

Narrative





## **'Norwich has turned itself into a world hub for literature'**

Ian McEwan, 2010

—

Front cover:  
Handwritten title  
supporting the bid  
by Ian McEwan.





Norwich:  
UNESCO  
*City of  
Literature*

## Management Group

Chris Gribble  
Chief Executive,  
Writers' Centre Norwich.

Robert McCrum  
Chair, Writers' Centre Norwich.

Graham Creelman  
Vice Chair, Writers' Centre Norwich.

Magdalen Russell  
Bid Writer.

## Steering Committee

Brian Ayers  
Director, The Butrint  
Foundation (UNESCO  
World Heritage Site),  
archaeologist, historian  
and writer.

Keith Bartlett  
Deputy Principal,  
Norwich University  
College of the Arts.

Tim Bishop  
Head of BBC East.

Liz Calder  
Co-founder Bloomsbury  
Publishing: co-founder  
Full Circle Editions:  
founder and President,  
Paraty International  
Literary Festival, Brazil.

Professor Jon Cook  
Former Dean, Arts and  
Humanities, University of  
East Anglia: Chair, Arts  
Council England East.

Professor William Pope  
Chair, East of England  
Development Agency

Professor Giles Foden  
Writer and Professor  
of Creative Writing,  
University of East Anglia.

Dr. Ian Gibson  
Science writer, former  
Member of Parliament  
for Norwich North:  
former Dean of Biological  
Sciences, University of  
East Anglia.

Chris Gribble  
Chief Executive,  
Writers' Centre Norwich.

Jan Holden  
Assistant Head of Service,  
Norfolk Library and Information  
Services: Chair, UK Social  
Exclusion Network.

Baroness Hollis of Heigham  
Writer, historian and politician:  
former leader of Norwich  
City Council.

Dr. Valerie Henitiuk  
Director, British Centre  
for Literary Translation.

Caroline Jarrold  
Community Affairs Adviser,  
Jarrold: Secretary and  
Trustee of the John Jarrold  
Trust: Chair of the Norfolk  
and Norwich Festival.

Richard Jewson  
Chair, Archant (UK's largest  
independent regional media  
business): Lord Lieutenant  
of Norfolk.

Councillor Steve Morphew  
Former Leader, Norwich  
City Council.

Andrea Stark  
Executive Director, Arts Council  
England East and South East.

David White  
Chief Executive, Norfolk  
County Council.

# Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>iii</b>	
<hr/>		
<i>Part one</i>		
<b>900 years: a literary city</b>	<b>01</b>	
<hr/>		
i	The flow of history: resistance and change	01
ii	World-changing writers, ideas and print	02
iii	Du diffrunt: dialect, a sense of place and the Norfolk spirit	05
<i>Part two</i>		
<b>Today: a creative city</b>	<b>07</b>	
<hr/>		
i	A cultural economy	07
ii	A central place for representation and dissemination	09
iii	A world of libraries and living museums	13
iv	Words about art	14
v	Wider literary landscapes	16
vi	Small city, big art	18
vii	Cultural heritage	19
viii	A knowledge economy	20
ix	A tale of two cities	21
<i>Part three</i>		
<b>The Future: reaching out</b>	<b>22</b>	
<hr/>		
	The Vision: Norwich, UNESCO City of Literature	22
i	A world centre for free expression, innovation and change	23
ii	Making connections, creative cities	24
iii	A place of ambition, new ideas and a digital future	25
<b>Credits</b>	<b>iv</b>	
<hr/>		



---

Above:  
Landmarks  
of Norwich.



## Executive summary

Norwich has been a literary city for 900 years: a place of ideas where the power of words has changed lives, promulgated parliamentary democracy, fomented revolution, fought for the abolition of slavery and transformed the literary arts. Today, it remains the English destination for poets, novelists, biographers, playwrights, translators, literary critics, historians, environmentalists and philosophers: a place for writers as agents of change.

Norwich is also a city of international networks. It is the first UK *City of Refuge* for persecuted writers and a founding member of the *International Cities of Refuge Network*. The University of East Anglia pioneered Britain's first creative writing MA and is home to a vast network of international writers, including fellowships for emerging talent in Africa, India and the Far East. Writers' Centre Norwich has generated multiple networks of guest writers, publishers and international partnerships. The Norfolk Record Office has been recognised by the International Council of Archivists as the most advanced archive centre in Europe and holds collections of Outstanding International Importance. The city is also a world-class centre for new media and science writing and the British Centre for Literary Translation is a member of Europe's RECIT network of literary translation centres and a contributor to UNESCO's Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity.

Until the 18th century, Norwich was England's second city. Sheltered within a protected area of outstanding natural beauty, this regional capital looks out from England's east coast across the North Sea into mainland Europe and a multitude of trading links and cultural networks beyond. The city's Anglo Saxon origins, overlaid with a Norman, mediaeval, early modern, Victorian, modern and post-modern urban scene, embodies both continuity and a unique cultural identity rooted in the cultivation of ideas, radical writing and literary experiment. Creative activity has always sprung from native roots and Norwich famously follows its own instincts. But this cultural wellspring has been fed over nine centuries by an influx of outsiders who have brought in new ideas, new technologies and new talent. The city's reputation as a historic centre of dissent and free expression has led directly to its designation as a *City of Refuge* and a sanctuary for writers. The quest continues into the 21st century, to find new and wider channels that connect, harness, mobilise and share creative ideas between developing and developed cities worldwide.

This submission for Norwich to become a *UNESCO City of Literature* is endorsed by the UK's Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media & Sport. It is led by Writers' Centre Norwich in association with Arts Council England, the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, the University of East Anglia, Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council. And it sets out a vision for Norwich to become a committed and active partner within UNESCO's Creative Cities Network through dialogue, solidarity, shared experience and building knowledge.



---

Left:  
Julian of Norwich  
stained glass window,  
Norwich Cathedral.

*Part one*

# 900 years: a literary city

## i The flow of history: resistance and change

Norwich is a city of incomers, traders and refugees. The area has been a focus for human activity for 10,000 years and just beyond the city boundaries to the south, the Roman town of *Venta Icenorum* occupied the Iron Age home of the Iceni tribe who rebelled against Rome and were brutally defeated under their leader, Boudicca. Two thousand years later, the myth of Boudicca has evolved to become a manifestation of national pride and a fiercely independent local spirit. Legions of storytellers, writers and poets tell her story in Norwich today.

---

Boudicca, in a chariot, with her two daughters before her, drove through the ranks. She harangued the different nations in their turn: This, she said, is not the first time the Britons have been led into battle by a woman. But now she did not come to boast the pride of a long time ancestry, nor even to recover her kingdom and the plundered wealth of her family. She took the field, like the meanest among them, to assert the cause of public liberty...

The Annals of Tacitus  
(AD 110-120; Book XIV)

When Rome withdrew from England in the fifth century, *Venta Icenorum* was abandoned and Norwich emerged slowly from the watery marshlands around the confluence of two rivers, the Wensum and the Yare.

To understand Norwich is to enter the city by river from the direction of the North Sea, from the shores of Scandinavia, North Germany and the Low Countries. A nexus of waterways – the primary channels of communication – opened it up to trade, to foreign influences, languages, ideas and new technologies. By c.1004, Norwich was important enough to attract the attention of Sweyn Forkbeard of Denmark who “came with his fleet to Norwich and completely burned and ravaged the borough” (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*).

By the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066, the town had recovered to become a major port and urban centre. With its close ties to continental Europe, it occupied the richest and most densely populated part of the British Isles and within the context of Saxon England, was home to the largest number of ‘free peasants’ – a prosperous, cosmopolitan region facing out to the wider world, able to assert some independence from feudal demands and the source of a free thinking, *du diffrent*, culture still evident today.

The Norman Conquest brought dramatic changes to the settlement: a new borough for a fast-growing French-speaking population, including a significant Jewish quarter, a massive Norman Castle and a Norman Cathedral built across the old Saxon

marketplace. In 1194, Norwich was granted a charter by King Richard I, making it one of the oldest ‘cities’ in the UK. Nine hundred years later, the castle, the cathedral and the market still dominate the city. Today, however, the castle is a museum of national importance and local affection and the cathedral is an international ecumenical, educational and inter-faith centre and one of the most beautiful buildings in England.

In the following centuries, Norwich continued to grow and the main source of wealth was wool and cloth exports. The success of the wool trade combined with a wide network of immigration links with continental Europe made the city rich and from the Middle Ages until the 18th century, Norwich was the second largest city in England. It was also a place of religious and political dissent and a haven for waves of refugees fleeing persecution in Europe. This potent mix of immigration and affluence continues to shape the city today and its physical expression remains in the grand architecture, winding mediaeval streets, human scale and European character that make Norwich such a good place to live.

