

Scots Language Judge's Report

The number & quality of entries written in Scots which have been submitted to the 2021 FWS competition should have surprised me. But I wasn't so much surprised as chuffed to read the high standard of work sent in from across Scotland & beyond.

Scots has again been, absolutely rightly, enjoying an increasing & widening recognition as a longstanding European language of literary provenance, acclaim & relevance to the wider cultural & real worlds in which it's intermittently thrived over the past 800 years. Like any indigenous language standing in the way of cultural empiricism, Scots (i.e. its speakers & writers, its people) has had to endure, overcome & battle just to ensure it doesn't disappear down the monoglot thrapple of the present. Our language is now very much in a position to not only commemorate a notional, national past but to tackle head on the global present & also a future it very much belongs to & in.

Scots is a language. Like all world languages it is very much the sum of its richly varied geographic & linguistic parts. These entries reflect this in the most vibrant ways possible, from Gala to Glesca to Granton to Dundee to Dyce to Durness to Scrabster to Stromness to Scalloway & all Scots points in between. The subjects covered are as diverse as the modern Scotland their language thrives in. Sure, it's a competition but all credit to the FWS for again encouraging writers from right across the country to create & have showcased their poetry, stories & all-round crack.

I hope you'll trust me when I say that the commended & 'placed' work featured here is commended & placed by one person, one writer, myself, but is very much representative of the wider high standard of all work submitted, its accessibility & its craft. Congrats to those whose work is placed here. Equal congrats & thanks to all whose work I've read, enjoyed & which ensured that the choices I had to make took so much reading, re-reading & appreciation.

Scots is in safe hauns, harns & heids aw owre the ship. It's haudin furrin, makkin siccar & singin an chantin in mony the braw vyce in wir chorus o guid braid Scots.

Stuart A Paterson