

ENTERTAINMENT

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It takes two

TALENTED

DUO: Mary Smith and Phil McMenemy.

AN UNUSUAL collection of words and images has won a Stewartry duo a national award.

Mary Smith and Phil McMenemy have won the Leaf Book collaboration competition for a writer who is co-operating with an artist working in a different art form.

Their submission entitled *Grey Day* at Carrick beat off hefty competition for the first prize.

Mary, of Castle Douglas, is a poet, freelance writer and novelist. Her poetry has been widely published whilst her debut novel, *No More Mulberries* set in Afghanistan, has received high international praise.

Phil is a landscape and fine art photographer who works from his studio in Laurieston.

Mary said: "As Phil and I are working on a project called *This Galloway*, I submitted some of my poems and Phil's images of Carrick shore.

"We came first, which means a cash prize and includes publication of one of my poems and one of Phil's images in the *Leaf Writers' Magazine*."

Leaf Books editor Sam Burns said: "It was a close-run thing, but we

By **Sara Bain**

plumped for Mary and Phil's entry in the end, primarily because we felt it was the best example of this sense of 'call and response' that we like to see in a collaborative endeavour.

"We felt the poem was an apt response to the image, or the image an apt illustration of the poem.

"We liked that it had both written and visual appeal, but that certainly doesn't mean we passed over less visual written pieces in favour of it – in fact several were commended."

One of the commendations again went to Mary for her collaboration with artist and printmaker Silvana McLean. Entitled *Lost in Translation*, the entry was an extract from *Voices from Glentrool and Merrick*.

Mary added: "We are all delighted as it is a validation of the work we are doing and makes us feel we are moving along the right lines and creating something people will want to see and read.

"We hope our work together will result in a multi-media exhibition and, possibly, a book."