

# *A Poetic City*

## Writer in Residency programme

Bristol Cultural Development Partnership (BCDP), the producing house behind Festival of Ideas, is seeking four experienced and socially engaged professional writers who can offer exciting and inclusive residencies, each at a different location across the city. Applications are welcomed from one or more areas of creative writing, from writers, storytellers, scriptwriters, poets, spoken word or other artists working with words and from writers at different stages of their careers. The residencies are funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, as part of *A Poetic City*. Find out more at [www.facebook.com/bristolpoeticcity](https://www.facebook.com/bristolpoeticcity)

During this period of social-distancing and lockdown we, like many other events organisers, have adjusted our planned programme. We hope to respond to this challenge creatively, exploring ways that residencies and engagement might be held in virtual and digital ways. We look forward to seeing responses to this in applications.

### *A Poetic City*

2020 marks 250 years since the death of Bristol-born poet Thomas Chatterton. Despite his accolade as the “Father of Romantic Poetry”, and the centuries of fascination that he’s held for some poets, artists and musicians, he’s largely unknown in his home city. *A Poetic City* is a multi-partner, citywide programme bringing to light Bristol’s links to this iconic literary figure. We will build on existing knowledge of his life and times and explore his enduring legacy and influence upon subsequent generations of artists. Partners include the University of Bristol, Lyra poetry festival, Literature Works, the RWA, Bristol Culture (Libraries, Museums and Archives), Glenside Hospital Museum and St Mary Redcliffe. We will celebrate Bristol’s vibrant and diverse contemporary poetry scene and will inspire and commission poets of the future. Chatterton’s story also raises themes including artistic credulity and credibility; fake news and fake art; young artists; arts and mental health; on-going barriers to accessing culture in the city; the nature of celebrity; the resurrection of the Gothic; and the nurturing of creativity.

### Residency locations

- Glenside Hospital Museum
- The Red Lodge
- The RWA
- St Mary Redcliffe

### The residencies

We are looking for proposals that take an inclusive approach to ensure participatory sessions can welcome anyone regardless of their abilities. Responses for both residencies should include participatory sessions / workshops, and may include some outreach to existing community groups. Subject to lockdown guidance, the writers’ time would be split between working independently on-site (physically or virtually) at the locations, facilitating groups of people in participatory activities (in person or digitally) and working at home.

Subject to lockdown guidance, the writers may be present while the sites are open to the public and we would like the writers to engage with volunteers, staff and visitors in a positive and creative way. Writers will work in partnership with staff at the sites, as well as the team at BCDP who will offer support.

Proposals must be suitable for the public-access museum, gallery and religious spaces and must take into account accessibility and health and safety.

Whilst the writers will retain intellectual copyright over any works produced, we would like work where possible to be on display/exhibited and we will be using images and coverage of the programme for evaluation, reporting and marketing purposes during and after the residencies.

Applications can be made to more than one residency, though in these instances we would expect writers to explain how they would use multiple residencies to bring value and greater opportunity to the project.

#### **Outcomes of the project are:**

- To deliver writer-in-residencies that encourage and forge new connections between the sites and local communities.
- For museum, art and religious sites to have tested and evaluated new ways of working with professional writers, enhance their cultural offer, sharing their stories in new ways and inform work within and beyond the life of the programme.
- To respond to the life and work of Bristol-born poet Thomas Chatterton, Bristol's Romantic heritage and the contemporary life of a writer working in the city.

#### **The writers are required to:**

- Hold a week long residency with their allocated location, with a minimum of 2.5 days on site (physically or digitally)
- Produce outputs as agreed with their locations.
- Work closely with BCDP and the site team shape and deliver the programme
- Lead sessions with groups, working with them to produce new creative work.
- Participate in discussions about progress and evaluation.
- Contribute at least one piece of writing to the project blog

#### **Terms and Conditions**

- There is a fixed, non-negotiable grant of £1,000, inclusive of VAT.
- The author will retain copyright of their work and the client may not use it for commercial purposes.
- The client may use the work as required within *A Poetic City* and in wider BCDP activity, including for marketing purposes and in the linked programmes of the Festival of the Future City and Bristol Festival of Ideas. As the National Lottery Heritage Fund are providing financial support to the *A Poetic City* programme they may also wish to use images in marketing and reporting material.

