.

Festival programmer Bob McDevitt says, “It’s hard to pinpoint the Scottish continued fascination with crime fiction, but I do think it’s something we’re rather good at (look at the global bestsellers that have originated here). Every year at Bloody Scotland, through our debuts and spotlight sessions, we see amazing new talent. I’ve just read *From the Shadows* an Inverness-set debut by GR Halliday which has a wonderful foreboding atmosphere, and I think Alan Parks is a name to watch out for (*Bloody January* and *February’s Son*). Claire Askew’s *All the Hidden Truths* will linger long in your memory!”

The festival scene in Scotland is buoyant. In 2017, Aberdeen launched Granite Noir, a weekend-long celebration of crime fiction (full disclosure: I am the festival’s programmer), now in its third year. In 2018, Granite Noir sold more than 5,500 tickets, and averaged 63 per cent capacity across our author talks and workshops. Waterstones reported more than £4,500 in on-site sales. Last year also had Glamis Crime at the Castle, which attracted a dazzling roster of authors to their atmospheric venue.

Let’s not forget, adds Sara Hunt, “Scotland’s First Minister offers direct support in the form of participation in festivals and sharing her love of reading, especially of Scottish crime. And Creative Scotland and Publishing Scotland are increasingly getting behind international promotion of the genre. In short, the ecosystem is good. Or perhaps it really is down to the long hours of darkness in winter. Or something in the water. (By which, perhaps, I mean the Water of Life.)”

Above: Ian Rankin, Val McDermid and Denise Mina leading last year’s Bloody Scotland parade.
Below: last year’s top-selling Scottish crime novels from Denzil Meyrick, Ambrose Parry and Graeme Macrae Burnet

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**Criminally good reading...**

Five crime fiction novels to look out for in 2019

*Thunder Bay* by Douglas Skelton, Polygon

*February’s Son* by Alan Parks, Canongate

*Murder at the Plague Museum* by Lesley Kelly, Sandstone Press

*The Unnatural Death of a Jacobite* by Douglas Watt, Luath Press

*Miss Blaine’s Prefect and the Vampire Menace* by Olga Wojtas, Contraband
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When Darren McGarvey’s debut, Poverty Safari, became an award-winning bestseller, he found success brought more challenges. Peter Ross catches up with him

A few days before we were due to meet, but with no details arranged, Darren McGarvey messaged to apologise for having been slow to make contact. He’d been in bed, he said, “sweating out codeine”; an experience he described, perhaps unnecessarily, as very unpleasant. Here was what readers of his writing – the formal work and the posts on social media – might recognise as a typical overshare: the admission of a serious personal issue (addiction to painkillers), illustrative of a wider societal ill (the so-called “silent epidemic” of opioid addiction in the UK) and expressed in language that was both blunt and sharp with just an edge of the darkly comic.

McGarvey, who is 34, is the author of Poverty Safari: Understanding The Anger Of Britain’s Underclass, a word-of-mouth and critical success which, in 2018, won the Orwell Prize for political writing. Critical of a “poverty industry” in which the goal is not the eradication of poverty but the furtherance of the careers of those professionals who work with the poor, the book called on individuals to take greater responsibility for their own lives, and detailed McGarvey’s own journey – to use that worn-thin word – through alcoholism to sobriety. The dedication concluded, “PS: Don’t do drugs.”

We meet in a cafe on Glasgow’s southside. The area is called Battlefield. McGarvey, who also goes by Loki, the name he uses in his work as a rapper, is wearing a black jacket over a grey hoodie. He takes off his glasses, baseball cap and headphones, laying them beside his coffee. He has been feeling “burned out”, he says, “exhausted”. He has been sober for a few days and is staying in a hotel, detoxing.

It is January 4th. On December 30th, McGarvey put out a statement on Twitter (he uses social media as half-pulpit, half-confessional) explaining that since November 2017 he had been struggling with addiction to over-the-counter painkillers, which had led him to relapse at times on alcohol and other drugs. This period coincides exactly with the lifespan of Poverty Safari, which had been published in the November. So what happened?

“It’s quite frightening when you suddenly find yourself launched into a different level of public visibility,” he says, “and I struggled to cope with it.” The demands on his time and attention resulting from the rocketing success of the book led him to pay insufficient attention to the self-care necessary for on-going sobriety, attending recovery meetings and so on.

A specific incident triggered the relapse. He was in London, promoting the book, and had been invited on to Radio 4’s Start The Week. The immediate response to his appearance – 10,000 Twitter notifications, the book topping the Amazon chart – made him manic. He realised that his life might be about to change. Success, financial security for his young family: one more push and they’d be his.

Then, the following morning, about to leave for the BBC to talk to Jeremy Vine, he learned that he had been
dropped from the show.

