

Quay Words and Libraries Unlimited 2021 at Exeter Library and Exeter Custom House

Call out for Writer-in-Residence February and March 2021



Exeter
City of
Literature

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Designated
UNESCO Creative City
in 2019



Supported using public funding by
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Writer-in-Residence at Exeter Library and Exeter Custom House Information Pack

Literature Works and Libraries Unlimited are delighted to announce a Writer-in-Residence opportunity hosted both at Exeter Library and Exeter Custom House. Exeter Custom House is a historic building owned by the Exeter Canal and Quay Trust (ECQT) on Exeter Quay. ECQT is developing the concept of Exeter Custom House as a 'literature hub' in the context of Exeter's UNESCO City of Literature programme. Following its successful bid to Arts Council England National Lottery Projects, ECQT has commissioned Literature Works to deliver two years of *Quay Words* programming at Exeter Custom House over the period 2020-22.

Libraries Unlimited is an independent charity running 50 libraries across Devon and 4 libraries in Torbay, as well as 4 mobile libraries and a range of other services including; two FabLabs, and 2 Business and IP Centres. Libraries Unlimited is an Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), expanding their services to include high-quality arts and cultural events and activities. Exeter Library is a flagship city centre library with over 1km of shelves containing over 60,000 books, CDs and DVDs. The library has as reserve stack of approximately 150,000 items and the Special Collections Archive consists of early printed books ranging in date from an Incunable of 1480 to c.1900. Additional resources include large children's library, a separate teen area, Business and IP Centre, FabLab, meeting rooms, public access PCs and café.

Quay Words 2020-22 is a partnership between ECQT and Literature Works, the literature development charity for South West England. *Quay Words 2020-22* showcases literature as an accessible and diverse art form and this literature hub concept was a central pillar of Exeter's successful bid to gain UNESCO City of Literature status in 2019.

We are seeking to appoint a writer, storyteller, spoken word artist or other wordsmith to be in residence at the Exeter Library in February, followed by Exeter Custom House in March for the equivalent of at least one day per week during the two-month period. Depending on the current circumstances with Covid, the residency can be delivered digitally, with the writer engaging instead from home. The selected writer will be engaged by Libraries Unlimited and Literature Works on a contractor/freelance basis as Writer-in-Residence for the term.

The Theme 'Exploring the Stories of Exeter's Women'

Combining Quay Words Spring season theme of exploration and Exeter Libraries presentation of the BL UN Finished Business Exhibition we are interested in the shared Writer-in-Residence developing work from the theme of 'Exploring the Stories of Exeter's Women'. We seek creative responses to this idea and are interested in hearing how you will research and gather stories, both historical - using the collections held by Libraries Unlimited - and contemporary stories from Exeter locals. We plan for the Writer-in-Residence to contribute to an event on International Women's Day 8th March.

We are keen to encourage the Writer-in-Residence to reflect on and draw inspiration from the heritage significance of Exeter Custom House and the Quay area, as well as Exeter as a whole. Exeter has a history dating back 2,000 years; it is a cathedral city with acclaimed libraries and archives and a world-ranking university. Exeter and Devon are home to authors of global renown. Exeter Quay was

once a centre of international trade, exporting and importing goods worldwide from the quayside. We seek to appoint a Writer-in-Residence who will be inspired to explore, connect and create within this setting.

Residency terms

The Writer-in-Residence will be contracted to be working with the residency venues for one day each week – or equivalent - during the period, which runs from 1st February to 31st March. They will also deliver four public-facing events or workshops of their own design, based on their time working with these unique settings. These may be workshops, talks, discussions or other creative activities: we are open to ideas. We'd like to hear your creative ideas for delivering the work digitally in order to be responsive to the Covid 19 restrictions that may be in place during the period of the residency. We are able to support a blended approach that works with social distancing guidelines by combining activity in both venues with broadcast to digital audiences if this is possible during the period of the residency. (See note below about use of digital in adhering to latest guidance.)

The Writer-in-Residence will have free access to the *Quay Words* Spring 2020 programme of events at the Custom House, presenting opportunities to connect with other writers and our wide range of partners.

We are looking for creative responses to the theme and seeking a Writer-in-Residence who can uncover and transform stories from their own perspective. Following this - and within one month from the end of their Residency – we will invite the writer to create a short piece or performance inspired by their residency which Literature Works and Libraries Unlimited may publish or produce. The nature of this commissioned piece is to be negotiated during the interview process. ECQT will wish to promote the completed work on its own website (www.exeterquay.org.uk)

Residency package

We offer an inclusive fee for the Residency of £2,000 to include the delivery of four public-facing events.

If Covid 19 regulations allow it we encourage our writer to find time to develop their own work at the Custom House and we invite them to spend as much time on site as they wish. We will provide a private writing space in the building for the duration of March.

How to apply

Please apply in writing on no more than two sheets of A4, outlining your relevant experience, why you would like to undertake this residency and the impact it would have on your own work and development. Please summarise your availability within the given time period and your ability to meet the requirements of the commission, including your willingness to travel to Exeter. Please also include a writing CV, with full details of your writing and publishing record.

Please email your applications to: customhouse@literatureworks.org.uk

Closing date for receipt of applications is: 5pm on Friday 11th December

Candidates selected for interview will be notified on or before Tuesday 15th December

Interviews will take place using Zoom on Thursday 17th December

TO NOTE: Quay Words writer residencies in July and August 2020 have successfully taken place in digital form, using different virtual platforms to deliver online activity that connects and refers back to the Exeter setting. In the early autumn we hosted some events in the building, with measures in place for socially-distanced, limited group sizes before the current lockdown and at this stage the aim is to do the same with this residency if possible. We continue to monitor and adhere to government and local authority guidance. Should circumstances at any point prevent activity from taking place in situ, we will work with our Writer-in-Residence to move the activity online.