

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 14 September 2021

The Sixth Edinburgh Makar

Executive/routine	
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee:
 - 1.1.1 acknowledge Alan Spence's achievements as Edinburgh Makar over his extended term from 2017 to 2021, and to extend Committee's thanks and best wishes for the future; and
 - 1.1.2 To approve the appointment of Hannah Lavery as the Sixth Edinburgh Makar, from October 2021 to September 2024.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director - Place

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The Sixth Edinburgh Makar

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report gives the background to the civic appointment of the Edinburgh Makar. It notes the achievements of the outgoing Fifth Makar, Alan Spence, whose term of office comes to an end on 30 September 2021 and asks Committee to acknowledge those achievements. Hannah Lavery has been nominated as the sixth Edinburgh Makar, to take up the post from 1 October 2021. Committee is asked to approve her appointment.

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 28 August 2001, the Council Executive approved the proposal to create the civic appointment of Edinburgh Makar, a 'poet laureate for Edinburgh'. The Edinburgh Makar is appointed in acknowledgement of his or her achievements in poetry.
- 3.2 This initiative built on the Council's existing commitment to the promotion of writers and literary projects through, for example, the Writers' Museum, Makars' Court, literary publications, Edinburgh City Libraries and designate at Unesco City of Literature.
- 3.3 The Scots word 'makar' originally applied to writers of the 15th century such as William Dunbar but has come to be used to stress the role of the poet or author as a skilled and versatile worker in the craft of writing.
- 3.4 The post is a civic appointment made by Council and overseen by the Culture service. The writer is selected and nominated by representatives of the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, the Scottish Poetry Library, the Scottish Centre of PEN International and the Saltire Society in partnership with Culture. Eligible writers are required to be resident in Edinburgh, or to have a strong connection with the city.

- 3.5 The Makar is required to write one poem each year on Edinburgh and/or aspects of life in the city and assist in the promotion of poetry throughout Edinburgh, in partnership with the Writers' Museum, City Libraries, Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, the Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish PEN, the Saltire Society and other literary organisations
- 3.6 Following a rigorous selection process, the poet and playwright Stewart Conn was appointed as the First Edinburgh Makar by the Council on 30 May 2002, taking up his post on 1 June 2002. He was succeeded by the poet Valerie Gillies who was appointed by the Council on 2 June 2005. Ron Butlin, poet, novelist, playwright and librettist, was appointed by Council on 1 May 2008 and became the Third Edinburgh Makar. He was succeeded by Christine De Luca, who took up her appointment on 1 June 2014. Alan Spence became the Fifth Makar on 1 October 2017.
- 3.7 An honorarium, currently £2,500 per year for a fixed period of three years, is awarded for this civic appointment.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Alan Spence has been a committed, dedicated and tenacious Edinburgh Makar. Despite the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic and many practical challenges it brought throughout 2020/21, he has successfully engaged with a wide range of local and national cultural partners, poets and members of the public, and participated in a significant number of civic and cultural events. Alan has been an impressive advocate and ambassador for Edinburgh and for poetry, and his interest in international dialogue and exchange has undoubtedly enhanced the city's reputation overseas.
- 4.2 A detailed calendar of activities undertaken by the Fifth Edinburgh Makar is provided in Appendix 1; the range of the Makar's activities is illustrated below:
 - 4.2.1 creating commissioned work, notably for the annual Edinburgh Awards;
 - 4.2.2 giving public readings of his work;
 - 4.2.3 representing the city or its cultural partners at launch events and receptions;
 - 4.2.4 providing interviews for the spoken and print media; and
 - 4.2.5 participating in cultural meetings and events nationally.
- 4.3 The writer nominated to succeed Alan Spence as Edinburgh Makar is Hannah Lavery, an award-winning poet, playwright, performer and experienced workshop facilitator, born and raised in Edinburgh. The Drift, her autobiographical play, toured Scotland as part of the National Theatre of Scotland's Season 2019 and her poem, Scotland, you're no mine, was selected as one of the Best Scottish Poems 2019. A biographical note is provided in Appendix 2.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Covid-19 restrictions allowing, a civic reception will be held in the City Chambers for the outgoing and incoming Edinburgh Makars. A plaque in the City Chambers inscribed with the details of the previous Edinburgh Makars will be brought up to date to record the end of the fifth Makar's appointment, and the start of the sixth Makar's term.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The honorarium of £2,500 per annum, the cost of updating the Edinburgh Makar plaque, and the costs of the civic reception can all be contained within the 2021/22 revenue budget held by Culture.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The Culture service has worked in partnership with representatives of the Saltire Society, the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, the Scottish Centre of PEN International and the Scottish Poetry Library to select the nominee for the Edinburgh Makar appointment.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 The Edinburgh Makar 2005-2008, City of Edinburgh Council, [1 May 2008](#)
- 8.2 The Edinburgh Makar 2008-2011, City of Edinburgh Council, [1 May 2008](#)
- 8.3 Update on the Edinburgh Makar, Culture and Leisure Committee, [26 April 2011](#)
- 8.4 Edinburgh Makar Update, Culture and Leisure Committee, [28 June 2011](#)
- 8.5 The Third and Fourth Makars, Culture and Sport Committee [27 May 2014](#)
- 8.6 Edinburgh Makar: Update and Extension of Term, [20 March 2017](#)
- 8.7 The Fifth Edinburgh Makar, Culture and Communities Committee, [12 September 2017](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Detailed calendar of activities undertaken by the Fifth Edinburgh Makar
- 9.2 Appendix 2 - Biographical note for Sixth Edinburgh Makar

Alan Spence – Fifth Edinburgh Makar

Calendar of Activities: 2017 → 2021

September

Announcement in the press of appointment as Makar - articles in The Scotsman, Evening News, Herald. Online coverage from Edinburgh City of Literature, Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish Review of Books, Association for Scottish Literary Studies...