The record, however, is ambivalent. The city’s reputation for tolerance, non-conformism and continentalism has been matched by episodes of intolerance and insularity. And this ambivalence goes back a long way. In 1144, the first blood libel in the history of European anti-semitism was enacted in Norwich against the Jews, leading to massacres in London, Lincoln and York and eventually, to the expulsion of all Jews from England in 1290.

There is a memory in Norfolk as long as its Celtic shorelines. Since Norwich emerged from its watery landscape and wide skies, it has challenged writers to release that memory, as a form of imaginative history that flows into now and the future and carries with it the agonies and consequences of persecution and exile, the dynamic virtues of immigration and sanctuary and the joy of dreaming in a place where everything seems possible.

## ii World-changing writers, ideas and print

Norwich has been a city of literature for more than 900 years. Since the scholar-writer, Bishop Herbert de Losinga, laid the foundation stone for the Norman cathedral in 1096 and bequeathed his exceptional collection of books to the cathedral library, it has grown to include a record of the city as a capital of print and the history of the book – including a unique record of European book binding – and the building itself has become a glorious free space for writers and thinkers of all faiths and philosophies to meditate and dream within its vast stone walls.

---

**I am Meir, b.r. Eliahu, from the city of Norgitz, which is in the land of isles called Angletterre. May I grow up in the Torah of my Creator and in fear of him; Amen, Amen, Selah.**

Meir ben Elijah (13th century poet; Vatican Archive)

Beyond the cathedral walls, Norwich was home to England’s only mediaeval Hebrew poet, Meir ben Elijah. Writing at the time of the Jewish expulsions in 1290, his voice cries out from the darkest period of Anglo-Jewish history. From the edge of oblivion, he attempts through his poems to sustain a connection to his home to which he would never return. His poems were ‘lost’ for 700 years, but *as a direct result of research for this bid*, they have been rediscovered and will be published in translation in early 2012.

---

**All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.**

Revelations of Divine Love - Julian of Norwich (14th century)

Julian of Norwich (1342–1416) also spoke from a time of extreme personal and social crisis in a voice that still resonates today. One of Europe’s greatest mystics,

Julian wrote one of the most astonishing texts of the Middle Ages and was the first woman to be published in English. Norwich had more than 50 churches – many of which survive today – and she spent most of her life walled up in an anchorite cell in St. Julian's. Here she wrote *Revelations of Divine Love*, an extraordinary contemplation of universal love and hope in a time of bubonic plague, religious schism, uprisings and war. This was also the time of a great flowering of vernacular English literature – Geoffrey Chaucer was a contemporary – though Julian was certainly the only writer who referred to God as Mother. Today, she is read by secular, contemplative, feminist and literary readers of every nationality and faith worldwide, attracting thousands of visitors to the place where she lived and wrote.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, Norwich became a haven for Dutch, Flemish, Walloon and Huguenot immigrants fleeing persecution in mainland Europe. Some 37% of the city's population were 'strangers' – the highest ever concentration of refugees in a British city. As the cultural and economic centre of one of the most highly populated areas of the country, Norwich became a hotbed of new ideas, new forms of printing and literary expression, at the same time as another cultural flowering, sometimes referred to as the English Renaissance, reached its peak in the Elizabethan Age.

The city's rumbustious playwrights and poets captured every opinion and literary style of the period. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547), gave the world its first blank verse and sonnet form - later used by Shakespeare. (He was executed as a staunch Catholic at the time of the English Reformation.) Playwright, John Bale (1495–1563), was a famous propagandist for the Protestants. Thomas Deloney (156?–1600) was a balladeer silk weaver who created the first prose narrative, recognisable today as 'the novel'. The dramatist, poet and pamphleteer, Robert Greene (c.1558–1592), accused the embryonic novelist of "yarking up ballads" and called his contemporary,

William Shakespeare, "an upstart crow". And back at the cathedral, the Bishop of Norwich, Richard Corbet (1582–1635), wrote anti-Puritan verses and ballads.

Amidst this maelstrom of literary insults, Norwich had become a city of print and in the great European age of maps and mapping, it was the first English city to be shown in prospect by the pioneer cartographer, William Cunningham. Remarkably, this magnificent plan of Norwich in 1558 is still visible today: a handsome, human-scale skyline punctuated by civic towers and spiritual spires.

As we move into the 17th century and the English Civil War, the great polymath, physician, philosopher, scientist, naturalist, bibliophile and Norwich resident, Thomas Browne (1605–1682), wrote books of such universal distinction, his influence as a literary stylist over 400 years has transcended national boundaries. His private collection of books in many languages formed the foundation of the future British Library and his tomb, in the fabulous church of St. Peter Mancroft, attracts literary pilgrims from all over the world. Thomas Browne was revered, amongst many, by the Argentinian writer, Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986) and the Norwich-based, German writer, WG (Max) Sebald (1944–2001), who founded the British Centre for Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia. The university is also home to the Thomas Paine Study Centre, named after one of the most influential political writers the world has ever seen.

---

**Independence is my happiness...my country  
is the world and my religion is to do good.**

*Rights of Man - Thomas Paine (1791)*

Tom Paine (1737–1809) was born of humble origins 30 miles south of Norwich. A friend of Benjamin Franklin, Paine's *Common Sense* treatise (1776) influenced the course of the American Revolution and led to his involvement in the framing of the American Constitution.



Raised in a household of opposing religious views – his father was a Quaker, his mother a member of the Anglican Church – he became a sceptic, a restless character driven by an inner revolt against the inequality he had witnessed in England. He wrote passionately in support of the French Revolution and the abolition of slavery and his *Rights of Man* (1791) is one of the most widely read books of all time. Paine's radicalism is both universal and very particular; a prime example of the dissenting mind that emerged through the centuries in Norfolk and Norwich as a force for change in the wider world.

As Thomas Paine campaigned for a new world order, a Norwich printer embarked on a career that would transform his name into a synonym for parliamentary democracy. Luke Hansard (1752–1828) learned the parliamentary principle as a child – his mother was a Tory and his father a Whig – and his fortune rose on the wave of political publishing that accompanied the intellectual revolution of the late 18th century. Hansard excelled at the production of political tracts and broadsheets and on the strength of this work, he secured a job with John Hughes, printer to the House of Commons, who counted Dr Johnson and Edmund Burke among his customers. Hansard soon became a partner of the firm and by 1800, he was sole proprietor. His sons and grandsons consolidated the business, printing the Parliamentary Debates first for William Cobbett and after 1811, as *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*. Throughout the English-speaking world, the word 'Hansard' has come to represent public access to the democratic process and appropriately, Hansard is published in Norwich by the The Stationery Office.

Harriet Martineau (1802–1876) was born in Norwich of Huguenot descent and radical Unitarian views. She found extraordinary international fame as a 'literary lioness', political economist, pioneering feminist, the world's first female journalist and one of the founders of sociology. In 1835 she set off on an intrepid tour of America to investigate how the young country was measuring up to its constitutional ideals. She travelled in the South, saw slavery at first hand and spoke out at a meeting of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society which led to mob protests and threats to her life. On her return she wrote two books – *Society in America* and *Retrospect of Western Travel* – and Charles Darwin, much impressed by their famous and formidable author, became a close friend. Her radicalism and insistence on equality and human rights had an impact on many, particularly her novel based on the life of Haiti slave rebellion leader Toussaint L'Ouverture, *The Hour and the Man* (1856). She travelled to the Middle East and wrote the trilogy *Eastern Life* (1848) in which she predicted future conflict between East and West.

Norwich had produced another world-class writer: an individual voice and a genuine radical whose work in the cause of gender and racial equality, fair economics, scientific evidence and campaigning journalism, demonstrably changed the world.



---

Above:  
Thomas Paine  
(1737–1809).

---

**There is in Norwich a deaf girl who does more than any man in the country.**

Lord Chancellor, Lord Brougham (1830), on Harriet Martineau

---

I am truly amazed and half alarmed to find this County of Norfolk filled with little revolutionary societies, which transmit their notion of things to the Reformists of London.

Fanny Burney – Novelist and Diarist  
(1752-1840)

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Norwich was a radical centre for writing and publishing, for dissenters, revolutionaries, translators, internationalists and social reformers. Amongst Martineau's abolitionist contemporaries were the great prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry, and Anna Sewell, who wrote the 50 million bestseller, *Black Beauty* (1877) – one of the most translated and widely read books in the world. At the same time, the novelist, travel writer and multi-linguist, George Borrow – protégé of the radical Norwich teacher, writer and linguist, William Taylor – travelled throughout Europe and North Africa, lived in Russia and Spain and wrote passionately in support of minority languages and ways of life, most notably, Romani. In addition to world-changing writers, printers and publishers, Norwich produced the UK's first provincial library in 1608 and the UK's first provincial newspaper in 1701.

A brief stroll around 900 years of literary activity, yet many more writers and innovators – as many today as in the past – have drawn inspiration from a city where literature has been, and continues to be, the locus for change, experiment and contemplation.