“I just plummeted. I felt so awful.” McGarvey, perhaps as a result of trauma in his background, seems to have difficulty regulating his self-worth. Failure, he now felt, was to be his lot. “I was supposed to get a train home, and I just took a detour round the pharmacies. Before I know it, I’m sitting in Euston station putting these soluble pills into a cup, and that was it. I did that on and off at different points during the year when I was struggling. But there was a couple of times when the amount of pills I was taking was not safe ... I am an addict. I don’t know why I mess with these things.”

One reason: praise and respect is not good for him. “It does disorientate me. I’m a lot more comfortable when I’m working in a terrain where there’s a level of hostility being directed towards me.” He has chosen to be honest because he is not comfortable with being regarded as a model of recovery. “I do not feel strong,” he wrote in his statement, “and I do not feel brave.”

It is worth dwelling on this as a counter to the comforting publishing fairytale that having a popular success means one will live happily ever after. That said, McGarvey is certainly appreciative of his good fortune. The professional highlight of 2018 was winning the Orwell Prize, especially given that *The Road To Wigan Pier* had been a key influence on *Poverty Safari*. It is perhaps telling that the first question he asked, backstage, was, “Can anyone take this away from me?”

The significance of the prize, for McGarvey, is exactly that: it is his forever. Although he has sufficient self-awareness, and is enough of a canny self-publicist, to know that his back-story – son of an alcoholic mother who once held a knife to his throat – has been his entrée into publishing and the media, he also finds the fixation of journalists on that story reductive. *Poverty Safari* and the Orwell Prize are his new credentials. He is no longer just someone who had horrible childhood experiences and is willing to talk about them to the papers; he has become the author of his own story, spinning that straw into gold.

In any case, McGarvey’s upbringing, in the Pollok housing scheme, is more nuanced than is often reported. No doubt it had its Trainspotting-esque moments, but it was also “very celtic, folky”. His parents met at a rehearsal studio. At home, the drink would come out, but so would the guitars. “We all,” he says, “have poets’ hearts.” His aunt, Rosie Kane, was a political activist, later a Member of the Scottish Parliament, and very musical. McGarvey’s father is a musician who always encouraged him to write and perform. “I played drums, trumpet; I was actually acting in theatre before I got into hip hop.”

He has made a BBC documentary about hip hop in Scotland. He got
into the scene when he was 18. He was homeless and had just lost his mother, who died at 36 from cirrhosis of the liver. Was rap a kind of solace? “Certainly. There’s two aspects to it. One, it was a very literal way for me to express how I felt, which I was drawn to. Before hip hop, I was interested in drama, which is less literal. I liked the idea that I could go on a microphone and say whatever the fuck I wanted to say. At that time in my life I was really angry and upset.”

He began to feel ‘represented’ by this music and culture. “I was just coming out of my adolescence. I was cut off from my family. I would see my granny occasionally, and lie to her about the drugs I was doing. So most of my time was spent on my own, or with people who were into hip hop.” Older guys on the scene became mentors. They would try to teach him about personal responsibility, about taking care of his finances. Hip hop, he says, raised him.

McGarvey’s next book, Hostile Environments, will be published by Ebury in August. “The basic premise is: if we look at the Home Office’s policy on immigration, we see that same doctrine – an almost religious belief in the politics of hostility – across all of public life.” He has been on the road for a couple of months, researching the book while also making a series on poverty for the new BBC Scotland channel. “I’ve found that poverty is worse than even I thought, and I consider myself someone who is very informed. The term ‘food bank’ doesn’t really convey what we’re dealing with here. The scale of it is almost incomprehensible.”

He is in a very different place from where he was just a couple of years ago. He is a father of two young children (“Left to my own devices, I’m a deeply selfish person. But there’s not much room to indulge that when you’ve got kids”) and an in-demand commentator on politics and current affairs. His is not quite a Cinderella story – the rags are still visible beneath the ballgown, and one suspects he wouldn’t have it otherwise – but there is plenty of goodwill, perhaps in Scotland in particular, for McGarvey, his success, and the difficulty he seems to be having in adjusting to it. There is considerable interest, too, in what he comes up with next.

That being so, does he feel daunted by the challenge of following up the success of his debut? “Yeah, but what a brilliant position to be in.” There is pressure, he says, but he can’t bring himself to regard this as a problem. “If half the people who bought Poverty Safari buy the next one, it’ll still be a bestseller.”

