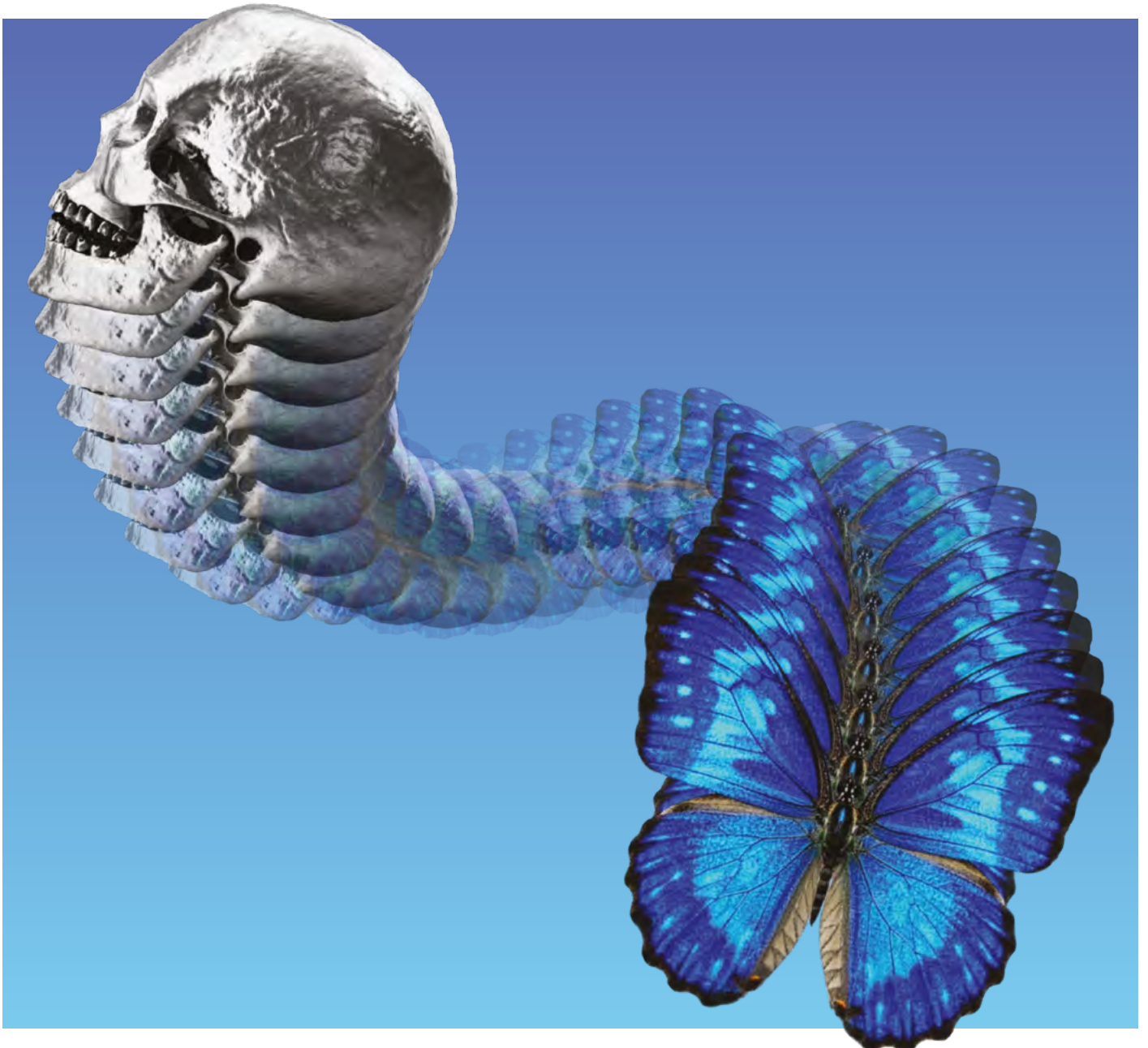


Changing your mind



Explore the Festival



Using the brochure

There are almost 600 events to explore over our three programmes, so we've added a few helpful features to this brochure (and our website) to help you find the right events for you. To see what other intriguing events have been added since we went to print, head to edbookfest.co.uk/recently-added

What's new on site

We're so excited to be returning to the Edinburgh Futures Institute, where we've now made ourselves properly at home!

There are lots of new things to explore this year, as well as plenty of returning favourites. We're thrilled to be presenting events in the beautiful and historic Greyfriars Kirk for the very first time, as well as returning to the cosy Elliott's Studio and grand McEwan Hall. Our friends at the BBC are taking over the Spiegeltent from 17-21 August with a host of radio broadcasts and podcast recordings, and our brand new partners, LNER, have relaunched our brilliant Kids Zone. Look out for their fun new features in the Children's Tent and Families Hangout, which both return as spaces to run about or chill out in.

Waterstones are back with our stuffed-to-the-rafters Festival Bookshop, you can jump right into a new purchase in the Reading Room, claim a timeslot in the Book Nook for your book group, and fill your boots with food and drink from our bar and food trucks in the Courtyard (there's even ice cream!).

Flip to the site map on p129 to see the lay of the land at the time of this brochure going to print, and check online for our most recent updates.

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Access:

Livestreamed

We livestream events globally on our website, which are often also available on demand.

British Sign Language

BSL interpretation is also available on request - see p125.

Live Captioned

These events will be captioned live by captioners in the room.

AI Captioned

We're using AI captions to expand the accessibility of our events. We welcome feedback on how our audiences find this experience.

Learning Disability Friendly

These events are designed for those with learning disabilities.

Formats:

Remote Appearance

Some participants will join on a screen.

Food & Drink

These events include food and/or drink.

Terms, labels, and what they mean

Themes and genres

Throughout the brochure you'll find that each event is colour coded with its key theme (Adults) or genre (Young Adults, Children and Families) to help make finding the right events for you as easy as possible. There's a key on each page, and full info on our Adult Programme themes on p4-10.

Age ranges

Children and Families events also come with age guidance to help you choose (but you know your children best).

Prices

We offer a number of concessions, which are included in brackets after each event, and can be found on our website.

Welcome

to the 2026 Edinburgh International Book Festival



Jenny Niven
Festival Director & CEO



Welcome to the 2026 Edinburgh International Book Festival, one of the world's great celebrations of books and ideas.

Every year, creating the programme is both a privilege and a challenge. With more than 185,000 books published annually in the UK alone, the possibilities are endless, and that's before we even begin exploring brilliant writing from around the world. This year, we're welcoming guests from 41 countries, bringing stories and perspectives from Mexico to Japan.

But the Book Festival isn't simply a showcase. It's a carefully curated programme, shaped with curiosity, ambition, and a belief in the conversations people most want and need to have right now.

Our 2026 theme, Changing Your Mind, is both an invitation and a provocation. What does it take to stay open, flexible, and willing to see differently? What happens when we learn something new, shift our perspective, or watch others do the same? In a fast-changing world, the ability to rethink may be more important than ever. As novelist Katie Kitamura said earlier this year, 'Almost every writer changes my mind; that is the point of reading'. Come and be changed with us.

At the heart of the Festival is a belief that books, writing, and ideas matter profoundly in public life. We don't come with a fixed set of answers, but we do create space for conversation, discovery, challenge, and new perspectives. It's also enormous fun. Few places are better on a summer evening than the Spiegeltent: in great company, listening to extraordinary musicians, writers, and unexpected collaborations while the city's Festivals whirl around outside.

We want as many people as possible to be part of these experiences. This National Year of Reading has highlighted a worrying decline in literacy and in reading for pleasure across all ages. As a charity, widening access to the Book Festival - and broadening whose voices are heard in public conversation - is central to everything we do, regardless of income, geography, or previous experience with books or festivals.

So this year, why not bring someone who thinks books aren't "for" them, or who hasn't discovered reading yet? You never know, you might just change their mind.

Thank You to Our Supporters

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is only possible thanks to the support of all the individuals, companies, trusts, and partners who have generously supported us this year. Your gifts, sponsorship, enthusiasm, and commitment to the Festival help us celebrate words and ideas, foster community, and inspire future generations.

Your contributions enable us to bring people together, turning big ideas into unforgettable moments. Thank you.

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Supporters



With thanks to the University of Edinburgh

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is hosted at the Edinburgh Futures Institute as part of a long-term partnership between the Festival and the University of Edinburgh. We would like to thank the University of Edinburgh for their support in making this year's Book Festival possible.

Our 2026 Hero Theme is

Changing Your Mind



Why is everything so divisive right now? Don't we actually have more in common than what divides us? Are we capable of changing our minds, and if we do, is that growth; or a 'U-turn'? At a time of peak polarisation, could being flexible in our thinking, and being able to understand a different perspective, be the thing that might just save us?

Our hero theme dives into why we've got to such a state of fixed positions on everything, what the consequences are of increasing social and political divides, and how we might change other people's minds - or at least agree to disagree, agreeably. We also explore how our understanding of the mind is changing, from cutting-edge thinking on consciousness, to first-hand accounts of incredible journeys in neurorehabilitation. Finally, we celebrate reading: the ultimate route to changing your mind. Treasured writers share stories of the books that have shaped them, and we look at the mounting evidence of the power of art to transform our minds, and our lives. So... are you open to changing your mind? Step away from the noise and delve into the theme's three strands:

Can You Change Your Mind?

Reaction and the algorithm influence public debate like never before. But true democracy depends on the freedom to listen, reflect, and (re)consider. Join online experts **Sarah Wynn-Williams**, **Jimmy Wales**, and **Cory Doctorow** as they examine the development (and decline) of the internet over the last 30 years. A raft of notable names explore the current political landscape and what changes are needed for nations to thrive, including **Gordon Brown**, **John Curtice**, **Jeremy Hunt**, and former Finnish Prime Minister **Sanna Marin**. **Liam Byrne**, **Sarah Stein Lubrano**, and **Marius Ostrowski** ask if changing your mind is even possible in today's polarised climate, while **Gabriel Gatehouse** and **Simukai Chigudu** reveal how opinions are shaped online and through our inherited stories. **Daniel Trilling** exposes the rise of Europe's far-right, while **Andrew Hussey** and **Richard Collett** look more broadly at what unites and divides us after conversations

with strangers across France and the UK. And getting practical, hands on workshops offer tools for rebuilding true dialogue in divided times.

Consciousness Now

Discoveries in neuroscience and psychology are transforming thinking about memory, recovery, attention, and consciousness. Meanwhile, AI's rise forces us to ask: if machines can imitate thought, what remains uniquely human? World-leading thinkers **Michael Pollan** and **Anil Seth** tackle this complex puzzle. **Gwen Adshead** and **Orlando Swayne** reveal the human brain's adaptive ability in trauma and transformation, **Nick Barber** and **Helen Pilcher** examine the sometimes uneasy power balance between mind and medicine, and **Fergus Murray**, **Julie Farrell**, and **Lucy Rose** joyfully expand our definition of neurodiversity.

Stories That Change Us

What's the role of art in all this? Can stories change minds? **Daisy Fancourt** and **Wayne McGregor** unpack the science of how the arts improve wellbeing and cognition, while luminaries **Kiran Desai** and **Claudia Rankine** share the books that changed their lives, and writers including **Katalina Watt**, **Rebecca Tamás**, and **Zakia Sewell** ask why we're still learning from the world's oldest stories. Plus, our vibrant Opening Night Gala (featuring **Anne Enright**, **Jackie Kay**, and **Aidan O'Rourke**) and Communities Cabaret events centre international and local voices responding to our theme via poetry, music, and storytelling.

All 'Changing Your Mind' events are marked with a blue butterfly throughout this brochure.



Programme Themes

To help you find the right events for you, we've sorted our Adults Programme into different themes, which you can discover across the following pages. The key at the bottom of each page shows you which theme each event belongs to. From food and drink to politics, fiction to poetry, there's plenty to explore.

"Reading fiction is important. It is a vital means of imagining a life other than our own..." says the magnificent **Ann Patchett**. Join her, and a constellation of fiction stars, as we bring you brilliant, visionary, and inventive storytellers spinning tales of history, fantasy, romance, and more. Featuring Scottish greats and visiting writers from over 40 countries, encompassing household names and first-time novelists, we invite you to see the world anew this August.

Brilliant Fiction



From Scotland, award-winning novelist **Ali Smith** shares her exuberant new anti-war novel, *Glyph*; **Maggie O'Farrell** arrives fresh from *Hamnet*'s incredible awards streak with her new title, *Land*; **Fern Brady** joins us with a special preview of her debut novel, *High Energy Unpleasant*; and **Jenni Fagan**'s hugely anticipated *The Delusions* imagines an afterlife run by cosmic (and comic) bureaucracy.

Evelyn Clarke (AKA Cat Clarke and V E Schwab's writing partnership) discuss sinister thriller *The Ending Writes Itself*, **Louise Welsh** returns to Glasgow's seedy underbelly in *The Cut Up*, and **Tom Newlands**' *Something Like Happiness* confirms him as a name to watch after Scottish Book of the Year-winning *Only Here, Only Now*.

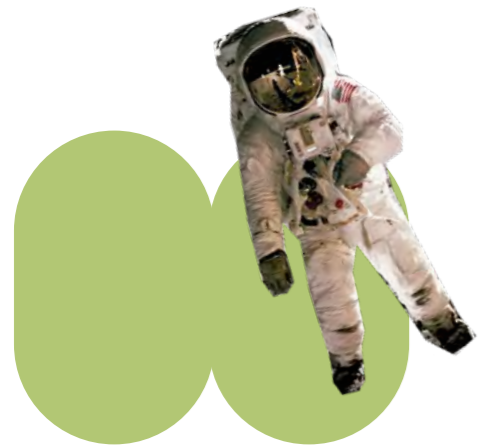
From further afield, **Daniyal Mueenuddin**'s debut novel, *This is Where the Serpent Lives*, transplants the great Russian novel to modern Pakistan; **Colm Tóibín** regales us with *The News from Dublin* in his new collection of short stories; **Claudia Rankine** explores truth, art, and fiction in *Triage*; and **Matt Haig** boards *The Midnight Train* towards the past mistakes we'd like to erase.

Ben Lerner explores the failures of technology and memory in *Transcription*; **Candice McCarty-Williams**' vibrant Queenie returns 10 years older and no wiser in *Queenie is Working on It*; and million-copy-selling fantasy author **Samantha Shannon** unpacks her newest title, *Among the Burning Flowers*.

Sales of fiction in translation in the UK are booming: celebrate with literary royalty from around the world, including two of Japan's bestselling sensations - **Mieko Kawakami** (*Sisters in Yellow*) and **Nao-Cola Yamazaki** (*Don't Laugh At Other People's Sex Lives*); Spain's **Javier Cercas**; cult French author **Édouard Louis**; and a trio of 2026 International Booker Prize nominees: **Yáng Shuāng-zǐ** with *Taiwan Travelogue*, Germany's **Daniel Kehlmann** with *The Director*, and **Shida Bazayr** with *The Nights are Quiet in Tehran*.

The Front List

The Front List, presented in partnership with Underbelly, brings internationally celebrated writers, journalists, historians, and performers to the glorious McEwan Hall for ambitious, in-depth conversations spanning fiction, politics, history, technology, and culture.



Pulitzer Prize-winner **Colson Whitehead** and Booker Prize-winners **Kiran Desai** and **Douglas Stuart** lead a powerful fiction line-up, alongside acclaimed and beloved novelists **Ann Patchett** and **Elif Shafak**. We celebrate 35 years of the global phenomenon that is **Diana Gabaldon's** *Outlander*, welcome the electric **Kae Tempest**, launch **Mel Giedroyc's** hilarious and heartwarming new novel, and Oscar-winning illustrator **Charlie Mackesy** brings his beloved characters to life before our eyes.

Big ideas also take centre stage: founder of Wikipedia **Jimmy Wales** and **Cory Doctorow** examine the future of the internet, while **Lyse Doucet**, **Edward Wong** and **Lewis Goodall** explore global politics, shifting alliances, and the human side of conflict. Power and identity come into focus with celebrated historians **David Olusoga** and **Tom Holland**, alongside a deep dive into a pivotal moment from the Scottish archives from **Val McDermid** and **Jo Sharp**.

Uplifting, inspiring, and illuminating, The Front List offers bold and thought-provoking events for curious minds of all kinds.

Scotland to the World

Scotland's stories, and our writers, have long been our strongest ambassadors. For this special series, in four separate commissions and collaborative presentations, the writing of four of our literary luminaries – **Ali Smith**, **William Dalrymple**, **Kathleen Jamie**, and **Len Pennie** – is intertwined with music and performance to tell a story of our globally interwoven lives, enriched by our connections to other countries and cultures.

Supported by the Expanded Festivals Fund, Scotland to the World takes Scottish words to Japan, India, across Europe, and to the United States. Join us for some truly immersive evenings, presented in the historic surroundings of Greyfriars Kirk.

In *Song of Rona Island*, Japan's experimental **Noh Reimagined** theatre company combine with celebrated fiddler **Aidan O'Rourke** and piper **Bridghe Chaimbeul** to take an essay from former Makar **Kathleen Jamie**, creating an utterly unique blend of Scottish and Japanese folklore, myth, and music.

Seasonal Quartet sees leading Dutch contemporary classical collective **New European Ensemble** (NEuE) present four new pieces, each inspired by one of **Ali Smith's** seminal novels, with accompany readings performed by the writer herself.