### iii Du diff runt: dialect, a sense of place and the Norfolk spirit

The city's reputation for dissent and free-thinking has bred a good-humoured tolerance and a strong creative temperament, but also a famous tendency, as expressed in the local dialect, to “du diff runt”. From Boudicca's rebellion against Rome in AD 61 to Saxon *liberi homines* (free men), the relationship between language, history and identity in this one small area of East Anglia is immensely complex. Wave upon wave of invaders wiped out the ancient Brythonic (British) language, raised common Latin to the higher status of the educated and ecclesiastical classes and – according to the distinguished Norwich linguist, Peter Trudgill – the Germanic tribes of the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Frisians who founded the city gave birth to the English language itself.

Anglo-Norman and Hebrew poured into the melting-pot, spiced by the languages of the ships sailing down the Wensum bringing olive oil from Spain, dyes from Asia Minor, millstones from the Rhineland, Gascon wine, Scandinavian furs and Italian silk. Later still, the Dutch, Flemish and French-speaking Huguenots and Walloons, representing 37% of the local population, transformed Norwich into a trilingual city, with the addition of the Romani language (now extinct in Britain) in the 19th century. Today, 108 languages and dialects are spoken in Norfolk and Norwich (Appendix IX): a culmination over two millennia of the evolution of language in its many contexts, world events, social groups, narrative structures, personal stories, particular themes, stylistic variations and distinctive voices.

---

Below:  
Thomas Paine  
Study Centre, UEA.





*Part two*

# Today: a creative city

## **i A cultural economy**

Norwich is a medium-sized city (population 230,000) serving the county of Norfolk (population 840,700) and a catchment area of one million people. The East of England is one of the fastest growing regions in the UK and its regional capital is closer to Amsterdam's Schiphol airport (35 minutes) than to London (90 minutes by train).

Norwich is a world centre for environmental sciences and art, where nature writers and artist poets famously inhabit both domains. It is a city of students and researchers – the University of East Anglia (14,000), City College Norwich (4,500), Norwich University College of the Arts (1,500) and Norwich Research Park (9,000 scientists). It is a tourist destination for five million visitors and a gateway to 90 miles of outstanding coastline, 200 conservation areas, 10,000 listed buildings of historic and architectural interest and Britain's finest wetland - the world famous Broads National Park.

Historically, Norwich has always had a broad view of the future and this application to join UNESCO's Creative Cities Network is part of the quest for new opportunities to connect with other cities worldwide: to encourage creative experiment and new ideas as a shared economic, cultural and social resource and as a means of developing the skills and well-being of its own population.

The key for Norwich is literature and the city is confident that it can fulfil UNESCO's criteria for membership of the Creative Cities Network:

- Norwich is a regional centre for publishing and a national publishing hotspot.
- Norwich is home to a multiplicity of educational programmes with shared agendas across schools and communities using a large cohort of writers and artists.
- Literature, drama and poetry are integral to the cultural life of a city where people spend more per head of population on culture than anywhere else in the UK.

- Norwich is home to the oldest city arts festival in the country and host to a year-round programme of literary and translation events with a global remit.
- Norwich is a city of words – bookshops, book groups, libraries, universities, publishers, printers, live literature and creative writing across all levels of local life.
- Norwich is home to the British Centre for Literary Translation, a world model for the promotion of writing translated from and into many languages and cultures.
- Norwich has produced a Writers' Centre with deep local roots and a global outlook.

When industrialism shifted the axis of Britain north to south, the East of England lost the wool trade that had made it rich. But the regional capital remained a literary centre. Today, the name 'Norwich' is recognised by publishers and agents as synonymous with new writing. The landmark Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library has the highest number of users in the UK – using a model focused on social justice. Norwich University College of the Arts is a field leader in the graphic arts. Writers' Centre Norwich is the city's literary linchpin (and lead for this bid). And the University of East Anglia (UEA) is home to one of the most famous creative writing centres in the world.



---

Right:  
The Square, UEA.

## ii A central place for representation and dissemination

### *The University of East Anglia*

UEA is the most important development for Norwich in the last fifty years. Since it was founded in 1963, it has become an international community of students, researchers, academics and writers from more than 100 countries, with 40% of its graduates staying on to live and work in Norwich. Over those years, it has generated Nobel prize-winners, world-class research (third in the world after Harvard and Princeton for geosciences) and the iconic Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts. The presence of UEA has enabled the city to attract and retain young skilled workers and has led directly to the development of Norwich Research Park. Above all, UEA has become a global centre for creative writing with unparalleled success in developing prize-winning writers.



Above:  
Ian McEwan at  
the WCN/UEA  
UNESCO event,  
2010.

Britain's first and most famous MA in creative writing was founded at UEA in 1970 by Angus Wilson and Malcolm Bradbury. Their first MA student was Ian McEwan, who went on to win the Man Booker Prize, followed by Kazuo Ishiguro and Anne Enright. Others followed – in scriptwriting, biography, poetry and translation – and in 1990, the Jordanian writer, Fadia Faqir, became the first PhD in creative and critical writing. Since then, Norwich has been home to hundreds of prize-winning writers including Louis de Bernières, Angela Carter, Amit Chaudhuri, Andrew Cowan, Giles Foden, Helon Habila, Richard Holmes, Paul Muldoon, Lorna Sage, WG Sebald, Ali Smith, George Szirtes and Rose Tremain.

UEA runs two international literary festivals a year and in partnership with Writers' Centre Norwich, it has brought to the city some of the most distinctive voices in the world, from Nobel prize-winners JM Coetzee, William Golding, Seamus Heaney, Doris Lessing, Toni Morrison and Harold Pinter, to Margaret Atwood, Russell Banks, Mourid Barghouti, André Brink, Jung Chang, Joseph Heller, Arthur Miller, Michael Ondaatje, Grace Paley, Irina Ratushinskaya, Arundhati Roy, Salman Rushdie, Nawal el Saadawi, Susan Sontag, Mario Vargas Llosa, Gore Vidal and Saadi Yousef. It hosts *Voices from Greece* – an annual event, sponsored by the Greek Ministry of Culture – and the Thomas Paine Lectures, most recently given by the internationalist writer and political campaigner, Tariq Ali.

UEA has a very strong international strategy and networks reaching out to all corners of the world. The School of Literature, Drama and Creative Writing is represented at all the major world literary festivals and it offers a host of fellowships for emerging talent in both the developed and developing world. The David TK Wong Fellowship is awarded for writing located in the Far East. The Charles Pick Fellowship encourages young writers at the start of their careers, most recently, the Swedish-Icelandic writer, Birgit Larsson, and the Nigerian novelist, Simidele Awosika. An African Writing Fellowship was awarded to Caine prize-winner, Helon Habila, a Canadian Writing



---

Image:  
The Grade II listed  
"Ziggurats", UEA.





## The University of East Anglia has a graduate retention rate of 40%

---

The presence of UEA has enabled the city to attract and retain young skilled workers and has led directly to the development of Norwich Research Park, soon to see £26M invested in infrastructure to deliver innovation from bioscience businesses on the park. Above all, UEA has become a global centre for creative writing with unparalleled success in developing prize-winning writers.

In November 2011, UEA's Creative Writing programme was awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Further and Higher Education, the UK's most prestigious higher education award, given to those who can demonstrate outstanding work at a world-class level.

Fellowship to Nancy Lee and a Teaching Fellowship to the Australian writer, Catherine Cole. The Royal Literary Fund supports two writing fellows a year and the university has appointed six Distinguished Writing Fellows – major writers with a longstanding connection to UEA.

This remarkable institution is a leading partner in the bid for Norwich to become a UNESCO *City of Literature* and a world resource in terms of human creativity and as a vehicle for ideas. As a centre for writing, thinking and experiment, it attracts students from all backgrounds, ages and nationalities, supported by bursaries for both British and international students. It has renewed one of the city's greatest cultural assets – i.e. literature – by joining forces with local communities and colleges, as well as with international writers, to explore and engage with literary culture at all levels of social, economic and cultural possibility (Appendix III).

---

Literature will not change the unemployment situation, nor will it stop Shell from flaring gas in the Niger Delta. For those in the corridors of power the lure of money and the spoils of power are too great. But writing can contribute to awareness, it can change attitudes, it can make us appreciate the world in a different way. It can make us better people.

Ogaga Ifowodo, Nigerian Poet (Worlds Festival, 2005)

### ***The British Centre for Literary Translation***

BCLT was founded by one of the most original writers of the 20th century. WG (Max) Sebald taught European Literature at UEA from 1969 until his sudden death in 2001. As a writer, he was profoundly influenced by the hybrid style of the 17th century Thomas Browne, and achieved international acclaim with books such as *The Emigrants* (1993), *The Rings of Saturn* (1999) and *Austerlitz* (2001). Translation was an essential element of Sebald's work and in 1989, he founded BCLT – a unique invention in the heart of a modern campus university in an ancient city, reaching out to writers worldwide.

