

12 September 2014 *For immediate release*

The Poetry Society makes this National Poetry Day one to 'Remember'!



Still from the Poetry Society and Canal & River Trust film of the Marian Allen poem 'The Wind on the Downs', animated by Linda Hughes.

The Poetry Society celebrates **National Poetry Day**, Thursday **2 October**, with a day of poetry readings, launches, prizes, performances and happenings themed around this year's official theme of 'remember'.

The day is jam-packed with Poetry Society events and goings-on, including: free poetry readings for children and families; a poetry film and live performances of new commissions to commemorate the First World War; poetry performances and an open mic for adults; brand new poetry films featuring spoken word legends; a poetic takeover of Covent Garden Tube Station; and the announcement of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award winners.

NATIONAL POETRY DAY LIVE AT SOUTHBANK CENTRE

National Poetry Day Live, running 1-6pm in the Clore Ballroom, is a day of free poetry readings and performances, compered by **John Hegley** and **Joelle Taylor**. This year's programme has been curated by eight young poets aged between 18 and 25. Our young curators have been recruited from former Foyle Young Poets of the Year and SLAmbassadors UK competition winners; as well as poetry groups, the Roundhouse Poetry Collective and the Barbican Young Poets. The resulting line-up is an electric mix of poets for all ages, both established and emerging, from favourites like **Julia Donaldson** and **Jean 'Binta' Breeze**, to new kids on the block **Hannah Silva** and **Raymond Antrobus**, plus Next Generation Poets 2014 **Emily Berry**, **Kei Miller** and **Daljit Nagra**.

Poetry films make an appearance too with the premiere of the **Page Fright** series commissioned by the Poetry Society, featuring spoken word artists performing canonical texts that appear on school curricula. The films show **Joelle Taylor**, **Benjamin Zephaniah**, **Hollie McNish** and **Dizraeli** presenting their versions of poems by Wilfred Owen, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Dylan Thomas and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Also premiering is an animation of a heart-breaking First World War poem, **'The Wind on the Downs'** by **Marian Allen**, animated by **Linda Hughes** and voiced by National Theatre actress **Olivia Vinall**. This new film has been commissioned by the Poetry Society and the **Canal & River Trust** to mark the centenary of the First World War.

Alongside a fun-packed afternoon of live poetry events, the public can get involved in the action as artist **Davina Drummond** helps them produce their own personal scrapbook page using a photo and a line of poetry. These can be taken away as a memory of the day and copies will be displayed in the Southbank Centre during the event, and added to a National Poetry Day Live scrapbook.

More information about National Poetry Day Live is available on our website www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd

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For further information

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THE PITY

The culmination of the Poetry Society's National Poetry Day events at Southbank Centre will be the premiere performance of four new commissions in response to the legacy of the First World War. **'The Pity'** brings together some of the UK's most exciting writers – from the Young Poet Laureate for London to one of the Faber New Poets and Forward Prize winners and nominees – for a contemporary response to the legacy of the conflict. **Denise Riley, Steve Ely, Zaffar Kunial** and **Warsan Shire** will premiere their searing new poems accompanied by visual created by **Robert Peake** at 6pm in the Purcell Room, Queen Elizabeth Hall. Tickets are £10 and available from the Box Office on 0844 847 9910. www.poetrysociety.org.uk/events/event/2822

National Poetry Day Live and The Pity are both presented as part of Southbank Centre's **London Literature Festival**, which runs from 30 September-13 October. www.southbankcentre.co.uk/londonlitfest

FOYLE YOUNG POETS AWARD

The morning of National Poetry Day sees 100 world-class young poets being celebrated in the **Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award** ceremony. The Foyle Award is the Poetry Society's competition for writers aged 11-17 and was this year judged by **Grace Nichols** and **Simon Barraclough**. A record-breaking **7,603 young poets** entered over **13,600 poems** from a staggering **78 countries** and the 15 Overall winners and 85 Commended poets are travelling from across the UK and as far afield as **India, Singapore** and the **USA** to claim their prize. More information about the award is available on our website www.poetrysociety.org.uk/fyp

EVENTS AT COVENT GARDEN

Elsewhere in London, the Poetry Society has also worked with **Covent Garden Station, Transport for London** and the **London Transport Museum** to help celebrate poetry in the locality of the Poetry Society's Poetry Café, bringing poems and poetry to life for thousands of travellers and visitors to the area on National Poetry Day.

At Covent Garden Station itself there will be poetry played regularly over the public announcement system and a 'Quote of the Day' board dedicated to National Poetry Day and its theme of 'Remember' – as well as giveaways of poetry-related goodies. On the Covent Garden Piazza outside the London Transport Museum, 11.30am-12.30pm, there will be free readings of 'Remember'-related poetry and the chance for members of the public to read a poem aloud themselves.

Finally, from 7.30pm-late, the **Poetry Café** at 22 Betterton Street, London, presents **'Playing Poetry'**, an evening of experimental poetry performance devised by singers, musicians, actors and poets.