Meeting at City Arts Centre with Maeve Toal, Helen Scott and David Patterson to discuss working together on Makar-related projects, and in particular participation in launch events at the Gallery on 16 November.

Recorded interview and poetry reading, with Bashabi Fraser, on BBC Radio Scotland Ricky Ross show. Also featured on BBC Scotland Facebook page.

Reading at the Heretics, Waverley Bar, with John Herdman, Dolina McLennan, Peter Burnett. Welcomed and introduced to the audience as Edinburgh's new Makar.

Broadcast on Ricky Ross Show, BBC Radio Scotland.

National Poetry Day - held poetry book sale at Citadel Books and gave out copies of Scottish Poetry Library's postcards. Did readings at the shop throughout the day.

Attended event at Scottish Poetry Library to honour previous Makar Christine De Luca and welcome me to the post. Event chaired by Edinburgh's First Makar, Stewart Conn.

October

Ceremony at City Chambers, hosted by Lord Provost, to welcome me as Makar. Among those in attendance were the Japanese Consul General and the Indian Deputy Consul General as well as previous Makars Christine De Luca, Valerie Gillies and Stewart Conn.

Press coverage (with photos) of Makar ceremony, in Scotsman, Edinburgh Evening News and The National

Online interview with Scottish Review of Books, discussing new bookshop and appointment as Makar.

Meeting with Gillian Findlay, Galleries and Museums, to discuss possibilities for Makar post.

Organised and hosted a reading at Citadel Books to promote Thali Katori, a new anthology of Scottish/South Asian poems. Other poets taking part were Bashabi Fraser and Alan Riach (editors of the anthology) and former Makars Christine De Luca and Valerie Gillies, along with Indian-born poets Shampa Ray and Jameela Muneer.

Working on commissioned poem for Edinburgh Award winner (Sir Tim O'Shea)

November

Meeting with Anna Murray, Galleries and Museums, to discuss project to write site-specific poems for Gallery of Modern Art, particularly to encourage children to use the outdoor area.

Continuing work on commissioned poem for Edinburgh Award winner Sir Tim O'Shea

Chaired literary event - Culture Cafe - in Aberdeen with author Bernard MacLaverty. Introduced to audience as Edinburgh Makar.

Read poetry for Edinburgh City of Literature at launch of Star and Story project in the Canon's Gait.

Attended launch of Our Story project at Museum of Edinburgh.

Attended Edinburgh Award ceremony at City Chambers, hosted by the Lord Provost. Read commissioned poem - 'World Without Walls' - for 2017 recipient Sir Tim O'Shea.

For Interfaith Week, took part in reading/discussion at St Mungo Museum of Religion, Glasgow. Introduced as Edinburgh Makar.

Meeting at Citadel Books with Councillor Gordon Munro, artist/photographer Fay Young and Lili Fraser from Scottish Poetry Library. Discussed revival of Poetry Tree events in St Andrew Square - aiming at programme for Spring 2018 with reading/performance/installations. Proposed collaboration with Japanese Consulate. Sponsorship sought from Standard Life and Costa Coffee who have both expressed interest.

Gave reading of winter poems at City Arts Centre, for launch of three exhibitions - the Gallery's Winter Season. Chaired by Councillor Ian Campbell and Museums and Galleries Manager Frank Little. Some 300 people in attendance.

Visit to Prague (UNESCO City of Literature).

Reading at Den Poezie Poetry Festival with eminent Czech poet/folksinger Jiri Dedecek, Head of Czech PEN. Own poems read in translation by poet Tomas Mika - discussions on dual-language publication as on-going project.

Talk at Charles University, Prague, on own writing and modern Scottish Literature. 50 students and staff attended.

Meeting with Bernie Higgins, Director of Den Poezie Poetry Festival and Katerina Bajo, director of Prague City of Literature project. Discussed many possible areas of collaboration - they are keen to establish their own Makar for the City of Prague. Keen also for me to make return visits, perhaps for 2-month residency, and to pursue further the possibility of publishing my poetry in Czech translation. Made visit to Municipal Library and Franz Kafka Museum.

Coverage of poetry reading via social media - Facebook and website pages for Den Poezie festival and Czech PEN.

Continuing email correspondence with Czech contacts.

December

READING at Indian Consulate to promote Thali Katori - anthology of Scottish/South Asian poetry. Reception hosted by Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan and chaired by the book's editors Alan Riach and Bashabi Fraser, who also read, with Christine De Luca and other poets.

Attended Reception at Assembly Rooms in honour of the birthday of Emperor Akahito of Japan. Event hosted by Japanese Consul General Mr Daisuke Matsunaga. Speeches by the Consul General and Scottish Culture Minister Fiona Hyslop.