What is Publishing Scotland?
Publishing Scotland is the network, trade and development body for the book publishing sector in Scotland. It represents a wide range of publishers and suppliers – both print and digital. Publishing Scotland acts as the voice and network for publishing, to develop and promote the work of Scotland’s publishers both nationally and internationally, to provide support and advice, and to coordinate joint initiatives to develop and strengthen the publishing sector in Scotland. Visit publishingscotland.org

Scottish Books International
Scottish Books International is a joint service on behalf of the literature sector in Scotland, dedicated to the international promotion of Scottish books, writers, festivals and organisations. Scottish Books International is led by Sasha de Buyl and supported by a steering group of Publishing Scotland, Edinburgh International Book Festival, Creative Scotland and Jenny Brown Associates.

For more information about Scottish Books International, please contact Sasha de Buyl at sasha.debuyl@scottishbooksinternational.org

Publishing Scotland
Foilseachadh Alba
Claire Askew
I BEGAN writing All The Hidden Truths – a novel in which a young man at a Scottish Further Education college shoots dead 13 of his female classmates – in 2014, but the idea had been with me far longer than that. I remember vividly the day of the Dunblane Massacre: it was three days after my tenth birthday, and I was at my own small Scottish primary school, not really all that far from Dunblane. I remember everyone around me trying to process the news that a man had charged into a school and murdered many of the pupils and a teacher. It was a loss-of-innocence moment for many of us, I think: the world certainly never looked fully safe again to ten-year-old me.

By 2014, school shootings were appearing in the news with alarming regularity. “This is an American problem, though,” people said, “it doesn’t happen here.” But it has happened here. Increasingly I found myself thinking, “someone needs to write a book about this issue from a Scottish perspective.” It took a while, but eventually I realised no one was going to, so I might as well have a go myself.

I’ve been a poet for a long time: I began publishing poems in small magazines in about 2004, and my debut poetry collection, This changes things, was published in 2016 by Bloodaxe, having been shortlisted for an Edwin Morgan Poetry Award. I wasn’t sure if I had the attention span for a novel: I’d never written so much as a short story, and breaking into fiction was a big adventure for me. But I think I’d spent so long thinking about the issues at the heart of the novel that by the time it came to write it, the words were just there.

The novel won the 2016 Lucy Cavendish Fiction Prize as a work in progress: I had 50,000 words and no ending, but the judges saw the story’s potential. One year (and many tricky redrafts) later, my amazing agent, Cathryn Summerhayes of Curtis Brown, sent the book out on submission. It went to auction, with four publishers putting in bids. All The Hidden Truths was published in August 2018 by Hodder & Stoughton, and was amazingly well received: a highlight was legendary critic Marcel Berlins making it a Times Crime Book of the Month. I took the novel on tour, stopping at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, Noirwich, Bloody Scotland, Wigtown Book Festival and London’s The Riff-Raff, among others. I’ve been so lucky to reach so many readers, and to hear about the ways in which the book’s themes have affected them.

In 2019, I’m looking forward to the publication of What You Pay For, the follow-up to All The Hidden Truths. It’s a novel about the closeness of siblings, and like All The Hidden Truths before it, What You Pay For also looks at ideas about toxic masculinity, and asks how well we can ever really know the people we love. There are also gangsters in it, just for good measure.

Kirsty Logan
IT’S IMPOSSIBLE to choose just one career highlight so far. It’s almost five years since my first book, The Rental Heart & Other Fairytales, was published. Since then, I’ve had four more books out (two novels, a story collection and a short memoir), written another story collection due out in 2019, recorded the audiobooks for both novels, won several literary prizes, read at festivals all over the world, taught and mentored hundreds of aspiring writers, co-hosted 22 episodes of a podcast, been on BBC radio dozens of times, been commissioned to write...
stuff happens. All I can do is attempt to

hundreds of locations, a cast of

sound, a different story: technicolour, full

outside. In my head, though, it's

doesn't look particularly exciting from

time is spent at a laptop, which

what I was saying. Sitting alone, making

unravel themselves. Getting an idea for

story threads suddenly, somehow,

quiet ones – sometimes so quiet that

since I was 18, and to know he's read my

Portable Shelter

discussion with her! The other is when

Warner, never mind have a filmed

me imagined she'd ever meet Marina

ever since. I don't think 22 year-old

dissertation on retold fairytales, and

Book Festival; I wrote my undergraduate

Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Edward Lear's nonsense stories,

chomping through

school – set at the task of writing

poems, visual art pieces,

related degrees and writing as much as

movement and strangeness onto the

get even a small amount of that colour, movement and strangeness onto the page – and that's when publishing comes in. Without the actual, physical book, I wouldn't ever be able to let anyone else into this world I've made. With a book, I can open the door and invite the reader in – and then none of us are so alone.