BCLT belongs to a network of 12 translation centres in Europe. It runs an extensive programme including residencies for translators from the EU and India (funded by the Charles Wallace India Trust), publishing initiatives and the Sebald Lecture held annually in London in partnership with the *Times Literary Supplement*. (Speakers have included Seamus Heaney, Carlos Fuentes, Susan Sontag, Germaine Greer and Hans Magnus Enzensberger.) It has brought contemporary writers and translators to Norwich from Asia, India, Latin America, the Middle East and all parts of Europe. In the UK, it works in partnership with the UK Translators Association, Literature Across Frontiers, English PEN, the Gulbenkian Foundation, the British Council and Arts Council England.

---

Sebald became a writer who enriched the culture of Europe.

Eric Homberger, December 2001



---

Above:  
WG Sebald  
(1944–2001).



Above:  
The British  
Centre for Literary  
Translation Summer  
School, 2011.

The 2010 Summer School hosted winners of the Adalbert von Chamisso Prize, the Akutagawa Prize, the Goethe Medal and the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, as well as writers shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize, the Ingeborg Bachmann Award, the Jelf First Novel Award and an author who has worked with film directors Zhang Yimou and Ang Lee. Such is the global popularity of these Summer Schools, 60 applications were received for 10 available places in the inaugural Japanese-to-English workshop.

BCLT has been a model for new translation centres in Poland, India, China and Egypt. It stands at the centre of a network of transnational links that reflect the labyrinthine complexities of Sebald's writing and brings together the particular – local traditions, surprising forms and devices – with the universal: the indispensable art of translation itself, of inter-language understanding and inter-cultural dialogue.

---

**Translation lies at the heart of all our cultural exchange.**

Professor Jean Boase-Beier - founder of UEA's MA in Literary Translation

### ***Writers' Centre Norwich***

Writers' Centre Norwich (henceforth, the Writers' Centre) was launched in 2003 as a groundbreaking collaboration between UEA, Arts Council England, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council (Appendix IV).

The Writers' Centre was an experiment: a unique cultural initiative designed to build on the city's longstanding literary credentials. The aim was to extend the remarkable literary activity at UEA by placing it in the city centre where historically it belonged and socially, would have the most impact. The new centre would be free to explore relationships between writers, culture and local communities and stimulate debate about literature and its value through cross-cultural exchanges. It would unlock talent, harness potential and experiment with ideas founded on principles of free expression, tolerance and diversity.

The Writers' Centre exceeded expectations. In six short years, it had evolved to become a driving force behind the rapid development of the city's creative industries and a leading national literature development agency with a special interest in the social, economic and cultural impact of creative writing. It had mobilised an intricate web of local, national and international networks and partnerships by creating a multiplicity of events, projects, awards, forums, readings, talent development schemes, workshops, international conferences and community projects across all levels of creative activity.

At the city level, the Writers' Centre has captured the imagination of all the creative

---

**It's a very exciting and unusual project. The writerly passions that UEA has so successfully nurtured for decades are being blended with the rich cultural resources of both city and county. It's an adventurous move, ripe with possibilities.**

Ian McEwan, 2003

industries in Norwich – from computer gaming to tourism – by using writing to engage with new ways of thinking. At a global level, the most recent six-day *Worlds Literature Festival* brought writers to Norwich from all over the world including representatives from three *UNESCO Cities of Literature* – Edinburgh, Iowa and Melbourne.

This bid is a natural progression for a local programme that seeks to develop and share experiences within a global context and to find physical expression in an International Centre for Writing (see Part III).

### ***Norwich City of Refuge***

As a creative response to the city's literary and migrant past, the Writers' Centre established Norwich as the UK's first *City of Refuge* for threatened writers and a founding member of the *International Cities of Refuge Network* (ICORN) based in Norway. ICORN is an association of cities and regions around the world dedicated to the value of free expression with the aim of offering sanctuary and a voice to persecuted writers.

Norwich was launched as a *City of Refuge* in June 2007 with a gathering of ICORN cities at City Hall and a performance of international readings and music at the cathedral. Since then, the scheme has focused on three main strands of activity: a year-round local community programme; guest writers in exile; and ICORN's EU-funded *Shahrazad* project. The Writers' Centre has taken refugee writers into schools, libraries, museums and arts centres. It has worked with the BBC to produce film-poems created by young asylum seekers. It has offered sanctuary to the city's first guest writer and it has harnessed the scheme to establish a dedicated network of schools, teachers and refugee writers living and working in the UK. It has become a member of the Norwich Asylum Seeker and Refugee Forum (NASREF) through which it organises an annual programme of events involving writers, artists, libraries, museums, radio stations, cinemas, theatres, community groups, galleries, refugees and asylum seekers across the city. It has also

offered specialised training to local media with dramatic results (Appendix IV).

### ***Shahrazad***

In 2007, Norwich joined Barcelona, Brussels, Frankfurt, Stockholm and Stavanger to launch the EU-funded *Shahrazad* programme: an open uncensored space in which writers from all over the world can safely connect and release their stories. The project has two main strands - *Stories for Life* and *Letters to Europe*. Over five years, these narratives will be created and disseminated throughout Europe by poets, journalists, novelists, editors, cartoonists, translators and essayists worldwide. In Norwich, the focus is on giving children and young people a voice through creative workshops and digital story production. Most recently, 200 schoolchildren worked with writers to compose a series of *Letters to Europe*, addressed to other young people across the North Sea, expressing some of their hopes and dreams for the future (Appendix IV).

---

Below:  
Letters to Europe  
Workshop, Avenue  
Junior School,  
Norwich, 2011.





### iii A world of libraries and living museums

The Forum is a new £70 million landmark building in the centre of Norwich almost entirely devoted to open access street level art, learning and new media (Appendix VI). This grand contemporary civic building includes the regional headquarters of the BBC, the largest permanent digital gallery in Europe, a state of the art auditorium and the busiest public library in Britain.

#### ***Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library***

Given its radical literary history, it is not surprising that Norwich founded the first provincial civic library in 1608 and bound itself so early and profoundly into the notion of the public library; the fundamental human values enshrined in the ability for all citizens to have free and open access to knowledge and ideas. Norwich has remained so true to this ideal, it was the first municipality to adopt the Library Act of 1850 and today, the Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library is the most successful library in Britain.

The Millennium Library had 1,496,186 visitors between April 2010 and March 2011 and issued 1,181,661 books and other items – the highest number in the UK for the fifth year running, according to figures compiled by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. It continually embraces new formats and technologies that allow wider access to knowledge and reading and help people to develop digital and information skills that enable them to become fully active citizens, with extra help for those who are socially excluded. This is a place where knowledge is free and where independent and expert advice and support is available to everyone, regardless of social background. Underpinning its many roles, the library offers a welcoming, neutral and safe place for communities to come together and develop the ties that are essential for local well-being and the health of a tolerant society (Appendix V).

#### ***A Human Library***

The Millennium Library is part of an international experiment known as the Human Library: ie. instead of borrowing a book, individuals borrow a person. In *Refugee Week*, for example, members of the public ‘borrowed’ a refugee or support worker for a half hour conversation, not only unleashing the power of personal testimony, but raising levels of general awareness and providing information to people who don’t, or can’t, read books.

#### ***Social Exclusion Network***

Jan Holden, Assistant Head of Services, Norfolk Library and Information Service, co-founded the UK’s Social Exclusion Network. The theme of the network is social justice, equality of access and cultural development and this national association of libraries, museums, archives, galleries and other cultural organisations is primarily focused on developing new ways to connect with disadvantaged minorities. These include disability groups, children in care, older people, refugees, asylum seekers, prisoners and travellers. It does this by sharing resources, vital information and data about new initiatives and proven results worldwide. With its sharp focus on literacy skills and a concomitant commitment to wider social agendas, the Millennium Library and the Social Exclusion Network represent an invaluable resource for Norwich as a *literate City of Literature* and for sharing ideas within UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network.

#### ***Norfolk Record Office: The Archive Centre***

The Norfolk Record Office (NRO) is recognised by the International Council of Archivists as the most advanced archive centre in Europe. Housed in a dazzling new building attached to Norfolk County Hall on the edge of Norwich, this is yet another civic resource designed to draw people in, to raise awareness of a shared history and how it relates to world cultures. The NRO collects and preserves records of historical significance and makes them available through its education programmes to as many people as possible. It is one of six national centres

The Millennium Library had  
1,496,186 visitors between  
April 2010 and March 2011

---

Norwich was the first municipality to adopt the Library  
Act of 1850 and today, the Norfolk & Norwich Millennium  
Library is the most successful library in Britain.