Presented in partnership with Celtic Connections, in *Delusions*, US-based, BAFTA-winning composer **Paul Leonard-Morgan** sets the vital poems of **Len Pennie** to soaring strings and piano. And in *The Golden Road*, historian **William Dalrymple** explores the connections between Scotland and India, transported by the fusion sounds of **India Alba**, a collaboration of leading musicians from both countries.

Scotland to the World events are marked with a half globe.



Good Information

In a world of misinformation and alternative facts, our Good Information strand looks at trusted sources, and how the information, data, and knowledge we consume can be verified. What pressures are journalists under in the digital age, and how do our online lives change our relationship to truth?

John Curtice explains elections and what the data is revealing about politics in Britain today; **Cory Doctorow** presents 'enshittification', a condition savaging the contemporary internet; and Wikipedia founder **Jimmy Wales** outlines *The Seven Rules of Trust* for the online age. Pulitzer Prize-winning data journalist **Mona Chalabi** transforms colossal numbers into something relatable and tangible, and **Sebastian Mallaby** and **Tim Wu** ask how we ensure technology works for the good of the many rather than the few.

Forensic architect **Eyal Weizman** uncovers the chilling inside story of the reshaping of Gaza, **Yi Ling Liu** reveals the inner workings of China's internet, and **Fergus McIntosh** (who runs *The New Yorker's* renowned fact-checking department) discusses how to preserve reality in journalism. We explore impartiality in the media with **Lewis Goodall**, and **Elizabeth Finkel** makes the case for scientific proof over medical conspiracies.

Don't miss our **First Edition** events, where you can spend the morning catching up on the latest current affairs with the very journalists and writers covering them (including **Lyse Doucet** and **Pankaj Mishra**), and much more.



New World Orders

In a world of increased conflict and complex entanglements, it can be bewildering to follow the international news, never mind understand the forces shaping global change. Upheaval in US foreign policy alone is changing the world around us faster than has happened in decades.

We bring together the most authoritative voices across economics, law, and politics, to help untangle the threads which bring countries together and divide them - and where the UK sits in it all.



We look at the international flow of money and power, with leading analysts including former US State Department official **Edward Fishman** and Oxford academic **Carl Benedikt Frey**. **Rana Dasgupta** and **Ece Temelkuran** consider borders and the refugees who must cross them, and we hear from top tier journalists including **Anand Gopal** and **Scott Anderson**.

Historian **Simon Sebag Montefiore** explores the origins of the modern Middle East, sinologists **Frank Dikötter** and **Isabel Hilton** explore the makings of the Chinese Communist Party, **Åsne Seierstad** paints a portrait of Russian lives under Putin, and **Anthony Seldon** explores the impact of 10 years since Brexit.

The New York Times's **Edward Wong** reports on how the decisions made in Washington play out on the international stage, former Chancellor and Foreign Secretary **Jeremy Hunt** counters the narrative that Britain's international influence is in the decline, while **John Kampfner** argues Britain's solutions can only be found by looking more outwardly for inspiration.

How to Live a Meaningful Life

We like our books to uplift and inspire us as well as to inform us. Our programme is full of moments of joy and connection, and ways to explore the things that make our hearts sing and ache in equal measure.

Waterstones Children's Laureate, **Frank Cottrell-Boyce**, issues a call to arms to protect childhood; **Katy Hessel** shares her insights on *How to Live an Artful Life*; **Poorna Bell** explores women who have defied society's 'rules'; **Prue Leith** extols the liberty and expected joys of aging; **Sarah Perry** looks at death and dignity with devastating grace; iconic Agony Aunt **Philippa Perry** hosts a very special live edition of Ask Philippa; and **Buffy's Book Club** returns with a brand new event, Brief Encounters.

Philosopher **Julian Baggini** dives into what coffee means to us (alongside a special tasting with **Santu Coffee**), Norway's **Future Library** announces its next sensational writer, and our new series, **Pen Pals**,

highlights glorious creative friendships between some of our favourite writers, including **Ann Patchett** and **Meg Mason**.

You can also enjoy the fruits of the Festival's year-round Communities Programmes, with our special *Where We Are* exhibition, and young people from the **Spartan Foundation's Alternative School** share their imaginative writing.



Table Talk

A highlight of our programme, Table Talks are a chance to share a meal with friends old and new in the beautiful surroundings of Elliott's Studio. From hearty three-course lunches to more casual affairs, reward yourself with food for thought as some of our favourite chef-writers bring their stories to delicious life.

Dazzling chefs plating up an unforgettable spread include the Michelin-starred **Santiago Lastra**, who evokes his *Mexican Soul* with smoke and spice in a rare event; **Ben Lippett** serves up modern-classic dishes from *How I Cook*; Elliott's Studio founder **Jess Elliott Dennison** shares her wholesome and delicious *Vegetable Recipes*; **Gurdeep Loyal** whips up surprising creations from pantry staples in *Flavour Heroes*; **Dara Klein** conjures her family's native Puglia with *La Trattoria*; and **Yasmin Khan** draws on her Irani-Pakistani heritage with flavour-forward dishes from *Sabzi*.

You can also enjoy more snack-size experiences from master of Sichuan cuisine **Fuchsia Dunlop** and beloved Guardian columnist **Meera Sodha** (who prepares a dish from her smash-hit *Dinner*). Sample **Justin Tsang's** mouthwatering East Asian dishes, **Sophie Macfie's** plant-based power bowls, or **Ella Risbridger's** go-to recipes for making life '10% more lovely'. Feel nourished in mind and spirit with **Tamar Adler**, who elevates cooking to a philosophy, and former Ottolenghi pastry chef **Helen Goh** embraces both *Baking and the Meaning of Life*.



Fascinating Non-Fiction

From the Bard to the Barrowlands, forensics to football – the best of the year's non-fiction offers revolutions, revelations, and the intimate human stories behind the headlines.

How many FOI requests does it take to tell an accurate story? **Andrew Lownie's** *Entitled* meticulously charts the rise and fall of the modern House of York, while **Oliver Bullough** explains how dirty money is buying up democracy.



Fiction writers turn to new forms as the legendary **Anne Enright** enriches us with her essays from across the decades, novelist **Mark Haddon** reveals the darkly hilarious story of his own childhood, and **Louis de Bernières** uses his diaries to reflect on his writing life.

Simon Kuper shares the thrill of being at every World Cup since 1990; **Nandini Das** presents Tudor England anew via its international connections; and in an age of impunity, when violent actions seemingly go unchecked, human rights barrister **Philippe Sands** reflects on a decade since the publication of *East West Street*.

Intimate events collide with public narratives as **Darren McGarvey** examines how personal stories are exploited for wider consumption and **David Turner** shares untold journeys of disability and resistance from history. **Stephen McGinty** recounts the devastating events at Dunblane Primary School and examines their legacy, while Baroness **Brenda Hale** unpacks how the law can be used to protect all of our rights.

Poetry

Nothing gets under the skin or expresses the complexity of the human experience quite like poetry. With work spanning an enormous range of styles, from tender to raucous, formal to abstract; even if you haven't dipped a toe in since school, let us be your guide to some of the best poetry from across these isles.

Hollie McNish delights with *Virgin*; **Jay Gao** and **Malgorzata Lebda** attend to the human body's relationship with nature; **Hannah Lavery**, **Jennifer Wong**, and **Nidhi Zak** consider how migration is articulated in poetry, song, and myth; **Colin Bramwell** and **Ryan Van Winkle** share how they're bringing poetry to wider audiences; and T. S. Eliot Prize-winner **Joelle Taylor** brings the riotous energy of her new collection, *Maryville*, to the stage.

Simon Armitage, **Hanan Issa**, and **Peter MacKay** (UK and Welsh Poet Laureates and Scottish Makar respectively) join forces to reflect on the idea of a national poetic identity. Elsewhere, **MacKay** showcases the range of languages being spoken in contemporary Scotland in *Our Many-Voiced Country*.

For something noisier, check out **Loud Poets** Grand Slam Final, **GUBSMACKED's** Flyte Night, **Push the Boat Out's** Open Mic Night (get involved via our website), or our own **Citizen Collective** as they showcase the next big names in both written and spoken word.



Music, Performances & Podcasts

Join us for comedy, podcasts, and shenanigans galore as we welcome a host of performers, bards, and broadcasters to raise the roof of the fabulous Spiegeltent.

We're thrilled to present a sneak peek at hip-hop musical *Wallace* from the mighty **Dave Hook** and **Rob Drummond**, as well as celebrating 50 years of Scottish punk with *Caledonia Screaming*. **Astrid Jorgensen** leads the crowd in song (no rehearsal required!) alongside writer **Lauren Elkin** as they explore the power of our voices, and there's a special farewell celebration for local indie publishing sensation **404 Ink**.

Edinburgh Makar **Michael Pedersen** and broadcast legend **Nicola Meighan** convene a constellation of starry pals for music, chat, and fun, while we play host to live podcast recordings from BookTok sensation **Jack Edwards'** *Inklings Book Club* (with special guest **Jem Calder**), Australian favourite *The Secret Life of Books*, and The Ukrainian Shelf with **Olesya Khromeychuk** and

Uilleam Blacker. The hilarious and bookish **Cariad Lloyd** and **Sara Pascoe** return for their wildly popular *Weirdos Book Club*, and to close the Festival, we welcome **The Fun Lovin' Crime Writers** to murder some tunes.

And back by popular demand, following a sell-out UK tour earlier this year, **Hamish Hawk** returns for a one-night-only performance of our commission from Festival 2025, *Life in a Scotch Sitting Room, Vol. O*.



Workshops

Our programme is for writers as well as readers, whether you're already six novels in, or picking up a pen for the first time. Our intimate workshops and masterclasses are typically 60, 90, or 120 minutes long and are for groups of up to 20 people at a time. Individual event listings give an idea of what experience level is recommended. Come along for the unique opportunity to be coached and inspired by leading writers, wherever you are in your writing journey.

Covering a vast array of topics and styles, this year's programme of 30 workshops features everything from **Catherine Coe** on writing for children, to **Sally Hayden** on war reporting, while **Polly Barton** hosts a roundtable problem solving session for translators.

To delve deeper into our Changing Your Mind theme, why not let **Sarah Stein Lubrano** teach you how have more open conversations, or **Emily Kasriel** guide you on the art of deep listening.

Or for something completely different try 'Junk Journaling' with bookbinder **Rachel Hazell**, using Tarot as a writing tool with **Jill Dawson**, or join **Emma-Lee Moss** (AKA Emmy the Great) to explore the power of songwriting to tell personal stories.



Programme Partners

404 Ink
All Stories
BBC
Beyond Borders Scotland
Buffy's Book Club
Celtic Connections
Craigmillar Literacy Trust
Cròileagan Dhùn Èideann
Dads Rock
David Hardy & Margie Seale
Deaf Action
Durham ReaderBank
Dynamic Earth
Eating & Waiting to Eat
Edinburgh Art Festival
Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity
Edinburgh College of Art
Edinburgh for Under Fives
Edinburgh Libraries
Edinburgh Medical School 300
Edward Federman
Elliott's Studio
Equator

ESEA Lit Fest
Future Library
GUBSMACKED
Gutter Magazine
House of YA
I Am Loud
Inklings Book Club
International Booker Prize
Kulturalnik Polish Books & Culture Centre
Little Simon (part of Simon & Schuster)
My Kind of Book
Mu Arts
National Museum of Scotland
New European Ensemble
New Writing North
Open Book
PAMIS
PEN International
Push the Boat Out
Raw Material
Roundhouse Poetry Collective
Santu Coffee

Scottish Book Trust
Scottish Prison Service
Scran Academy
Secret Life of Books
Spartans Community Foundation
Streetreads
The Ripple Project
The Scots Language Centre
The Ukraine Shelf
Vintage Classics
Wasafiri
Weirdos Book Club
Wild Wings of Hope
Women's Prize Trust
YA Book Prize

Young Adults



Our dedicated programme of events for those aged 30 or under (or who are simply young at heart) returns for year two!

After a cracking launch last year, we're buzzed to bring you A-grade events with the most exciting names in the YA sphere. From YA Queens **Juno Dawson**, **Samantha Shannon**, **Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé**, **Holly Bourne**, and **Maisie Chan**, to performances from **Loud Poets**, **GUBSMACKED**, and **Push the Boat Out**, by the way of sessions with illustrator **Chanté Timothy**, and graphic artist **L D Lapinski**, we reckon there's something for everyone in our line-up.

We'll be welcoming back last year's hottest ticket Buffy's Book Club; TikTok star and 'the internet's librarian' **Jack Edwards** will chat to **Jem Calder**; and **House of YA** take over the Spiegeltent for an entire afternoon.

And this isn't even the half of it - flick to p86 to see everything that's coming your way.

Children & Families



With over 150 events especially created for everyone from babes-in-arms to teenagers, we're celebrating the National Year of Reading in style!

Look out for (deep breath) **Jacqueline Wilson**, **Julia Donaldson** (and the Gruffalo!), former Children's Laureate **Joseph Coelho**, **Cressida Cowell**, **A F Steadman**, **Louie Stowell**, **Neill Cameron** and The Donut Squad, **Chris Riddell**, **Bookbug**, **Corinne Bailey Rae**, **Dougie Payne** and **Rachel Seago**, **Harry Woodgate**, **The Beano**, **Rob Biddulph**, **Jodie Ounsley** (Fury from *Gladiators!*), and SO MANY MORE!

With kids' tickets just £6, and bags of free and drop-in events - including a Pip and Posy® trail, hands on installation, and character meet and greets - there's plenty to keep little minds occupied. And in the LNER Kids Zone you'll find our Children's Tent and Families Hangout, where wriggles and roars can be released.

Our full Children and Families event listings start on p96.



Front Row

BBC AT THE EDINBURGH FESTIVALS



The Afternoon Show

EDINBURGH FUTURES INSTITUTE 17 - 21 AUGUST

Enjoy your favourite **BBC** radio shows in **The Book Festival Spiegeltent** at Edinburgh Futures Institute, home of The Edinburgh International Book Festival.

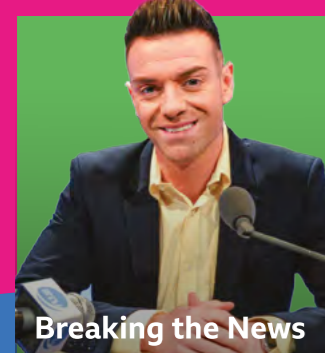


Loose Ends

From culture and comedy to current affairs and politics.

Join the audience to experience some of the best shows and biggest names appearing at the Edinburgh Festivals.

For **FREE** tickets and information
Scan the QR Code or go to
bbc.co.uk/showsandtours



Breaking the News



Scotcast

The Book Festival Spiegeltent, Edinburgh Futures Institute, 1 Lauriston Pl, Edinburgh, EH3 9EF

Listen on **SOUNDS**

Around our Festival site

Our event venues are the beating hearts of our Festival, but there are plenty of other lovely spaces for you to spend time in and enjoy – whether you’re attending an event or not.

Hang out spots

The LNER Kids Zone

We want visiting families to have the best time EVER. Understanding that young engines have a lot of steam to blow off, we’ve created a dedicated Kids Zone across a whole end of EFI, supported by LNER.

Little legs can run around to their hearts’ content on our **Kids Courtyard**. An outdoor area around our Children’s Tent (convenient!), feel free to play the day away here.

Or come inside to explore the **Families Hangout**. Get creative with a range of activities, or curl up in a child-size yurt with a cuddly toy friend and a book (you can borrow one for free from the nearby bookshelf!).



Food and drink

We’re partnering again with a selection of local food trucks to offer a delicious range of snacks, street food, and sweet treats, catering for all ages, tastes, and dietary requirements.

Wash it down with a drink from one of our bars. Soft drinks, speciality craft brews, or a spritz to sip in the sun – our main Courtyard bar will see you good (and if you’re attending an event in the Spiegeltent, pop by the bar in there!).

Canopy Kitchen & Courtyard, operated by The University of Edinburgh, also offers a diverse menu of sit-in meals, or quick bites from their takeaway area.

Festival Bookshop

No book festival is complete without a stacked bookshop, and ours is delivered by our brilliant friends at Waterstones. Stocked full with titles from authors appearing in the Festival and more, you’ll find time will slip away as you browse the shelves.

The Exhibition Room

Seek out our *Where We Are* Communities exhibition on Level 1 to find out more about our work outside of August, featuring illustrations by Edinburgh College of Art students in collaboration with participants and partners from our Communities projects.



Festival online

Can’t make it to the Festival site? Want to see two events happening at the same time? Love what your favourite writer said so much that you want to hear it again and again? You’re in luck!

Many of our events are livestreamed and available to watch on a Pay What You Can basis. Then, in the Autumn, we’ll release a slew of even more recorded events to enjoy on demand.

Look out for to identify livestreamed events, and sign up for our mailing list at edbookfest.co.uk to get updated on when we release our additional on demand recordings.

Our Schools Programme goes beyond the book...

A coach travels home, packed with school pupils buzzing from their day out at the Book Festival. They chat excitedly about the best things they saw, the new things they learned, and the authors they saw live for the very first time. The book each young person takes home is just the beginning; they also gain new perspectives, inspiration, and enthusiasm that will last a lifetime.

Maybe one day, some of them might even be on our stages with their very own bestseller...

This is the difference our Schools Programme makes. As a charity, we can't make it happen without your support.



Our work with Schools

We provide unforgettable learning experiences to inspire and engage young minds.