2018 was my year of trying new things: screenwriting (TV, features and short films), collaboration (an Angela Carter-inspired album with musicians Kathryn Williams and Polly Paulusma), podcasting (Teenage Scream, lovingly dissecting 90s teen horror), opera libretti (I'll be honest, that one didn't go so well).

In 2019, I want to continue to tell stories in as many different ways as I can. The one thing I know is happening in 2019 is that on Halloween, Harvill Secker will publish my collection of dark feminist horror stories, Things We Say in the Dark. Other than that, I'll be at my laptop, dreaming worlds. I hope at some point I can open the door and let you in.

Helen McClory

I THINK every writer starts as a reader, and that is where I began, as a child staying up past any reasonable bedtime chomping through George's Marvellous Medicine and Matilda, The Borrowers, Edward Lear's nonsense stories, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, Les Misérables, Swallows and Amazons. Permission to write myself came at school – set at the task of writing poems and stories, I would fill pages and pages in my wonky handwriting. For all the enjoyment there was a constant frustration at the visible gap in quality between my own writing and the writing in the books I loved. With other writers I think it's the case too, that itch that makes us keep trying, the urge to hide the grit that ends up making the pearl. A pearl made mostly of grit, perhaps. There was always the voice that solemnly wondered why I had the arrogance to think I could be a writer. But what else would I do with myself, if not this?

I duly (and gratefully) spent a lot of time taking literature and writing related degrees and writing as much as I could, while scraping by at day jobs I variously tolerated or slipped away from. I travelled, working abroad as an English language teacher in Italy, Catalonia and Australia, and as a dog walker in New York. Over a 12-year period I wrote: a novel that helped me pass my PhD at the University of Glasgow but was never published; a collection of short strange fiction, On the Edges of Vision, put out by a tiny American press and that did better than my expectations, winning the Saltire First Book of the year in 2015; another novel, Flesh of the Peach, that sat in a drawer for four years before being published by a press that immediately went under, and most recently another collection, published last year, called Mayhem & Death, written while my dear father, a great reader of books, was dying. There is another novel too, currently in the hands of my agent. If all I can do is write, then, I told and tell myself, I must write. In the chaos of existence, we try to find our through-lines, our way of being part of life, art, and the now. Make small worlds or experiments of language, or find it best in dizzying fragments, and for perhaps a more sustaining purpose – for the imaginary readers, the ones who will tender the story, find a temporary shelter in the words; the ones like us. Sometimes in the course of trying to write, day jobs overwhelm, as is the case in the past three months, where I have had little to no time to do any writing at all—so in 2019 I am very much looking forward to a residency I will be undertaking in Tuscany in March. Bliss is uninterrupted, financially-secure writing time. I suspect there will be a good amount of reading time in there too.

Chris McQueer

I STARTED writing around three years ago and since I finished my first short story about a moth trying to take over a guy’s mind, back in 2016, it’s been a total whirlwind. Initially, I was really worried about how my pals and family would react to me giving writing a go. Coming from a working class background, the tendency is to cast doubt on other people who pursue creative endeavours or anything out of the ordinary really. Luckily that hasn’t been the case and everyone I know is on my back at all times making sure I’m giving it my all.
Moving to a different medium let me experiment with styles. I became known as a comedy writer after Hings was published but I’m keen to branch out and try weirder, darker and more dramatic stuff as well. I really want to try writing for TV as well.

Either adaptations of my stories or something original. My ultimate goal is to follow a similar career path to the likes of Charlie Brooker and Jordan Peele who’ve both went from writing comedy then into more sinister tales. One day I’d like to write and direct a film but for now I’ll be happy if I can just get to the end of this novel.

Malachy Talack

WHEN writing my first book, Sixty Degrees North, the goal was singular. Publication was the point towards which I oriented myself. It was the hope that kept me going. What lay beyond that horizon seemed so distant to me then, and so much up to chance, that I barely thought of it at all.

The principal result of this lack of expectation, when my book did find a publisher, was gratitude. Each positive review, each letter from a reader, each round of audience applause, seemed the most astonishing good fortune. That feeling has not abated.

Since Sixty Degrees North was published, in 2015, two more books have followed: The Un-Discovered Islands, in 2016, and The Valley at the Centre of the World – a novel – two years later. Each of them has found new readers across the United Kingdom, each has been published in North America, and each has been (or is currently being) translated into other languages, in Europe and beyond. Other writing too has come: commissions from magazines, and from the BBC; essays, short stories and articles; work for broadcast and publication, online and in print.

What has most surprised me though, over these past few years, has been the pleasure I’ve found in speaking to audiences, at festivals and in bookshops. What at first seemed daunting has since become deeply rewarding. Sharing and discussing my work, answering questions, interacting with readers: there is a thrill of both intimacy and immediacy to it that is entirely unlike the solitary business of writing. Yet such events have helped me think differently about my work, about how my words are read. They have, I hope, improved the way I write.

