



Royal Literary Fund

The Royal Literary Fund, which has been helping professional authors since 1790, today named Sir Ian Blatchford as its new President.

Sir Ian has masterminded the transformation of the Science Museum – which this year received the accolade of Art Fund Museum of the Year – during a decade as Chief Executive and Director of the Science Museum Group. This comprises five museums throughout England and is the largest group of science museums in the world. He is also the current Chair of the National Museum Directors' Council, working with other leading cultural figures to steer the nation's museums through current challenges.

Sir Ian said, 'I am a true believer in the power of great writing, so I am honoured to be able to play a part in the life of this extraordinary benevolent fund, created more than two centuries ago by writers, for writers. Never has the work of the RLF felt more important as the publishing industry continues to grapple with the ongoing market changes. The unique and diverse voices of British novelists, biographers, playwrights and poets is needed more than ever in these uncertain political and economic times'.

'We're delighted that Sir Ian has agreed to take up this role,' said RLF Chief Executive Eileen Gunn. 'There's no doubt his great energy and broad knowledge and involvement in the cultural world will further our mission to serve all writers in need.'

The RLF is governed by a board of trustees that includes Joanna Trollope and Mark Le Fanu. Applications to the Fund for grants have risen sharply in recent years and it supports around 200 writers a year.

The RLF also runs education programmes, including a Fellowship Scheme that places writers in universities and other institutions to help students develop their writing. This year 113 Fellows are working in 86 universities across the nations of the UK. The Science Museum will benefit from its second RLF Fellowship.

Sir Ian is no stranger to publishing, having written for academic journals. Last year he co-authored with Dr Tilly Blyth *The Art of Innovation: from Enlightenment to Dark Matter*, a take on how interactions between science and art have shaped the world around us.