



Announcing Britain's New Canal Laureate 2018: Nancy Campbell



Nancy Campbell. Photo: Paul Preece, 2018.

**PRESS
RELEASE**

Embargoed until 12:01am,
11 January 2018

The Poetry Society and the **Canal & River Trust** are delighted to announce the appointment of Britain's new Canal Laureate 2018: **Nancy Campbell**.

Oxford-based poet and kayaker Nancy has a keen interest in arctic, marine and water conservation, following on from her winter residency at the most northern museum in the world in Greenland in 2010, and subsequent museum residencies in both Greenland and Iceland over the last seven years.

During 2018 she will "seek out and share stories" from the people and places she will encounter during her travels along the 2,000 miles of the nation's historic canals and waterways looked after by the Canal & River Trust.

Nancy begins her role as Canal Laureate this month, taking over from poet Luke Kennard (2016-17) and poet Jo Bell, who became the inaugural Canal Laureate (2013-15).

Interested in helping make her poetry accessible to a mainstream audience, Nancy is keen to realise her poems through other mediums such as printmaking and film. Her initial events and collaborations will include: creating a short work about rain to be displayed by the waterways; writing a poem about an unassuming and endangered type of herring – the Twaite Shad; and a collaboration with Nottingham's 'Light Night' event.

Continues over

For further information

Ben Rogers, The Poetry Society: 020 7420 9895 /
brogers@poetrysociety.org.uk

Joe Coggins, Canal & River Trust: 020 3204 4410 /
07827 357655 / joe.coggins@canalrivertrust.org.uk

The Poetry Society

22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX
Tel: 020 7420 9880 Fax: 020 7240 4818
www.poetrysociety.org.uk

Nancy Campbell said:

“I’m thrilled to be appointed as the new Canal Laureate and am grateful for the inspiring wake of poems the previous Canal Laureates leave behind. I’ve always lived near to water, from my childhood living between the Tweed and the Tyne, I now live just ten minutes’ walk from the Thames and not far from the River Cherwell and Oxford Canal. I would love to live on a narrowboat, but I don’t think I could fit all my books into one! Instead, I paddle around Oxford’s waterways on a kayak or canoe, which is a great way to discover these green corridors.”

She added:

“Although my writing is inspired by the environment, I don’t see nature in isolation from human activity. What fascinates me is the intersection between people, the places they live and their local environment. I’m keen to explore the history of Britain’s remarkable canals, to discover how they have transformed over the last 200 years from an industrial to leisure resource and have become places of recovery and healing to enhance our wellbeing.”

Established in 2013 by The Poetry Society and the Canal & River Trust, the Canal Laureateship aims to encourage exciting new writing about the Britain’s historic canal network. Previous Laureateships have seen poems stencilled onto canalside walls, carved into newly made lock-beams, translated into short films, and forgotten classic poetry given new life in performances, publication and animations.

Canal poetry has been celebrated at venues including the Hay Festival, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Birmingham Literature Festival, National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, London’s Southbank Centre and Crick Boat Show, Welshpool Poetry Festival, Market Bosworth Festival, Leeds Liverpool Biennial, and showcased in a dedicated canal edition of BBC Radio 4’s *Poetry Please*.

The project is part of the Arts on the Waterways programme, a partnership between the Canal & River Trust, Arts Council England and Arts Council of Wales to help attract even more visitors to the waterways while surprising and delighting existing communities through innovative art projects.

Tim Eastop, executive producer of the Canal & River Trust’s Arts on the Waterways programme, said:

“Our nation’s waterways are a big canvas that offer a launch pad to create the most incredible and unexpected works across a range of artistic disciplines. I see our canals and rivers as cultural capillaries, capable of helping the arts reach out to new audiences and attract new supporters for our superb waterways. We’re very excited to announce Nancy as our new Canal Laureate. She is a rising name and we look forward to realising her exciting ambitions over the course of the Laureateship.”

Judith Palmer, Director of The Poetry Society, said:

“While our rivers and coast have attracted centuries of British writers, the slow waters of our canal network remain relatively uncharted in literature, and are ripe for poetic exploration. Our continuing partnership with the Canal & River Trust has been responsible for generating many wonderful new poems, and

Continues over

For further information

Ben Rogers, The Poetry Society: 020 7420 9895 /
brogers@poetrysociety.org.uk

Joe Coggins, Canal & River Trust: 020 3204 4410 /
07827 357655 / joe.coggins@canalrivertrust.org.uk

The Poetry Society

22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX
Tel: 020 7420 9880 Fax: 020 7240 4818
www.poetrysociety.org.uk

connecting with new audiences around the country. We're thrilled to be now announcing our third Canal Laureate, and welcoming Nancy Campbell to the role. Nancy has established herself as an energetic and innovative poet of insatiable curiosity with a passion for exploring lives and landscapes shaped by water. We look forward to accompanying her on this new literary journey as Canal Laureate."