Most of these events of course have been to ‘home crowds’, in Scotland, and elsewhere in the UK. But I’ve also travelled further afield – to Australia, to France, to the United States – and these trips have been among the most enjoyable times I’ve had as a writer. A particular highlight came in 2017, when I was invited to take part in Edinburgh International Book Festival’s ‘Outriders’ project. For several weeks I travelled by car through the US, from North Dakota to Louisiana, alongside the American novelist Jennifer Haigh. It was an experience that will stay with me always.

This coming year brings yet more travel. In addition to events planned within the UK, I will be attending the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature in Dubai, and the Cóirt Festival in Galway, Ireland. I have also been invited, later in the year, to speak with university students in Japan. Back in the UK, my novel, The Valley at the Centre of the World, will get its paperback release, from Canongate, in March.

Besides all of this, I will be spending a great deal of my time alone, at home, working on my fourth book. That prospect – of shaping new sentences on the page – sometimes leaves me daunted, but never less than grateful.
As Scotland’s Year of Young People drew to a close at the end of 2018, it was clear that a national commitment to the emotional growth of children and teenagers was partly going to take place through books. With Canongate, Matt Haig saw his first children’s bestseller and smaller presses have been doing some exciting work both in Scotland, and particularly in Scots, which is starting to attract wider attention.

Curly Tale, who also run the children’s bookshop in Wigtown, Scotland’s National Book Town, are in a unique position as both booksellers and publishers. Publisher Jayne Baldwin says “From [the bookselling] viewpoint it remains buoyant, with board books always in demand by parents and particularly grandparents. Although we have had titles rejected by the bigger bookselling chains due to price, as booksellers we find that many customers are looking for a high quality children’s book and price is a secondary issue.” This is backed up by Floris, with MD Katie Lockwood-Holmes suggesting that “beautiful children’s books and exciting new voices, both in writing and illustration, will never go out of style.”

Floris have strengthened their already market-leading Scottish children’s imprint, Kelpies, with the addition of new voices such as Victoria Williamson (The Fox Girl and the White Gazelle) and what they describe as “explosive sales for instant classics” such as The Treasure of the Loch Ness Monster. They have also expanded into new markets with a range of titles called Fact-Tastic Stories from Scottish History, “which combines rigorous non-fiction with emotionally engaging narrative for Scottish school children.”

Young Adult literature seems to have lost none of its popularity with both the market and readers, and Scotland has seen some critically well-received titles coming out from both publishers and authors, including Sophie Cameron’s 2018 debut Out of the Blue which combined magic realism with a touching queer coming of age narrative. Black and White have had success with Akemi Dawn Bowman’s YA debut Starfish and Estelle Maskame’s bestselling DIMILY series concluded with Just Don’t Mention It, eagerly awaited by her fans around the world.

Graphic novel publisher BHP seems uniquely placed to explore this market giving the increasing popularity of the medium, and they are attacking it with their customary ambition, developing YA titles for 2020 and pitching them to TV and film producers.

Despite the temptations of technology, Kaite Welsh finds that the appetite for children’s books is as healthy as ever. Young Adult literature seems to have lost none of its popularity with both the market and readers, and Scotland has seen some critically well-received titles coming out from both publishers and authors, including Sophie Cameron’s 2018 debut Out of the Blue which combined magic realism with a touching queer coming of age narrative. Black and White have had success with Akemi Dawn Bowman’s YA debut Starfish and Estelle Maskame’s bestselling DIMILY series concluded with Just Don’t Mention It, eagerly awaited by her fans around the world.

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other storytelling out there through different and powerful media: the dreaded automatically starting next episode of the Netflix boxset, the hooky pull of social media, the immersive reach of gaming and cinema, the intimacy of podcasts. But as the oldest technology of the lot, books are still competing.”

EDUCATIONAL publishing is never without its challenges, and indeed that word comes up often when many in the industry reflect on 2018. “The curriculum,” notes Rosie Howie, Publisher at Hodder Gibson, “provides flexibility to students and teachers to cope with the demands of our ever-changing society but means it can be difficult to support with the right services.”

Nevertheless, there is confidence and cautious optimism for the future. Now that the National Qualification exams have been revised, publishers like Hodder Gibson, Leckie and Leckie and Bright Red can move forward updating titles and make the progress on new publishing and digital developments that was delayed in 2018. There is a lot of effort in creating a personality or trusted brand to appeal to teachers, students and parents alike.

Not all educational publishing is destined for the home market – Glasgow-based Geddes and Grosset/Waverley Books have arguably one of the biggest back catalogues of educational and children’s titles in Scotland and their focus on the export of affordable reference books, grammar titles, bilingual, health and early learning series to a wide, international market is...