#### **Application Procedure**

- Deadline: applications must be received by **6pm Sunday 7 June 2020**. Email direct or use We Transfer marked for the attention of Naomi Miller, Deputy Director, BCDP on [naomi.miller@businesswest.co.uk](mailto:naomi.miller@businesswest.co.uk)
- For any questions about the residencies, please contact Andrew Kelly, [andrew.kelly@businesswest.co.uk](mailto:andrew.kelly@businesswest.co.uk) (available until 31 May).
- The application must contain the following:
  - Application document covering
    - Indication of which residency you are applying for, alongside explanation of why this particular commission is of interest and the particular contribution you can make. (Word/PDF)
    - Written account of relevant experience to date, including evidence of being able to respond effectively to client requests and adhere to deadlines. (Word/PDF)
    - Previous experience and motivation in engaging with communities, e.g. through writing workshops, oral history taking, performances etc. (Word/PDF)
  - Up to three examples of previous work, demonstrating range of written styles. (JPG)
  - A copy of your C.V including reference to any previous relevant work (Word/PDF)
  - Timeline showing proposed working times (this can be flexible)

Shortlisting will be completed by representatives from BCDP and Literature Works. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend digital interviews during the week of **15 June**.

# The Venues

## Glenside Hospital Museum



**Residency period:** any week in August or September

**Open hours** (subject to lockdown guidance): Wednesday and Saturday mornings

**Access:** Full disabled access

**Residency brief:** Open, all writers and proposals considered

**Website:** [glensidemuseum.org.uk/](http://glensidemuseum.org.uk/)

“There’s a lovely little church on Blackberry Hill, Bristol, nestled in the grounds of what was once the old psychiatric hospital. Step inside, and you’ll find a curious assemblage of artefacts, writings, recordings, drawings, and sculptures, giving insight into the care provided for the mentally ill and the life of people who lived and worked there. Welcome to Glenside Hospital Museum.”

As one visitor wrote: *'I appreciated the history, heritage, humanity of the museum. It helps illustrate the evolution of mental health awareness and the relationship between wider environment and wellbeing. It has a tangible collection to inform and conceptualise learning content which is very valuable. The museum will move you emotionally.'*

### The Collections

Glenside Hospital Museum houses collections relating to the history of mental health care, set within the grounds of the building which opened in 1861 as the Bristol Lunatic Asylum.

The exhibits are housed in the hospital chapel, a Grade II listed building built in 1881 for the patients. Bristol Lunatic Asylum underwent several names changes including Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol Mental Hospital and Glenside Hospital which closed in 1994, and now the building is occupied by the University of the West of England Faculty of Health and Social Care. Since the 1880's Nurse Training has been delivered on this site. The Museum also houses the stories from the Stoke Park Colony of Hospitals for people with Learning Disabilities.

Throughout its history the building has gone through many changes, but looking at the warm grey pennant stone you can easily imagine the lives of the many people who have lived and worked here. The large collection of artefacts, photographs and information provide a picture of life and work in the former hospitals, including the three years (1915-1919) when the asylum became a First World War hospital.

### The role

As Writer in Residence we hope you will be inspired. There are no specific expectations. The museum is delivered by a group of dedicated volunteers of all abilities and ages, including creative artists that can help if you would like to organise an event, or produce a small book. It may be to showcase your work and the work of other poets and/or deliver a poetry workshop, but we are always open to ideas that will help promote the Museum, reduce negative attitudes to mental illness and promote well-being. Our only stipulation is that the work needs to destigmatise mental illness and the care provided. There are many positive stories to be found as in all hospitals the staff hope to be able to cure their patients. Negative stories that media and fictional film and writing often feed us does not help those who are mentally ill or the progress we need to make in caring for them.