Each August, we:

Welcome almost **5,000 pupils** to dedicated Schools events

Provide fun **additional learning activities** through the Discovery Zone

Give every pupil a **FREE book** (supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart)

Support schools with **free tickets** and a **transport fund** so cost and location aren't a barrier to learning

Online and year-round, we:

Livestream and **record events**, so teachers and pupils can access them when they need to

Publish **bespoke learning resources** linked to our events and the curriculum



...and it can't happen without you

At a time of decreasing literacy and reading enjoyment, our work with young people has never been more important to help set them up for future success. We need your help to make the Schools Programme possible and give 5,000 young people the opportunity to experience the magic of the Book Festival.

Every gift, membership and donation, little and large, brings us one step closer to brilliant Book Festival experiences for Schools – and some of the ways you can support us offer great perks in return!

Let's be Friends

Joining our Membership supports our work while granting you some exclusive benefits in return - our way of saying thanks.

Friend	Friend Plus
£60 per year	£120 per year
Advance booking 1 day	Advance booking 2 days
Priority brochure mailing	
-	Members Lounge access during the Festival

Find out more about all our Membership levels online.

Make a donation

Every gift will make a difference to young people. Thanks to a generous supporter pledging match funding, every donation to our work with schools in 2026 will go twice as far.

£10	can pay for a pair of free tickets, for pupils who would otherwise miss out on a visit
£50	can help cover materials for the hands-on activities in the Discovery Zone
£100	can support our Transport Fund, offering Schools financial help to reach us

Leave a lasting legacy

Helping young people from all backgrounds enjoy a lifelong connection to books and the Festival through a gift in your Will is easy to do, and ensures your passion for literature will resonate forever.

Is your business keen to make a difference?

We're lucky to be supported by a range of companies, who each receive bespoke benefit packages in return for their sponsorship. If your business would like to help us reach more schools than ever before, then we would love to speak with you.

Ready to help?

Visit edbookfest.co.uk/support-us, or scan:



Anne Enright: Attention

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

For 30 years, **Anne Enright** has been paying attention - to literature, to Ireland, to the voices and bodies of women - and writing about it all in prose so insightful and exuberant you want to dog-ear every page. *Attention: Writing on Life, Art, and The World* gathers a career's worth of essays on topics ranging from Dublin to Honduras, James Joyce to Toni Morrison. Today, the Booker Prize-winning author of *The Gathering* and *The Green Road* discusses craft, memory, and the art of looking closely with **Caolinn Hughes**. Supported by Culture Ireland.

AI

**Close Read with Open Book: Poems to Change Your Mind**

10:30-12:00
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Join **Marjorie Lotfi** and **Jess Orr** from Open Book, a charity organising shared reading and creative writing groups, as they introduce you to some of the brilliant poets appearing at this year's Festival. The session will focus on poems from a range of perspectives, all in conversation with our hero theme, Changing Your Mind. No preparation required, reading materials will be provided. Expect an open discussion from the start.

**Open House**

10:30-11:30
Spiegelent
Pay What You Can

You're invited to our Open House! Bring your friends and join Festival director **Jenny Niven** and Festival guests as they take you through highlights of 2026: from the themes underpinning the programme and the stories behind our fantastic commissions to this year's hidden gems. There's so much to take in, so let Niven and our guests be your helpful guide across the next 16 days.

AI

**Gavin Francis: The Unfragile Mind**

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Between 30-50% of GP consultations now concern mental health. As a GP for over 20 years, **Gavin Francis** has had a front row seat to society's changing ideas of mental illness. *The Unfragile Mind* draws on hundreds of conversations with patients and specialist colleagues about mental suffering and how best to ease it. With **Karine Polwart** today, he argues that society's current approach is overly rigid, and would benefit from more curiosity, humility, kindness, and hope.

AI



THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Len Pennie & Sophia Smith Galer: Use It or Lose It

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

When a language disappears, what else are we at risk of losing - culturally, politically, and personally? In her powerful new book, *How to Kill a Language*, award-winning author and journalist **Sophia Smith Galer** journeys across continents and generations to ask this crucial question. Today, she's joined by iconic Scots poet and broadcaster **Len Pennie**, author of the defiant *Poyums Annaw*, to explore bilingual identity, the erasure of languages, and the efforts being made to revitalise them. Supported by the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

AI

Mark Haddon: Leaving Home

12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

As an artist and multi-million copy bestselling writer, **Mark Haddon** is known for constructing vivid worlds through his imagery and storytelling. Now, he reflects on his own world with *Leaving Home*: his richly illustrated and darkly hilarious memoir about growing up in the East Midlands. In this fascinating conversation, the Booker-longlisted author of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* talks family, art, and what it means to see the world differently.

AI

Writing for Children: A Workshop with Catherine Coe, Patrice Lawrence & Rashmi Sirdeshpande

13:00-15:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Have you always wanted to write for children but don't know where to start? Keen to understand your characters, plot, and audience better? This friendly, illuminating workshop with award-winning authors **Patrice Lawrence** and **Rashmi Sirdeshpande** will leave you encouraged, inspired, and raring to go. Plus, discover more about All Stories, a charity founded by **Catherine Coe** to support underrepresented children's book writers. See website for details on subsidised virtual places for participants from low-income backgrounds.

Have Lunch with Ben Lippett

13:00-16:00
Elliott's Studio
£100.00

Amassing a million-strong following with his warm, funny videos on how to nail 'cheffy' recipes like sausage and sage pappardelle, **Ben Lippett** makes the kitchen the coolest place to be. Today he'll draw on instant bestseller *How I Cook* to serve lunch with a side of advice on buying and preparing restaurant-quality food, no matter your skill level. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink, a multi-course lunch, and specially paired wine on the table.*

AI

Tom Newlands: Something Like Happiness

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

There's an unmistakable buzz around **Tom Newlands**. Winner of Waterstones' 2025 Scottish Book of the Year with his debut, *Only Here*, *Only Now*, his blistering second novel, *Something Like Happiness*, follows Frazer and Caitlin from puppy love to impoverished parenthood in a story shot through with humour and poignancy. Definitely a talent to watch, join Newlands to reflect on whether love is enough when the world has stacked the odds against you. Chaired by **Beth Cochrane**.

AI

Yi-Ling Liu: The Wall Dancers

13:45-14:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

If all the web users in China formed their own country, it would be Earth's third most populous... yet the wider world has little idea of what goes on behind the Great Firewall. Today, journalist **Yi-Ling Liu** discusses her new book, *The Wall Dancers* - a revealing look at China's internet; not just the censorship and surveillance that exist, but also the abundant memes, subcultures, and activism which challenge our assumptions about Chinese digital society. Chaired by **Jenny Niven**.

AI

Ask Philippa - Live

14:00-15:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Sometimes we need a helping hand to untie life's trickier knots, be it falling out with a close friend or a messy relationship. Fear not: the nation's favourite therapist **Philippa Perry** is here to play agony aunt in a live version of her beloved *Ask Philippa* column, formerly of the *Guardian* and now on Substack. From romantic dilemmas to workplace woes, there's no problem too big (or small). Submit your questions via askphilippa@edbookfest.co.uk

AI

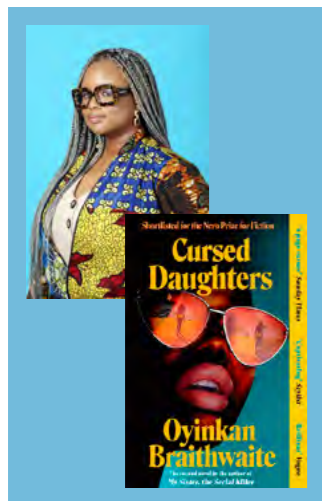


Yi-Ling Liu, 13:45-14:45

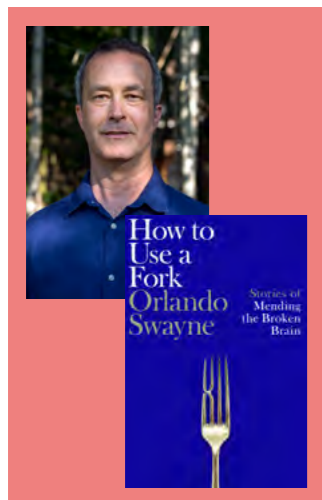
**Programme key**

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

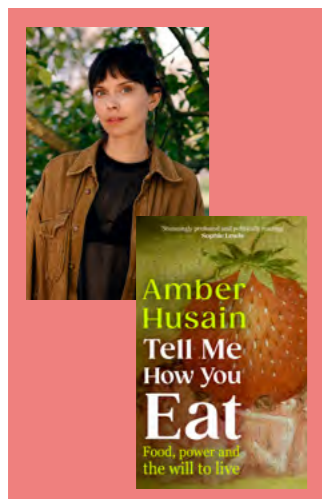
Access: AI Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | CC Live Captioned | AI AI Captioned
Formats: AI Remote Appearance | AI Food & Drink



Oyinkan Braithwaite, 15:15-16:15



Orlando Swayne, 15:30-16:30



Amber Husain, 16:45-17:45

Brodie Crellin & Susannah Dickey: Under One Roof

15:00-16:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Death brings people together, right? For the families at the heart of **Brodie Crellin's** *A Sense of Occasion* and **Susannah Dickey's** *Into the Wreck*, things aren't so simple. Reunited under one roof, the characters in these sharp, witty novels must navigate their grief, coming together while laying bare old wounds. Join Dickey and Crellin in conversation as they talk about loss, atonement, and what makes families tick. Chaired by **Caolinn Hughes**. Supported by Culture Ireland.

(AI)

Oyinkan Braithwaite: Cursed Daughters

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Oyinkan Braithwaite's Booker Prize-longlisted debut, *My Sister, The Serial Killer*, swiftly became a viral publishing sensation. Her hotly anticipated second novel, *Cursed Daughters*, is a deliciously dark tale about a family curse, reincarnation, female rivalry, and haunting secrets. Join Braithwaite to explore the strength of familial beliefs, taking a risk on love, and the powerful forces which can be unleashed if we try to swerve grief. Chaired by **Carmen Thompson**.

(AI)

Orlando Swayne: How to Use a Fork

15:30-16:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A consultant neurologist with a particular interest in neurorehabilitation, **Orlando Swayne's** work has taught him that a brain that's been 'broken' has the potential to form new connections and mend itself. Speaking profoundly to our Changing Your Mind theme, Swayne discusses *How to Use a Fork: Stories of Mending the Broken Brain*: his fascinating exploration of human recovery and survival that brings real-world rehabilitation case studies to life, asking questions about the very nature of consciousness itself.

(AI)

Loud Poets Grand Slam Final

15:30-17:30
Venue T
£10.50 [£5.00]

Back again for another year of electrifying slam poetry, this heated competition from Loud Poets gives new meaning to the phrase 'poetry in motion'. Having qualified through a series of nationwide Slams, 10 poets compete for a cash prize, glory, and the coveted title of Slam Champion. Host **Kevin Mclean** brings you along for the final showdown in an event that promises to deliver a poetic knockout.

(CC)

Catherine Opie & Del LaGrace Volcano: Radical Imagery

15:45-16:45
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

This year, EAF (Edinburgh Art Festival) welcomes the radical work of two cult American photographers: **Catherine Opie** and **Del LaGrace Volcano**. Volcano's *Love Bites Back* is an exhibition of dyke photography, while Opie's *To Be Seen* features nearly 80 portraits of those commonly missing from mainstream art history. Both pioneering photographers, they join **Kim McAleese**, director of EAF, to speak about their work and their portrayal of often invisible communities.

(AI)

Amber Husain & Rebecca May Johnson: Eating Their Words

16:45-17:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Why are domestic kitchens deemed 'women's spaces' while most Michelin-starred chefs are men? What does it mean to follow your appetite, remix recipes, reject food as 'good' or 'bad'? Today, **Amber Husain** and **Rebecca May Johnson** discuss piercing questions around food, politics, and gender in *Tell Me How You Eat* and *Small Fires*: one a deeply personal exploration of anorexia and the politics of eating, the other a manifesto for cooking as an intellectual act.

(AI)

Peter Apps & Lina Khatib: The Next World War

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

It would be easy to say that for the first time since the Cold War, the next world war feels like a matter of 'when', not 'if'. Here to give us clear, cool-headed insight into where the world might be going are **Lina Khatib**, Associate Fellow at Chatham House's Middle East and North Africa Programme, and *Reuters* defence correspondent **Peter Apps**, whose *The Next World War* gives an insider account of preparations to combat the new 'axis of upheaval'.

(CC)

Ashley Douglas, Kate Lister & Jean Menzies: Ladies of Pleasure

17:15-18:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Women's sexuality is often missing from the history books, but reading between the lines can reveal a lot about how female pleasure has been controlled, misunderstood, and set free over the centuries. Today, the Festival brings together three writers who've been thinking deeply about the role of sex in women's stories: *Flick* author Dr **Kate Lister**, *Aphrodisia* author **Jean Menzies**, and *With My Own Hand* author **Ashley Douglas**, the historian uncovering Scotland's 16th-century Sappho in *With My Own Hand*. Chaired by **Vic Murray**.

(AI)

Emma-Lee Moss: My Cantopop Nights

18:00-19:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Singer-songwriter **Emma-Lee Moss**, AKA Emmy the Great, reflects on her personal journey through music, fandom, and identity (and performs a few songs for us too). *My Cantopop Nights* explores the stars Moss idolised throughout her Hong Kong upbringing and the subsequent loss of identity when her family moved to England. Hear her trace how this hidden passion intertwined with Hong Kong's post-colonial tensions, becoming both a refuge and a symbol of her childhood self. Chaired by **Katie Goh**.

(AI)

Daisy Johnson & Doireann Ní Ghríofa: Kindred Spirits

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Mixing archive and memory, **Doireann Ní Ghríofa's** *Said the Dead* draws readers into a haunting illumination of Cork's forgotten women. In **Daisy Johnson's** hypnotic *Long Wave*, a founding discovered on an island contends with new motherhood while, years earlier, a pregnant woman, locked away by her own mother, dreams of escape. These visionary writers join us to discuss memory, whispers from the past, and the stories that survive us. Chaired by **Niamh Ní Mhaioileoin**. Supported by Culture Ireland.

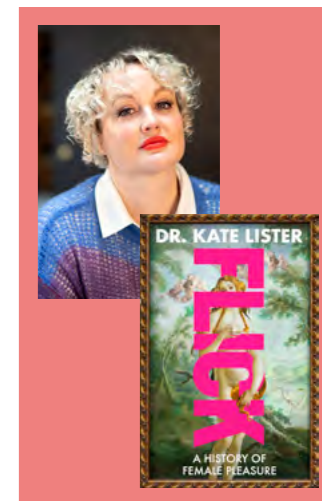
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Opening Gala: Changing Your Mind

19:00-20:15
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Celebrate the opening of this year's Festival in this captivating evening of new, specially commissioned writing, hosted by Festival director, **Jenny Niven**. We'll bring you a kaleidoscope of perspectives and provocations from a diverse line-up of stellar writers, including **Y M Abdel-Magied**, **Graeme Armstrong**, **Anne Enright**, **Gavin Francis**, **Naomi Ishiguro**, and **Jackie Kay** as they each read powerful new pieces of writing responding to our 2026 theme of Changing Your Mind, with music from **Aidan O'Rourke**. Check website for the full line-up.

(AI)



Kate Lister, 17:15-18:15



Emma-Lee Moss, 18:00-19:00

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed (BSL) British Sign Language (CC) Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (C) Remote Appearance (F&D) Food & Drink





Gurdeep Loyal, 13:00-16:00

Chopping and Changing: A Poetry Workshop with Peter Mackay

10:30-11:30
Venue A
£25.00 [£23.00/£20.00/£5.00]

National Makar **Peter Mackay** knows that words come to us slightly battered and dented. What do we do with these imperfect tools? How do we put them together in meaningful, powerful ways? How do we harness their 'usedness' to change what our minds might say? In this poetry workshop, explore different means of changing our (and others') minds, re-envisioning words and images, deciding what's for the chop, and what can be repurposed to create new, imaginary worlds.



Have Lunch with Gurdeep Loyal

13:00-16:00
Elliott's Studio
£100.00

Have you tried spicy harissa lasagne? Or added sesame oil to a sundae? In *Flavour Heroes*, **Gurdeep Loyal** combines his expertise as a food and travel writer to dissolve the imaginary borders around culinary cultures. Join him at the table as he prepares a flavour-rich, globe-trotting meal that will get your synapses (and tastebuds) firing on all cylinders. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink, a generous multi-course lunch, and paired wine on the table.*



Charlotte McConaghy: Wild Dark Shore

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What does it mean to raise children in an ecological crisis? *New York Times* bestselling author **Charlotte McConaghy** felt the weight of this question while pregnant - and that's how *Wild Dark Shore* came into the world. An eco-thriller set on a storm-lashed island, the novel (longlisted for 2026's Women's Prize for Fiction) vibrates with eerie beauty. Today the author discusses courage and how far we might go for the people, and wildernesses, we love. Chaired by **David Farrier**.



Philippa Perry: Shrink Solves Murder

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

When a man's body washes up near Beachy Head, the police call it suicide - but his therapist is not convinced. *Shrink Solves Murder* is a cosy crime caper so deft in its unpicking of the human condition that you'll wonder why **Philippa Perry** didn't pour her expertise into novel-writing sooner. Don't miss the beloved psychotherapist, agony aunt, and bestselling author of *The Book You Wish Your Parents Had Read*, talking with **Sam Baker**.



