

About this exhibition

40 Years of Scottish Publishing

40 YEARS OF
SCOTTISH
PUBLISHING
1974-2014

Publishing in Scotland has seen a remarkable renaissance over the past 40 years. Part of that renewed vigour and growth is due to the creation in 1974 of the Scottish General Publishers Association, later the Scottish Publishers Association (“the SPA”), and even later Publishing Scotland. The nineteenth-century Golden Age of Scottish Publishing, when Edinburgh rivalled London as a bustling and innovative centre of print production, remained an inspiring but distant presence in 1974 as a group of young publishers joined with more established figures to reassert the existence of a distinctive industry north of the border.

The 1970s was a period of great cultural renewal in Scotland and the publishing industry would make an enormous contribution to that through disseminating new accounts of Scotland’s history, distributing the self-confident works of contemporary Scottish writers, and providing platforms for the social and political debate that led to the referenda of 1979, 1997 and 2014. In the 40 years that followed, Scottish publishers have continued to make a contribution to our country’s understanding of itself, its past and future. However, the diversity and range of what is now published here has expanded well beyond material intended for Scottish consumption. Our publishers look to markets beyond Scotland – by exporting and selling rights – and the books produced here receive international acclaim.

Novels are the most visible (and glamorous) part of publishing’s output but they are only a small fraction of the whole. Educational publishers produce for a varied and distinctive curriculum through primary and secondary school. Publishing in all the languages of Scotland, Gaelic and Scots as well as English, informs the mission of others. The Scottish legal system is served by our publishers, as are the scientists and researchers within the universities whose work finds an international scholarly audience. We celebrate them all in this exhibition.

