

Roger McGough is Poetry Society's new President



Photo: Hayley Madden for the Poetry Society

The Poetry Society is delighted to announce Roger McGough as its new President.

Roger McGough is one of Britain's best-loved poets, and has even been described by Carol Ann Duffy as the "patron saint of poetry". He has written or appeared in over 50 books, for readers of all ages, and is a great populariser of poetry via his books, performances, and radio presence as presenter of BBC Radio 4's 'Poetry Please'.

Describing it as "an honour to become the Society's new President", following in the footsteps of Jo Shapcott, Paul Muldoon and Dannie Abse, Roger McGough said: "I believe that poetry will become more relevant and important over the coming years, and an efficient and well-run Poetry Society should be there to embrace it".

His appointment as President, having been a member since the 1970s and a Vice President of the Society, brings a serious depth of experience, vitality and irrepressible wit to the role.

Former President Jo Shapcott said: "We know Roger McGough for his strong connection with poetry readers, his generosity to other poets, and the range and brio of his own work. All this makes him a wonderful new President for the Poetry Society."

McGough takes his position at an exciting time for the Poetry Society, as it looks forward to expanding its programmes. The Society, which celebrated its centenary in 2009, champions poetry in its many forms, through innovative education schemes, awards, publications and commissions.

Poet Laureate and Poetry Society Vice President Carol Ann Duffy celebrated the announcement, saying: "Roger McGough, a much-loved performer, children's poet and National Treasure, is a lovely, popular choice as the Poetry Society's new President."

McGough has just written a new poem for the Poetry Society as part of its 'Look North More Often' project, which was performed by children at the official lighting-up of the Christmas tree in London's Trafalgar Square. His poem, 'Roots',

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combines words, lines and images by children from twelve primary schools in London and Lincolnshire, and can be seen displayed around the tree on decorative blue banners until 4 January 2012.

– ENDS –

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Notes to Editors:

- **The Poetry Society** was founded in 1909 to promote “a more general recognition and appreciation of poetry”. Since then, it has grown into one of Britain’s most dynamic arts organisations, representing poetry nationally and internationally, with 4,000 members. It publishes the leading poetry magazine *Poetry Review*, and has an extensive education programme. It has a long commitment to the commissioning of new work, and runs prestigious competitions including the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award and the National Poetry Competition. www.poetrysociety.org.uk
- **Roger McGough** was awarded his OBE for services to poetry in 1997 and a CBE last year. He is the author of over 50 books, and presents ‘Poetry Please’ on BBC Radio 4. His latest poetry books are *That Awkward Age* (Penguin) and, for children, *The Imaginary Menagerie* (Frances Lincoln), which he also illustrated. For fuller biographical details please see the United Kingdom section of www.poetryinternationalweb.org
- *The Mersey Sound*, the anthology that established McGough, Adrian Henri and Brian Patten as the ‘Liverpool Poets’ has sold over a million copies and has never been out of print (Penguin, 1967).
- McGough is currently working on an exhibition called ‘The Doors of Liverpool’, for the new Museum of Liverpool, with students from Liverpool John Moores University and with doors donated by the public. The exhibition will open in 2012.
- The post of President is an honorary position at the Poetry Society. Poetry Society Director is Judith Palmer. The Chair of Trustees is Sir Stephen Irwin. The Society’s honorary Vice Presidents are Simon Armitage, Carol Ann Duffy, Michael Longley, Ian McMillan, Hugo Williams and Benjamin Zephaniah.



Roger McGough's poem 'Roots', surrounds the Christmas tree in London's Trafalgar Square as part of the 'Look North More Often' project. Photo: Hayley Madden for the Poetry Society

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