



June 2016

Event to bring climate change novel to life

A Scottish writer creative writing lecturer at Leeds Beckett University, and politics graduate of the University of Edinburgh, is bringing to life her latest novel through an interactive event taking place on Saturday 18 June as part of the Edinburgh Festival of Cycling at Edinburgh's Central Library on George IV Bridge.

Dr Lucy Burnett's novel, *Through the Weather Glass*, is a re-writing of the classic Icarus story, which tells a fictionalised version of the true story of Lucy's struggles to understand environmental change during a 2,500 mile solo cycle ride from Salford to the Greek Island of Ikaria, where Icarus fell. The book is a hybrid novel – combining a range of different genres of writing and art-forms, including fantasy travel writing, poetry and documentary photography.

With the support of Arts Council England and the Centre for Culture and the Arts at Leeds Beckett, Lucy will be inviting members of the public to engage in an interactive version of her book which aims to get the audience to think about climate change in new, creative and playful ways.

Taking place as part of the Edinburgh Festival of Cycling, from 10am to 5pm, participants will be invited to pedal a bicycle to power a TV screen, watch an animated Google earth film, listen to excerpts from the book, browse some photographic artwork or pen their responses to the installation onto paper feathers and pin them to Icarus's wings.

Lucy, who lived in Edinburgh for 11 years where she worked for organisations like Friends of the Earth and Ramblers Scotland, explained: “Rather than seeking solutions or persuading the audience of a point of view, the *Through the Weather Glass* installation playfully invites the public to participate in creating more positive stories about climate change than we usually hear.”

Kim Harding, Festival Director, said: “We are delighted to feature ‘Through the Weather Glass’ as part of this year's Edinburgh Festival of Cycling, looking at the issue of global climate change. Before starting up the Festival, I was a research scientist working on the potential effects of climate change on Scottish vegetation, so this is issue of great interest to me.”

The installation is going on a tour of book festivals and book spaces around the UK throughout 2016.

Lucy added: “The opening event in May at the Broadway Shopping Centre in Bradford was a huge success. The public responded superbly, with participants aged 6 to 86 pedalling the bike. By the end of the day Icarus's wings were brimming with feathers. It really felt as though the installation had taken flight and I can't wait to share it with the people of Edinburgh.

“The aim isn't to persuade people of any particular agenda regarding climate change, but rather to invite people to participate in thinking through what the evidence of environmental damage means. Too often people feel disenfranchised by the climate change agenda of targets and international conferences, or feel frozen by the apocalyptic stories that are told. This installation aims to bring the agenda right back down to earth, and to encourage people to think in playful, creative ways about how we can respond and move forward from here. What kind of world do we *want* to live in, and what can we do to make that world a reality?’

The full list of tour dates is as follows:

Saturday 4 June – Leeds Big Bookend – Trinity Leeds, 10am – 5pm.

Monday 13 June – Crossing the Tees Book Festival, The Neptune Centre, Berwick Hills, Middlesborough, 10am – 5pm

Tuesday 14 June - Crossing the Tees, Stockon-on-Tees Central Library, 10am-5pm

Wednesday 15 June, Crossing the Tees, Hartlepool Central Library, 10am-5pm

Saturday 18 June – Edinburgh Festival of Cycling – Central Library, George IV Bridge, 10am-5pm

Saturday 25 June – Hebden Bridge Arts Festival, Blazing Saddles Bike Shop, 10am-5pm

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August – Amy Johnson Festival, Hull, venue and times tbc

Friday 9 and Saturday 11 September – Tebay Services Northbound, Penrith, Cumbria (all day)

Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 September – New Mills Arts Festival, Spring Bank Arts Centre, High Peak, Derbyshire, 11am-4pm

Friday 30 Sept – Sunday 2 October – Tebay Services Southbound, Penrith, Cumbria (all day)

Saturday 8 October – Durham Book Festival, Clayport Library times tbc

Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 October – Off the Shelf Sheffield, Winter Gardens times tbc

For more information please email Lucy Burnett on lucyburnett75@gmail.com or call 07766 737521.

Ends

For further details please contact Carrie Braithwaite in the Communications team at Leeds Beckett on 0113 812 3022 or email c.braithwaite@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Notes for editors:

- Leeds Beckett University has more than 29,000 students on programmes in Leeds and abroad and just over 3,100 staff.
- The Vice Chancellor of Leeds Beckett University is Professor Peter Slee.
- Leeds Beckett's four faculties are: Arts, Environment and Technology, Business & Law, Health and Social Sciences, and Carnegie.
- Leeds Beckett University is the only university in the UK to have achieved both the Customer Service Excellence standard, Investors in People Gold and the RoSPA Gold medal across the whole institution.
- The Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) showed that the proportion of Leeds Beckett 2013/14 graduates in work, further study or both six months after leaving university was 94.1%.