

ST. DUTHAC
2021
BOOK
& ARTS
FESTIVAL
FÈIS LEABHRAICHEAN IS
EALAIN DHUBHTHAICH

9th - 14th
Sept 2025



St Duthac Book and Arts Festival | Facebook
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ABOUT US



Photo:2025 Opened by Curtis and Anne from the USA



Photo: Music at Fearn Abbey



Photo: John Attenborough with his guide dog in Tain Bowling Club



Photo: Volunteers at Balnagown Estate

In our 5th year the 2025 St Duthac Book and Arts Festival once again brought culture and the arts to the Easter Ross Peninsula in the Highlands. The festival delivers a wide range of free and affordable events to capture the imagination of the local community and visitors to the area, regardless of age or stage in life.

The festival is coordinated by a volunteer committee whose aim is to bring the community together socially and to stimulate the local economy by attracting visitors and inward investment to the area.

In addition the group aims to further promote local culture, venues and instil a sense of belonging and pride in our communities.

Our varied programme offers the opportunity for local folk and visitors to immerse themselves in the written and spoken word through author events, workshops, arts and heritage trails and a Pop-up Bookshop with Gallery.

The vision in 2019 became reality in 2021 and in 2025 we pulled together a bigger and better St Duthac Book and Arts Festival, bringing the world of arts, culture and heritage together in its 5th year with added elements, a wider range of events and larger audiences.

This year we launched with an open mic night, we took the pro-loco art event to Portmahomack, where the artists were inspired by the coastal views, the secondary schools art competition saw an increase in submissions, and we once again encouraged fringe events to be a part of the festival.

Our goal is to bring the community together socially and to stimulate the local economy while preserving and promoting local culture were met and we look forward to delighting audiences and participants again for our 6th outing in 2026 from 8th - 13th September 2026

2025 STATISTICS

39 EVENTS

In addition to the Pop-up Bookshop which saw an average daily footfall of 70 people. During the festival we held 29 ticketed events, 5 school events, 2 Pop-up authors, a school art competition, pro-loco event and open mic night at a variety of locations across the peninsula. The festival promoted authors; artists and musicians in venues across the peninsula. In this our 5th year, we strived to bring affordable and free events to reach more people to promote social engagement and intergenerational activity

1400 ATTENDANCES

In 2025 our ticket events saw an increase in sales by 51% from 668 in 2024 to 1010 in 2025 via TicketSource with some on the door sales. The total attendances figure includes school and pro-loco events. Our audiences grew and we attribute this to our varied programme and consumer confidence. We continued with our blended approach to access events and sold tickets via TicketSource website and telephone service. We then continued to sell tickets through the Pop-up shop and on the door at several events.

POP-UP EVENTS

Throughout the year as part of our marketing and fundraising efforts we took a stall at each of the Tain Community markets, we held a stand-alone St Duthac Day event on March 8th, we attended fundraising events around the peninsula and our Pop-up Bookshop during the festival attracted approx. 500 people through the door.

1575 CORE FOLLOWERS

Our core followers have doubled from 729 in 2024 to 1575 in 2025 via X (Twitter), Instagram and Facebook. Through marketing approaches our reach is as far afield as Australia, America, Singapore Canada, and Scandinavia.

2-WAY LOCAL SUPPORT

Our aim is to support the local and wider community through social and cultural engagement and improve health and wellbeing and citizenship. In return we have been supported through volunteering, membership, donations of books, engagement and funding. We have worked with a wide demographic who have supported the festival through their volunteering at events and in the shop.



Photo: Pop Up Bookshop, Masonic Lodge



Photo: Audience members at Mary Paulson Ellis event



Photo: Pro-loco & Schools Art Competition Voting



Photo: Audience in Collegiate Church

CONCLUSION

The 5th St Duthac Book and Arts Festival has felt even bigger and better. We decided to stick with the 6 day format introduced in 2024 and have grown our following and attendances.