Continued correspondence with Councillor Gordon Munro, artist/photographer Fay Young and Lillias Fraser from Scottish Poetry Library to forward St Andrew Square poetry project.

Meeting at National Gallery of Modern Art with Anna Murray, Galleries and Museums, to further discuss project for site-specific poems to be installed in the Gallery's outdoor area.

2018

January

Attended Event at Royal Scottish Academy with artist Calum Colvin discussing his portrait of poet Hugh MacDiarmid, introduced by author James Robertson.

Interviewed at Citadel Books by Edi Stark for BBC Radio Scotland magazine programme Winter Weekend. Discussed bookshops, writing and Makar post.

Interview with Edi Stark broadcast on BBC Radio Scotland.

Working on site-specific poems for National Gallery of Modern Art.

Meeting at Marketing Edinburgh office with CEO John Donnelly (along with artist Fay Young and Lillas Fraser from Scottish Poetry Library), to gain support and possible funding for Poetry Garden project in St Andrew Square.

Meeting at Essential Edinburgh office with Emily Johnston, Senior Manager and Roddy Smith, Chief Executive (along with Fay Young and Lillas Fraser - see above) to move forward the plans for Poetry Garden project. Firm commitment of support, financial and organisational, from Essential Edinburgh

Burns Night Reading at Lyon & Turnbull, Edinburgh, to promote new poetry anthology published by Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow. Read own poetry alongside other poets and book's editor Alan Riach.

Interview with Colin Waters of Scottish Poetry Library for podcast to be posted on SPL website. Discussed own work, poetry in general and Makar post.

Contacted Essential Edinburgh with costings for poetry / podcast related to Poetry Garden project.

Interview - Completed interview begun on my visit to Prague in November, to be featured in Czech newspaper Literary Noviny. Discussed own work, Scottish literature and Makar post.

Photograph with caption appeared in Edinburgh Life magazine. (Taken while reading poem for Sir Tim O'Shea at Edinburgh Award ceremony in City Chambers).

February

Meeting with Gillian Findlay at Writers' Museum for update on Makar activities and to discuss further projects.

Podcast interview by Colin Donald (30 minutes) posted on Scottish Poetry Library website.

Chaired Book Group in Citadel Books, Abbeyhill.

Chaired Reading at Belmont Cinema in Aberdeen by poet Douglas Dunn, and had Meeting with Jane Spiers, CEO Aberdeen Performing Arts on poetry poster project she has initiated involving twelve top poets working with artists. Results will go on show at Music Hall, Aberdeen, but discussed transfer to Edinburgh through my role as Makar - possible exhibition in Scottish Poetry Library or City Art Centre.

Completed and delivered seven short poems commissioned for gardens of National Gallery of Modern Art

Chaired Book Group at Citadel Books, Abbeyhill.

Meeting with American freelance journalist Susannah Jacob who is researching an article on Edinburgh for the New York Times. She has interest in literary Edinburgh, particularly Robert Louis Stevenson. I directed her to Gillian Findlay at the Writers' Museum for further research.

Participated in City of Literature project initiated by City of Literature Heidelberg - copied out two of my poems by hand on special paper, to be incorporated in a hand-bound book containing poems from all the Cities of Literature worldwide. Assisted by Rebecca Raeburn at City of Literature Edinburgh who took photos for the project's international website.

March

Meeting on site at St Andrew Square with artist Fay Young to discuss further possibilities for Poetry Tree project.

Book Group at Citadel Books, Abbeyhill.

At National Gallery of Scotland, judged annual poetry competition for school pupils reciting poetry they had learned by heart (Poetry by Heart Scotland competition) run by the Scottish Poetry Library. Chose winners, spoke before and after award, recited one of my own poems and presented prize to overall winner.

Meeting with artist Calum Colvin to discuss participation in collaborative poetry/art project for Royal Scottish Academy (working with artist Doug Cocker.

Book Group at Citadel Books.

Meeting with photographer Robin Gillanders to discuss collaborative project - photographs and haiku, also for Royal Scottish Academy.

Book Group at Citadel Books.

Interview (completed earlier) published in Czech newspaper Literary Noviny (two page spread). Discussed own work, Scottish literature and Makar post.

Book Group at Citadel Books.

Chaired Reading by poet Gerda Stevenson from her new collection QUINES - poems by Scottish Women

Meeting with Ali Bowden, City of Literature. Hand-wrote one of my poems to be gifted to City of Literature Iowa, during forthcoming visit by Lord Provost.

Chose one of my poems for City of Literature project in Krakow - poems to be projected at various sites in the city. Arranged for Polish translation of poem through contact at University of Lodz.

Continued correspondence with City of Literature Prague and Den Poezie Festival about establishing a Prague Makar post incorporating exchanges with Edinburgh.

April

Meeting with artist Rose Strang and cellist Atzi Muramatsu to plan collaborative project on Holyrood Park for Midsummer exhibition/ performance.

Meeting at Royal Scottish Academy with artists Calum Colvin and Doug Cocker to discuss poetry performance at RSA exhibition.

Award - Announcement of award to me by Japanese government of their prestigious honour the Order of the Rising Sun. Citation describes me as poet, Emeritus Professor and Edinburgh Makar.

