

3 March 2005

NEWS RELEASE

SCOTTISH FRIENDLY SCOOPS UK AWARD FOR CHILDREN'S BOOK TOUR

A major UK award for sponsoring Scotland's biggest ever literary tour has been won by Glasgow-based Scottish Friendly Assurance.

At the glittering Arts & Business Awards ceremony at the Barbican in London on Tuesday March 1st 2005, Scottish Friendly scooped the highly coveted Arts & Kids award for its sponsorship last year of the Children's Laureate Tour.

Organised in conjunction with the Scottish Book Trust, this tour featured well known author and current Children's Laureate, Michael Morpurgo, touring across Scotland, meeting over 8,000 children from 195 different schools.

The tour covered 1,883 miles in the distinctive yellow Words on Wheels van, reaching towns, cities and rural communities, including the islands of Lewis, Harris, Skye, Islay, Jura, Mull and Bute.

Events ranged from single classes to capacity crowds of more than 800 people.

Teachers' packs were distributed to all Scottish schools and ten thousand books were given away during the tour.

The judges at the Arts & Business Awards felt the key objective of the Scottish Friendly sponsorship, to inspire children throughout Scotland to read and to write, had been met, impressively.

Colin Tweedy, Chief Executive of Arts & Business said, "This is a superb example of how business and the arts can work well together, for the mutual benefit of both organisations. By celebrating successful business-arts partnership and sharing best practice, we can create partnerships to benefit our businesses, our arts, our communities and our future generations."

Calum Bennie, Scottish Friendly Marketing Manager, said, "As a friendly society, we are very committed to giving something back to the community and we are delighted that our efforts have been recognised by such an eminent UK body as having a real impact across Scotland. The aim of last year's tour and indeed this year's tour, is to give thousands of young people the unique opportunity to meet well-known authors, which we hope will go a long way to encouraging an interest in reading and writing."

The latest Scottish Friendly National Words on Wheels Tour for 2005 was launched in Dunfermline in February with award-winning international best-selling author Eoin Colfer, creator of Artemis Fowl.

Organised by Scottish Book Trust, Scotland's national agency for reading and writing, with support from the Scottish Arts Council, the tour will run until September 2005, covering most of mainland Scotland including the Borders, Dumfries & Galloway, Inverness, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

Full details on the Arts & Business 2004 Awards can be found at: www.aandb.org.uk

For more information on Scottish Book Trust or the tour, visit www.scottishbooktrust.com and for more information on Scottish Friendly visit www.scottishfriendly.co.uk.

ENDS