NATIONAL POETRY DAY RESOURCES

To support teachers to use poetry in the classroom on National Poetry Day, literature organisations have produced short educational resources matching the letters of this year's theme 'remember'. The Poetry Society has produced two of these teaching resources: one for primary schools, 'R is for... Reading out loud' and one for secondary schools, 'M is for... Mix it up', both available from the official National Poetry Day website, www.nationalpoetryday.co.uk. We have also produced resources at both primary and secondary level to go alongside our new animation of First World War poem **'The Wind on the Downs'** by **Marian Allen**, which will be available on the day from The Poetry Society resources webpage: www.poetryclass.poetrysociety.org.uk

MORE INFORMATION

More information about all of the events and activity around the Poetry Society's celebration of National Poetry Day, and the continuing First World War commemorative programme, can be found on the website. Visit www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd. You can track events on the day and get involved online by following the **@PoetrySociety** Twitter account or Facebook page, or the **#nationalpoetryday** hashtag on Twitter.

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**For further information please contact Robyn Donaldson on 020 7420 9886
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Notes to Editors:

NATIONAL POETRY DAY LIVE

National Poetry Day Live is presented by the Poetry Society and Southbank Centre, London and has run every National Poetry Day since 2009. The programme of events runs 1-6pm and is compered by Joelle Taylor and John Hegley: 1pm – 2.15pm features the best of children's poetry from Julia Donaldson, Joseph Coelho and John Hegley. 2.30pm – 4.30pm features poems and performances for young people from Joelle Taylor, Ross Sutherland, Raymond Antrobus and Josh Idehen, plus Page Fright films. 4.45pm – 6pm features a host of special one-off performances from Kei Miller, Hannah Silva, Emily Berry, Daljit Nagra and Jean 'Binta' Breeze.

The National Poetry Day Live Scrapbook will be collated by artist Davina Drummond, who specialises in site- or date- specific works, often incorporating the use of text and textiles. Davina's practice explores modes of making artworks which involve the process of social interactions and creative collaborations.

www.davinadrummond.co.uk

All National Poetry Day Live events take place in the Clore Ballroom, Royal Festival Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London, SE1 8XX, and are this year presented as part of the London Literature Festival. Admission is free. www.poetrysociety.org.uk/npd

THE POETRY SOCIETY

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 British poetry both nationally and internationally. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. It publishes the magazine *The Poetry Review*, runs the National Poetry Competition, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award and the youth performance poetry championship SLAMBassadors UK. A registered charity, the Poetry Society is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. www.poetrysociety.org.uk

THE FOYLE YOUNG POETS OF THE YEAR AWARD

Founded by the Poetry Society in 1998, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award is the largest and most prestigious prize for young poets aged 11-17 years. It receives entries from more than 7,000 young people each year. With the competition as its focus, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award also incorporates a year-round programme of activity aimed at encouraging creativity and literacy in young people, supported by teaching resources and additional poet-led opportunities in schools. The scheme also recognises and nurtures best practice in creative writing teaching, identifying committed 'teacher trailblazers' to act as teacher mentors. The Awards are announced at Southbank Centre on 2 October. This event is for invited guests only. www.poetrysociety.org.uk/fyp

FOYLE FOUNDATION

The Foyle Foundation is an independent grant-making trust supporting UK charities which, since its formation in 2001, has become a major funder of the arts and learning. The Foyle Foundation has invested in the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award since 2001, one of its longest partnerships. During this time it has trebled its support and enabled the competition to develop and become one of the premier literary awards in the country. www.foylefoundation.org.uk

SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and the Hayward Gallery as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following the major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities.

Southbank Centre is the home of live literature in the UK, with a thriving, year-round programme of readings, talks and events unrivalled by any other organisation in the capital. www.southbankcentre.co.uk

LONDON LITERATURE FESTIVAL

London Literature Festival 2014 runs from 30th September to 13th October. Now in its 8th year, the festival is part of the Southbank Centre's regular live literature programme and aims to reinvigorate the literature festival model by injecting more commissioned pieces and varied event formats that people couldn't see anywhere else. www.southbankcentre.co.uk/londonlitfest

THE POETRY CAFÉ

The Poetry Café (The Poetry Place) is Covent Garden's most congenial literary joint. Serving delicious vegetarian cuisine at lunchtime, and coffee and pastries throughout the afternoon, in the evening the atmosphere is busy and vibrant, with poetry readings almost every night. Exhibitions run regularly at the café – currently showing is 'Digressions', a collection of Philippa Troutman's paintings, prints and cut-ups, in a joint project with award-winning poet Ian Duhig, celebrating Laurence Sterne's masterpiece, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. Visit the Café at 22 Betterton Street, London, WC2H 9BX.

www.poetrysociety.org.uk/cafe

NATIONAL POETRY DAY

A annual nationwide celebration of poetry held each October, National Poetry Day is organised by the Forward Arts Foundation. Education resources available online include downloadable activity packs for libraries, teachers and parents, encouraging children to write, read and share poetry. The exercises relate to the letters in the word 'Remember' and have been prepared by each of the partner organisations, including the Poetry Society.

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