May

Social Media coverage of Rising Sun Award - University of Aberdeen, Edinburgh City of Literature, Bella Caledonis etc.

Radio interview on Rising Sun Award for BBC Radio Scotland Sunday morning show with Ricky Ross.

Meeting at Royal Scottish Academy (Preview of RSA Annual exhibition) with artist Calum Colvin and author James Robertson to discuss my contribution to poetry element of the exhibition in response to artworks.

Broadcast of Radio Scotland interview.

Reading at Nomad's Tent, Edinburgh to celebrate India's Nobel Prize-winning poet Rabindranath Tagore. Charity event also featuring former Makar Christine De Luca and Indian singer Bani Battacharya. Event attended by Indian Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan.

Interview (conducted by phone) with Japan Times newspaper in Tokyo, following on from announcement of Order of the Rising Sun award.

Working on poem for RSA exhibition (collaborative piece with artist Doug Cocker). Working on poem for Midsummer event in Holyrood Park.

Attended Reception at Scottish Poetry Library for visiting Latvian poets.

Attended Event at Scottish Poetry Library in honour of librarian Lillias Fraser.

Meeting with visiting American poet Sarah McCallum.

Meeting with artist Rose Strang and cellist Atzu Miramatsu to progress collaborative project for Midsummer event in Holyrood Park.

Reading at Royal Scottish Academy, with poet Rab Wilson - session chaired by artist Calum Colvin, curator of this year's RSA exhibition. Read new poem MEADOW, a response to art-work of that name by artist Doug Cocker.

Working on Poem commissioned by Lord Provost's office for forthcoming visit to Krakow.

June

At Edinburgh City of Literature Office, copied out poem I had written for Lord Provost's visit to Krakow, on parchment paper to be delivered as a scroll to Mayor of Krakow.

Rehearsal and recording with cellist Atzi Muramatsu of poems I had written for Midsummer event with artist Rose Strong, on the wells of Holyrood Park.

Flew to Krakow for UNESCO Creative Cities event.

In Krakow. Afternoon, attended open forum sessions at Creative Cities event. Evening accompanied Lord Provost and Ali Bowden from City of Literature to meeting with Mayor of Krakow. Informal discussions on co-operation between Edinburgh and Krakow as partner-cities. At reception afterwards, Lord Provost announced Edinburgh/Krakow writers' exchange and I read my specially commissioned poem to Mayor and some 400 guests. Met delegates from many cities worldwide. Renewed acquaintance with Prague City of Literature delegate (Katerina Bajo) and confirmed my participation in Prague's Den Poezie festival in November. A number of delegates said they would discuss possibility of appointing their own 'Makar' or city poet.

Met my Polish translator - Monika Kocot from University of Lodz. She will translate my Edinburgh - Krakow poem for projection on 'Poetry Wall' in Krakow city centre (another of my poems, translated by her, is already part of the project). Evening, returned to Edinburgh.

Reading with cellist Atzi Muramatsu - midsummer event at studio/gallery of artist Rose Strang in Abbeyhill (collaborative project for the opening of The Wells of Holyrood Park exhibition).

Attended Reception/Dinner at the City Chambers, hosted by Lord Provost, welcoming delegation from University of Kyoto.

Book Group, Citadel Books, Abbeyhill.

Meeting with poet/artist Julie Johnstone to discuss collaborative projects and publication.

Award Ceremony to receive Order of The Rising Sun from the Japanese Government in the name of the Emperor. Award presented by Consul General Mr Daisuke Matsunaga at his residence in Edinburgh. Read a poem written for the occasion.

July

Book Group, Citadel Books.

Meeting with artist Fay Young and representatives of Essential Edinburgh to progress Poetry Garden project for St Andrews Square. (Meeting at Essential Edinburgh offices in George Street).

Meeting with Japanese Consul General Daisuke Matsunaga at his Residence in Edinburgh to discuss further contact/collaboration after his return to Japan and forthcoming posting to Ethiopia as Ambassador of Japan.

Meeting at Indian Consulate with Consul General Anju Ranjan to discuss participation in forthcoming celebration of 150th anniversary of birth of Mahatma Gandhi.

Book Group, Citadel Books, Abbeyhill

Meeting with Caitrin Armstrong of Book Trust Scotland to discuss writing workshop at Book Trust headquarters.

Book Group, Citadel Books, Abbeyhill

Meeting with artist Fay Young and Vikki from Dishoom Reastaurant to discuss Dishoom's involvement in Poetry Garden project at St Andrew's Square

Meeting with Rebecca Raeburn at City of Literature to restart Makar web page originally set up by Christine De Luca.

Book Group, Citadel Books, Abbeyhill

August

Reading at Moniack Mhor writers' centre. Introduced as Edinburgh Makar.

Reading at Citadel Books, with poets Tom Hubbard and Christine de Luca, with music from lute-player Christopher Jupp.

Reading at Edinburgh International Book Festival. Session chaired by Brian Taylor, BBC Scotland political commentator.

Reading at poetry festival in New York to mark 70th anniversary of United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Keynote speaker Chaudhuri, former Permanent Representative of Bangla Desh to UN.