**Stella Man, Curator, Glenside Hospital Museum**

## The Red Lodge



**Residency period:** any week in September

**Open hours** (subject to lockdown guidance): Saturday – Tuesday, 11am-4pm

**Access:** Due to the historic nature of the building, all six storeys of the house are accessible only by stairs. Access dogs are welcome.

**Writing brief:** A scripted performance moving through rooms of the house, telling stories of the girls who studied here.

**Website:** [bristolmuseums.org.uk/red-lodge-museum/](http://bristolmuseums.org.uk/red-lodge-museum/)

### A Brief History of the Red Lodge

Originally the site of a Carmelite Friary, on its dissolution the land passed to John Young, whose name is first mentioned in connection with it in 1568. Young, a country gentleman with estates in Wiltshire and Dorset, built the Great House on what is now the site of Colston Hall. In 1574 he was honoured with a visit from Queen Elizabeth I, whom he entertained with her entourage at the Great House for a week. Sadly she would not have visited Red Lodge during her visit, as the very earliest section of the building dates to around c1580. Young's estate also included a White Lodge in the extensive gardens above the Great House, and many others were constructed nearby – it was a very fashionable thing to build a lodge above the city (as it was then). The Great House and estate were lost by the Young family when John's son Robert squandered most of his fortune. The Red Lodge was then held by at least 20 different owners over the next two centuries, never staying long in the hands of any one family. Many physical changes were made, including moving the staircase, and glazing what was originally an open arcade overlooking the gardens. In 1787 Francis Cheyne Bowles and Richard Smith, surgeons, took the lease and used 'a large convenient room' – presumably the Great Oak Room - 'for their anatomical lectures'. (Smith's son, also Richard Smith, was the surgeon responsible for the book bound in the skin of John Horwood, now on display at M Shed). In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the Red Lodge was first used as a school, when Rev William Hort set up a finishing school / high class young ladies seminary. Exercise books from this time, found under floorboards, are now in the museum collections. Red Lodge's neighbour, the Great House, had been a place of education since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century when Edward Colston set up his school there.

After a brief period between 1827 – 1854, when it was a private residence for the last time, Red Lodge became a school once again. Lady Byron, widow of the poet, purchased the Red Lodge for Mary Carpenter to set up her Reformatory School for girls. A plaque on the first floor commemorates Lady Byron and her gift. Carpenter was a passionate social and educational reformer, founding the school at Red Lodge to take in young girls who had fallen foul of the law, believing she could train them to become productive and respectable members of society, mostly in service. The remaining school records, held at Bristol Archives, show that in many cases the school was successful. Staff remained in touch with the girls, recording the positions they went on to (many in the US), and other details of their lives. Three cells were built in the cellars, on the insistence of staff at the school. Isolation cells were considered appropriate punishment by the standards of the time, particularly when dealing with often troubled young women - another punishment was cutting hair. The cells are still present in the basement at Red Lodge.

When the school closed in 1919 the building was purchased by Alderman James Fuller Eberle and a group of his friends, including George A Wills, to make a home for the Bristol Savages and to preserve Bristol's history for Bristolians. Eberle also donated many of his varied collections to the museum service. The Red Lodge has been cared for and opened to the public by the museum service ever since. Bristol Savages are still in residence in the Wigwam building in the garden.