Rachel Aviv & Catherine Carr: It's All Relative

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two skilled storytellers meet to mine the rich vein of family dynamics. In *You Won't Get Free of It*, *The New Yorker* journalist **Rachel Aviv** collects real stories of mothers and daughters to intimate and revelatory effect, while documentarian **Catherine Carr's** *Who's the Favourite?* puts the messy reality of adult siblinghood under the microscope. Leave confronted, comforted, and filled with food for thought about your most formative relationships and your place in the family.



Jill Dawson: Pixie

12:15-13:15
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Thousands consult Tarot cards about the paths they should be taking, but few know the name of Pamela 'Pixie' Colman Smith, illustrator of the world's most iconic Tarot deck. In fictionalised biography *Pixie*, her life as a plucky fin-de-siècle artist drawn to the occult is conjured up by Orange Prize-shortlisted author **Jill Dawson**. A qualified Jungian Tarot reader herself, if you bring your dilemmas today, Dawson might just show you the way. Chaired by **Kirsty Logan**.



Patrick Gale & Lisa Ridzén: Before It's Too Late

10:15-11:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Family frailty and how ageing fathers ache for connection as the clock ticks down: these are the threads linking **Patrick Gale's** *Love Lane* (the follow-up to his Costa Novel Prize-shortlisted *A Place Called Winter*) and **Lisa Ridzén's** heartrending debut, *When the Cranes Fly South*. Is it ever too late for reconciliation? Brace your nerve endings for a powerful conversation between the authors as they reflect on regret, forgiveness, and their profoundly life-affirming novels. Chaired by **Nicole Abadee**.



THE VALVONA & CROLLA EVENT

Eating and Waiting to Eat: Podcast Live - with Ben Lippett

10:30-11:30
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two Americans walk into a bakery and leave with a podcast. Not the start of a joke, but the origin story of **Kevin Rivers** and **Carlos Miranda's** beloved, Edinburgh-based *Eating and Waiting to Eat* podcast. In this live episode, the pair chat about the hows and whys behind everything we do in the kitchen with professional-chef-turned-home-cook **Ben Lippett**, whose stunning debut, *How I Cook*, is celebrated by the likes of Nigella Lawson and Yotam Ottolenghi.



Naomi Ishiguro & Katalina Watt: High-Octane Folklore

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

If fast-paced fantasy plots are your thing, secure your seat for **Naomi Ishiguro** and **Katalina Watt**. In *The Rainshadow Orphans*, Ishiguro draws on Japanese folklore and Studio Ghibli to tell a story of righteous revenge, while Watt's *Saltswept* takes you on a perilous quest through Southeast Asian mythology in search of hidden treasure. Join them for a fascinating chat about magical histories and why the world's oldest stories still have so much to teach us. Chaired by **Kirsty Logan**.



Cory Doctorow: Enshittification

15:15-16:15
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Tech critic, sci-fi author, and seer of digital dystopia, **Cory Doctorow's** *Enshittification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What to Do About It* is a blistering take-down of formerly utopian tech companies' constant chase for bigger profits. In this urgent discussion with **Heather Parry**, Doctorow sets out the case for how to cure ourselves from the lure of big tech, resist the monetisation of every aspect of our lives, demand regulation, and reclaim our privacy online.



Rachel Aviv: Strangers to Ourselves

15:30-16:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

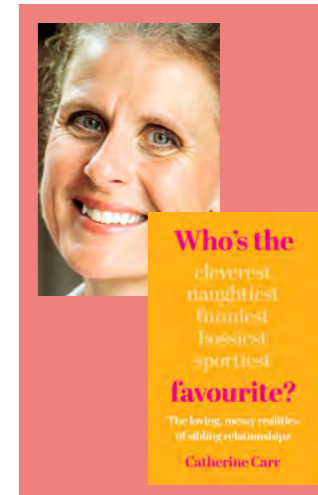
Join long-time *The New Yorker* journalist **Rachel Aviv**, renowned for her in-depth reporting on topics ranging from police shootings in Albuquerque to the complex case of neonatal nurse Lucy Letby. *Strangers to Ourselves*, centred around five people's psychiatric testimonies and Aviv's own childhood, explores how society and storytelling shape our experience of mental illness. A remarkable book, it treats the human mind with the subtlety, complexity, and care it deserves.



Word Salad

15:45-16:45
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Hungry for some hearty food chat? **Peter Simpson**, editor of *The Skinny's* food magazine *GNAW*, hosts a spirited round table with *Times* restaurant critic **Chitra Ramaswamy**, founder of *Fare* magazine **Ben Mervis**, and *Vittles* and author of *Small Fires*. From reviews to long-form explorations of food culture, memoirs to memes and mailouts, they'll discuss the ever-expanding ways that writers share their thoughts on what we eat, and why.



Catherine Carr, 11:45-12:45



Rachel Aviv, 15:30-16:30

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

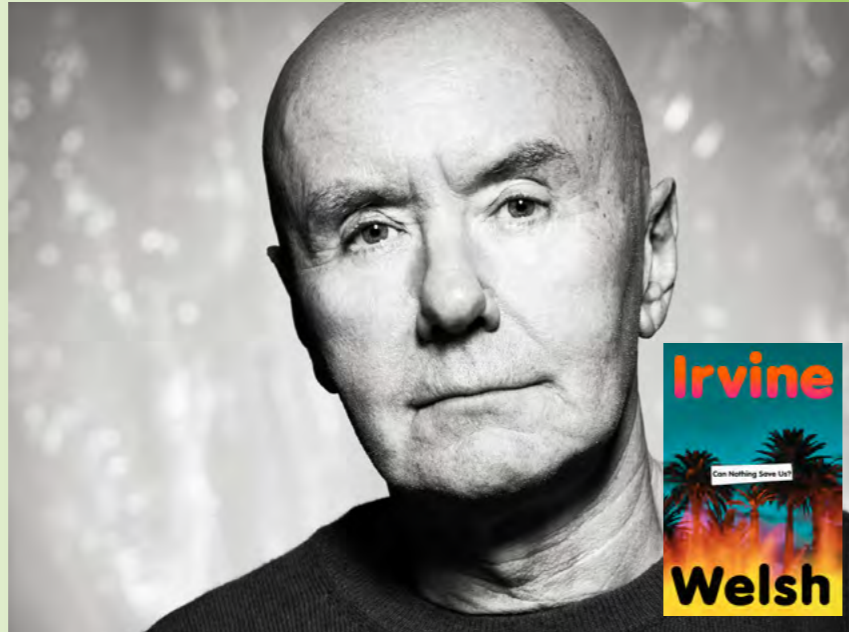
Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [O] Remote Appearance [FD] Food & Drink

Irvine Welsh:
Can Nothing Save Us?

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Scotland's grittiest writer returns to launch *Can Nothing Save Us?* - a ferocious saga of moral freefall, set in a blisteringly hot Las Vegas. **Irvine Welsh** turns his unflinching gaze on a nation in crisis with this novel following three generations of a wealthy, divided family spiralling toward paranoia, drug-fuelled excess, and explosive reckoning. The bard of bad behaviour joins us - 30 years on from the *Trainspotting* movie - for an unfiltered chat about power, entitlement, and moral decay. Chaired by **Kevin Williamson**.

AI



Essie Fox & Jess Kidd:
Modern Gothic

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Catherine Earnshaw rises from the grave to set the record straight. An orphan with electricity in her fingertips is sent to a house where inventors build living machines. **Essie Fox's** *Catherine* reimagines Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* while **Jess Kidd's** *Little Spark* blends gothic with steampunk to spellbinding effect. Together, the 'Queen of Victoriana' and the bestselling author of *Things in Jars* discuss atmosphere, secrets, and why the gothic still grips us with **Beth Cochrane**.

AI

Tarot for Fiction Writers:
A Workshop with Jill Dawson

17:00-18:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£24.00/£8.00]

While writing her novel *Fred and Edie*, **Jill Dawson** was stuck and decided, as a writing exercise, to give the book's protagonist a tarot reading. 26 years later, and now a qualified Jungian Tarot reader, Dawson has used tarot to develop her writing in many ways since. Join her for this interactive workshop exploring using the tarot to overcome creative blocks, unlock voice and form, solve narrative puzzles, and expand your writing practice.

Big Tech (and What to Do About It): A Changing Ideas Workshop

17:00-19:00
The Lounge
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Do you deeply feel the urgency of the challenges that face us, but don't know how to channel that into meaningful action? Designed as a follow-on for attendees of 'Beeban Kidron & Sarah Wynn-Williams: Safety in an Online World?', this workshop - co-created with Changing Ideas and facilitated by Civic Digits' artistic director **Clare Duffy** - aims to help bridge that gap. Join our action-focussed discussion on online safety (or online harms?) and leave feeling empowered to take practical next steps.



When Rights Collide

17:15-18:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How can we use the law as a framework to protect the rights of all? Today's event, featuring a panel of legal experts, explores the Supreme Court's recent ruling on the legal definition of a woman and what it means in practice. Can previous cases where rights have appeared to be in competition help illuminate a pathway forward? We invite audience members for a good faith discussion on this contested and challenging topic, with the aim of achieving better understanding and more empathy. With Baroness **Brenda Hale**, **Karon Monaghan** KC, and **Keio Yoshida**.

CC



India Alba & William Dalrymple:
The Golden Road

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£25.00 [£23.00/£15.00/£5.00]

Historian **William Dalrymple's** *The Golden Road* draws on decades of research about India's pivotal role in shaping the ancient world. Inspired by his award-winning book and fresh from Celtic Connections, this brilliant event blends readings on the history between India and Scotland with performances from musical collective **India Alba**, who fuse the raga gats of Indian classical music with the melodies of the Scottish Highlands. *Part of Scotland to the World. Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown and The Consulate General of India, Edinburgh.*

AI

Our Many-Voiced Country

18:00-19:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Now in his second year as Makar, **Peter Mackay** brings together contemporary poets working in Scotland who showcase the range of languages being spoken and written across the country. From English, Catalan, Orcadian, Scots, and Gaelic, to Tamil, Arabic, Persian, and Kutchi (and beyond!), this special event will weave together a tapestry of multi-language poetry, featuring performances from: **Helena Fornells Nadal**, **Harry Josephine Giles**, **Marjorie Lotfi**, **Robbie Macleòid**, **Q Manivannan**, and **Alycia Pirmohamed**.

AI

qntm: There Is No Antimemetics Division

18:15-19:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

An antimeme is an idea you can't hold onto - a dream, a dirty secret, a complex equation. Now imagine one that's hunting you. Software engineer turned cult literary sensation **qntm** joins us with *There Is No Antimemetics Division*: a mind-bending debut blending cosmic horror with jaw-dropping ideas that asks what happens when reality itself becomes unreliable. One of the *Guardian's* best sci-fi books of 2025, this is unlike anything you've read.

AI

Annie Lord, Elle McNicoll & Bobby Palmer: Love, or Something Like It

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Packed with stories that take on love in unconventional ways, contemporary romance has got hot again. Just ask *Vogue* columnist **Annie Lord** (*The Project*), YA author turned debut adult novelist **Elle McNicoll** (*Unapologetic Love Story*), and bestselling author and journalist **Bobby Palmer** (*Main Characters*) - all of whose novels explore modern relationships, intimacy, and profound connections. **Nyla Ahmad** chairs this uplifting chat about 21st-century love stories, and why we still believe.

AI

Abir Mukherjee: The Pinnacle

19:00-20:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Welcome to the Pinnacle, Mumbai's grandest skyscraper, where privilege lives high above desperation, and every floor has its secrets. In his most propulsive thriller yet, **Abir Mukherjee's** *The Pinnacle* follows a washed-up Bollywood actor accused of killing his Bollywood-superstar wife. Did he do it? The bestselling author of *Hunted* and the *Wyndham & Banerjee* series joins us to talk glamour, celebrity, satire, and the view from the very top.

AI

Rob Drummond, Dave Hook & Orla O'Loughlin: Hip-Hop Wallace

20:30-22:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

An exhilarating collision of Scottish rap and historical mythmaking, *Wallace: A Musical* is a playful, humour-filled retelling of the story of William Wallace that packs a punch. Join playwright **Rob Drummond**, director **Orla O'Loughlin**, and rapper **Dave Hook** as they talk about what it takes to reinvent a national legend. And in a Festival first, audiences will be treated to a delicious live sample of the show itself, before it heads on tour this autumn.

AI

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

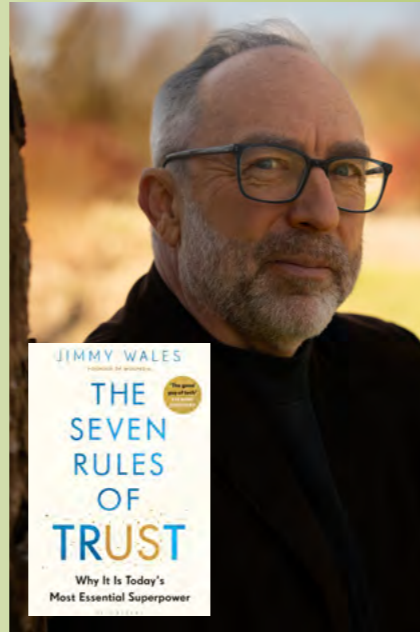
Access: Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | CC Live Captioned | AI AI Captioned
Formats: Remote Appearance | Food & Drink

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

The Front List:
Cory Doctorow & Jimmy Wales13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Remember when the internet was exciting and full of possibilities? As online content becomes darker, more divisive, and sensationalist over truthful, join **Jimmy Wales**, founder of Wikipedia and author of *The Seven Rules of Trust*, and journalist and sci-fi author **Cory Doctorow**, writer of *Enshittification: Why Everything Suddenly Got Worse and What To Do About It*, for a frank, fascinating discussion with **Gabriel Gatehouse** on the current state of our online lives. Can the internet ever be good again? Supported by *Edinburgh Futures Institute*.

CC

**Andrea Wulf: The Traveller**10:30-11:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Step into the shoes of the most consequential man you've maybe never heard of. Award-winning historian **Andrea Wulf** talks to **Fiammetta Rocco** about *The Traveller: The Revolutionary Life of George Forster and his Search for Humanity*, recounting the young naturalist who journeyed to the far reaches of the known world on Captain Cook's second voyage. A visionary proto-activist, his travels inspired radical ideas about humanity, equality, and freedom at odds with the worldviews of his time.

AI

Frank Cottrell-Boyce:
A British Childhood11:00-12:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What does it mean to be young in Britain today? As Waterstones Children's Laureate, **Frank Cottrell-Boyce** has met children from many - often precarious - backgrounds, and *A British Childhood* is his piercing examination of how community, and connection, are fraying. This urgent conversation sees the inaugural Children's Booker Prize chair sharing illuminating, real stories from Britain's homes, schools, and streets - and a message of hope too. Chaired by **Noëlle Cobden**.

BSL AI

Shared Reading with
Open Book11:00-12:00
Venue A
Free Ticketed

Join Open Book Lead Readers for an informal and relaxed shared reading session. Each session will explore a chapter from a debut book from this year's Festival Programme. No experience necessary, all reading materials will be provided on the day.

Aonghus MacKechnie:
City of Romanticism11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A castellated, stone city draped over a dramatic landscape - travellers have been drawn to the romantic beauty of Edinburgh's architecture for centuries. In his new book, *Edinburgh: City of Romanticism*, historian **Aonghus MacKechnie** reveals how our capital developed as a hub for writers, poets, artists, and musicians, through the lens of its emblematic architecture that still attracts over four million tourists every year. A conversation for anyone in love with art, architecture, and Edinburgh itself.

AI

How Can We Build
a Feminist Scotland?12:15-13:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *Building a Feminist Nation*, social justice campaigner **Talat Yaqoob**, modern historian **Helen O'Shea**, and Law professor Kim Barker commissioned bold new writing on the intersection of feminism, human rights, advocacy, and policy to prompt vital discussions about Scotland. **Esa Aldegheri** talks with them and contributors **Muminah Koleoso** (writing on young women and misogyny) and **Catherine Murphy** (exploring poverty and the economy), considering the political shifts required to deliver a more equitable, feminist Scotland.

AI

Brenda Hale:
With the Law on Our Side12:45-13:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Baroness **Brenda Hale** of Richmond was the first woman to serve as President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. With decades of experience as a judge and an intimate knowledge of British law, *With the Law on Our Side* - longlisted for 2026's Women's Prize for Non-Fiction - uses true stories to explore the complexities of real court decisions. Join Lady Hale to learn how the law works, why we should care about it, and how we can use it to protect all our rights.

BSL CC



THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

The Front List:
Val McDermid & Jo Sharp15:00-16:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Did you know that in the 17th century, Scotland tried to establish a colonial project in Panama? Hear acclaimed crime novelist **Val McDermid** and Geographer Royal for Scotland **Jo Sharp** chat with **Allan Little** about their fictional retelling of the surprising Darien scheme story from our country's history. *This Door of the Seas* reveals Scotland's colonial ambitions and how they ultimately failed, bankrupting the nation and setting Scotland on a path towards political union with England. Supported by the *Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities*.

AI

Tariq Ashkanani &
Kirsty Lockwood:
Breaking the Silence13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Tariq Ashkanani, winner of the McIlvanney Prize 2025, presents his latest thriller, *The Hollow Boys*, following a young boy's return 10 months after disappearing. Meanwhile, Scottish political journalist **Kirsty Lockwood** introduces her debut, *We Know What You Did*, in which a seemingly sweet, lonely girl refuses to speak following a livestreamed murder. Today, both crime novelists join **Bryan Burnett** to talk murder, mystery, and menace.

