



Explaining to ourselves and others: the 2000s

The written word explains us to ourselves and others. Ian Rankin, member, Scottish PEN

By the end of the 20th century Scottish writers were reaching a wider audience than ever before.

They were present at literary gatherings on every continent. Some were being translated into many languages. And Scotland had increasing opportunities to meet writers from overseas, as literary festivals burgeoned, bringing to Scotland writers from many different countries.

In 2008 Scottish PEN hosted the biennial Writers in Prison conference. Delegates from 30 PEN centres gathered in Glasgow.

High on the agenda was a focus on freedom of expression in China – the Beijing Olympic Games were just a few months away. Scottish PEN took part in a poem relay in which Shi Tao's poem 'June', about the Tiananmen Square massacre, travelled around the world like the Olympic torch. It was translated into local languages as it progressed – in Scotland into Gaelic by Rody Gorman and Scots by Kate Armstrong, both Scottish PEN members.

Scottish PEN produced three CDs of contemporary Scottish writing, *Border Crossings* and *Departures and Arrivals*, featuring prose and poetry from 36 contemporary Scottish writers. The CDs were distributed to PEN centres throughout the world.

Scottish PEN's role in fostering creative exchange was becoming stronger all the time.