### Facilities

Red Lodge is an old building with huge amounts of character and many layers of history, but fewer modern conveniences! It's really important to note that the building is not fully accessible. There are steep steps at both entrances, uneven floors and steps throughout, and no accessible toilet. Options for physical work spaces are:

- The flat / stores on the top floor. This has the advantage of being completely private, we can set up a desk (and heater), but the flat has poor Wi-Fi connectivity. There are working electric sockets.
- The print room on the first floor. While the other rooms are interconnected this one is stand alone, so the door can be shut for complete privacy, though ideally we wouldn't do this during opening hours. An alternative would be to put a barrier across the entrance. The advantage to this space is access to Wi-Fi. There are also electrical sockets.
- The public spaces where the writer might meet people could be anywhere in the house or garden

There are toilet facilities in the museum – these are for both staff and visitors. The small staff room and kitchen will be available to the writer to make lunches, tea etc. For conservation reasons no food or drink should be consumed elsewhere in the building (including the private workspace).

### **Access and timing**

We would like the residency to take place during September. When we reopen the museum is staffed Saturday – Tuesday, 11am-4pm and these would be the ideal days for the residency. If weekends are not workable then we can probably cover other days of the week, by prior agreement.

### **Programme**

Given the current situation, it's unlikely we will have other events running during the residency. Red Lodge is a small, very atmospheric museum. Most visits are independent and self-led, with visitors often spending lots of time talking to the very knowledgeable front of house team. The writer would have the opportunity to move around the house, observe and / or chat with visitors and staff during opening hours, and to experience the building when it's almost empty – as former residents would have done. Staff will be able to give the writer a full tour of the building, including all the behind the scenes spaces such as the top floor flat and the cells in the basement.

### **Residency Brief**

While we would not at this stage be closed to discussing other ideas, we would be especially interested in a project that took Mary Carpenter's Reformatory school as its focus. This is not an area of Red Lodge history we are able to show much of, though there are some objects on display in one room, including Mary Carpenter's piano. There are also some records held at Bristol Archives, and we have some material which can be passed on to the writer.

- Transcripts from Mary Carpenters diary
- Newspaper articles detailing the girls who when there, ages and reason for being sent to Red Lodge
- Newspaper articles about the school
- Images from the collection

We would envisage the outcome being a performance of some sort, perhaps moving from room to room, focussing on the lives of the girls. The performance / event should be for a general, largely adult audience. We need to limit numbers in the building and in certain rooms, so it could be for quite a small, intimate group (max of 60 people in largest room, less in smaller spaces). It's increasingly likely we would want to film the performance for potential use on digital platforms.





transformation which could be used in some way to support future fundraising

**Website:** [rwa.org.uk/](http://rwa.org.uk/)

**Residency period:** Early autumn 2020

**Open hours** (subject to lockdown guidance): Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 5.30pm; Sunday 11am – 5pm

**Accessibility:** Due to the historic nature of the building, all six storeys of the house are accessible only by stairs. Access dogs are welcome.

**Residency brief:** A poet able to reach and engage with teenagers and young adults, and create a piece of work marking the RWA's moment of

The **Royal West of England Academy** (RWA), England's only regional Royal Academy of Art, is Bristol's finest art gallery. Its magnificent Grade 2\* listed building hosts five naturally-lit galleries acclaimed as one of the best exhibition spaces in the country. Its lively programme of exhibitions celebrate the best of historic and contemporary British art, including artists from Turner and Constable to Fedden and Nash, and work by its own Academicians, who include some of the country's leading artists.

The RWA will be exhibiting Wallis' famous portrait of Chatterton (<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/wallis-chatterton-n01685>) later this autumn. Responding to this portrait in live and/or digital engagement sessions will be central to the output of this residency. The gallery is almost preparing for a major transformation of its historic galleries and entrance and would like the output of the residency to mark this moment and potentially help with fundraising.

### Programme

Given the current situation, it's possible that we won't have other events running during the residency. Subject to lockdown guidance, we would hope that the writer would have some opportunity to move around the galleries, observe and / or chat with visitors and staff during opening hours, and to experience the building when it's almost empty. Staff will be able to give the writer a full tour of the building

### Residency Brief

The RWA are looking to reach new audiences of teenagers and young adults. We are especially keen to see applications from poets from across the poetry spectrum who have experience at engaging with and writing with or for these audiences. We would also like the creative output to mark the moment of transformation currently happening in the galleries, with the hope that it might be used for fundraising purposes.