The Canal Laureate's new poems and observations will be published on www.waterlines.org.uk. Follow Nancy's adventures via Twitter [@CanalPoetry](https://twitter.com/CanalPoetry)

– ENDS –

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: for further information, images or to arrange interviews please contact:

Ben Rogers, The Poetry Society: 020 7420 9895 / brogers@poetrysociety.org.uk

Joe Coggins, Canal & River Trust: 020 3204 4410 / 07827 357655 / joe.coggins@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Nancy Campbell

Born in Exeter in 1978, Campbell's interest in landscapes and the way they are shaped by natural and manmade forces was nurtured by growing up in the Scottish Borders and Northumberland and informs her work today.



A cross-disciplinary artist, whose work encompasses poetry, non-fiction and the creation of artist's books, Nancy studied English Literature before training as a letterpress printmaker, a craft that also informs her poetry. She has a keen interest in the visual arts.

Nancy is dedicated to developing innovative literature projects to engage audiences with environmental issues. A series of residencies with Arctic research institutions has resulted in projects responding to cultural and climate change in polar and marine environments. She featured as a *Marie Claire* 'Wonder Woman' in 2016 for her environmental activities, including founding the Arctic Book Club and The Polar Tombola, an interactive live literature event.

Nancy's poetry collection *Disko Bay*, "a beautiful debut from a deft, dangerous and dazzling new poet" – Carol Ann Duffy, was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection in 2016. Her artist's books include *proviso*, *Death of a Foster Son* and *How To Say 'I Love You' In Greenlandic: An Arctic Alphabet*, which received the Birgit Skiöld Award and is now reissued in a new edition by MIEL.

Nancy's writing on the visual arts appears regularly in the *Times Literary Supplement* and many other journals. *Bill Jacklin: Graphics*, co-authored with Jill Lloyd, was published in 2016 to accompany the artist's exhibition at the Royal Academy, and she is an editor of *Dark Mountain* journal. For some years the editor of international art magazine *Printmaking Today*, she remains on its editorial board.

Nancy's next book, entitled *The Library of Ice*, a memoir of her travels in the Arctic, is due for publication by Scribner UK in autumn 2018.

For more information about Nancy Campbell visit: www.nancycampbell.co.uk

Watch Nancy reading one of her Arctic poems 'The Message': www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuahKFrRkbU

Watch Nancy's poem for Channel 4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjZhUuUIuYI>

Continues over

For further information

Ben Rogers, The Poetry Society: 020 7420 9895 /
brogers@poetrysociety.org.uk

Joe Coggins, Canal & River Trust: 020 3204 4410 /
07827 357655 / joe.coggins@canalrivertrust.org.uk

The Poetry Society

22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX
Tel: 020 7420 9880 Fax: 020 7240 4818
www.poetrysociety.org.uk

The Poetry Society

Founded in 1909 to promote a “more general recognition and appreciation of poetry”, The Poetry Society has since grown into one of Britain’s most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, The Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. It publishes the magazine *The Poetry Review*, runs the National Poetry Competition, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award and the youth performance poetry championship SLAMBassadors UK. www.poetrysociety.org.uk @PoetrySociety

The Canal & River Trust

The Canal & River Trust launched in 2012 and cares for 2,000 miles of historic waterways across England and Wales – a fascinating, free network that’s full of life and open to all. The Trust also cares for the nation’s third largest collection of listed structures, as well as museums, archives, and hundreds of important wildlife sites. The charity believes that living waterways transform places and enrich lives and our role is to make sure there is always a place on your doorstep where you can escape the pressures of everyday life, stretch your legs and simply feel closer to nature.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk @CanalRiverTrust @crtcomms

Arts on the Waterways

The Canal & River Trust’s Arts on the Waterways innovative cultural programme was Initiated by the Trust in 2012 and is supported through Arts Council England and Arts Council Wales. The programme provides artists with time and space along the waterways where they can slow down, research and make ambitious new work responding to important social, environmental and heritage questions and to inspire more people to experience and appreciate their local waterways.

www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/waterway-arts #ArtsontheWaterways

Waterlines

News from the Canal Laureate programme can be followed at www.waterlines.org.uk or on Twitter @CanalPoetry

For further information

Ben Rogers, The Poetry Society: 020 7420 9895 /
brogers@poetrysociety.org.uk

Joe Coggins, Canal & River Trust: 020 3204 4410 /
07827 357655 / joe.coggins@canalrivertrust.org.uk

The Poetry Society

22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX
Tel: 020 7420 9880 Fax: 020 7240 4818
www.poetrysociety.org.uk