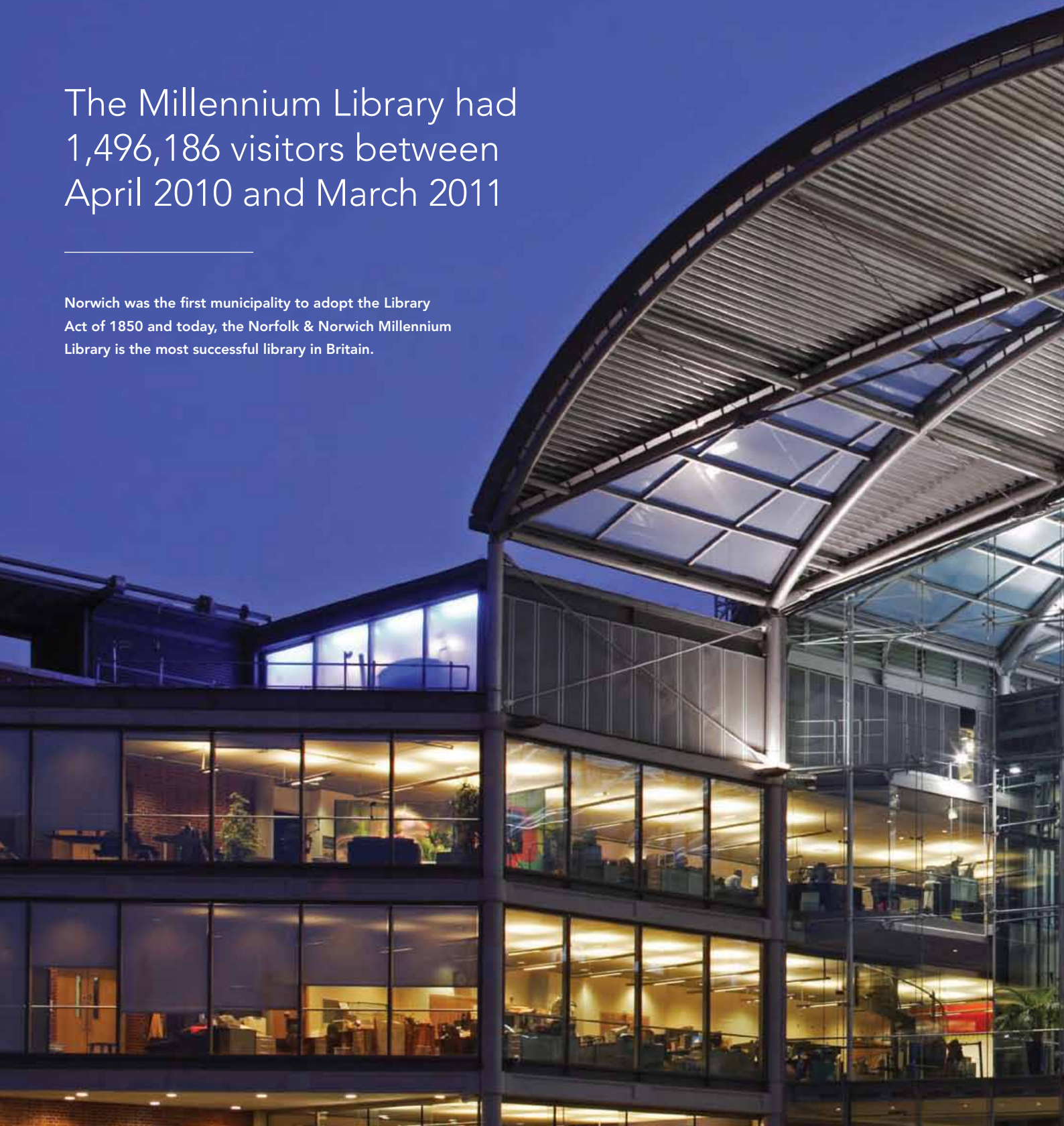






Image:  
The Forum, home  
of the Millennium  
Library, Norwich.

connected to the Houses of Parliament in London. It includes the Norfolk Sound Archive and the East Anglian Film Archive. And the entire collection has been deemed of Outstanding International Importance (Appendix V).

### ***Private collections***

Norfolk and Norwich are home to some of the UK's most valuable private collections. The library at Blickling Hall (1616) is owned by the National Trust and contains some of the most historically significant manuscripts and books in England. The vast Palladian Holkham Hall (1734) holds an important collection of mediaeval manuscripts. Norwich Cathedral has a library and reading room housing more than 20,000 books dating back to 1474. The Sir Thomas Browne library based at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and the remarkable natural history library and rare book collection at the John Innes Centre, date back to the 17th and 18th centuries. The John Jarrold Collection and the Colman Collection have a home at the Archive Centre. The famous Paston Letters, a huge collection of family correspondence written between 1422 and 1509, reside in the British Museum. And more treasure lies in the basement of the UK's largest independent regional media group, Archant: an extraordinary newspaper archive dating back to 1750.

### ***Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service***

NMAS is the lead museum service in the East of England and a vital partner for this bid. It comprises 12 museums and two study centres and it attracts more than 300,000 visits a year, making it the most effective museums service in England. NMAS is based at Norwich Castle Museum and has formal partnerships with the national Tate Gallery and the British Museum. In addition to its regional leadership role and national status, NMAS runs a massive year-round public engagement and outreach programme. It has deep roots in local communities and manages a range of spectacular buildings housing objects and exhibitions of great national and regional cultural importance (Appendix V).

## **iv Words about art**

---

I arrived here [Norwich] a week ago and find it a place where... literature seems to be pursued with an ardour which is astonishing...

Andrew Robertson, Artist, Letter 1814

The visual arts have a strong presence in Norwich. In addition to the national collections at the Castle Museum and a number of smaller galleries, the Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts is a world centre. Opened in 1978, it was one of the earliest public buildings designed by Norman Foster, one of the best-known architects in the world. This elegant structure, drifting across a ridge of land between UEA and Norwich Research Park, houses the School of World Art and Museology and a world-class collection of art from Africa, Asia, North and South America, the Pacific region, mediaeval Europe and the ancient Mediterranean: a glamorous building offering a global dimension to a very particular local setting. It is also a place of writers. It not only hosts international readings and a World Book Club, it brings together writers, artists and volunteers as part of a community programme designed to encourage a wider outlook and greater understanding of relationships between peoples and cultures around the world (Appendix VI).

### ***Norwich University College of the Arts***

---

Norwich has made an incredible contribution to writing, printing, and graphic design.

Professor John Last, Principal of NUCA

Norwich University College of the Arts (NUCA) generates creativity and innovation in the heart of the old city and is a major champion of this bid. It occupies a fine range of historic buildings in the Blackfriars and St. Andrew's area and the visibility of its 1,500 students,





Left:  
Norwich University  
College of the Arts.

its strong focus on the graphic arts and new media, the creative energy streaming out of its ancient buildings, contribute a great deal to the cultural economy of Norwich.

Imaginative writing is central to the creative industries and NUCA has produced many writers. The Hungarian-born poet and translator, George Szirtes, is one of Britain's finest post-war poets and winner of the TS Eliot Prize in 2005. He taught at NUCA for many years before joining the creative writing faculty at UEA. He discovered and supported a generation of young poets, many of whom have stayed on in Norwich to contribute to the literary life of the city, including the flourishing member-led writing group, Café Writers.

NUCA works closely with the Writers' Centre, UEA and the Norfolk and Norwich Festival to develop innovative and collaborative projects; notably, those that explore the relationship between images and words and the role of narrative in art, design and media. Its teachers are practising designers, artists, writers, poets and film-makers and many are leaders in their field. For example, NUCA's award-winning book design specialist, Dr. Rob Hillier, created the *Sylexiad* fonts, a typeface designed to be easily readable by those with dyslexia. The font has been adopted as the official typeface of NUCA and by the Council of Higher Education in Art and Design (Appendix VI).

### ***East of England Production Innovation Centre***

Broadcasting, film and new media are strongly represented in Norwich and the East of England Production Innovation Centre (EPIC) is one of the most advanced broadcast production facilities in Europe. This is a major centre for training and the development of new services and digital communication technologies. It provides world-class equipment and studios for professional production companies and facilities for schools and colleges, including NUCA. Norwich is home to many writers for film, television and radio and the designation of Norwich as a *City of Literature* would attract the wider attention of international producers and film-makers to one of the foremost studios in the country.

### ***Cultural Olympiad 2012***

The Writers' Centre is a member of the Norfolk Cultural Olympiad network. Together with the Norfolk and Norwich Festival, the Forum Trust, BBC East, the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts and NUCA, it is planning a major bid to deliver a series of exhibitions and projects involving digital technologies that will celebrate the Cultural Olympiad 2012. A successful bid to become a UNESCO *City of Literature* would enable the city to develop relationships and connect these ambitious programmes to Edinburgh (*City of Literature*), Bradford (*City of Film*), Glasgow (*City of Music*) and through the Creative Cities Network, to link with other cities worldwide.

