Poetry Residency

Located within the National Forest, the National Memorial Arboretum is the Nation's year-round place to remember, a space where everyone can celebrate lives lived and remember lives lost. A beautiful and inspiring place, the 150-acres of the Arboretum form a living landscape and are home to over 400 memorials. Tales of bravery shown in the most extraordinary of circumstances, selfless service and sacrifice, camaraderie and care are represented by the memorials, that are designed to represent the stories of those they remember. The landscape of the Arboretum is constantly evolving, throughout the seasons and key moment's themes and events that take place on site during the year help to share the stories behind the memorials.

About the Residency
We are looking for a poet who will take up residence in the grounds of the Arboretum for up to a 2-year period and explore the surroundings, landscape, and memorials through the art of poetry.

There is a growing evidence base and proven research which links poetry to wellbeing. We are combining this with the essence of the Arboretum and the art of reflection and Remembrance as well as a celebration of lives lived.

The aim of which will be to create a selection of unique and original poems for the duration of the residency.

- They will reflect the change in seasons, mood and ambience of such a significant site whichfocus on sense of reflection, place, health and mental wellbeing.
- In addition, the poet in residence will facilitate a workshop session with a different community or educational group to explore the words, sounds and landscape of a chosen space or theme. Allowing them to think and write freely to develop a creative response.
- Throughout the year the poet in residence will be expected to perform and showcase their work at various events held at the Arboretum (such as Remembrance Sunday and Armistice) and outside of the site where the Arboretum is represented.
- The poet will be expected to write poetry to align with key events in the calendar for example VE Day and VJ Day in 2025, along with poetry around other key memorials, moments in time and to summarise the development of the Arboretum at the end of the year.
- The poet will host and attend events held at the Arboretum and will be part of the Learning and Participation team.

Further residency information

- This role will be site based at the National Memorial Arboretum (DE13 7AR)
- The contract will be offered on a freelance basis, and the successful candidate will be responsible for paying their own tax and national insurance payments
- The fee will be £300 per day inclusive of travel for a minimum of 36 days during this period
- This role will require a full DBS
- The applicant should have experience in developing and delivering participatory workshops with both school age groups and community adult groups

- The applicant should be a performance poet that feels comfortable sharing their work in both small and large scale event environments
- All poetry created will belong to the National Memorial Arboretum.

Reflections from our first and most recent poet in residence Dan Simpson who has just completed two years with the Arboretum.

"When I first arrived at the National Memorial Arboretum for my interview, I immediately appreciated how special this place is. There are not many public spaces where loss and grief are so welcomed, and the past remembered and honoured so openly.

I felt privileged to be chosen as the Arboretum's first poet-in-residence, and over the course of two years have seen first-hand the care and thoughtfulness with which the site and the memorials are used and maintained: allusion and symbolism are embedded in the nature of the Arboretum, and so it's a truly creative and imaginative place to work as an artist. The engagement and learning teams are brilliant colleagues: dedicated to their purpose, open to ideas, and up for a challenge! I've had some of the best experiences of my career over the residency: writing and sharing contemporary poems at both traditional services of Remembrance and for a new memorial dedicated to those who served our country during COVID; facilitating workshops for young people, veterans, serving personnel, and military families; seeing my poems on display in the exhibition spaces. Reflecting on my time in-residence, it's been an honour to be trusted in bringing my craft and skill to this special place."

How to apply
Please submit an up-to-date CV and covering letter identifying key skills, experience and why you feel you are suitable for the role along with an example of your recent or most appropriate work to rasmith@thenma.org.uk by Wednesday 5 March at 5pm. Successful candidates will be required to attend an interview where they will be given the opportunity to perform a piece of their choice on Thursday 3 April.

All enquiries, including those relating to access support should be directed to Rachel Smith, via the email address above.
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Our Privacy Promise
The National Memorial Arboretum, which is part of the Royal British Legion, takes your privacy very seriously and we will only use the information you have provided on the form below to communicate with you about your application. We will not share your data and promise to keep your personal information safe and secure. All proposals and personal information will be deleted 60 days after the submission deadline. You can update your personal details at any time by contacting the National Memorial Arboretum on 01283 245 100 or emailing info@thenma.org.uk. For more information about how the National Memorial Arboretum processes personal information and about your rights under data protection law please see our privacy policy at thenma.org.uk/privacy