

Science Fiction and Dundee

Revealing the actual and fantastical literary history of Dundee

Since 2015 the Being Human Festival hubs and events in Dundee have celebrated writers and works of literature from the city's past and present, with a particular focus on science fiction through Mary Shelley, H.G. Wells and Jonathan Swift.

The lives and work of these writers have been the inspiration for huge variety of events, activities and creative collaborations, including an alien autopsy conducted by Professor Sue Black in front of a live audience, the creation of a pantomime about Frankenstein's Monster, and an experimental film about space travel and an international moon hoax.

The hubs and events have inspired the creation of resources that are appealing and accessible to public audiences as well as useful in educational contexts. Seven Being Human comic books have been produced in collaboration with the Scottish Centre for Comics Studies in Dundee Comics Creative Space. 800 of the 'Frankenstein Returns!' comic books produced in 2018 were given to local secondary schools and were featured most recently in the Frankenstein episode of BBC Alba's 'Sar Sgeoil' series in June 2022. The festival outputs have facilitated the creation of networks of engaged teachers in schools across Dundee, Arbroath and Montrose, and in 2017 a Science Fiction Masters degree was launched at the University of Dundee that includes English, film studies and comic studies modules.

The success of Being Human in Dundee has led to an ongoing and strengthening relationship with the City Council. For the 'Aquatic City' programme in 2019 the council provided an empty shop space in a shopping centre which the team was able to use for interactive and creative events and pop-up talks, attracting a new demographic to the festival. There have also been growing connections with other festivals and venues across the city, including the Dundee Science festival, the Dundee Literary festival and the Dundee Arts Café.

Mary Shelley has been the breakout star of the programming. Based on the success of the Being Human hub themes 'Mary Shelley's Dundee' (2015) and 'Frankenstein Returns!' (2018) the Council are now planning a Frankenstein trail in the city for 2023, and a new plaque will be placed on a local church. When the Eden Project comes to Dundee in 2025 one of the guilds that will be developed across the city as satellite projects will be themed around creativity and centred on Mary Shelley.

“ Being Human created a narrative... it's the kind of thing that snowballs – once one of the local partners, businesses or cultural institutions figures out that we're doing something they want to join in as well. It's not just a Dundee story anymore – it's going to be a Scotland story.

– Dr Daniel Cook



People:

- [Daniel Cook](#), Reader in English, School of Humanities, University of Dundee

Institution:

- [University of Dundee](#)

Partners:

- [Dundee Comics Creative Space](#)
- [Scottish Centre for Comics Studies](#)
- [Dundee City Council](#)
- [Dundee Science Festival](#)
- [Dundee Arts Café](#)

Area:

- Scotland

Being Human Festival years:

- Mary Shelley's Dundee, 2015
- HG Wells at 150, 2016
- Swift at 350, 2017
- Frankenstein Returns, 2018
- The Aquatic City, 2019
- New Worlds, 2020
- Renewal, 2021
- Breaking Books, 2022

Learn more:

- [Being Human Dundee Twitter](#)
- [Dundee Comics Creative Space - Frankenstein](#)