## St Mary Redcliffe



**Residency period:** week commencing 10 August

**Open hours** (subject to lockdown guidance): 8am until 5pm Monday to Saturday and 7am until 8pm on Sundays.

**Residency Brief:** one poem, or a series of poems, that investigates one or more of these themes in a metre used by Chatterton produced by a poet of any age and poetic specialism.

**Access:** Due to the historic nature of the building, some parts of the building, and specifically those related to Chatterton and the space reserved for the writer, are only accessible via a spiral staircase. Alternative desk space will be provided, if needed.

**Website:**

<https://www.stmaryredcliffe.co.uk/>

The residency at St Mary Redcliffe will take place during the week commencing **10 August** and will be for a minimum of 2.5 days, although the venue will be available for five days leading up to an end-of-residency event, which will be held either in the church or online on the evening of **Saturday 15 August**. The appointed writer will also be asked to take part in an event, either physical or digital, during Bristol Open Doors, **which takes place from 11-13 September**. **These dates are, however, subject to lockdown guidance and will be discussed further at the interview stage.**

### History

The Christian community has worshipped continuously on the site occupied by St Mary Redcliffe Church for well over 800 years. The first church may have been built here in Saxon times, when Bristol first became a port – the original quayside was just across the road, below the red sandstone cliff from which this area gets its name, located on what is now Redcliffe Quay. The present church is a treasure of international importance, a Grade I listed building that is a masterpiece of Gothic architecture.

St Mary Redcliffe sits at the centre of Redcliffe, on a spur of red cliff that gives the church its name. Redcliffe, once separate from Bristol and part of the manor of Bedminster, like the wider city is an area with strong links to the sea, maritime trade and industries such as glass-making and pottery. The history of the church is peopled with characters associated with the early modern expansion of Bristol, such as John Cabot and William Canynge, but also later political and cultural figures such as Admiral William Penn, William Hogarth and Thomas Chatterton, Wordsworth's "marvellous boy", whose formative years were spent contemplating the gothic splendour of the church.

### **Residency brief**

The church invites applications from poets of any age who have an interest in the poetry of Thomas Chatterton, how St Mary Redcliffe Church and its history influenced his work, and the effect of Chatterton on subsequent generations. We would particularly welcome interest from writers who are interested in investigating some or all of the following through poetry:

- how Chatterton's poetry responded to the architecture of the church building
- how Chatterton's 'afterlife' - his biography and literary influence - shaped perceptions of the church during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries
- what might an appropriate modern response to Chatterton's poetry be
- how can Chatterton and his work influence the way the people of Redcliffe see themselves in the twenty-first century

We would like the writer in residence to produce one poem, or a series of poems, that investigates one or more of these themes in a poetic metre used by Chatterton.

### **Other activities**

As part of the Poetic City initiative, St Mary Redcliffe will be organising a series of community-facing events and activities, designed to get more local people involved in poetry and build awareness of Bristol's poetic heritage. These include:

- A symposium on Romanticism
- A poetry outreach session
- An intergenerational event
- Community information sessions

Due to the effects of coronavirus, planning for these activities has been disrupted, so we are at the moment unable to provide precise information about when they will take place or the exact nature of the activities. However, it is our intention that at least some activity will take place during the period of the residency and, accordingly, we would like to appoint a poet who is willing to be involved in some form of community facing activity as part of the appointment.

### **Location**

Depending on lockdown guidance, the writer will spend some of the residence working in a private room located above the north porch, near to the Chatterton Room where the poet is reported to have found inspiration for his poetry. The church would also provide a more publicly located desk inside the church, so that the writer is able to spend part of their time speaking to church visitors about Chatterton, their work and the *A Poetic City* project.