Correspondence with Prague City of Literature making arrangements for visit to Den Poezie festival in November when I will read with their newly-appointed City Poet. The post was directly inspired by my Makarship after my visit to the festival last year.

Reception at City Chambers, hosted by Lord Provost, to meet international Peace Run arriving in Edinburgh on way across Europe.

September

Award Ceremony. Received Scottish Samurai Award from Ronald Watt OBE for services to literature and Scottish-Japanese relations. (Past recipients have included Billy Connolly and Joanna Lumley). Ceremony hosted by Lord Charles Bruce at his family home Broom Hall in Fife.

Meeting at St Andrew Square with artist Fay Young and David Cobb from Royal Caledonian Botanical Society to further progress re-establishment of Poetry Garden. Confirmed plans to hold ceremony and event on National Poetry Day in October.

Attended screening of new documentary film RAY OF LIGHT at Edinburgh University, organised by Edinburgh Indian Association, attended by Deputy Consul General.

Attended as civic guest Edinburgh Riding of the Marches at Edinburgh City Chambers, presided over by Lord Provost.

Conducted Writing Workshop for staff at Scottish Book Trust.

Attended Reception at City Chambers to honour retiring Indian High Commissioner to the UK Mr YK Sinha. Ceremony presided over by Lord Provost and Indian Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan.

Lunchtime Reading of my poetry at Colonies Art Fair in Abbeyhill.

Second lunchtime Reading of my poetry at Colonies Art Fair in Abbeyhill.

Reading and Talk at Edinburgh Writers' Club.

October

Reading and Talk at Indian Consulate General to mark 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. Ceremony organised and chaired by Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan.

Recorded Podcast for Scottish Poetry Library on Poetry Tree event in St Andrew Square for National Poetry Day.

Reading at Terraces Book Group Edinburgh.

Ceremony for National Poetry Day - rededication of Poetry Tree in St Andrew Square. Organised Reading by myself and three of the previous Makars - Christine De Luca, Ron Butlin and Stewart Conn. Event also attended by Ms Yoko Murata from Japanese Consulate General who gave a short speech. Haiku written by me for the occasion was placed by the tree.

Podcast broadcast online on Scottish Poetry Library site.

Meeting with Frank Little (Cultural Venues Manager, Museums and Galleries) to discuss first year as Makar and forthcoming Makar-related projects. (Particular interest in international aspect of the post).

Attended Performance at Indian Consulate, hosted by Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan - dance-drama based on the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore,

Meeting with artist Mary Walters to discuss collaborative sculpture/performance project to take place at Summerhall arts centre.

November

Working on poem, Flower of Scotland, for Edinburgh Award winner Doddie Weir.

Working on poem, Edinburgh Come All Ye, to be read at Eurocities Conference, Edinburgh.

Attended Event at Scottish Storytelling Centre - opening of exhibition by artist Marie-Alice Harel (combining illustration and storytelling) and launch of book Hortari.

Visit to Prague.

Attended (as VIP guest) Concert in Prague to mark centenary of Czechoslovakian independence. Dignitaries attending included Czech and Slovak parliamentarians, guests representing literature and the arts, and Indian Ambassador.

Talk/Reading at Den Poezie Festival Prague, with newly-appointed Prague 'Makar' or City Poet Sylva Fischerova. (Appointment was inspired by my visit last year, and funded by Prague City of Literature).

Read Poems at ceremony in Makar's Court to dedicate memorial to Scottish World War 1 poets.

Read Poem commissioned for Edinburgh Award dedicated to this year's recipient Doddie Weir at special ceremony in City Chambers, hosted by Lord Provost, attended by Doddie Weir and guests.

My Doddie Weir poem, Flower of Scotland, published on Doddie Weir's website and Facebook page, and widely shared on social media.

Read specially commissioned poem, Edinburgh Come All Ye, at Eurocities Conference in Edinburgh, to some 500 delegates. Conference attended by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, poem introduced by Lord Provost. Renewed acquaintance with delegates from Prague City Council.

December

Attended Reception at Assembly Rooms to mark birthday of Emperor Akahito of Japan. Event organised by Japanese Consulate General and hosted by new Consul General Mr Nozomu Takaoka. Speech by Fiona Hyslop, Culture Minister.

Read at Launch of Gitanjali and Beyond, journal produced by Edinburgh Napier University. Launch was at Lighthouse bookshop and was attended by Indian Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan. Other poets taking part were Chrys Salt and Bashabi Fraser.

Meeting with Frank Little - Cultural Venues Manager, Museums and Galleries) to discuss further projects for the coming year.

Sat for portrait drawing by artist Joyce Gunn Cairns for her forthcoming exhibition at Scottish Poetry Library also featuring portraits of my predecessors as Makar.

Correspondence with Aberdeen Performing Arts initiating transfer of their exhibition featuring twelve Scottish poets (including myself) by artist Andrew Cranston. Possible venues are Scottish Poetry Library and Writer's Museum.

2019

January

Correspondence with Den Poezie Festival, Prague, and Edinburgh International Book Festival on proposed visit to Edinburgh by Prague 'Makar' - City Poet Sylva Fischerova.

Attended Reception at City Chambers to mark India's Republic Day. Event hosted by Lord Provost and chaired by Indian Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan. Speech by Deputy First Minister of Scottish Parliament, Mr John Swinney.