Choose your own adventure
Five children’s books to look out for in 2019
The Stone of Destiny by Caroline Logan, Cranachan
Auntie Robbo by Ann Scott-Moncrieffe, Scotland Street
Summer Bird Blue by Akemi Dawn Bowman, Ink Road
Outcasts by Claire McFall, Floris
One Shot by Tanya Landmann, Barrington Stoke

Kaite Welsh finds Scotland’s publishers rising to the challenges in the educational and academic sectors
The International Year of Indigenous Languages is a United Nations campaign for 2019 that aims to raise awareness of the endangerment of indigenous languages across the world. In Scotland, as in the UK as a whole, people speak many languages but the two indigenous languages, Gaelic and Scots, have seen an increase in activity and interest over the past five years.

A conservative estimate put total book sales in 2018 in Scotland alone at 15,202 with a value of £113,528 and covering a wide range of genres. Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the titles at the top end of the bestsellers are translations of popular works, a tribute to the list building of the Scots imprint Itchy Coo. Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stane was the bestselling Scots title of the year, and Itchy Coo’s backlist of translations of *The Gruffalo*, *Tintin* and David Walliams’ *Mr Stink* all make an appearance in the chart. But digging into the data reveals some interesting twists. Gaelic dictionaries and phrasebooks are well represented along with a book on Scots grammar, suggesting a real commitment to both languages as tools for enjoyment and creation.

The Gaelic Book Council’s Director Alison Lang confirms the growing interest in Scots and Gaelic learning: “Dictionaries and Gaelic-learning materials are consistently among our bestselling titles, with *The Essential Gaelic Dictionary* topping the list.” Will future bestseller charts see the inclusion of writers who have consulted them?

In academic publishing, Edinburgh University Press are keeping an eye on Plan S Open Access and readers’ move to digital, with Anna Glazier, Head of Marketing noting “We are seeing a shift in sales from print to digital, particularly for our older books. As an academic publisher it’s heartening to see an uptick in revenue based on actual usage.” Their careful balancing of digital and print sales, and their offer to a variety of territories meant 2018 was a record-breaking year for the company, with a sales growth of 6 per cent from 2017. As they head into their 70th anniversary year, they show no signs of slowing down with plans to produce 224 new titles.

Lack of diversity across children’s and YA literature has been a key concern over the past few years (the Reflecting Realities report showed only 1 per cent of books for 3-11 year-olds published in 2017 had a BAME protagonist). Barrington Stoke, who won the IPG Diversity Award in 2016, are clear about their commitment to changing the status quo “until such reports are not needed.” They anticipate that “trends for bold girls and inspiring female characters will continue into 2019” along with a continued growth in popularity for non-fiction and fact-based books.

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The rich variety and versatility of Scots dialects – Glaswegian, Orcadian, Shetlandic and Doric are reflected in sales in 2018 – means there’s a huge scope for creation.

Alison Lang is keen to point out the growing variety of successful books in Gaelic and Scots. She says: “Also popular are non-fiction titles with
a specific geographical focus, such as Murchadh Peutan’s memoirs of Skye and Kenya, Sùil air ais anns an Sgàthan, published by Clàr. Iasad Rann, a collection of John Maclean’s poetry published by the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society also sold well, and in contemporary fiction, Angus Peter Campbell’s latest novel Constabal Murdo has made a splash, as part of the new Ficsean Luath imprint.” Luath Press have always had Gaelic books on their list, but in creating their new imprint are showing a renewed vigour in seeking out the best Gaelic talent.

Acair, based in Stornoway, and the largest Gaelic publisher of general trade titles, published the poignant The Darkest Dawn: The Story of the Iolaire Tragedy to great acclaim at the end of 2018 to mark the 100th anniversary of the maritime disaster. They remain the largest publisher of children’s titles, especially for pre-school, and recently celebrated their 40th anniversary.

All these books are an investment in languages which historically have seen a decline but which are tenaciously surviving into the 21st century, carrying with them the wealth of thought, culture, imagination and world-view which only languages can carry – and in this the printed book is vital as a means of recording and communicating. 2019 sees the publication of Moder Dy, the debut poetry collection from Roseanne Watt, winner of 2018’s Edwin Morgan Poetry Prize, who writes in English and Shetlandic. The new generation of writers in Scots and Gaelic are a diverse bunch bursting with energy and ideas – and we can’t wait to see what they do next.

Itchy Coo: speaking our language

Itchy Coo is Scotland’s only dedicated publisher of Scots language books. Founded in 2002 by James Robertson and Matthew Fitt, Itchy Coo is an imprint of the Edinburgh publishing house, Black & White. Now in its 17th year, Itchy Coo has done what it set out to achieve: more people than ever are reading in Scots, especially young people.