## v Wider literary landscapes

Norwich serves Norfolk as its main urban centre, but the county itself has thrown up some of England's most striking literary figures. The English political philosopher and novelist, William Godwin (1756–1836) – the world's first proponent of anarchism and utilitarianism – lived in the tiny hamlet of Guestwick. Parson Woodforde (1740–1803), an unremarkable vicar, kept a remarkable diary of everyday rural life and became a 20th century bestseller. Mary Mann (1848–1929), a farmer's wife, was a quite unique Victorian author of 40 novels on rural poverty. The 'light of glory of English letters', John Skelton (1460–1529) was the Tudor poet laureate who lived in South Norfolk and five hundred years later, another poet laureate, Andrew Motion, was Professor of Creative Writing at UEA.

Literature is a stealthy artform. Its strength lies beneath the surface of things. Poets and writers have always been attracted to Norfolk's subtle landscapes, but the recent spate of superb 'nature-writing' to emerge from the region has been astonishing. Ronald Blythe, Richard Mabey, Mark Cocker, the late Roger Deakin, Robert Macfarlane; these are fine writers, deeply linked to each other and to the minutiae and universality of their environment. The pioneering oral historian, George Ewart Evans (1909–1988), wrote the classic *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay* and lived in South Norfolk. Gresham's School in North Norfolk produced WH Auden and Stephen Spender (as well as the composer, Benjamin Britten). The comedian/writer, Stephen Fry, lives in West Norfolk. Henry Rider Haggard (1856–1925) wrote *King Solomon's Mines* from the family home in South Norfolk, a district that is also home to Bill Bryson. And prize-winning biographers, Richard Holmes, Ann Thwaite, DJ Taylor and Kathryn Hughes, live and work on the outskirts of Norwich.

The county is also home to the award-winning Norfolk Children's Book Centre and a remarkable number of leading children's authors, including Rachel Anderson, Joyce and Polly Dunbar, Clare Jarrett, Pat Moon, Mal Peet and Kevin Crossley-Holland (Appendix VII).



---

Above:  
River Yare, Norfolk.

---

**When children say reading is boring, what they mean is they haven't found a book they like. That is a huge challenge and it's something I like to rise to.**

Marilyn Brocklehurst, Founder of the Children's Book Centre, 2009



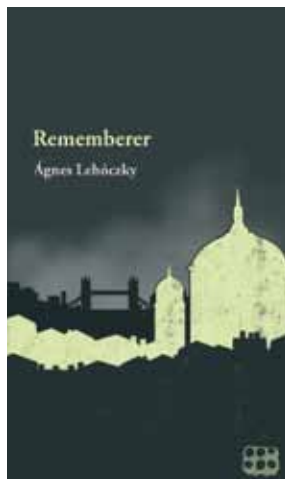
---

Right:  
River Bure, Coltishall.

We found ourselves surrounded by flotillas of novelists, poets, nature-writers, historians, essayists...and artists of every kind. What else could we do but start a publishing house?

Liz Calder, Publisher, 2009

Below:  
'Rememberer' by  
Agnes Leńóczy,  
published by  
Egg Box.



## Publishing

Britain has one of the largest commercial publishing industries in the world. In 2007, UK publishers sold an estimated 855 million books, with an invoiced value of £2.995 billion. Hidden within these massive figures lie poetry, literature in translation and new talent, the richest seams of writing and the least commercially viable. Increasingly, publishing houses are playing safe and cutting risks. It is more difficult for new writers to get published and equally so, for established writers to maintain their contracts and advances. Norwich has always supported its writers but never more so than today. For example, *Unthank Books*, was launched in 2010 quite explicitly to “publish the type of books publishers used to”.

‘Norwich’ itself is a publishing brand. The School of Literature, Creative Writing and Drama at UEA has produced more national and international prize-winning writers than any other institution in the country. Any manuscript arriving from UEA on the desk of a national publisher or agent will be received with special attention. This extends to writers and poets living and working in the city and more recently, to new talent emerging from the many workshops and schemes generated by the Writers’ Centre.


There are 27 small independent publishers based in Norwich and eight more outside the city. This represents some five per cent of the UK’s independent publishing sector and relative to the region’s low population, a higher percentage than anywhere else in the country outside London. They range from those that publish oral history memoirs, first novels, poetry pamphlets and first collections to *Full Circle Editions*, launched in 2009 by one of the world’s most eloquent advocates for wonderful writing and beautiful books, co-founder of Bloomsbury and a member of our steering committee, Liz Calder.

*Egg Box Publishing* belongs to the poet, Nathan Hamilton, singled out by Canadian critic/poet, Todd Swift, as a leading member of “the Norwich School”. If such a school exists, it is a community of interest with a startling ability ‘to connect’, not least, to the hundreds of graduates from UEA’s School of Creative Writing who have remained in the city, including the founders of *East Publishing* and the leading UK poetry magazine, *Rialto*.

On the other side of the literary planet lies The Stationery Office: a direct descendent of the great 18th century Norwich printer, Luke Hansard, and one of the largest publishers in the world today. The TSO still publishes *Hansard*, but it also represents global organisations such as the *International Pharmacopoeia* (the pharmaceutical ‘bible’ worldwide), the Council of Europe, the World Bank and UNESCO itself. Norwich is also home to Bertrams, one of the largest book wholesalers in Britain, and to Archant, the UK’s largest independently owned media business. Norwich itself has two daily newspapers and the *Eastern Daily Press* produces literary features and reviews of







There are 27 small independent publishers based in Norwich and eight more outside the city

---

This represents some five per cent of the UK's independent publishing sector and relative to the region's low population, a higher percentage than anywhere else in the country outside London.

outstanding quality, with a special focus on regional books and writers (Appendix VIII).

The changing face of publishing and distribution through the development of digital technology is both a challenge and an opportunity to widen participation and deepen engagement with all forms of literature in all languages worldwide. In Norwich, this challenge is being mediated by the Writers' Centre in partnership with the city's many other cultural organisations engaged with literature (Appendix IV).

### ***Print and booksellers***

In 1438, Johann Gutenberg invented one of the world's greatest technologies, moveable type. By 1556 the exiled Flemish Protestant, Anthony de Solempne, had arrived in Norwich and was printing books for the city's Dutch refugees. In 1701, Frances Burges launched Britain's first provincial newspaper, the *Norwich Post*, and the region has been famous for print ever since. The small Norfolk town of Fakenham has been a centre for printing since the 18th century and Bungay, on the Norfolk/Suffolk border, is known worldwide as the home of Clays, one of the UK's largest book-printers with a workforce of 500 people producing 180 million books a year. Today, there are 127 printers and lithographers in the county and 65 of these are located in Norwich.



---

Left:  
The Book Hive,  
London Street,  
Norwich.

The remarkable Jarrold family arrived in the East of England in the 17th century, bringing with them the art of printing and book-binding and an ethos devoted to civic life. Today, the John Jarrold Printing Museum in Norwich is one of the finest in the country. It holds a superb collection of historic printing presses, a living museum run by a volunteer group of retired printers, freely used by students and members of the public. Jarrold is also an award-winning bookseller and round the corner, in London Street, is the Book Hive that in 2011 was voted Best Bookshop in *The Daily Telegraph* nationwide Best Small Shops awards. The county is also a hunting ground for bibliophiles, with over 50 second-hand bookshops, often housed in tottering buildings crammed to the rafters with literary treasures spanning centuries (Appendix VIII).

### **vi Small city, big art**

Norwich is a small city with a large cultural infrastructure supported by a higher than average commitment to public funding for the arts. Since Arts Council England, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council identified Norwich as a centre for literature and became active partners with UEA in setting up the Writers' Centre, creative writing and the spoken word have become core to all arts organisations in Norwich. The rapid development of digital technology and new genres of writing have also presented a whole new world of opportunities for children and young people to engage with words. For example, Norwich Arts Centre offers a programme of performing and media arts across all art forms and national boundaries and as a venue that sets out to dissolve definitions and cultural barriers, it has also become the regional hub for live literature (Appendix VII).

## ***Norfolk and Norwich Festival***

The festival has made use of an exquisite small city as a backdrop and a playground...

Lyn Gardner, *the Guardian*, 18 April, 2010

As a 21st century creative city, Norwich is a rising star. Over the last five years, the Norfolk and Norwich Festival has become the fourth largest city festival in the UK and increasingly, an important platform for literature. Festival attendance has rocketed from an audience of 35,000 in 2005 to 130,000 in 2011. Founded in 1772, it is the oldest city arts festival in the UK. Its meteoric success is partly due to a strong sense of place balanced against an element of surprise and risk. It is truly international but also a catalyst for the city's wider social, cultural and civic aspirations: an inclusive experience that generates a shared sense of well-being. It works very closely in partnership with the Writers' Centre and the bid for Norwich to become a UNESCO *City of Literature* was headlined during the festival by the writer and UEA *alumnus*, Ian McEwan.

