

SCOTTISH POETRY LIBRARY

bringing people and poems together

The Scottish Poetry Library is a unique national resource and advocate for poetry. Based in Edinburgh, it has a staff of 6 and holds more than 40,000 items of Scottish and international poetry, including the Edwin Morgan Archive.

The SPL is one of three poetry libraries in the UK, but the only one to be independently constituted and housed. It is the only poetry house in the world to have an extensive library at its core. The Poetry House in New York is perhaps the best comparison, but it has no lending collection.

The SPL is the nation's library for poetry

- *collecting and caring for Scotland's poetry*
- *providing poetry from all over the world for Scotland's readers*
- *providing access to its extensive resources without charge*
- *sharing knowledge and expertise*

The SPL brings people and poems together

- *bringing the pleasures and benefits of poetry to as wide an audience as possible*
- *providing opportunities to engage with poetry*

The SPL supports learning and library professionals

- *providing innovative learning resources and professional development opportunities*
- *enabling them to promote poetry with pleasure and confidence*

The SPL supports poets

- *providing a first port of call for anyone wanting information about Scottish poets, whether at home or abroad*
- *facilitating poets' connections with schools and festivals*
- *showcasing Scottish poets through publications in print and online*
- *providing opportunities for poets to hear, meet and work with fellow poets in Scotland and beyond*

AIMS

1. Providing a unique national resource centre of recognised excellence for poetry

- *meeting the expectations of existing and new audiences*
- *providing expertise and working to sustain a resource for the nation*

2. Bringing the pleasures and benefits of poetry to as wide an audience as possible

- *taking poetry into the everyday environment*
- *creating opportunities for people to connect personally with poems*
- *providing opportunities for shared enjoyment*

3. Nurturing creative language and reading skills

- *encouraging children and young people to find in poetry a source of pleasure and a means of self-expression*
- *supporting teachers*
- *contributing to lifelong learning*

- *supporting emerging and established writers*
4. Providing access to poetry resources in a changing technological landscape
 - *enabling existing and new audiences to access their national collection, and the expertise of the SPL*
 - *enabling people to access resources via means most suited to their circumstances*
 5. Engaging with the international community
 - *building a worldwide audience for Scottish poetry*
 - *building an audience for international poetry in Scotland*
 - *raising the SPL's international profile*
 6. Working collaboratively with other organisations
 - *reaching hard-to-reach audiences*
 - *enriching other organisations' programmes*
 - *enhancing SPL provision*
 - *increasing funding opportunities*
 - *raising SPL profile*

ENABLED BY

- Quality people
- Quality infrastructure

RELEVANT AIMS for this post

- **Bringing the pleasures and benefits of poetry to as wide an audience as possible**

Enjoyment of poetry is the key aim of the SPL. We believe that poetry can enrich people's lives, as part of the fabric of their everyday existence and not just something for special occasions. Poetry offers shared meaning, a fresh way of seeing, and the music of a perfectly-turned phrase; it offers surprises, challenges, and the deep satisfaction of encountering the right words at the right time.

Our aim of building the audience for poetry has two strands: to encourage more people to discover the pleasure of poetry; and to enrich the quality of the reading experience, helping readers improve confidence and communication.

As a small organisation based in Edinburgh, but with a national remit, a key challenge for us is to reach far beyond our library shelves and make poetry available to people all over Scotland. Over the past two years we have also focused resources on web 2.0 technologies, taking advantage of the opportunities they provide for us to reach beyond our traditional core audience. Personal contact remains an integral part of our audience development strategy.

Objectives

- To create opportunities for people to connect with poems in their everyday environment
- To provide opportunities for shared enjoyment of poetry
- To collaborate with other organisations to extend our reach and create pathways into poetry

- **Providing access to poetry resources in a changing technological landscape**

The SPL enables ease of access to unique resources and to others not easily available to the general public. It provides a reference and lending collection at its physical premises in Edinburgh and a postal lending service throughout Scotland and the UK.

The SPL has over 2,000 registered borrowers, and over 4,000 items were borrowed in the financial year 2008/09, an average of 15 books per day. The SPL provides access to a range of poetry and poetry resources via its website.

The Amb:IT:ion programme is enabling the SPL to develop its online resources to an unprecedented degree. We expect to launch our new website early in 2012 and its development is key to the development of the SPL as a whole.

Objectives

- To enable existing and new audiences to access the SPL and staff expertise
- To provide the resources most appropriate to individual needs and by a means of access most suited to their circumstances

- **Engaging with the international community**

The core of the SPL's collection is Scottish, and it has always been conceived of in an international context. This is provided particularly by the extensive holdings of European poetry either in translation or in bilingual editions. Other poeties are also represented, including a recent small collection of contemporary New Zealand work.

Events held at the SPL and in other venues, in collaboration with organisations such as the Goethe-Institut or the Institut français, complement the holdings. For the past six years, the SPL has worked in partnership with Literature Across Frontiers to hold an annual intensive translation workshop in Scotland, and the results of this are presented in two public events (latterly at the EIBF) and also on the website. LAF workshops abroad often include a Scottish participant, on the SPL's recommendation.

The SPL is often called upon to advise international organisations who wish to invite Scottish poets to read abroad, and equally is contacted by such organisations (and publishers) seeking performance opportunities in Scotland. The SPL is working closely with other Scottish literary organisations, through the Literature Forum for Scotland, to co-ordinate such work.

Objectives

- To build a worldwide audience for Scottish poets and an audience for international poetry in Scotland
- To facilitate international, in-depth, poet-to-poet encounters
- To raise the profile of the Scottish Poetry Library internationally