

The Jessie Kesson Residency at Moniack Mhor Writers' Centre

Moniack Mhor

Moniack Mhor Writers' Centre is managed by Moniack Mhor Ltd, a non-profit making company and registered charity in Scotland. The centre is supported by regular funding from Creative Scotland and is managed by six members of staff, overseen by a voluntary board of directors. Moniack Mhor is a residential facility dedicated to the furtherance of literature in Scotland and beyond. It runs independent creative writing courses over some eight months of the year, and outwith this period offers a host of creative writing opportunities for young people, community groups and partner organisations. The centre welcomes hundreds of people through its doors each year and in addition to promoting literature within the local community, attracts individuals and organisations from across the world.

Jessie Kesson

Jessie Kesson, born in 1916, was raised in orphanages and worked as a farmhand and domestic servant. She lived most of her life in the north of Scotland, including Abriachan, which is three miles from Moniack Mhor. She wrote about her experiences in such classics as *The White Bird Passes*, and *Another Time, Another Place*. Her legacy is not only her books; she is, quite simply, an inspiring individual. The fact she became a successful author is proof that anyone can write, regardless of background or opportunity, and that all lives are worthy of transforming into literature.

2016 marks the centenary of her birth and Moniack Mhor intends to mark this by running a programme of events throughout the year. More details on this activity is to follow.

The Fellowship

The centre is grateful, through literary agents Johnson and Alcock, to have been given permission by Avie Kesson, daughter of the writer Jessie Kesson, to name the residency *The Jessie Kesson Fellowship*.

The Jessie Kesson Fellowship has been established to provide a writer with the time and space to write, and to raise awareness of Jessie Kesson in Highland schools. The chosen writer will:

- Live on-site in the cottage at Moniack Mhor for the whole month of March 2015.
- Have the opportunity to deliver six creative writing workshops based on or inspired by Jessie Kesson's life and work in local schools, libraries, or community centres.
- Be invited to partake in a literary evening event either as part of a ceilidh in the straw bale studio or at a designated local venue.
- Be asked to contribute one piece of work to Moniack Mhor at the end of the residency.

It is important that applicants hold a current UK driving license, or one that would allow them to drive during their stay.

Location

Moniack Mhor is 1,000 feet above sea level, with a view of Ben Wyvis. It is 18 miles from Inverness, and five miles from Kiltarlity. It is a perfect area for walking, but it can be chilly, so warm clothing and sturdy footwear is advised.

It should be noted that the nearest shops are located in Beauly, located 8 miles from the Centre. It is a beautiful, yet isolated spot. Applicants should take this into consideration before applying.

The Centre is comprised of a main house, cottage, and straw bale studio. The cottage is centrally-heated and also has a wood-burning stove. There are computer, printing and online facilities, and a small kitchen on the ground floor. There are two en-suite rooms of choice, one with a bath and one with a shower.

There are several retreats/ courses programmed for the centre during the residency period and these will take place in the main building and straw bale studio.

Stipend

The stipend offered to the writer in residence is £350 per week, **total £1,400**.

Moniack Mhor can offer reimbursement of transport costs, from within Scotland only, either second class rail fare or fuel costs at £0.40 per mile, to allow the writer to make their way to and from the centre at the commencement and end of the residency.

It is expected that the writer in residence will fund their own subsistence costs, i.e. food and drink, etc., while resident at Moniack Mhor.

The accommodation at the cottage shall be rent-free and the company car will be available to use throughout the duration of the residency. Fuel will be covered to and from workshops delivered as part of the residency programme.

The writer will be self-employed, responsible for their own income tax and national insurance contributions, and will invoice Moniack Mhor for stipend payments at an agreed period during the residency.