But why on earth would you read in Scots? As one English teacher once put it while looking down their nose at an Itchy Coo book, ‘I can’t be bothered reading this!’ But for those who can be bothered – and Itchy Coo’s sales have shown there are – reading in Scots puts Scots speakers in touch with Scotland and with a fundamental part of themselves which in many cases had been denied to them: reading in your own language.

Take any language community in Europe – whether English, French, German, Italian or Irish, Catalan, Basque or Frisian – and imagine the only time the majority of speakers of these languages saw their languages written down was in the funny papers or once in a blue moon in a poem.

And then take Scots.

Traditionally the experience of most Scots speakers was that they would only ever stumble across their language in written form in either The Broons or Oor Wullie or once a year in the January ritual of learning a Burns poem by heart for the obligatory school ‘Scottish’ concert.

Reading in Scots is good. Reading all kinds of things in Scots – stories, plays, translations of classic literature, non-fiction – opens up new worlds and new ways of seeing those worlds. Reading Scots with an open mind in the twenty first century rebalances the disdain and neglect shown to the language and its speakers in the previous one.

Itchy Coo proudly and without apology or shame continues to publish the highest quality of books in Scots for bairns and weans o aw ages.
Scottish books are inspiring travellers from all over the globe. Philip Miller discovers how Scotland’s tourist destinations are attracting visitors looking for a more literary experience.

Few writers would think that the words they so carefully put down on the page will lead to others exploring the real world in a different way.

When Ian Rankin pens his Rebus detective thrillers, or when Diana Gabaldon conjured 18th century Scotland for her bestselling Outlander series of time-travel romantic dramas, the desires of tourists were far from their mind.

But the inspiration millions of readers have taken from the printed pages of those who have conjured Scotland – ancient and modern – in print, has led to a sizeable, and growing, industry in literary tours of Scotland, and tourism in general.

It is not for nothing that VisitScotland, the tourism body for Scotland, now suggests trips like a 12-day excursion for the fans of Outlander to see the places where their literary heroes have lived and loved. These historic sites in Scotland have been experiencing what has been dubbed the ‘Outlander effect’, with a surge in visitor numbers in the last two or three years, following the debut of the series in 2014.

Blackness Castle, used as a substitute for Fort William in the series, has seen the biggest rise in visitors, up a remarkable 72 per cent from April to June in 2017. Other castles have seen similar uplifts in interest, including Doune Castle, Aberdour Castle and Linlithgow Palace, as has Glasgow Cathedral.

Overall, this has led to a general boost in tourism, which reached record levels in the last year. Much of the increase, it should be noted as Brexit fills the pages of the press and the airwaves, came from European visitors.

The ‘Outlander effect’ may be repeated elsewhere. Certainly Fiona Hyslop, the Culture Secretary for Scotland, has said she hopes two recent historical epics filmed in Scotland will lead to more tourist visits. The first, released
in late 2018, was Outlaw King, about Robert the Bruce. The second film, released early in 2019, has more literary ties: Mary, Queen of Scots, starring Saoirse Ronan in the title role, was shot in a number of castles and other locations in Scotland last year. It was itself based on a book, John Guy’s biography, My Heart is my Own: The Life of Mary Queen of Scots.

VisitScotland are highly aware that the literary landscape, as they call it, can attract potential visitors to the country. Recent years have seen some substantial developments on this theme. There is, for starters, a dedicated literary section on the VisitScotland website, designed to attract international visitors whose interest has been piqued by books and reading. The tourism body clearly sees the potential benefit: it has worked with the Literature Alliance Scotland, the Scottish Book Trust, Edinburgh City of Literature (the capital has the official UNESCO designation), Publishing Scotland, and others, on how to draw literary tourists to the country. VisitScotland has also teamed up with the University of Glasgow on a book. Entitled Literary Scotland: A Traveller’s Guide, it is written by the eminent academic, Professor Alan Riach, and details settings for novels, scenery that inspired poetry, as well as the more factual details of the birthplaces and homes of distinguished writers including some familiar and unfamiliar names. Robert Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Hugh MacDiarmid are featured, as well as Mary MacLeod, John Buchan, Irvine Welsh and the former Makar or National Poet, Liz Lochhead.

There is also a Scottish Storybook Trail for younger bibliophiles. This map highlights locations and inspirations for famous children and young people’s books. It includes, as you may expect, the works of JK Rowling, pointing to the real Tom Riddle’s grave in Greyfriars Kirkyard (Riddle being the real name of the evil Lord Voldemort) as well as the Glenfinnan Viaduct (across which the Hogwarts Express swoops in the Harry Potter movies). Elsewhere there are attractions associated with JM Barrie, the creator of Peter Pan, Kenneth Grahame’s The Wind in the Willows, Robert Louis Stevenson, and the Isle of Coll, inspiration for Katie Morag, the books and TV series created by Mairi Hedderwick.