### **vii Cultural heritage**

The city's literary identity has evolved through the constant flux and flow of ideas and styles that find physical expression in the remarkable fabric of the city. Norwich has 1,560 Grade I and II listed buildings including 32 mediaeval churches, many of which are used for arts and cultural purposes. This represents one of the largest portfolios of historic buildings in the country.

Norwich is home to a number of heritage organisations but this is a living city, not a museum. The Norwich Heritage Economic & Regeneration Trust (HEART) is so dynamic and outward looking that since it was founded five years ago, it has created a collection of the city's

finest buildings as an international showcase for English urban and cultural development over the last 1,000 years. It has won two publishing awards and a major tourism award. It has established a network of North Sea heritage cities. It has pioneered the development of new technologies to break down cultural barriers. It has served as a model for cultural regeneration across the UK, in India, Japan, Australia, Canada, Eastern Europe and the EU. And it has helped Norwich to become the only English member of the World League of Historical Cities. Working with Norwich as a *City of Literature*, HEART's ultimate aim is to develop a 'heritage' model that works for the maximum benefit of the local economy and to share the results with other towns and cities across the globe.

Right:  
The Sir Thomas  
Browne statue,  
Hay Hill, Norwich.



### ***Monuments and memorials***

HEART has been instrumental in laying down trails, historic markers and plaques on houses that celebrate the city's famous legacy of writers, booksellers, printers, historians and social reformers (Appendix VII). A magnificent bronze sculpture of Sir Thomas Browne stands on the site where he lived in the Haymarket. The Julian Centre and the Thomas Paine Study Centre bring people from all over the world to meditate and reflect on the 14th century mystic and the 18th century firebrand. Most moving of all, the grave of the writer, WG Sebald, who died in 2001, whose meteoric course still gains in posthumous momentum, has already become a place of spontaneous pilgrimage, each pebble on his gravestone representing a personal and anonymous mark of respect.

# The Norfolk and Norwich Festival has become the fourth largest city festival in the UK

---

Festival attendance has rocketed from an audience of 35,000 in 2005 to 130,000 - £429,000 in box office takings - in 2011. Founded in 1772, it is the oldest city arts festival in the UK.







—  
Image:  
The Electric Hotel,  
Norfolk and  
Norwich Festival,  
2010.

### **viii A knowledge economy**

Norwich is the major economic driver for the East of England. Its emerging strengths in the creative and cultural industries have been led by a hard-won unity of purpose and a shared agenda across every level of cultural activity. Designation as a UNESCO *City of Literature* would transform the city as a cultural destination.

In terms of scale and communication, a compact ‘mediaeval’ city with a vibrant knowledge economy serving a fast-growing region is perfectly placed to identify, support and develop creative talent: to cultivate ideas and mobilise resources and organisations that know each other well. Cultural leadership combined with grassroots knowledge have been key to raising local aspirations and by joining a global network, Norwich will benefit hugely from increased cultural diversity and exchange. It will also be able to offer UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network a secure place in the world for free expression and shared communication across literature, translation, new media, digital technology and also science.

The presence of UEA has enabled the city to develop the international Norwich Research Park – a powerful co-operative including the John Innes Centre, the Institute of Food Research, the Sainsbury Laboratory and the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital. The Research Park employs over 9,000 scientists and together with UEA, it has created the world-class Earth and Life Systems Alliance and generated the fourth highest number of science citations in Britain, after London, Oxford and Cambridge (Appendix IX).

The John Innes Centre is ranked number one in the world for plant science and its library is exceptional. It represents the history of genetics worldwide and provides a service for visiting research students across the developing and developed world. For visitors outside the science community, the Rare Book Collection is particularly outstanding for the breathtaking beauty of its books embracing more than 400 years of botanical studies.

For centuries, Norwich has embodied literary experiment and social change. More recently, the city has become a leading centre for science writing. From the young scientist attending the literary Salon in the city centre to the Head of the John Innes Library, there is a desire to break down the ‘two cultures’ mindset of mutual suspicion between science and the humanities, by improving the understanding of science in the literary arts, by using verbal art to improve the language of science and by exploring the urgent and mutual issues of copyright.



---

Above:  
John Innes Centre,  
UEA.

---

Two years of anatomy, physiology and pathology had given me a very rich vocabulary that I felt I could put to use; a humanised scientific vocabulary...

JG Ballard, British Writer, 1930-2009

The late JG Ballard was a massively intelligent writer informed by science. He was greatly admired by Dr. Ian Gibson, former Dean of Biological Sciences at UEA, former MP for Norwich North and a passionate advocate for science and technology in the House of Commons. For him, the language of science is central to good policy and a healthy democracy. As a member of the steering committee for this bid, he believes that “the opportunity arises to fold the rich tapestry of science and its vocabulary into the city’s unique literary output as an integral part of the programme to link with UNESCO creative cities worldwide.”

---

Below:  
Draft plan,  
International Centre  
for Writing, 2011.



## ix A tale of two cities

As we have shown, the city is well equipped with higher education institutions to meet its economic and cultural needs. Indeed, the overall population has higher skill levels than the national or regional average. This speaks volumes for Norwich as a ‘liveable city’ and provides an invaluable skills base and a relatively young population.

However, an overview of skills and wages in Norwich has often been described as ‘a tale of two cities’: a knowledge-based city; and those ill-equipped to participate in the new economy. Norwich overall remains a relatively low wage economy. Many local school leavers become locked into lower skill jobs with few prospects. This has led to a range of issues about culture and human capital. It is why Norfolk Library and Information Service places literacy at the top of the agenda. It is why the city’s political, cultural, educational and business leaders have come together to share resources, to build capacity and create a spirit of optimism that embraces knowledge and new ideas. It is why the city is using its unique literary identity as a vehicle for social, economic and cultural change (Appendix IX).

The UNESCO accreditation would be used to nurture ambition. It would generate a collaborative and coherent programme, flowing across all sectors – the arts, libraries, museums, universities, colleges, schools, broadcasting, print, new media, tourism and commerce. It would raise the aspirations, literacy levels and language skills of local children, young people and school leavers seeking employment. It would connect them and their city to the rest of the world and find physical expression in an International Centre for Writing and a digital home for writers worldwide.



# Norwich has 1,560 Grade I and II listed buildings including 32 mediaeval churches

---

This represents one of the largest portfolios of historic buildings in the country and the largest collection of pre-Reformation churches of any city north of the Alps.







Image:  
The historic  
Elm Hill, Norwich.

*Part three*

# The Future: reaching out

**The vision: Norwich, UNESCO City of Literature**

A journey around Norwich begins in King Street, where the River Wensum connects the city to the sea and the mediaeval poet, Meir ben Elijah, protests against persecution. An alley nearby leads to the anchorite cell where Julian of Norwich writes her *Revelations of Divine Love*. In the Haymarket, the bronze statue of Sir Thomas Browne, England's most original mind at the brink of civil war, leads to The Forum, the 21st century home of the BBC and the Millennium Library. Across the street is the new International Centre for Writing, a meeting place for the hundreds of writers who live and work in Norfolk and Norwich still, for the international fellows and creative writing students from the University of East Anglia, writers in exile, international delegates to conferences and festivals, young people on training schemes in the seminar rooms, creative entrepreneurs in the start-up studios, the Writers' Centre, the City of Refuge, the British Centre for Literary Translation - a gateway to UNESCO's Creative Cities Network and a transnational home for innovation, experiment and free expression for writers worldwide. And so the journey continues...

## i A world centre for free expression, innovation and change

Culture is... the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs...

UNESCO Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, 1982

In Norfolk and Norwich – the birthplace of Thomas Paine and Harriet Martineau – the creative industries are based on one underlying principle: *no-one should be excluded from cultural and civic life.*

Norwich is committed to a further set of related principles that underpin the city's aspiration to become a key player in UNESCO's Creative Cities Network:

- Norwich as a *City of Literature* will enshrine Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: *Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community and to enjoy the arts...*
- Norwich recognises and will facilitate the two most important aspects of becoming a UNESCO *City of Literature*: sharing ideas and experiences. Norwich will actively seek links with creative cities in developing countries, to learn from them, to share with them and to help them build capacity.
- Norwich will become a committed and active partner within UNESCO's Creative Cities Network through dialogue, solidarity and new mechanisms that allow for the constant exchange of experiences with other members of the network.
- Norwich will place childhood literacy at the centre of its programme.
- Norwich will offer a safe space for people of all cultural backgrounds to define their own aspirations in their own words, enabling them to own their own future.
- Norwich will empower individuals and communities to tell their own stories within the context of inter-cultural exchange.
- Norwich will build on its unique historical and contemporary contribution to world literature with key themes built into the future development of the city.
- Norwich will develop a range of projects related to the *City of Literature* status that enhance the city's creative industries and safeguard and promote its heritage.