February

Attended Reception at City Chambers to welcome newly-appointed Indian High Commissioner to UK, Mrs Gaitri Issar Kumar.

Attended Meeting at Indian Consulate General hosted by Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan. Emphasis was on links between Scotland and India, the arts being represented by me, poet Bashabi Fraser and by Lord Charles Bruce and Lady Joyce Caplan.

Reading to Scottish Writers' Centre, chaired by author and committee member Donal McLoughlin. Opportunity to meet Glasgow City Makar Jim Carruth.

Meeting with poet Larry Butler to discuss memorial event at Scottish Poetry Library for poet Tom Leonard who had passed away in December.

Meeting with Irish writer Billy O'Callaghan who was visiting Edinburgh.

Meeting with Asif Khan, Director Scottish Poetry Library, to discuss forthcoming events, including memorial event for poet Tom Leonard at SPL.

Attended Opening of exhibition by artist Rose Strang, with reading by poet Tom Hubbard.

Composed Poem on Gratitude commissioned by Edinburgh City of Literature.

March

Meeting with David Patterson, City Arts Centre, to discuss writing poem for forthcoming Victoria Crowe retrospective exhibition.

Meeting with Ali Bowden, Edinburgh City of Literature. Copied out commissioned poem on gratitude.

Participated in Event at Scottish Poetry Library in honour of poet Tom Leonard who passed away in December. Others taking part included poets Liz Lochhead, Aonghas Macneacail and Jenni Fagan, and actor Tam Dean Burn. Event chaired by BBC's Arts Correspondent Pauline Maclean.

Reading at Stirling University's Japan Festival. Introduced as Edinburgh Makar.

Hosted Reading at Citadel Books, Edinburgh to launch poetry pamphlets published by Tapsalteerie Press. Poets reading were Iain Maloney, Samuel Tough and Sarah Stewart.

Reading at STAnza poetry festival, St Andrews. Read with poet Fiona Moore. Introduced as Edinburgh Makar. Session chaired by Glasgow Makar Jim Carruth.

Poem, Parliament Parkour, published in The National. Accompanying article by Professor Alan Riach mentioned Edinburgh Makarship.

Attended Dinner/Reception at City Chambers to mark launch of The Quaich project for redevelopment of Princes Street Gardens. Event hosted by Councillor Donald Wilson.

Reading at Aye Write festival in Glasgow at further event in honour of poet Tom Leonard. Other poets taking part included Alasdair Gary, Glasgow Makar Jim Carruth, and former Scottish Makar Liz Lochhead.

April

Meeting with photographer David Williams to discuss possible collaborative project (based on photos of Portobello promenade) to result in 'artist's book' publication.

Meeting at Saughton Park with Indian Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan and Councillor to discuss possible event/installation to mark 150th anniversary of birth of Mahatma Gandhi.

Meeting with Guy Peplow of the Scottish Gallery to discuss possible publication featuring artwork by Dame Elizabeth Blackadder.

Attended Reception at Broom House (home of Lord Charles Bruce) organised by Japanese Consulate General to mark the accession to the Japanese throne by Emperor

Working on Poem commissioned by City Art Centre for the opening of retrospective exhibition by artist Victoria Crowe. Correspondence with the artist and with writer/critic Susan Mansfield about possible publication to mark the event.

May

Reading at Scottish Poetry Library for opening of exhibition by artist Joyce Gunn Cairns who has done drawings of myself and former Makars. The event was my idea and I read with previous Makars Christine De Luca, Ron Butlin and Stewart Conn. Along with other recent work I read a poem written for the occasion.

Attended Opening of exhibition by Victoria Crowe at City Arts Centre. My Poem, All About the Light, commissioned for the occasion, was featured in the exhibition, printed on the wall next to the first painting.

Working on Poem, The Ballad of Saughton Park, to be read at re-opening of the park after refurbishment, in presence of HRH The Princess Royal on 6 June.

June

Gave Poetry Reading and Talk on poetry and spirituality at Friends Meeting House, Edinburgh.

Helped edit online journal, Gitanjali and Beyond, for Napier University's Scottish Centre for Tagore Studies.

Completed and delivered poem The Ballad of Saughton Park for the park's re-opening after refurbishment.

Read poem, The Ballad of Saughton Park, at official ceremony for the park's re-opening. Ceremony attended by HRH The Princess Royal, Edinburgh's Lord Provost Frank Ross and other dignitaries. Event received extensive online news coverage.

Meeting over dinner at Gardener's Cottage, Princes Street Gardens to discuss ideas for Quaich project, led by Jules Haston. Others attending were novelist Ian Rankin, sculptor Andy Scott and journalist Alan Taylor.

Chaired reading by Edinburgh poet/storyteller James P Spence at Citadel Books to launch his new pamphlet Willow Pattern Haiku published by Edinburgh workshop group Other Poets.

Gave Reading of haiku poems to group of schoolchildren at Inverleith Park to launch tree-planting initiative, Tree Time - a partnership between the Woodland Trust Scotland, Edinburgh and Lothians Greenspace Trust and City of Edinburgh Council

Gave Reading at Scottish Poetry Library of poems written so far in my time as Makar. (One hour programme, including Q&A). Event was sold out.