Edinburgh, the first UNESCO
City of Literature – a title which reflects its considerable literary history – has several tours of its own. Ken Cockburn, a poet and storyteller, runs tours with poetry readings at each location, and Mercat Tours also run trips around the city. There is Invisible Edinburgh where the guides have all experienced homelessness, and one tour looks at the ‘Trainspotting Generation’ in the north of the city.

And, of course, Edinburgh is home to one modern fictional detective: Inspector John Rebus. There is a Rebus Tour, run by Colin Brown, that has the seal of approval from Ian Rankin, who says: “I set out to write novels which would explore contemporary Edinburgh and that take the reader into the City’s secret heart, where few tourists go. Colin Brown consolidates this with his entertaining and knowledgeable walking tours.”

Glasgow has its tours too, including the Merchant City Trad Trail, which starts from the Scottish Music Centre in the Merchant City, focussing on the songwriters and storytellers of its folk and roots scene.

And it seems, to this writer at least, there may be some gaps in the market. Glasgow could be host to an Alasdair Gray tour: not only to the literary sites related to the polymathic genius, and some of the locations alluded to in his masterpiece, Lanark, but also the art works he has given to the city, including the murals in Óran Mór and the Hillhead underground station. Then, perhaps there could be an Iain Banks trail all over Scotland, but perhaps one linked to his contemporary novels, such as Complicity and The Bridge, rather than his phantasmagorical science-fiction novels of deep space, written as Iain M Banks. But we might need to wait to the 23rd century for that.
Kaite Welsh talks national treasures

SCOTLAND takes pride in its heritage and tourist industries, and nowhere is that more evident than in the publications the heritage publishers produce each year. The National Museum of Scotland has found that the current tourism boom in Scotland and increased interest in areas of Scottish history is good news for the heritage market, but are wary of reacting to trends and “tend to plan ahead for definite dates”.

That said, the Outlander effect can’t be ignored. Simon Spanton of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh says: “Interest blooming like this can’t really be planned for but it does show the underlying fascination is there, ready to be piqued. Scotland’s cultural, historical and natural heritage is so rich that TV and other media have an amazing vein to mine; finding ways to complement that with publications is a challenge but a lot of fun. It prompts new ways of thinking about your existing books and provides opportunities for new books – if you can take them quickly.”

Interesting data has come out around the publications themselves, all with an encouraging slant. The National Galleries have found that not only do the bigger “well-crafted, beautiful books” find their audience but introductory companion volumes are also performing well. The gallery shops themselves have been “going from strength to strength” meaning they can expand the shops and their offerings in 2019, “affording us more opportunity to start to broaden the range of books that we sell. We’re looking forward to increasing that breadth of our list so that we can reflect various new aspects of our collection and reach out to the widest audience possible.”

The strong sales figures and visibility have been reflected across the UK, suggesting that public interest in Scotland goes far beyond attractive men in kilts.

Flying high

In May 2018, James Crawford, Publisher at Historic Environment Scotland (HES), author – and current Chair of Publishing Scotland – wrote and presented a three-part BBC1 documentary series, Scotland from the Sky. A second series is being broadcast this spring.

“When I joined HES 10 years ago, what caught my eye more than anything else was our aerial photography collection. We held millions of images going from the beginning of the 20th century all the way up to the present day. The challenge was to bring them together into a coherent format and narrative. What I wanted to do was use them to tell a new history of Scotland. The books that followed have been some of the most successful in our list: Above Scotland: The National Collection of Aerial Photography (2009), Above Scotland – Cities (2010), Scotland’s Landscapes (2012), and Aerofilms: A History of Britain from Above (2014, published in partnership with English Heritage). The wealth of stories they contain offered ready-made content when the BBC approached me to work with them on a television series. In turn, the research and scripting for the series has uncovered a whole host of new stories – and drawn on large amounts of new or previously unpublished imagery from our collection – all of which feature in our tie in book, also called Scotland from the Sky.

“This journey from book to screen and back again has been something of a virtuous circle – and the process of adapting content for television has been utterly fascinating. It has also taken me (often in a variety of different aircraft) to some of the most remarkable places in the country – Viking shipyards on Skye, a lost chapel on Canna, island slate quarries in the Firth of Lorne, forgotten Second World War remains in Wick. And more than anything else, it has shown me the unique narrative power of the view from above – and the wealth of stories that are still out there, waiting to be told.”


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