



Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour celebrates 20th Anniversary

Over 100,000 children inspired since the tour began in 1998

If you are interested in photographs from the photocall please contact:

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The [Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour](#) today launched its 20th anniversary celebrations. Award-winning authors Lari Don and Ross Collins marked the occasion with pupils at Shawlands Primary School in Glasgow. They were joined by Calum Bennie, Communications Manager at Scottish Friendly, and Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, the literacy charity which runs the tour.

During the event, Lari Don captivated the school children with her mythical fables and Ross Collins, a former pupil of the school, held a live-drawing session to bring the stories to life in front of the children's eyes.

The Children's Book Tour is supported by Scottish Friendly, one of the UK's leading financial mutuals, and organised by Scottish Book Trust, the national charity transforming lives through reading and writing. The tour visits both primary and secondary schools, and has enthralled more than 100,000 children since it began in 1998.

Author Lari Don said:

"I'm really excited to be celebrating the anniversary of these wonderful tours. When Scottish Book Trust took me on a Scottish Friendly tour of Northern Ireland with my Spellchasers trilogy last year, it was one of the best experiences of my writing life. We met hundreds of enthusiastic school pupils, many of whom had never had a chance to meet and chat to a published writer before. The tour was so well organised and so ambitious, in such a lovely part of the world."

Author and illustrator Ross Collins said:

"It's always a real pleasure touring with Scottish Book Trust and Scottish Friendly. I've visited schools and children in parts of the country I could never have reached before. Apart from working in slippers, getting kids excited about stories and illustration is the best thing about my job."

One of very first authors to take part in the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour was Alan Durant, writer and poet, who travelled to Orkney in May 1998 for a ten-day tour. Other authors that toured in 1998 include Dianna Hendry, poet and children's writer, and Janet Paisley, writer, poet and playwright who writes in Scots and English.

The 20th anniversary of the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour will be a year-long celebration and will reach every local authority in Scotland. Over 100 authors have taken part in the Children's Book Tour since 1998, and 13 of those authors will join the anniversary celebrations.



Julia Donaldson, author of the bestselling Gruffalo series and a former Children's Laureate, will participate in the Scottish Friendly Children's Tour in March, following the success of her 2012 tour. The author will visit libraries in Dundee, Stirling, Glasgow, Dumfries & Galloway and the Scottish Borders.

The highlight of the 20th Anniversary takes place on 6 June when Scottish Friendly and Scottish Book Trust will host a Jamboree Celebration event at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow. Headlining the anniversary celebrations will be bestselling children and teen author, Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell will also join the event, alongside award-winning Scottish author Pamela Butchart and comic creators the Etherington Brothers. Over 2000 children from all across Scotland will attend, and a bus travel fund will be offered for schools further afield.

Sarah McIntyre, illustrator and writer of children's books, has designed exclusive comics for the 20th anniversary celebrations, which will be gifted to all primary and secondary pupils participating in the Scottish Friendly Children's Book Tour throughout the year.

Calum Bennie, Communications Manager of Scottish Friendly, said:

"From the outset in 1998, we at Scottish Friendly were aware that the Children's Book Tour was an engaging, popular and worthwhile programme which would help promote literacy within Scottish schools. That the tour has gone from strength to strength and continues to inspire children is testament to the power of books and the first class authors and illustrators the tour attracts. Here's to its continued success."

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, added:

"Being able to tour authors and illustrators into schools, libraries and communities across the length and breadth of Scotland, and in England and Northern Ireland too, is a wonderfully effective way to spark children's creativity and love of books. Over the past two decades we've seen first-hand the hugely positive impact that the joy and excitement of a Children's Tour visit has had on pupils across the country. Our remarkable twenty year relationship with Scottish Friendly has made this possible, and we are very grateful to them for enabling us to bring books into the lives of many thousands of children."

Notes to Editors

For media enquiries, interviews and images, please contact Keara Donnachie, PR Officer on keara.donnachie@scottishbooktrust.com or 0131 524 0184.

After every tour, Scottish Book Trust's website features case studies and resources to show the impact of the tour on the pupils we visit: www.scottishbooktrust.com



About Scottish Friendly

Scottish Friendly, one of the UK's largest mutual life offices, is a progressive and modern financial services group. It provides investors and their families with a wide range of affordable investments.

Scottish Friendly has sponsored the programme for the past 20 years, touring some of the finest children's authors and illustrators including former Children's Laureate Chris Riddell, Malorie Blackman, Michael Rosen, Jacqueline Wilson, Melvin Burgess, Steve Cole, Michael Morpurgo and Sophie McKenzie.

Scottish Friendly is very engaged in the community and works with Scottish Book Trust to provide fresh and exciting content on its website: www.scottishfriendly.co.uk @scotfriendly www.facebook.com/scottishfriendly

About Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that include:

- Gifting books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home.
- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classrooms activities, book awards and author events.
- Supporting Scotland's diverse writing community with our training, awards and writing opportunities.
- Funding a range of author events for the public to enjoy and promoting Scottish writing to people worldwide.

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