July

Meeting with journalist/critic Susan Mansfield to help edit publication of poems and images arising from Victoria Crowe exhibition at City Arts Centre.

Further Meeting with Susan Mansfield to complete editing of Victoria Crowe book to tight deadline.

Attended Reading by visiting Irish poet Michael Longley to mark publication of a new pamphlet of his work.

Interview with me on my work as Makar, conducted by visiting Slovakian poet/academic Jan Gavura for online literary journal. (We had met at Den Poezie festival in Prague last year and he was following up the connection).

Attended Exhibition Opening at Skylark Cafe in Portobello by photographer David Williams with whom I am working on a poetry/ photography collaboration.

Meeting with Prof. Ian Gow, Chairman of Japan Scotland Society, to discuss various projects, including my giving a talk to the Society.

August

Meeting at City Arts Centre with Frank Little Cultural Venues Manager, Museums and Galleries - to discuss on-going Makar-related projects.

Reading at launch of book *Catching the Light*, Poems inspired by the Paintings of Victoria Crowe. Victoria Crowe also took part in the event (at Scottish Portrait Gallery) as did poets Christine De Luca, Gillian Allnut and Susan Mansfield.

Meeting at Saughton Park with Pete McDougall, Project Manager for the park's renovation project. Discussed publishing my poem, *The Ballad of Saughton Park*, as a commemorative pamphlet next year for the re-opening celebration.

Reading of my Makar poems and other work at Edinburgh International Book Festival. (Was due to read with Prague City Poet Sylva Fischerova who had to withdraw because of an injury. So I did a solo reading instead).

Reading of my Makar poems and other work at Edinburgh Festival Fringe event in Scottish Arts Club.

Again, Reading of my Makar poems and other work at Edinburgh Festival Fringe event in Scottish Arts Club.

Reading at poetry festival in New York. Keynote speakers were Ambassador Toshiyo Hironi, Representative of Japan to UN, and Mrs Aye Aye Thant, daughter of UN's first Secretary General U Thant.

September

Reading of my poem The Ballad of Saughton Park at Saughton Park community open day organised by Friends of Saughton Park with Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society - reading was part of programme including Gardeners' Question Time with Beechgrove Garden presenter

Meeting with visiting Polish author/academic Dr Monika Kocot to discuss her translating my poems into Polish.

Attended Riding of the Marches at City Chambers - event hosted by Lord Provost Rt Hon Frank Ross.

Talk and Reading at conference in Alliance Francaise on links between Scotland, Japan and France. (Introduced as Edinburgh Makar). Guest of Honour was Japanese Consul General Mr Nozomu Takaoka.

Reading as part of Colony of Artists Festival, Abbeyhill, in conjunction with exhibition by Edinburgh-based photographer David Williams.

Second Reading at Colony of Artists Festival.

Wrote Poem for collaborative venture with photographer David Williams based on his series of photographs of Portobello Promenade, to be published as an artist's book.

October

Working on commissioned Poem for Edinburgh Award Winner Ann Budge.

Attended Reception at Indian Consulate General to commemorate 150th anniversary of birth of Mahatma Gandhi. Event hosted by Indian Consul General Mrs Anju Ranjan. I was introduced as special guest (Edinburgh Makar) and with Mrs Ranjan conducted ceremony garlanding Gandhi statue.

Attended event at Edinburgh University's Adam House in honour of birth anniversary of Patrick Geddes. Event jointly organised by the University and Patrick Geddes Society.

Reading of specially commissioned poem for artist Victoria Crowe at a special event in City Art Centre attended by the artist and marking the success of her exhibition, just concluding. (The book which I co-edited in honour of the artist - *Catching the Light* - has sold out its print run).

Attended Book Launch at Edinburgh Bookshop of new publication *EDINBURGH* by poet Gerda Stevenson and photographer Allan Wright.

Contributed Poems for inclusion in calendar being produced by North Edinburgh Arts, organised by former Provost Lesley Hinds.

Meeting at Unesco City of Literature office with Ali Bowden and Rebecca Raeburn to discuss Makar-related activities, including international links.

Attended shortlist announcement for Saltire Society's annual Scottish Book Awards - my pamphlet *zenscotlit*, published by Essence Press, was shortlisted for the Callum MacDonald Award.

Completed Poem for Edinburgh Award winner Ann Budge.

November

Reading at The Hub as part of fund-raising event for North Edinburgh Arts - chaired by Lesley Hinds and addressed by Lord Provost Frank Ross.

Reading and Talk to staff of Edinburgh Festival Fringe at Jupiter Artland.

Three of my poems, translated into Czech, displayed on trams in Prague, UNESCO City of Literature, as part of their annual Den Poezie Festival.

Recorded my Poem - Queen of Hearts - for Edinburgh Award winner Ann Budge. Recording was made at City Chambers, for broadcast at special ceremony, also at City Chambers, when award will be presented.

2020

NOTE: ACTIVITIES CURTAILED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC.

March

Contributed poems for City of Literature project: Poems for Wuhan, in solidarity with Chinese victims of pandemic.

Wrote blog on forthcoming lockdown for Scottish Poetry Library web page.

April

Lockdown blog (see above) posted on Scottish Poetry Library web page.