2025 was another huge success for the festival and a positive impact on the local economy has been reported by businesses.

It was a resounding success in terms of footfall and engagement thanks to our core volunteer committee and the support from volunteers; businesses, authors, artists, venues, funders and patrons. Without their combined support the success of the 2025 festival would not have been possible.

Each year we reflect on the festival through a volunteer event and evaluation meeting, then we open our pitching window throughout the month of October.

We know the festival has once again made a positive impact on the community through feedback via social media platforms; comments books at each event and conversations relating stories of new partnerships, new enterprises; knowledge sharing and growth. See some taster quotes on the next page.

All of the businesses who supported the festival whether as a venue, through funding, free accommodation, raffle donation or who took an advert in the brochure have reported positive outcomes post festival.

Finally, the 2026 organising group are delighted to announce the dates for the 2026 event with some very special guests from the book, arts and heritage worlds signed up already. We hope you will support us in a book and art lovers take on what a cultural festival can be.

Save the dates from the 8th to 13th September 2026.



Photo: Author and Poet Michael Pedersen The Saint Duthac



Photo: Art workshop with Studio Smith



Photo: Collegiate Church Concert Finale Event

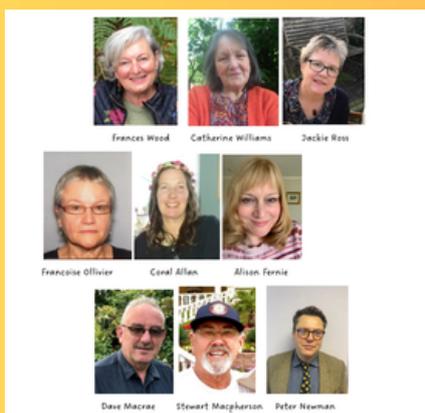


Photo: 2026 organising group

TASTER QUOTES

Facebook

Paul Taggart

They couldn't have been in more talented hands than our dear friend Liza Mulholland - who told us she had a wonderful time with everyone at Inver School. Congratulations on your brilliant artistic results, from Eileen and Paul

Brigitte Geddes

The entire Committee and their volunteers deserve great praise. I hope the events produced enough profit to stage the Festival again in 2026. Respect and applause

Lynn Cook

I thoroughly enjoyed the events I attended. Well done all. Shout out to Zoe Gray for wielding her camera beautifully .

Billy Livingstone

Went to 2 brilliant book events today thanks to all of the committee who made the events possible

Instagram

IReally looking forward to taking part in this lovely festival!! ❤️ Helen Graham Author

Comments Books 2026

“ So lovely to have the “buzz” of the Festival in Tain and surrounding villages. Enjoyed the events in the Collegiate Church. Well done to all!”

“ “Abiding memory; huge enthusiasm from all involved!

“The walk in the grounds of Balnagown Castle brought back so many memories of a childhood living with my family on the estate. Thank you so much for organising this”

Much looking forward to my return and seeing you again at the world's best book festival!!

Thank you to all our funders in 2025: Balnagown Estate: Beinn Tharsuinn Community Windfarm Fund (accessed through Kilmuir and Logie Easter Community Council, Edderton Community Council and Tain Community Council): Birlinn Ltd: Glenmorangie Distillery: Global Energy Group GEG: Kier Construction Community Wishes, and Scottish Book Trust. Thank you to DUFI ART for the beautiful brochures, posters and banners. Thank you also to all the businesses who have donated a raffle prize or placed an advert in our brochure, your continued support is much appreciated. Thank you to Councillors, sponsors, contributors, collaborators, local businesses, schools, venues and individuals who support the Festival in all sorts of ways. Finally, to all the volunteers who turn up, stand at stalls, staff the Pop-Up Bookshop, bake, sit on the committee, sell raffle tickets and do a hundred other things, a huge thank you, this Festival would not exist without you!