AI

Edward Fishman:
How Economic Warfare
is Changing the World14:00-15:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The global oil market follows critical arteries, and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz is a demonstration of the fragility of the system; a block at any one point has far-reaching effects, and global influence can be wielded through disruption. Leading authority on economic statecraft and sanctions, **Edward Fishman** joins us today to discuss *Chokepoints*, offering a timely illumination of modern economic warfare in the age of globalisation.

CC

Janina Ramirez: Legenda15:00-16:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Cultural historian **Janina Ramirez** is turning history on its head again. Following the success of *Femina* - her instant bestseller exploring the Middle Ages through the women written out of it - her latest book, *Legenda*, looks at the flesh-and-blood women behind Europe's national myths - warning against turning figures like Joan of Arc and Lady Godiva into 'poster girls and propaganda tools' for crafting national identities. Join Ramirez as she uncovers the true stories behind the tall tales. Chaired by **Jean Menzies**.

AI

Close Read: Wuthering
Heights by Emily Brontë14:00-15:00
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In our Close Read series, a brilliant author guides you through a deep-diving discussion of a classic text or genre that's inspired them. Think of it as an event blending friendly book club vibes with insightful study notes. Today, *Sunday Times* bestseller **Essie Fox** (author of *Catherine: A Retelling of Wuthering Heights*) shares her deep understanding of Emily Brontë's seminal gothic novel. With Fox's insight, uncover the many layers of love, tumult, and wild landscapes.



Janina Ramirez, 15:00-16:00

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
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Access: [L] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [RA] Remote Appearance [FD] Food & Drink



Tari Lang, 15:45-16:45



Colin Grant, 17:00-18:00

Simon Armitage, Hanan Issa & Peter Mackay: Poetry of the People

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

'Poetry is not only dream and vision,' Audre Lorde wrote, 'it's the skeleton architecture of our lives.' Join three brilliant national poets - **Simon Armitage** (UK Poet Laureate), **Hanan Issa** (Poet Laureate for Wales), and **Peter Mackay** (Makar of Scotland) - as they reflect on the idea of a national poetic identity, art's place in responding to the world, and the power of poetry for its own sake (expect a few poems from each of them too!).

(AI)

Tari Lang: My Neighbour, The Dictator

15:45-16:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

At the age of 14, **Tari Lang's** life took a turbulent turn when both of her parents were imprisoned without trial during Indonesia's 1965 coup. In *My Neighbour, The Dictator*, Lang provides a touching portrait of navigating crushes and curfews as a teenager, against the backdrop of dictatorship and tyranny. She joins us to discuss coming of age in the midst of a volatile environment, and how she found herself caught between wide-eyed adolescence and revolution.

(AI)

Colin Grant: What We Leave We Carry

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Colin Grant is renowned for his compelling work documenting the experiences of migrant communities, from the Windrush generation to his own Caribbean family. *What We Leave We Carry: Voices of Migration to Britain* saw him travelling the UK, taking in profound stories of love, loss, and arrival. Join Grant alongside contributors, including Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council, **Sabir Zazai**, and poet **Clementine E Burnley**, as they unpack the complexities of belonging and the emotional weight of what's left behind. Chaired by **Esa Aldegheri**.

(AI)

Simukai Chigudu, Gabriel Gatehouse & Sarah Wynn-Williams: Are You Sure?

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In the era of strong men and keyboard warriors, changing your mind can seem like the ultimate weakness. But how does that leave room for uncertainty or change? Couldn't we all stand to be a bit more flexible in our thinking? Join political scientist **Simukai Chigudu**, who challenges the stories we inherit, and journalist **Gabriel Gatehouse**, fresh from the frontlines of conspiracy culture. Also featuring **Sarah Wynn-Williams**. See online for full details.

(CC)

George E Osborn: Video Games, Politics, and the Battle for Global Influence

17:30-18:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Video games are played by - and connect - billions of people worldwide, meaning that, beyond entertainment value, they hold incredible potential for influence. In *Power Play*, leading game industry expert **George E Osborn** reveals how authoritarians, extremists, and populists have taken full advantage of this, co-opting the industry to develop games that promote their worldviews. Today, he delves into gaming and geopolitics, toxic communities, and how one of our favourite hobbies is being weaponised for political purposes.

(CC)

Alex Kadis: Big Nobody

17:30-18:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Described by Pandora Sykes as 'riotously funny and immensely touching', **Alex Kadis'** novel, *Big Nobody*, spins us into 70s East London, where Connie dreams of stardom... even if she has to kill her own father to get it. Drawing from her previous life as a music journalist (including a stint as features editor at *Smash Hits* in its legendary heyday), join Kadis to celebrate the strength of teenage dreams, the madness of first love, and what it takes to be somebody. Chaired by **Bobby Palmer**.

(AI)

THE SCOTSMAN EVENT A Verse of Poets

18:30-19:45
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Join your host, **Beth Cochrane**, for a glittering line-up of poets from across Scotland. From Scots Scribes to Gaelic singers, Edinburgh Makars to Edwin Morgan Poetry Award-winners, tonight's roster use their poetry - sometimes tender, sometimes uplifting, sometimes downright raucous - to explore everything from the journey of diaspora to the naming of unspeakable desires. Featuring: **Clementine E Burnley**, **Ceithidh Chaimbeul**, **Taylor Dyson**, **Hannah Lavery**, **Michael Mullen**, and **Andrés N Ordorica**. You won't want to miss this.

(AI)

Saara El-Arifi & Nikita Gill: Of Queens and Goddesses

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We welcome back two outstanding talents, who've both chosen powerful, complex women to inspire their latest works. Poet **Nikita Gill**, whose novel *Hekate* breathes new life into the Greek goddess of witchcraft through heart-thudding verse, joins **Saara El-Arifi**, the *Faebound* author turning her hand to historical fiction with *Cleopatra* - a reimagining of the iconic queen's life through a Black woman's lens. Strap in for an unapologetically feminist meeting of minds. Chaired by **Jean Menzies**.

(D) (AI)

Yáng Shuāng-zǐ & Lin King: Taiwan Travelogue

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Over scenic train rides and braised pork rice, a Japanese novelist in 1930s Taiwan falls for the interpreter hired to guide her. **Yáng Shuāng-zǐ's** International Booker Prize-shortlisted *Taiwan Travelogue*, translated by **Lin King**, disguises itself as a rediscovered text within a text, weaving together queer desire, postcolonial critique, hilarious dialogue, and sumptuous food writing. Join both author and translator exploring appetite and longing, translation and history, and the politics of our most intimate encounters.

(AI)

Sara & Cariad's Weirdos Book Club - Live

20:30-22:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Calling all weirdos and book-loving pals! Comedians, authors, and friends, **Sara Pascoe** and **Cariad Lloyd**, invite you to their *Weirdos Book Club*, lovingly described as 'a space for the lonely outsider to feel accepted and appreciated'. Join them in the Spiegelent tonight as they present a very special live edition of the podcast, which has previously included guests like Naomi Klein, Graham Norton, and Nish Kumar. Check online to find out who they're chatting to!

(AI)

Susan Orlean: Joyride

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

For four decades, legendary *The New Yorker* journalist **Susan Orlean** has illuminated other people's lives with wit and forensic curiosity. In *Joyride*, she revisits a career that reshaped narrative nonfiction - from cults and cab drivers to orchids and origami - while revealing the private heartbreaks and leaps of faith behind the bylines. Today Orlean, also the author of *The Orchid Thief* (adapted by Charlie Kaufman to become the 2002 film *Adaptation*) reflects on turning her virtuoso reporter's gaze inward. Chaired by **Hannah McGill**.

(D) (AI)



Saara El-Arifi, 18:45-19:45



Nikita Gill, 18:45-19:45



Susan Orlean, 20:30-21:30

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (O) Remote Appearance | (F) Food & Drink



Marc Mierowsky:
A Spy Amongst Us

10:30-11:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

It's 1706, and Edinburgh's streets are a powder keg as the Scots protest the planned union with England. But as **Marc Mierowsky's** *A Spy Amongst Us* thrillingly recounts, the English government had a very unorthodox secret service working to sabotage Scotland's independence. It was led by a bankrupt and thrice-pilloried author - none other than Daniel Defoe. Join Mierowsky today to uncover espionage and propaganda from London to the Highlands, and the unknown story of a distinctly modern political campaign.

AI

Sara Sheridan:
The Jewel Keepers

11:00-12:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A dangerous, long-guarded secret, a high-stakes treasure hunt through history, and a puzzle that stretches back generations - **Sara Sheridan** returns to the Festival with her immersive, Edinburgh-set novel, *The Jewel Keepers*. Join Sheridan, author of *The Fair Botanists* (Waterstones Scottish Book of the Year 2022), as she chats about the real historical events amid the dramatic fiction, plus what she discovered during her exclusive behind-the-scenes access to Edinburgh Castle while researching the novel. Chaired by **Ashley Douglas**.

AI

Writing Things: A Poetry
Workshop with Vona Groarke

11:00-13:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

What do the things we keep with us, show off, and carry from place to place, say about us? And how can that be harnessed as a shortcut, a signpost, a start? Join Ireland Professor of Poetry **Vona Groarke** (*Infinity Pool*) for a two-hour poetry writing workshop - an exploration and probing of objects for a possible haul of meaning, stories, or significance. There will be writing, plus thinking and talking about writing. And, of course, there'll be poems too.

Tiffany Jenkins:
Strangers and Intimates

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Perceptions of privacy and our right to it have changed across centuries and cultures, but in the age of surveillance and social media, populations are giving it away at an unprecedented rate. Discussing *Strangers and Intimates*, which the *New Scientist* called 'the sort of history book which makes you look at all history anew', cultural historian **Tiffany Jenkins** celebrates the past, present, and politics of the idea of private life, and examines what we may be losing.

CC

Jan Carson:
Few and Far Between

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Surreal times call for surreal stories. **Jan Carson's** *Few and Far Between* imagines an alternative history in which a community marooned on a haunted archipelago - a supposed utopia built to escape the Troubles - is now sinking under its own secrets. One of Northern Ireland's most imaginative writers and author of *The Fire Starters* and *The Raptures*, Carson joins us to unpack identity, community, redemption, and telling stories in order to survive history. Chaired by **Heather Parry**. Supported by Culture Ireland.

AI

Steve Crossan &
Alan Finkel: Inside the Machine

12:15-13:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]



An unmissable conversation with two fascinating figures at the forefront of global scientific innovation: **Alan Finkel**, former Chief Scientist of Australia and creator of ProudlyHuman AI-free certification, and **Steve Crossan**, founding member of the pioneering DeepMind project. From seemingly impossible breakthroughs to the real-world impacts of rapid change, hear their views on the next stages of AI development, and what it means for big tech, governments, and ordinary citizens alike. Chaired by Dr **Shannon Vallor**.

AI

Alistair Moffat:
The North Sea

12:45-13:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Alistair Moffat has always combined lyrical prose with fascinating storytelling, leading to over 30 acclaimed books delving into the wonders of Scottish history and beyond. *The North Sea: Along the Edge of Britain* sees the renowned historian travelling from Kent to Fair Isle to better understand our relationship with the sea. In this captivating event, Moffat shares tales of his seaside pilgrimage: from well-worn seaside towns to windswept island monasteries, and above the waves to below.

AI

Olga Wojtas:
Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Parcel of Rogues

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

It's 1788, Burns-mania is sweeping Edinburgh, and a time-travelling librarian has enlisted the teenage Walter Scott to help solve a mysterious murder - it could only be an **Olga Wojtas** novel. The maven of cosy crime is back with *Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Parcel of Rogues*, the sixth in her series about unlikely sleuth, Shona McMonagle. Join for an hour of escapism as Wojtas takes us on a magical mystery tour of the Scottish Enlightenment.

AI

**The Front List: Kae Tempest**

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Kae Tempest is a phenomenon of words as a multi-award-winning poet, playwright, songwriter - and novelist. Renowned for his electric live performances, Tempest joins **Michael Pedersen** to celebrate his new heart-breaking, soul-building, decade-in-the-making novel, *Having Spent Life Seeking*. Expect powerful reflections on family and forgiveness, redemption and atonement, the courage it takes to be seen, and the transformative power of love. Mixing performance and conversation, this is bound to be spellbinding and unique event from a generational talent.

AI

Sophie Pinkham:
The Oak and the Larch

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From the Mongol invasion to the days of the Tsars, the Soviet Union to Putin's war in Ukraine, Russia is a nation with a difficult and bloody history. It's also a country containing nearly a fifth of the world's forested land. Today historian and Comparative Literature professor **Sophie Pinkham** discusses *The Oak and the Larch*, telling the story of the centuries-long entanglement between Russian history, identity, and landscape - and what this means for all of us.

AI

Simukai Chigudu:
Chasing Freedom

14:00-15:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Oxford University's Associate Professor of African Politics, **Simukai Chigudu** is part of the 'Born Free' generation, raised as colonial rule ended in Zimbabwe. In *Chasing Freedom*, he details a childhood steeped in Britishness, from Shakespeare to cricket, before being forced to leave the country as it descended into political violence and economic collapse. Join Chigudu discussing his remarkable story with **Dina Nayeri**: that of a boy shaped through his parents' buried trauma and the currents of late-20th-century history.

CC

Sanna Marin &
Nicola Sturgeon:
How to Lead a Country

15:00-16:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What does it take to lead a country with both courage and compassion? How do you balance hope with pragmatism; a personal life with a public one? In their memoirs *Frankly* and *Hope in Action*, former Scottish First Minister **Nicola Sturgeon** and former Prime Minister of Finland **Sanna Marin** reflect on political careers with refreshing honesty. Don't miss their extraordinary conversation with **Talat Yaqoob** about the challenges, rewards, and history-making decisions that defined their leadership.

AI

Bella Mackie: Claws Out

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How to Kill Your Family author **Bella Mackie** is renowned for crime romps that skewer exactly the kind of people you (secretly) love to see skewered. Today she launches *Claws Out!* - her hotly anticipated new novel. When Diana Leyland sets her sights on a new romantic target, she doesn't bet on his entitled daughter being determined to drag Diana's murky past into the light. Because three dead husbands isn't just unlucky - surely, it must be murder?

AI



Bella Mackie, 15:15-16:15

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: [L] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [O] Remote Appearance [FD] Food & Drink





Louise Welsh, 17:00-18:00



Dean Atta, 17:00-18:00

Elizabeth Finkel & Caitjan Gainty: Beyond Reasonable Doubt

15:45-16:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Journalism to the law, academia to government - the institutions that underpin society rely on an evidence-based, expert-informed approach. Yet in this post-truth age, uninformed opinion can carry the same weight as rigorous research. Today, **Devi Sridhar** chairs a robust discussion on doubt and certainty with award-winning science journalist **Elizabeth Finkel** - who, in *Prove It*, unpacks the key elements of, and necessity for, scientific thinking - and medicine historian **Caitjan Gainty** - whose *Healthy Scepticism* illustrates where legitimate doubt has helped healthcare advance.

(AI)

Vona Groarke & Tom Pow: The Poet's Attention

15:45-16:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Scotland and Ireland have always punched above their weight in the world of poetry. Today we welcome two of their most beloved poets: **Vona Groarke** and **Tom Pow**. Slippages and transformations abound in *Infinity Pool*, Ireland Professor of Poetry Groarke's exhilarating new collection. In *The Vulnerability of Precious Things*, Pow examines the life and philosophies of Simone Weil, crafting a work of imaginative empathy. Don't miss the pair discussing and reading from their new work today. Chaired by **Marjorie Lotfi**.

(AI)

Louise Welsh: The Cut Up

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We've waited patiently for four years and the time's finally come - but can our favourite queer auctioneer-turned-accidental-detective stay out of trouble? In *The Cut Up*, **Louise Welsh** - Scottish literary legend and author of cult classic *The Cutting Room* - takes us back into the shady world of Rilke's Glasgow. Always fabulously entertaining, with a razor-sharp wit, Welsh chats with us today about her third foray into this gritty series. Chaired by **Kirsty Logan**.

(AI)

Writing Magical Realism: A Workshop with Jan Carson

17:00-19:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Jan Carson 'captures the absurdity and beauty of life' like no other according to Sara Baume - so, who better to lead this masterclass on magical realism, where the fantastical meets the mundane, than the luminous author of *Few and Far Between*. Join Carson to dive into the tradition of magical realism, then play with exercises that'll get you thinking about how you can weave the surreal into your own stories of the everyday. Suitable for all - just bring your notebook, pen, and imagination. Supported by *Culture Ireland*.

Dean Atta: Big Man

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Is there anything **Dean Atta** can't do? As well as being a beloved YA and children's author, 'one of poetry's greatest modern voices' according to *Gay Times*, and a recent BAFTA winner for his short animation *Two Black Boys in Paradise*, the Festival favourite now presents his highly anticipated adult literary debut, *Big Man*. Join Atta today as he discusses his tender yet playful story and its themes of queer aging, race, and living authentically.

(BSL) (AI)

Donal Ryan: Where are the Kings

17:30-18:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Donal Ryan is fast becoming an Irish national treasure. Full of heart, his writing tackles the moments that make up a life with compassion and humour. In *Where are the Kings*, a young man navigates family secrets, loss, and the changes that growing up brings. Hear the prize-winning author of works including *Heart*, *Be at Peace*, and *From a Low and Quiet Sea* chat about coming of age, living with grief, and big messy families. Supported by *Culture Ireland*.

(AI)

M John Harrison: The End of Everything

17:30-18:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Master of science fiction **M John Harrison** returns with his first novel since 2020's Goldsmiths Prize-winner, *The Sunken Land Begins to Rise Again*. In *The End of Everything*, Phillip Tennent, who collects washed up artefacts from the Channel, comes across a mysterious shapeshifting object that threatens to destabilise everything he thinks he knows. Today, Harrison joins us to discuss the post-apocalyptic, satirical adventure and how it chronicles the limits of human understanding.