Responses to SPL blog from London, Prague, Barcelona, Tokyo, Canberra, New York.

May

Wrote letter of support for poetry / arts venue in Prague. (Co-ordinated by Prague City of Literature and Den Poezie festival).

Contributed poems for Little Sparta project, co-ordinated by Ingleby Gallery.

June

Sent poem to Council's Parks and People garden project (distributed by Peter MacDougall, co-ordinator).

Meeting at Saughton Park to mark 3rd anniversary of Dreamer of Peace statue. Messages received from Joanna Cherry MP, Daisuke Matsunaga, former Consul General for Japan, Anju Ranjan, former Indian Consul General, Iain Torrance, former Moderator of General Assembly, Church of Scotland, Lord Charles Bruce and poets Gerda Stevenson and Christine De Luca (former Makar).

Contributed short story for anthology in aid of Homeless World Cup, edited by Val Macdermid.

July

Published article on my work in Japanese online cultural journal.

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Wrote article for Edinburgh City of Literature web page on links with Prague City of Literature. (Readings at Den Poezie Festival, Lecture at Charles University, my poems translated into Czech, displayed on city trams and in leaflet distributed to hospitals throughout the city).

Correspondence with Charles University Prague confirming commitment to take part in postponed Symposium of Scottish Literature.

Recorded poem by Edwin Morgan for online Perth and Kinross Literary Festival.

Contributed to poem for Edwin Morgan on what would have been his 101st birthday. Poem produced as poster by Essence Press, Edinburgh.

Contributed poem to Gitanjali and Beyond, online cultural journal produced by Napier University Scottish Centre of Tagore Studies.

Three poems in Golden Treasury of Scottish Verse to be published by Canongate. (Editors Don Paterson and Kathleen Jamie).

Wrote poem for Edinburgh Award Winner (Alexander McCall Smith).

Wrote poem for Time Capsule to go under statue of Robert Burns in Leith (linked with extension of Edinburgh Trams).

Zoom meeting with Saltire Society to discuss proposed stone at Makar's Court honouring Màiri Mhòr nan Òran (Mary Macpherson). Taking part were Sarah Mason, Saltire Society, Marion Sinclair, Publishing Scotland, and my predecessor as Makar, Christine de Luca.

Following on from Zoom meeting, shared with participants link to podcast by Gerda Stevenson in which she discussed Màiri Mhòr nan Òran, read one of her poems and sang one of her songs. Discussed featuring Gerda at unveiling of stone.

Suggested to Saltire Society it would be good to honour George Bruce with stone in Makar's Court. Followed up by contacting Bruce family who have since made a formal proposal. Further zoom meeting with Saltire Society to confirm placing of stone.

Zoom meeting with Asif Khan at Scottish Poetry Library to discuss Makar-related projects with the Scottish Makars - those taking part were Bill Herbert (Dundee), Laura Fyfe (Stirling) and Niall O'Gallagher (Glasgow).

Monthly follow-up zoom meetings via SPL to confirm collaborative Makar events and commissions. Additional in person meeting with Stirling Makar Laura Fyfe.

Contributed poems for Pushing the Boat Out, Edinburgh Poetry Festival. Poems are site-specific and will be recorded to be heard at particular locations: Scottish Parliament, Holyrood Park and George Wyllie Stones of Scotland sculpture.

Did zoom poetry workshop with poetry / art group organised by artist Bridgid Collins.

Helped judge student poetry competition organised by Dr Saeko Yazaki - read entries then took part in zoom session linking Edinburgh, Glasgow and Tokyo.

Wrote essay on Edinburgh writer John Herdman for festschrift to mark his 80th birthday.

Wrote blurb for new poetry collection by Edinburgh-based poet Mario Relich.

Put together collection of the poems written in my time as Makar, to be published by Saltire Society. (Working title, Edinburgh Come All Ye). Book will feature artwork by Victoria Crowe, Alison Watt, David Williams, Doug Cocker, Rose Strang and Joyce Gunn Cairns.

Hannah Lavery Biography

HANNAH LAVERY is an award-winning poet, playwright, performer and experienced workshop facilitator. Her poetry has been published widely and her poem, Scotland, you're no mine, was selected by Roseanne Watt as one of the Best Scottish Poems 2019.

The Drift, her autobiographical play, toured Scotland as part of the National Theatre of Scotland's Season 2019. In 2020, she was awarded a New Playwrights' Award by the Playwrights Studio Scotland and selected by Owen Sheers' as one of his Ten Writers Asking Questions That Will Shape Our Future for the International Literature Showcase, a project from the National Writing Centre and the British Council.

In 2020, Hannah was also selected as one of the Scottish Voices for BBC Writers' Room. She is one of Imagine's Accelerator Artists and an Associate Artist with the National Theatre of Scotland. In November 2020, her highly acclaimed play Lament for Sheku Bayoh was directed by Hannah in a co-production with the Royal Lyceum Theatre, National Theatre of Scotland and Edinburgh International Festival.

She has recently been selected for the Adopt a Playwright Award by offwestend.com and is under commission by Pitlochry Festival Theatre to adapt Jekyll and Hyde for their upcoming Summer Season. Hannah received a Creative Edinburgh Award in 2020 for her work with the Writers of Colour group and with Fringe of Colour.