## ii Making connections, creative cities

Norwich is a city where literary culture has thrived in a friendly environment of rich, organic, social networks and communities of interest. This unique and historic culture has been broadened and nurtured by the far-sighted attention of Arts Council England, Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council and the University of East Anglia. This regional commitment to literature in Norwich has been strongly supported by the business sector – the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, the Jarrold Group and the region’s largest media group, Archant – and by many other cultural stalwarts, most notably, BBC East.

The future growth of creative Norwich depends on the breadth and scope of its relationships beyond the UK. As the country’s first *City of Refuge* for writers and a leading member of the *International Cities of Refuge Network*, this submission has shown how a fast-growing network of relationships with other cities has already begun the process of developing international strategies around its current strengths and the deployment of these strengths to develop local skills and cultural diversity.

Connectivity is key. The Writers’ Centre has already established links with existing UNESCO *Cities of Literature* – Edinburgh, Melbourne, Iowa City, Dublin and Reykjavic. As a member of the Creative Cities Network, Norwich would forge new partnerships and create programmes to develop a range of local, civic, business, academic and cultural networks that extend across Europe, India, China, Africa and South America. The Writers’ Centre will also take a lead in national projects that seek to secure connections to global cities, for example, as an associate member of the Free Word Centre in London.



---

Left:  
Audience at the  
WCN UNESCO  
event, 2010.

### iii **A place of ambition, new ideas and a digital future**

#### ***International Centre for Writing***

Writers' Centre Norwich is leading the development of an International Centre for Writing that will sit at the heart of the city as a place of exchange for ideas between local and global communities. This will be a hub for literacy programmes, translation, research, interdisciplinary collaboration, commercial activity, publishing and advocacy. It will also be the physical expression of our ambitions to be a UNESCO *City of Literature*.

Exploring the artistic and social impacts of creative writing and reading in a thriving hub at the heart of England's first UNESCO City of Literature, the International Centre for Writing is a new partnership between Writers' Centre Norwich, University of East Anglia, Norwich City and Norfolk County Councils and Arts Council England.

The International Centre for Writing represents a shift in ambition and capacity for the literature sector and will be a place of inspiration, enjoyment, learning and transformation through creative writing, reading, translation and education in a world class literary city. The International Centre for Writing aims:

To explore the artistic power of creative writing by developing the best writing, translation and performing talent in the UK and internationally, improving engagement with and appreciation of the best in world literature and working with partners to innovate in creative writing teaching and the creation of new work.

To explore the social power of creative writing by celebrating freedom of expression, connecting best practice in literature development around the world, and helping to change lives by promoting reading and writing in and out of schools.

To establish Norwich as England's first UNESCO

*City of Literature*, putting literature at the heart of the city's culture, bringing the best in world literature to Norwich, celebrating Norwich's literary heritage on the international stage, bringing investment to the city.

The International Centre for Writing's physical realisation will result from the renovation and development of an 18th century Georgian house in the centre of the City. The detailed proposals create teaching, conference, event, office and writers' spaces in the main house, two Writers in Residence apartments in the upper floors of the annexe, a café, and a 120-seat events space in a new structure in the garden.

Membership of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network will drive forwards the city's capacity to create this centre by acting as a catalyst for its work. It will bring new partners, connections, prestige and interest to the city and Writers' Centre Norwich's work across academia, education, the creative industries and local government. It will also generate a cascading programme of international events and collaborations throughout Norwich and all its venues (Appendix IV).

The International Centre for Writing is a four year project that will be funded by a range of capital and revenue investment from a range of partners. Writers' Centre Norwich has a large scale capital bid lodged with Arts Council England and is in discussions with several other capital funders and revenue partners to ensure sustainable, coherent and achievable aims. Norwich City Council is granting The International Centre for Writing a long lease on a stunning property from its portfolio and Writers' Centre Norwich is working with architects, consultants and partners and achieved RIBA Stage B in December 2011. Full Feasibility and Business Plans have been drawn up alongside a Fundraising Feasibility Strategy and Campaign that is backed by WCN's core stakeholders and is attracting great interest within the sector (see Appendix IV).



# Credits

## Management Group

Chris Gribble  
Chief Executive,  
Writers' Centre Norwich.

Robert McCrum  
Chair, Writers' Centre Norwich.

Graham Creelman  
Vice Chair, Writers' Centre  
Norwich.

Magdalen Russell  
Bid Writer.

## Design and art direction

This book was designed by NUCA graduate, Bobby Burrage. Bobby is founder of The Click Design Consultants, an award-winning, independent, multi-disciplined creative design consultancy, based in Norwich.

[www.theclickdesign.com](http://www.theclickdesign.com)

Bobby selected two typefaces for this book. Bodoni was used to typeset the body copy for its classic elegance. In contrast, its modern counterpart Avenir was used for quotes and image credits.

Bobby worked closely with a local print consultant to achieve the bespoke format which features three stocks, perforated french folded leaves and foil blocked outer cover. The book was printed on an Indigo digital press using sustainable products.

## Photography

Inside front cover:  
Ian McEwan  
Photo by: Martin Figura.

Page ii:  
Landmarks of Norwich  
Photo by: Martin Figura.

Page 1:  
Julian of Norwich stained glass window, Norwich Cathedral  
Photo by: [norfolkchurches.co.uk](http://norfolkchurches.co.uk)

Page 4:  
Thomas Paine (1737-1809)  
Photo by: Norfolk County Council Library Information Service.

Page 6:  
Thomas Paine Study Centre, UEA  
Photo by: University of East Anglia.

Page 8:  
The Square, UEA  
Photo by: University of East Anglia.

Page 9:  
Ian McEwan at the WCN/UEA UNESCO event, 2010  
Photo by: Martin Figura.

French fold one:  
The Grade II listed "Ziggurats", UEA  
Photo by: University of East Anglia.

Page 10:  
WG Sebald (1944-2001)  
Photo by: Jerry Bauer.

Page 11:  
The British Centre for Literary Translation Summer School, 2011  
Photo by: Anita Staff.

Page 12:  
Letters to Europe Workshop, Avenue Junior School, Norwich, 2011  
Photo by: Dave Guttridge.

French fold two:  
The Forum, home of the Millennium Library, Norwich  
Photo by: The Forum.

Page 15:  
Norwich University College of the Arts  
Photo by: Nick Rees.

Page 16:  
River Yare, Norfolk  
Photo by: Cameron Self, Literary Norfolk.

River Bure, Coltishall  
Photo by: Cameron Self, Literary Norfolk.

Page 17:  
'Rememberer' by Agnes Lehoczky, published by Egg Box  
Photo by: Egg Box Publishing.

French fold three:  
Print block, John Jarrold Printing Museum, Norwich  
Photo by: Leo Reynolds.

Page 18:  
The Book Hive, London Street, Norwich  
Photo by: The Book Hive.

Page 19:  
The Sir Thomas Browne statue, Hay Hill, Norwich  
Photo by: Norfolk County Council Library Information Service.

French fold four:  
The Electric Hotel, Norfolk and Norwich Festival, 2010  
Photo by: Raphael Helle.

Page 20:  
John Innes Centre, UEA  
Photo by: John Innes Centre.

Page 21:  
Draft plan, International Centre for Writing, 2011  
Photo by: Ash Sakula Architects.

French fold five:  
The historic Elm Hill, Norwich  
Photo by: PGBrown1987, [flickr.com/photos/61367045@N06/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/61367045@N06/)

Page 24:  
Audience at the WCN/UEA UNESCO event, 2010  
Photo by: Martin Figura.



WRITERS'  
CENTRE  
NORWICH

This bid document has been led by Writers' Centre Norwich with the support of the following key partners:



UEA University of East Anglia











**Norwich has a sensational literary past spanning 900 years.** It is also a city of firsts - from the first battlefield dispatch (1075) to the first woman published in English (Julian of Norwich), the first recognisable novel, first blank verse, first printed plan of an English city, first published parliamentary debates (Hansard), the largest concentration of published dissenters, revolutionaries, translators and social reformers 18th and 19th centuries (including Thomas Paine, Harriet Martineau and the record-breaking 50 million bestseller, Anna Sewell), the first provincial library (1608), first municipality to adopt the Library Act (1850), first provincial newspaper (1701), first British MA in creative writing (1970), the first student of which was Ian McEwan, the UK's first City of Refuge for persecuted writers (2007) and a founding member of the International Cities of Refuge Network. To cap it all, the Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library has had the highest number of visitors and users in the UK for the last five years in a row - by far. Norwich is a city in which literature has been harnessed to foster positive social change for hundreds of years.

We are proud to submit a bid to become England's first UNESCO *City of Literature* and ensure this achievement is continued for many years to come.