(AI)

Rock the Boat: Poetry Open Mic

18:00-19:30
Spiegel tent
Pay What You Can

Whether you're ready to hit the mic or just keen to soak up the vibes, this event has you covered. Our friends at Push the Boat Out - Edinburgh's genre-bending international poetry festival - host a special edition of their vibrant monthly open mic to celebrate dynamic contemporary poetry and performance. So, sit back and enjoy - or take to the stage and showcase your own work. Visit our website to find out how you can get involved.

(AI)

Edwin Morgan Trust: Poetry, Performance, and Prizes

18:45-20:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

This lively showcase, hosted by **Ryan Van Winkle**, features some of the best of Scotland's contemporary poetry scene. Discover the talented young poets shortlisted for 2026's Edwin Morgan Poetry Award as they perform their work right before the big reveal of this year's prize-winner. Plus - celebrate the launch of the new, edited collection of Edwin Morgan's groundbreaking multimedia poetry, *A Home in Space*, with editors **Greg Thomas** and **Julie Johnstone**. Check website for full line-up. *Delivered in partnership with the Edwin Morgan Trust*.

(AI)

Jimmy Wales: The Seven Rules of Trust

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

As trust in billionaire-owned social media platforms continues to plummet, it's astonishing to see how crowd-sourced knowledge bank, Wikipedia - once a byword for dubious accuracy - has built up its readers' faith to become one of the internet's most clear-sighted information sources. Maintaining confidence in a landscape of untruths is important to Wikipedia's legendary founder **Jimmy Wales**. We're thrilled to welcome this key figure of the online age to discuss his book *The Seven Rules of Trust*.

(D) (CC)

Ashley Hickson-Lovence & Matthew Rice: Art/Work

19:15-20:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Ashley Hickson-Lovence and **Matthew Rice** push the limits of form to explore the tension between work and 'the work' of a writing life. Set during a single 12-hour nightshift, Rice's *Plastic* mixes poetics, memoir, and ekphrasis to illuminate the world of factory labour. Hickson-Lovence's *About to Fall Apart*, written as a single paragraph that unfolds across one frantic weekend, is a masterclass in voice. Come along for an engrossing discussion on practice, labour, and where creativity resides.

(AI)

Graeme Macrae Burnet: Benbecula

19:15-20:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Graeme Macrae Burnet's *Benbecula*, part of Polygon's acclaimed *Darkland Tales* series, explores a forgotten, real-life triple murder in the remote Hebrides in his immersive, unsettling prose. As his narrator's mind slowly fractures, Burnet asks: how do tragedy and isolation distort memory and selfhood? The Booker-shortlisted author of *His Bloody Project* chats about crime and punishment, unreliable minds, and his pull to the territory where history, fiction, and psychological darkness collide.

(AI)

Edward Fishman & Carl Benedikt Frey: You Can't Fight Progress

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Former US State Department official **Edward Fishman** and Oxford academic **Carl Benedikt Frey** take us right into the real-life thriller that is the global struggle for power and progress. Fishman's *Chokepoints* lays bare the economic battlegrounds that define modern-day war, while Frey's *How Progress Ends* warns that even rapid progress stagnates if innovation falters. Join them to discover these intersecting arenas, where 21st-century geopolitics really plays out. Chaired by **Richard Brass**.

(AI)

Simon Armitage: New Cemetery

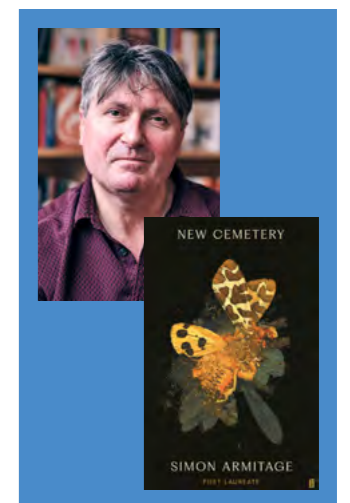
20:30-21:30
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A local beauty spot becomes a graveyard; a poet walks its boundary. Today, UK Poet Laureate **Simon Armitage** discusses and performs from his latest collection, *New Cemetery*, in which the new graveyard near his West Yorkshire home inspires a radiant, wry meditation on grief, nature, and time. Hear one of our finest poets of landscape, loss, and the strange comedy of being alive, reflect on changing landscapes, personal loss, and the life-enhancing power of poetry. Chaired by **Peggy Hughes**.

(AI)



Graeme Macrae Burnet, 19:15-20:15



Simon Armitage, 20:30-21:30

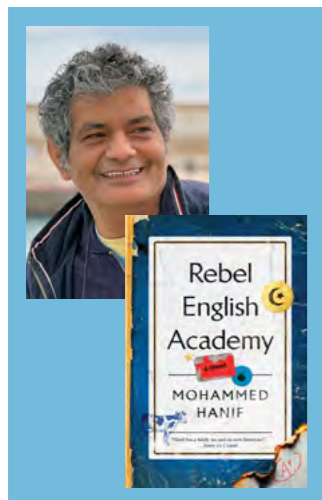
Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (O) Remote Appearance | (U) Food & Drink



Jane Harper, 14:00-15:00



Mohammed Hanif, 15:15-16:15

Kate Foster: The Repentants

11:00-12:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Betrayal flows through **Kate Foster's** chilling new novel: the story of two women, bonded forever in their exile to the world's most desolate prison. Based on the real-life attempt by Scottish landowners to annex Iceland, *The Repentants* tackles shame, sin, and survival while transporting us to a harsh 18th-century landscape. Join Foster, the Women's Prize-longlisted author of *The Maiden*, as she shares the thrill of reimagining the lives of women of the past. Chaired by **Natalie Jayne Clark**.

AI

Shared Reading with Open Book

11:00-12:00
Venue A
Free Ticketed

Join Open Book Lead Readers for an informal and relaxed shared reading session. Each session will explore a chapter from a debut book from this year's Festival Programme. No experience necessary, all reading materials will be provided on the day.

Fresh Words: Northern Writers' Awards

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
Pay What You Can

It's lunchtime, but there's no need to doomscroll over your meal deal. Be the first to discover the literary stars of the future instead. In partnership with Scottish Book Trust and other leading UK talent spotters, this lively event showcases electrifying new voices, so grab your seat before everyone else does. Today, we partner with New Writing North's Northern Writers' Awards, hearing readings from an amazing line-up of writers, featuring **Letty Sharpe, Beth Thompson, and Cindy Withjack**.

AI

Steve Brusatte & Jackie Morris: Birds - Evolution and Extinction

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Every *Jurassic Park* fan knows dinosaurs eventually evolved into birds, and in *The Story of Birds*, leading palaeontologist and film adviser **Steve Brusatte** recounts that thrilling, 150-million-year journey towards the creatures we know today. In *The Book of Birds*, meanwhile, artist **Jackie Morris** (with writer Robert Macfarlane) celebrates avian species at risk of extinction with soulful paintings and words. From prehistoric beginnings to modern vulnerability, Brusatte and Morris discuss the joys and mysteries of our feathered friends.

AI

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Polly Barton, Daniel Hahn & Anton Hur: In Other Words

12:15-13:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How does a book survive a journey between languages? Three exciting literary translators and writers join forces for a lively chat about their craft. **Polly Barton** (*Butter, Hunchback*), **Daniel Hahn** (*A General Theory of Oblivion, Pelé: The Autobiography*), and **Anton Hur** (*Cursed Bunny, Love in the Big City*) unpack why human translation still matters in an age of AI and how translation is more than a bridge between cultures: it's a creative act in its own right. *Supported by the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*.

AI

Gwen Adshead: Unspeakable

12:45-13:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]



Silence can be as powerful as what is said aloud, as pioneering psychiatrist and psychotherapist Dr **Gwen Adshead** very well knows. For decades, she's helped patients navigate painful and distressing life events, witnessing their courageous journeys to be free of fear and shame. She joins us with *Unspeakable*, an event less about trauma, and more survival - the 'what comes next'. Discover the language that allows us to move forward, to transform, and to hope.

AI



The Front List: Diana Gabaldon

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

It's been 35 years since Claire Randall first slipped through time, landing in the arms of Jamie Fraser and at the heart of a love story spanning centuries. **Diana Gabaldon's** *Outlander* novels have since become a bona fide sensation as a smash-hit TV series, with the 'Outlander effect' credited with revolutionising Scottish film, TV production, and tourism alike. Join Gabaldon, chatting to **Alisha Fernandez Miranda**, for this special anniversary event to reflect on the inspirations behind the adventures of the Fraser clan and how creating the 'Sassenach' changed her life forever.

AI

Dinner: A Table Talk with Meera Sodha

13:00-14:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00]

Every week, thousands turn to **Meera Sodha's** *Guardian* columns and cookbooks for vibrant veggie inspiration, be it her Sichuan-style aubergines or unbelievably creamy vegan mac and cheese. Watch a master at work as she prepares a favourite dish from the smash hit *Dinner*, and shares how cooking healed her after 'a baby and a breakdown' threatened to snuff out her spark. Chaired by **Chitra Ramaswamy**. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

FD

Callum McSorley: Rat Race

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

DCI Alison McCoist is Glasgow's most unpopular detective, and the thrillers starring her are the filthiest, funniest crime novels in Scotland. **Callum McSorley's** latest novel *Rat Race* closes the McIlvanney Prize-winning trilogy as McCoist chases a drug-dealer-turned-marathon-runner through a tangle of gangsters and bent cops. A new star of crime discusses violence and humour, urban Scotland, and ending the series with an absolute belter.

AI

Garth Cartwright & Madeline Potter: The Travelling Life

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Caroline Eden talks to two writers shedding light on the experiences and vibrant traditions of Romani communities in Europe. **Madeline Potter** discusses her personal and revealing *The Roma: A Travelling History*, while **Garth Cartwright**, author of *Princes Amongst Men: Journeys with Romani-Gypsy Musicians*, charts a journey through what - in 2005 - were thought to be the 'badlands' of Romania, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavia.

AI

Jane Harper: Last One Out

14:00-15:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Australia's Crime Queen, **Jane Harper**, is internationally renowned for her atmospheric thrillers. In fact, her 2016 smash hit, *The Dry*, sparked a whole wave in Aussie publishing of small-town crime fiction, a phenomenon that's come to be known as 'Outback Noir'. We're so excited to welcome Harper to Edinburgh today - hear her chatting about her new novel, *Last One Out*: a claustrophobic and engrossing study of fractured families and communities.

AI

Jeremy Hunt: Can We Be Great Again?

15:00-16:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A major figure in the previous Conservative UK Government, **Jeremy Hunt** has served as Chancellor and Foreign Secretary, and led the Culture and (controversial) Health briefs. His *Can We Be Great Again?* is a timely read in a world of shifting geopolitical faultlines. Rebutting the idea that the UK is in inevitable decline on the international stage, join Hunt as he sets out a new take on how our influence can be used to positively affect global democracy, migration, trade, and climate.

BSL AI

Mohammed Hanif: Rebel English Academy

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Mohammed Hanif, Booker-longlisted author of *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, brings his fierce combination of incendiary wit and political nerve to his thrilling new novel, *Rebel English Academy*. Fusing slapstick with state-of-the-nation reckoning to hilarious, harrowing effect, Hanif sets love, protest, and state violence on a collision course in late-70s Pakistan. **Daniel Hahn** talks with Hanif today about authoritarianism, dissent, and why satire is one of the sharpest tools for telling the truth.

AI

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | Live Captioned | AI AI Captioned
Formats: Remote Appearance | Food & Drink

Meera Sodha:
A Life Well Fed

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

When craving comfort and nourishment, **Meera Sodha** is a name we all trust. As a food columnist for the *Guardian* and author of bestselling cookbooks like *Fresh India* and *Dinner*, Sodha spreads her skill for flavourful recipes as generously as the icing on her cardamom dream cakes. Today she shares how cooking has truly fed her, from the kitchen smells of her Ugandan-Indian childhood home, to the dishes that brought her back from the brink of burnout.

AI



Colin Bramwell & Ryan Van Winkle: Poetry in Practice

15:45-16:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two singular voices in Scottish poetry, **Colin Bramwell** and **Ryan Van Winkle**, share new work and discuss their practice of bringing poetry to wider audiences, both on and off the page. Both poets play with questions of communication and connection: Bramwell's *Fetch* explores the boundaries of Scots and English to question a host of binaries, while Van Winkle's intimate *Get Closer* considers how we remember and misremember, shaping memory through experience.

AI

Turi King:
The Secrets of Our DNA

15:45-16:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Renowned genealogist, Professor **Turi King**, uses her expert skills to reshape our understanding of our ancestors, from unearthing their previously unknown medical conditions to their surprising international connections. In 2012, King led the identification of King Richard III's body; in 2025, she co-presented Channel 4's documentary, *Hitler's DNA*; today, she unpacks *The Secrets of Our DNA*, exploring how DNA shapes our world, from trial outcomes to species survival. *Supported by the Turtleton Charitable Trust.*

AI

Chris Brookmyre:
Quite Ugly One Evening

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Chris Brookmyre is an icon of Scottish crime fiction and a regular Festival favourite. This year, he returns with *Quite Ugly One Evening* - a zeitgeisty locked-cabin mystery set on a cruise celebrating an extremely questionable 1960s TV series... Who better to investigate than legendary journalist Jack Parlabane, 30 years since his first appearance in *Quite Ugly One Morning*? **Natalie Jayne Clark** chairs a conversation as energising, satirical, and irreverent as the author himself.

AI

Translating Shakespeare:
A Workshop with Daniel Hahn

17:00-18:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£24.00/£8.00]

Three of **Daniel Hahn's** literary translations have been longlisted for the International Booker Prize, and today he turns his attention to translating the work of William Shakespeare. This workshop, drawing from Hahn's *If This Be Magic*, explores what reading the Bard's work in a host of other languages (like Hungarian, Japanese, and Swahili) can tell us about translation, the author, and language itself. Participants don't need familiarity with any languages besides English. No knowledge of Shakespeare needed.

Graeme Armstrong: Raveheart

17:30-18:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Named one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists in 2023, **Graeme Armstrong** is back with his hotly anticipated second book *Raveheart*. Set in the heart of Scotland's rave subculture, this pacy new novel follows a band of rebels and misfits as they try to resurrect illegal warehouse parties in the face of a dystopian right-wing regime. Join Armstrong as he discusses this 'hilarious, tragic, and incredibly clever' look at modern Scotland.

AI

Tice Cin & Jacqueline Crooks:
City Soundscapes

17:30-18:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Big city life is equal parts exhilarating and gruelling in these lyrical, inventive novels from **Tice Cin** and **Jacqueline Crooks**. In *Safe Spaces* and *Sky City*, young women navigate the ups and downs of London living. Throughout, music is the beat that sustains them, a connective thread that sparks friendships, provides belonging, and offers a way through, or a way out. Today the authors come together to discuss navigating grief, fostering community, and finding home.

AI

Imani Thompson:
Honey

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

It's not every day that a debut novel sparks a ferocious 10-way bidding war, but **Imani Thompson's** *Honey* is that dazzling. In a conversation that promises to be as darkly entertaining as the book itself, comedian **Sophie Duker** joins Thompson to delve into the mind of *Honey's* murderous protagonist, Yrsa: the perfect vehicle for a razor-sharp exploration of race, desire, and female rage. Don't skip this chance to see a bona fide star on the rise.

AI

THE FORVIS MAZARS EVENT

Simon Kuper:
World Cup Fever

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

This August, doubtless hot on the heels of Scotland's victorious 2026 campaign (!), sports journalist **Simon Kuper** joins us with *World Cup Fever*. An attendee of every World Cup since 1990, Kuper chronicles the fervour of this global sporting fiesta, one which brings nations to a standstill and sends fans on incredible journeys just to be there. Tears, joy, controversy, inspiration, politics - this is the story of football, its magic and tumultuous history combined. Chaired by **Stuart Cosgrove**.

AI

Margaret Busby:
Part of the Story

19:15-20:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The UK's first Black female publisher and editor of groundbreaking anthologies *Daughters of Africa* and *New Daughters of Africa* - it's hard to overstate **Margaret Busby's** impact on literary culture these last 50 years. It is an honour to welcome her to the Festival. Busby joins us to discuss her life's work as a champion of Black voices and *Part of the Story*, which charts her journey from precocious girl in Ghana to publishing pioneer. Chaired by **Hannah Chukwu**.

AI

Citizen Collective:
26 Collective Street

19:15-20:15
Venue B
Pay What You Can

It's New Year's Eve on 26 Collective Street, a century-old building filled with stories and poems - open a door and dip into a life. Join us as families party, dogs cower from fireworks, and friends (and strangers) bring in the bells. But something has happened that risks ruining the night... This event has been co-created by young people from the **Citizen Collective** (our online creative writing group for young adults) and professional poet, **Ryan Van Winkle**.

AI

Ann Pettifor:
The Global Casino

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

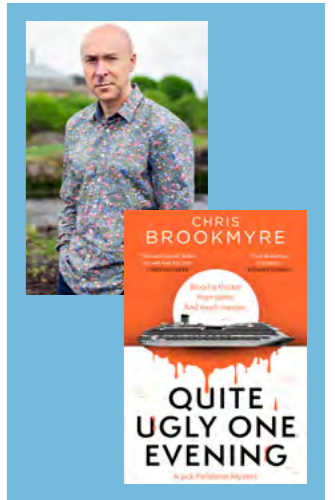
Political economist and director for PRIME, **Ann Pettifor** is famous for predicting the 2008 global financial crash. In this conversation she unpicks how the cost of your weekly shop, monthly bills, car, house, and holiday aren't just linked, they're fixed by faceless firms and funds operating in the shadows. Today she discusses her new book *The Global Casino: How Wall Street Gambles with People and the Planet*, exposing a corrupt system while offering a truly sustainable alternative.

AI

Book Festival Ceilidh

20:30-22:00
Spiegel tent
£10.50 [£5.00]

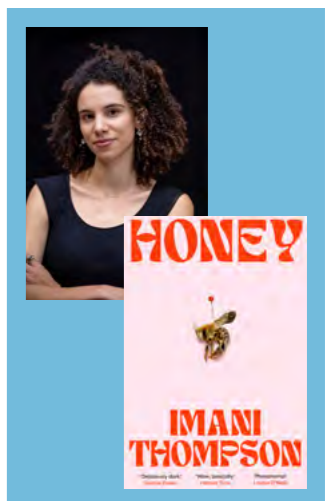
Nothing brings people together like a good birr! Join us tonight for a barnstorming dance, complete with one of Scotland's favourite ceilidh bands, **The Occasionals**. Never ceilidh-ed before? Have no fear, Strip the Willow newbies and Dashing White Sergeant experts are all welcome as a live caller takes us through the steps of traditional Scottish dances. Maybe you'll even do-si-do with your favourite author.



Chris Brookmyre, 17:00-18:00



Graeme Armstrong, 17:30-18:30



Imani Thompson, 18:45-19:45

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

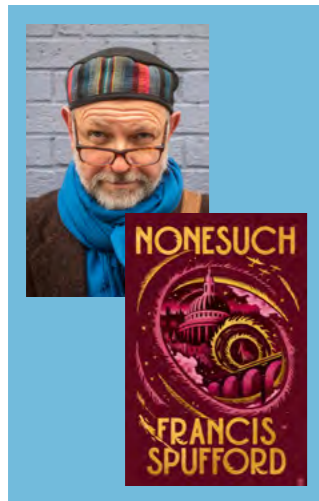
Access: Livestreamed | British Sign Language | Live Captioned | AI Captioned
Formats: Remote Appearance | Food & Drink

Wednesday 19

Wednesday 19



Margaret Drabble, 11:00-12:00



Francis Spufford, 12:15-13:15



Helen Goh, 13:00-14:30

Benny Higgins:
A Life in Reading

10:00-11:00
The Lounge
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

At fifteen, growing up football-mad on a Glasgow housing scheme, **Benny Higgins** received a letter from his grandfather - a Clydeside docker - with a list of books he wanted Higgins to read. It changed everything. The chair of Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Sistema Scotland/Big Noise - whose remarkable career has spanned finance, culture, and public life - reflects on how reading and the arts shaped his path, and why culture remains essential to who we are. Chaired by **Amina Shah**.

(AI)

James Macintyre:
Power with Purpose

10:30-11:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

His time in Number 10 may have been short, but more than 15 years since leaving Downing Street, Gordon Brown continues to wield significant influence. In *Power with Purpose*, former BBC1 *Question Time* producer and political correspondent **James Macintyre** provides an intriguing and definitive portrait of Brown, from his political birth to election defeat and life beyond. Today, Macintyre joins us to discuss his latest biography about a true political powerhouse, with a formidable legacy.

(AI)

Margaret Drabble:
The Great Good Places

11:00-12:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Childhood homes, cherished libraries, coastal sanctuaries - how do the places we remember shape who we are? Drawing on decades of writing and observation, literary legend **Margaret Drabble** blends memoir, essay, and short fiction in *The Great Good Places*, a profoundly moving meditation on time, memory, and the process of ageing. Today, she brings her astonishing wit and intelligence to discuss the pleasures and complexities of looking back on a life deeply lived. Chaired by **Lennie Goodings**.

(AI)

Peggy Brunache & Carrie Gibson:
The Fight to be Free

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Historian **Carrie Gibson's** *The Great Resistance* chronicles thousands of acts of defiance in the fight to end slavery across the Americas and the Caribbean. She appears alongside Dr **Peggy Brunache**, University of Glasgow lecturer in the history of Atlantic slavery and director of the Beniba Centre for Slavery Studies, which works to amplify the voices of history. Join us for this insightful conversation about insurrections, revolutions, and modern questions about social and racial inequality.

(AI)

Dan Jones:
The Green Man

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A learned monk. A town in turmoil. A mystery that may destroy faith itself. **Dan Jones' The Green Man** is a gripping medieval mystery set in 1367 Berwick, where children are disappearing, Scottish raiders menace the borders, and the old pagan ways are creeping back. The spec-fiction writer and author of *Man O'War* discusses reason and belief, religious panic, and why a novel set seven centuries ago feels disturbingly like our own times.

(AI)

Translation Surgery:
A Workshop with Polly Barton

12:00-14:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Polly Barton is the acclaimed translator of books including Asako Yuzuki's publishing sensation, *Butter*, Mieko Kanai's *Mild Vertigo*, and Saou Ichikawa's *Hunchback*. In this fun problem-solving session for practicing translators, Barton invites you to bring along the translation issue that's been irking you. From the granular to the abstract, witness the extraordinary creative forces unleashed when translators put their minds together! All languages and experience levels are welcome.



ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND EVENT
The Front List: Tom Holland

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Historian and *The Rest is History* podcast co-host **Tom Holland** describes *The Lives of the Caesars*, written by Suetonius 2,000 years ago, as having 'the quality of a very highbrow gossip column'. His new translation of this influential work illuminates the lives of the first 12 Roman emperors, exploring their leadership strategies, policy crises, eccentricities, and even their sex scandals. Join Festival director **Jenny Niven** chatting with a writer who's revolutionised popular history - not to be missed by anyone who thinks about the Roman Empire even infrequently.

(AI)

Anton Hur & Lee Seong-bok:
That Summer's End

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Regarded as one of South Korea's most influential poets, **Lee Seong-bok** is the author of eight extraordinary poetry collections and numerous other works, including *Indeterminate Inflorescence*, his acclaimed book of aphorisms which boasts fans including the members of K-Pop megahit band, BTS. It's a real honour to welcome Seong-bok to the Festival, talking about his intoxicatingly beautiful new work, *That Summer's End*, alongside **Anton Hur**, the International Booker Prize-shortlisted translator of the collection.

(AI)

Francis Spufford:
Nonesuch

12:15-13:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

To read **Francis Spufford's** literary fantasy *Nonesuch* is to be grabbed by the hand and pulled, screaming with delight, through a version of wartime London where statues talk, timelines bend, and fascism entangles with dark magic. From Booker-longlisted *Light Perpetual* to his last novel *Cahokia Jazz*, Spufford is always deft at drawing timely truths out of alternate realities. If you need a fresh perspective on how to keep fighting the good fight, don't miss him.

(AI)

Baking and the Meaning of Life: A Table Talk with Helen Goh

13:00-14:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00]

After a decade developing recipes (including *that* chocolate tahini cake) as Ottolenghi's pastry chef, **Helen Goh** brings her brilliance into the spotlight with her own book, *Baking and the Meaning of Life*. If you've got a sweet tooth, you can't miss the chance to taste a Goh-made treat straight from the oven, as she shares the personal histories behind her delectable creations. Chaired by **Simon Preston**. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

🍷

Marion Gibson, Mairi Kidd & Steven Veerapen:
The Witching Hour

12:45-13:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

At a time when women's rights are once again under threat across the world, it's perhaps no wonder that our fascination with the witch-hunts of the 1600s still burns bright. Today, we're joined by **Mairi Kidd** (*Newes of Witches*), **Marion Gibson** (*Witchland*), and **Steven Veerapen** (*Witches: A King's Obsession*) - the authors of brilliant new books that touch on themes of paranoia, moral panic, and obsession. What can our witch-hunting past warn us about the world of today?

(AI)

Programme key

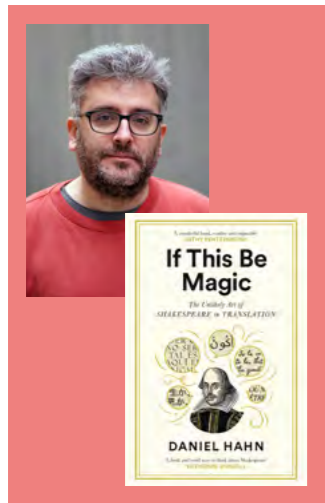
Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (L) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (R) Remote Appearance | 🍷 Food & Drink





Alexander McCall Smith, 15:00-16:00



Daniel Hahn, 15:45-16:45

Frances Crawford & Jennie Godfrey: Community Secrets

14:00-15:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We all love a good secret, especially when they're as gripping as they are wildly entertaining. In **Frances Crawford's** *A Bad, Bad Place*, a 12-year-old girl and her nan are dragged into the hunt for a murderer, while **Jennie Godfrey's** *The Barbecue at No.9* follows a Live Aid watch party as it turns sinister. In this lively event, Crawford and Godfrey talk writing mystery and plotting the perfect thriller with splashes of humour.

AI

Sara Baume: Opening Night

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What can friendship teach us about art - and art about friendship? In *Opening Night*, **Sara Baume** traces her growing bond with exiled American painter Mollie Douthit, from soup and punishing Atlantic swims in West Cork to grappling with complex questions about community and nationality, neurosis, mysticism, love, and pain. Hear the much-admired author of *Spill Simmer Falter Withier* open up about companionship, creativity, and the soul-stirring spell art can cast over a life. Chaired by **Peggy Hughes**. Supported by *Culture Ireland*.

AI

THE WOODLAND TRUST SCOTLAND EVENT

Alexander McCall Smith: Perfectly Prolific

15:00-16:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From the Georgian splendour of Edinburgh's New Town to the sunlit plains of Botswana, **Alexander McCall Smith** conjures incomparable worlds of warmth, humour, and humanity. This year, *The Prime of Bertie Pollock* brings fresh adventures to 44 Scotland Street, while *The Big Cats Dance Party* reunites us with the incomparable Mma Ramotswe. Join the knight of Scottish letters for a conversation full of generous-spirited storytelling.

AI

Polly Atkin & Gillian Best: Pain, Presence, Possibility

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How do we live well in bodies that don't make life easy? In *Swimming the Seasons*, **Polly Atkin** finds relief, freedom, and joy in year-round immersion in wild water. In *Chronic*, **Gillian Best** combines cutting-edge pain research with her own search for understanding. Together, they explore pain and disability, swimming and self-knowledge, and the possibilities of paying closer attention to body, mind, and the natural world.

AI

Polly Barton & Aea Varfis-van Warmelo: Lies, Crushes, and Karaoke

15:45-16:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Obsession and karaoke. Lies and self-sabotage. In *What Am I, A Deer?* and *Attention-Seeking Behaviour*, **Polly Barton** and **Aea Varfis-van Warmelo** bring fierce formal invention to two biting funny, mercilessly perceptive novels about trying to translate yourself into someone more palatable. Barton, the fearlessly original essayist and translator of Asako Yuzuki's bestselling *Butter*, joins Varfis-van Warmelo, a sharp, edgy new voice in fiction, to unpick confession, compulsion, authenticity, and whether we can ever truly escape ourselves.

AI

Daniel Hahn: If This Be Magic

15:45-16:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Why is Hamlet longer in Italian? How do you land a Shakespearean joke in German? And why are Lady Macbeth's pronouns such a headache? In *If This Be Magic*, seasoned translator **Daniel Hahn** dives gleefully into the seemingly impossible task of translating Shakespeare, revealing how English words stretch, fracture, and misbehave across languages. Today Hahn celebrates close reading and linguistic absurdity to show how changing every word can bring Shakespeare thrillingly back to life.

AI

Soph's 30 in 30: A Table Talk with Sophie Macfie

16:00-17:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00]

As the culinary force behind social media sensation 'Soph's Plant Kitchen', **Sophie Macfie** has led the charge for a better understanding of the protein and fibre potential of plant-based cooking - deliciously delivered through mouthwatering dishes to her almost 2 million followers. Join Macfie (and her trusty blender) as she whips up fresh, quick, nutrition-packed recipes from *Soph's 30 in 30*. Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.

FD

Close Read: Intro to Gaelic Literature

17:00-18:00
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In our popular Close Read series, a brilliant author guides you through a deep-diving discussion of a classic text or genre that's inspired them. Think of it as an event blending friendly book club vibes with insightful study notes. Today, novelist **Mairi Kidd** (*The Specimens*) provides an introduction to Gaelic literature, using her expert knowledge to share some gems. Expect a fun, enthusiastic workshop to please the eye - and ear. No prior experience of Gaelic needed.

Jeremy Hunt & John Kampfner: Great vs Better

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What does Britain have to offer on the world stage in the 21st century? Are we leaders, or is there much to learn? And in seeking to fix Britain's challenges, should we look close to home, or further afield? Join former Chancellor and Foreign Secretary **Jeremy Hunt**, author of *Can We Be Great Again? Why a Dangerous World Needs Britain* and journalist **John Kampfner**, author of *Braver New World: The Countries Daring to Do Things Others Won't* for a thought-provoking discussion, chaired by **Liz Lloyd**, on the state of our nation, and others who do things differently.

AI

Caroline Elton: Looking After

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Born in the 1940s, when Autism was barely understood, Lionel was treated as 'a peculiarity'. *Looking After* is his life story told by psychologist and academic **Caroline Elton** - his little sister. From their formidable mother refusing advice to institutionalise her young son, to his musical passions, and their shifting familial bonds, Elton shares Lionel's complex portrait, talking today about carving space for the legacies we leave behind, and finding the life-affirming, tender moments, and love within.

AI

Mona Chalabi: Humanising Data

17:30-18:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Mona Chalabi is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who converts complex data into arresting illustrations, often using text and sound to make people stop and rethink. She was named a Royal Designer for Industry - the highest accolade that a UK designer can receive - in recognition of her talent of making the intangible tangible. From capturing the enormity of wars in Palestine, Congo, and Sudan to how hijabis are depicted on screen, Chalabi talks to **Heather Parry** about how 'design helps to structure our moral universe'.

CC

Luke Wright: Later Life Letter

18:15-19:15
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *Later Life Letter*, his fiercely moving memoir-in-poetry, **Luke Wright** explores the effect of his own 'later life letter' - the document written by a social worker to an adopted child, detailing their journey from birth to adoption. Wright chats today about this tender, beautiful collection - full of wit and warmth and championed by the likes of John Cooper Clarke, Hollie McNish, and Lemn Sissay - then brings the story off the page with a dazzling performance.

AI



Caroline Elton, 17:00-18:00



Mona-Chalabi, 17:30-18:30

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [C] Remote Appearance [FD] Food & Drink

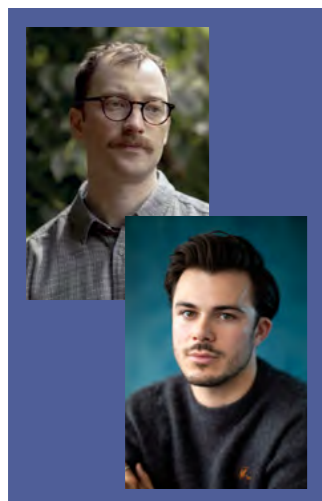




So Mayer, 19:15-20:15



Darren McGarvey, 20:30-21:30



Jem Calder & Jack Edwards, 20:30-22:00

Kenneth R Rosen & Odd Arne Westad: Polar Power

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Greenland has been thrust into the global spotlight by President Donald Trump announcing his intent to acquire the Arctic territory, by hook or by crook. But what sits under the ice that's so vital to geopolitics? Who better to unravel the puzzle than Cold War historian **Odd Arne Westad** (*The Coming Storm*) and American journalist and war correspondent **Kenneth R Rosen** (*Polar War*) who join us today to dissect this literal coldest of wars, and explore why the region is so vital to our futures. Chaired by **Edward Wong**.

DL CC

Beyond the Margins: Poetry in Motion

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
Pay What You Can

We believe that everyone has a story to tell and that stories help us make sense of our world. Over the spring, community members from the Streetreads Library joined forces with poet **Hannah Lavery** and illustrator **Katie Quinn** to create poetry and imagery exploring Edinburgh through their eyes, as people who have experienced homelessness in the city. Join them as they share their bold, unfiltered take on the Edinburgh the tourists don't see.

AI

So Mayer: Bad Language

19:15-20:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Language shapes the structures of our world: Who gets to speak? Who is silenced? Who is harmed in this imbalance? In their stunning blend of memoir and manifesto, *Bad Language*, **So Mayer** draws on their multi-lingual childhood and cultural texts (from the *Torah* to the Brothers Grimm) to interrogate how language has been used - and abused - across their own life. Join us for a rousing conversation about taking back language for protest and pleasure. Chaired by **Sasha de Buyl**.

CC

Meet the Winners: International Booker Prize 2026

19:15-20:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The International Booker Prize, the world's most influential award for translated fiction, champions literature from around the world, fostering an engaged global community of writers and readers whose experiences transcend national borders. The award brings international attention to both the author and translator with the prize divided equally between them. Join us as Emeritus Director **Fiammetta Rocco** speaks to the winners of 2026's International Booker Prize (supported by Bukhman Philanthropies) about their work and the art of translation.

CC

Darren McGarvey: Trauma Industrial Complex

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What makes us share our inner world with strangers? **Darren McGarvey** is a broadcaster, hip-hop artist, and campaigner, and his newest book, *Trauma Industrial Complex: How Oversharing Became a Product in a Digital World*, reflects on the commodification of trauma. The Orwell Prize-winning author of *Poverty Safari* shares his experience building a career through rapping and campaigning, and examines how personal narratives have been repackaged into digestible confessionals for public consumption.

CC

Jem Calder & Jack Edwards: Inklings Book Club - Live

20:30-22:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Jack Edwards has a knack for knowing exactly which novels will set our hearts alight, and today 'the internet's resident librarian' sits down with **Jem Calder** for a special live recording of the *Inklings Book Club* podcast. Discovered by Sally Rooney, who first published his writing in *The Stinging Fly*, Calder's spot-on debut about the listlessness, precarity, and wild joy of being in your 20s and 30s will make for an unmissable chat.

DL AI

Sally Magnusson: The Shapeshifter's Daughter

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

As the host of *Reporting Scotland*, **Sally Magnusson** became known as one of our most trusted journalists - now she's also a beloved (and bestselling!) author too. Join her as she unpacks her latest novel, *The Shapeshifter's Daughter* - a feminist retelling of a Norse myth set against the ancient landscapes of Orkney. How did personal history inspire this otherworldly yet utterly human exploration of father-daughter relationships, doomed love, and reclaiming identity?

DL AI

Masud Husain: Our Brains, Our Selves

10:15-11:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The brain's workings are essential to our identity, says Oxford neurology professor **Masud Husain**, winner of 2025's Royal Society Science Book Prize. *Our Brains, Our Selves* unveils case studies of seven patients, including a man who ran out of words and a woman whose memory loss made her believe she was having an affair with her own husband. Join Husain to explore our most complex organ. Chaired by **Devi Sridhar**.

AI

Shared Reading with Open Book

11:00-12:00
Venue A
Free Ticketed

Join Open Book Lead Readers for an informal and relaxed shared reading session. Each session will explore a chapter from a debut book from this year's Festival Programme. No experience necessary, all reading materials will be provided on the day.

Andrew Lowrie: The Rise and Fall of the House of York

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Royal biographies are often drama-filled but in **Andrew Lowrie's** *Entitled*, scandal, corruption, and cover-ups take centre stage. The historian's biography of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and Sarah Ferguson draws on four years of research, FOI requests, and 100s of interviews, tracing the reputational collapse of the pair, from their links with Epstein to misconduct in office. Hear Lowrie's insight into his research and the grift and corruptions of 'high society'.

BSL CC

Fresh Words: Gutter Magazine

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
Pay What You Can

It's lunchtime, but there's no need to doomscroll over your meal deal. Be the first to discover the literary stars of the future, instead. In partnership with Scottish Book Trust and other leading UK talent spotters, this lively event showcases electrifying new voices, so grab your seat before everyone else does. Today, we partner with *Gutter Magazine's* Finishing Your First Book Programme, hearing readings from an amazing line-up of writers - check website for full details.

AI

Nao-Cola Yamazaki, Polly Barton & Charlotte Goff: Writing the Interior

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Nao-Cola Yamazaki is a name you'll soon hear everywhere. Their intimate novellas, *Beautiful Distance* and *Don't Laugh at Other People's Sex Lives*, were smash hits in Japan, now published in English with stunning translations by **Charlotte Goff** and **Polly Barton**. Both stories deal with devotion: the deference employees are expected to show corporations in Japanese 'salaryman' culture, and the yearning that mounts between an art student and his much older tutor. Don't miss this sparkling conversation with three rare talents. Supported by *The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation*.

AI

Nick Barber & Helen Pilcher: The Mind-Body Connection

12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

An eye-opening conversation on the psychology of medicine. Pharmaceutical expert **Nick Barber** offers a guide for how to make the most of your medicines in *How to Take Drugs*, while *This Book May Cause Side Effects* sees neuroscientist **Helen Pilcher** explore the dreaded 'nocebo effect'. **Gavin Francis** chats to them both, tackling topics ranging from better health and advocating for yourself, to understanding how medicines work on the brain and even rethinking the mind-body connection.

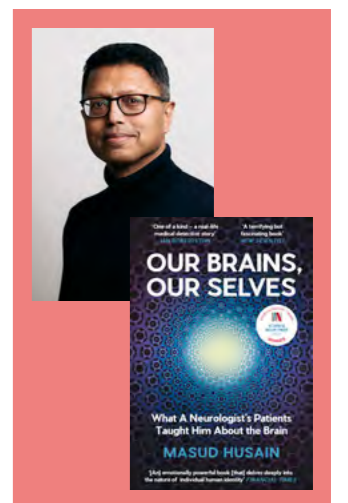
AI

Simon Sebag Montefiore: The Cauldron

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In this timely, thought-provoking event, bestselling author and historian **Simon Sebag Montefiore** discusses *The Cauldron: The Making of the Modern Middle East*, his compelling history on the intricacies and complexities of this tumultuous yet magnetic region. Talking with us today, Sebag Montefiore considers how modern states are made, the power of personality leadership, and the latest violent chapter of a rapidly evolving region.

AI



Masud Husain, 10:15-11:15

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: DL Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | CC Live Captioned | AI AI Captioned
Formats: CA Remote Appearance | FD Food & Drink

The Front List:
Colson Whitehead

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Colson Whitehead is one of America's most skilled and essential storytellers, holding the horrors of history in one hand and big-hearted humanity in the other. After consecutive Pulitzer Prize-wins for *The Underground Railroad* and *The Nickel Boys*, he concludes his acclaimed Harlem trilogy with *Cool Machine*: a portrait of hustle in 1980s New York. Join Whitehead for an energising conversation on why we can't move forward without looking back. Chaired by **Samira Ahmed**. Supported by *Claire & Mark Urquhart*.

AI



Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi:
The Ghost of the Mountains

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

There's only a handful of people who have been anywhere near the vicinity of a snow leopard, and this event will probably be the closest most of us will ever get: a wonder-filled conversation with biologist **Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi**, who's spent decades studying these elusive creatures. Hear about *The Ghost of the Mountains*, his thrilling account of intrepid exploration, dedicated conservation work, and the transcendent experience of encountering a snow leopard in the wild.

AI

Yuliana Ortiz Ruano:
Carnaval Fever

14:15-15:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In **Yuliana Ortiz Ruano's** *Carnaval Fever*, a girl's coming of age in the Afro-Ecuadorian community of Esmeraldas pulses with music, dance, and the fierce love of the women who raise her. But beneath the celebration, shadows press in: poverty, migration, and the threat of male violence. **Daniel Hahn** joins one of Latin America's most exciting voices, an English PEN Translates Award-winner, to discuss identity, resilience, and writing that you feel in your body.

AI

Nandini Das: This Little World

15:15-16:15
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

British Academy Book Prize-winner, **Nandini Das**, is Professor of Early Modern Literature and Culture at Oxford University. Her newest work, the captivating *This Little World: A New History of Tudor and Stuart England*, bursts the idea of England existing in isolation in the 16th and 17th centuries, uncovering its critical international connections through tales of merchants, migrants, sailors, travellers, and spies. Join Das to discuss nationhood and her resonant new view of England's global past. Chaired by **Samira Ahmed**.

AI

Catherine Cho & Saima Mir:
Destiny and Dynasty

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

As the old saying goes, the family that slays together, stays together - and it's even messier in the criminal underworld. **Saima Mir's** *Deliverance* (the final part in her compelling *Jia Khan* trilogy) and **Catherine Cho's** thrilling debut, *The Devoted*, both tackle the complexities of life within criminal dynasties. Today, two terrific voices in fiction join us to delve into the perilous world of organised crime. Chaired by **Sam Baker**.

AI

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Hilary Cottam & Sarah O'Connor:
New Ways of Working



15:30-16:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We're continually told that the AI revolution will forever alter our relationship with work, yet need that change be for the worse? Enjoy an invigorating discussion with two authors offering upbeat proposals for the future of work: Orwell Prize-winning *Financial Times* journalist **Sarah O'Connor**, whose *We Are Not Machines* explores humans learning to master destabilising new technology, and innovator and change-maker **Hilary Cottam**, whose *The Work We Need* reimagines labour as a force for collective good. Chaired by **Jarred McGinnis**. Supported by *Edinburgh Futures Institute*.

AI

Sophie Mackintosh & Stephanie Sy-Quia:
Loves, Lies, and Longing

16:30-17:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What's better than reading a book that pulses with emotional electricity and the thrill of forbidden love? Reading two! In *Permanence*, **Sophie Mackintosh** (Booker-longlisted author of *The Water Cure*) imagines a world where adulterers can test their love without fear of consequence, while **Stephanie Sy-Quia's** *A Private Man* fictionalises the crackling connection between her Catholic priest grandfather and a theology teacher. Today, they compare notes on passion as a constructive and destructive force with **Sasha de Buyl**.

AI

Scottish Parliament Elections:
Where to From Here?

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The votes are counted, and 2026's Scottish Parliament election has delivered a winner - but has it delivered a workable government? Will Scotland see stable leadership, or a parliament shaped by deals, compromises, and risk of fracture - and what questions does the result pose for Westminster too? Today's panel of experts - including polling authority **John Curtice**, journalist **David Torrance**, and political advisor **Liz Lloyd** - unpack the result, map the new balance of power, and reflect on this next chapter of Scottish politics.

AI

Jem Calder & Derek Owusu:
New Masculinities

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

When a debut author discovered by Sally Rooney meets one of Granta's Best Young Novelists, you can count on a fresh, fiercely intelligent exchange of ideas. Be in the room today with **Jem Calder** and **Derek Owusu** as they discuss their novels of modern masculinity and authenticity in the digital age, then run (don't walk) to put *I Want You to Be Happy* and *Borderline Fiction* right at the top of your TBR pile. Chaired by **Andrés N Ordorica**.

AI

The Good Immigrant:
10 Years On

17:15-18:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Featuring powerful and impassioned writing by 21 writers of colour, *The Good Immigrant* unflinchingly interrogates what it really means to be Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic in Britain today. On the 10th anniversary of this generation-defining collection, editor **Nikesh Shukla** joins some of the book's award-winning contributors - including comedian and commentator **Nish Kumar** - to reflect on themes of otherness, belonging, and what, if anything, has really changed over the past decade.

AI

Memory and Story:
A Workshop with Jarred McGinnis

17:30-19:30
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Memories are mercurial things and can be recounted differently even by those who shared an experience. Join **Jarred McGinnis**, author of *There is No Meant to Be*, for an all-senses-engaged interactive workshop which transforms your funny, profound, and most chaotic memories into works of creative writing. Bring along a family member, friend, or other individual with whom you share recollections and explore just how different our stories can be, even when their starting point is the same. No writing experience needed.

Patrick Freyne & Séamas O'Reilly:
Deadly Serious

18:15-19:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two of Ireland's sharpest wits come together for a conversation about finding the funny in the darkest of places. **Patrick Freyne** - novelist, journalist, and a viral sensation for his *Irish Times* piece about Ireland and the Royal family - gets a band back together in *Experts in a Dying Field*, with unexpected consequences. Seasoned *Observer* journalist **Séamas O'Reilly's** *Prestige Drama* follows the cast of an in-production drama in Derry as they solve the mystery of their missing leading lady. Chaired by **Peggy Hughes**. Supported by *Culture Ireland*.

AI

Natalie Jayne Clark:
The Malt Whisky Murders

18:15-19:15
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50]

Sit back, take a tippie, and delight in the darkly comic world of Tartan Noir novel, *The Malt Whisky Murders*. When Eilidh and her wife Morag open the first women-owned distillery in Scotland, they find themselves up against protest, scandal, nosy neighbours, intrusive TV crews... and two perfectly preserved bodies hidden in a pair of whisky barrels. Join this uniquely immersive talk and whisky tasting with poet, writer, and whisky ambassador, **Natalie Jayne Clark**. Chaired by **Simon Preston**.

AI



Nandini Das, 15:15-16:15

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: Livestreamed | British Sign Language | Live Captioned | AI Captioned
Formats: Remote Appearance | Food & Drink



Jenni Fagan, 18:45-19:45

Jenni Fagan:
The Delusions

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What happens when love collides with the laws of eternity? In *The Delusions*, Festival favourite **Jenni Fagan** (author of *Luckenbooth* and *The Panopticon*) imagines an afterlife run by cosmic bureaucracy: newly dead souls are processed, delusions extracted, and humans may soon become a banned race. Today, Fagan chats about love and defiance, satire as survival, and enlisting her incomparable imagination to try and capture the terrible fragility of life on earth.

BSL AI



Samantha Shannon, 20:30-21:30

David Keenan:
Boyhood

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

It starts in 1979 with the abduction of a young boy outside a Glasgow football ground. But **David Keenan's** *Boyhood* soon swells into a journey of grief and recovery, past and present, imagined and real. The author of cult classic *This Is Memorial Device* returns with his love letter to Glasgow, a novel Irvine Welsh is calling 'a complete triumph'. Today, Keenan introduces this extraordinary and multilayered story about youth, dreams, and magic.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Édouard Louis:
The Weight of Where We Come From

19:00-20:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Few writers expose the intimate violence of class and family with the force of international sensation **Édouard Louis**. In *Monique Escapes* and *Collapse*, two searing novels about lives shaped by poverty and abuse, the author of *The End of Eddy* trains his fearless gaze on his mother and brother. Hear his extraordinary blend of emotional intensity and sociological sharpness as he talks shame, escape, reinvention, and what it takes to break the cycles we inherit.

AI

Jack Parlett & Imogen Willetts:
Burn Bright All Night

20:00-21:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Flamboyance shines throughout culture in art, entertainment, protest, and fashion. It's at its shiniest when darkness descends and bars and clubs thrust their doors open. Join poet **Jack Parlett** - whose *Flamboyance* makes the case for this often-underestimated quality - and historian **Imogen Willetts** - whose intoxicating *Up All Night* is a tour through history's wildest parties - as they chat about the power of collective hedonism and the unique power of bodies in a room. Chaired by **Rachel Ashenden**.

AI

Samantha Shannon:
Among the Burning Flowers

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Samantha Shannon is an expert worldbuilder - with her million-copy bestseller *The Priory of the Orange Tree* (a feminist reimagining of Saint George and the Dragon) she gave us a portal into a magical universe of fire-breathing creatures so real you almost felt the heat. We're delighted to have her brilliant mind back at the Festival to unpack *Among the Burning Flowers*, a prequel that imbues this well-loved world with a darker backstory of heartbreak and human resilience. Chaired by **Irenosen Okojie**.

AI

Mischief and Mayhem with Mark Watson and Pals

20:30-22:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Fringe legend and unforgettable *Taskmaster* contestant **Mark Watson** is also the author of almost a dozen books, including his latest, deliciously entertaining novel, *One Minute Away*. Today, Watson becomes our inaugural 'Bookmaster' and is joined by a cast of fellow funny and bookish folks - including **Zara Janjua**, **Sanjeev Kohli**, and **Marjolein Robertson** - for a gab about books, writing, and comedy, as well as some hilarious, playfully competitive surprises.

AI

Jarred McGinnis:
There Is No Meant to Be

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Outlaw ancestors, family ghosts, a near-fatal accident, and a refusal to behave like a proper memoir: **Jarred McGinnis' *There Is No Meant to Be*** unearths the legends, violence, tenderness, and absurdity that run through his family line, dismantling rules and literary boundaries to ask what truly makes a life. Hear the author of *The Coward* on care, fatherhood, disability, and why even the hardest lives can still contain laughter. Chaired by **Dan Richards**.

AI

Daisy Fancourt & Wayne McGregor:
The Art of Health



10:15-11:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What if you could dance yourself smarter? Or paint away pain? This fascinating discussion between world-leading scientist **Daisy Fancourt** (*Art Cure: The Science of How the Arts Transform Our Health*) and world-renowned choreographer **Wayne McGregor** (*We Are Movement: Unlocking Your Physical Intelligence*) draws on science, research, and lived experience to explore the power of art, and how engaging with music, movement, and creativity can improve your health and happiness in innumerable tangible ways. Supported by the *Jasmine Foundation*.

AI

Starting from the Truth:
A Memoir Workshop with Catherine Cho

10:30-12:00
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£24.00/£8.00]

Above all else, memoir has to start from the truth. In this workshop led by **Catherine Cho**, Jhalak Prize-shortlisted author of *Inferno: A Memoir of Motherhood and Madness*, you'll start thinking about where to begin when telling your own story. Together you'll unpack the structure and openings of published memoirs, using them as a springboard for your own writing, while exploring how memoirs can act as mirrors for the reader.

Lorraine Kelly:
The Island Secret

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A true Scottish national treasure, broadcaster, and bestselling author **Lorraine Kelly** needs little introduction. Hot on the heels of her debut novel, *The Island Swimmer*, she returns to Orkney with *The Island Secret*, which sees an unexpected visitor turn life upside down for Evie - who'd hoped to finally find some peace. As warm and engaging as her stories, **Val McDermid** chats to Kelly about drawing inspiration from the island she's been visiting annually since 1985.

AI

Rebecca Perry:
May We Feed the King

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A reclusive heritage curator, a long forgotten, reluctant king, and the uncanny merging of history and storytelling - T. S. Eliot Prize-shortlisted poet **Rebecca Perry's** intricate debut *May We Feed the King* braids together two disparate lives, playfully floating between the present and an imagined past. Join Perry as she delves into this puzzle-box of a book which tackles history-as-narrative, the allure of power, and the magic of escapism. Chaired by **Heather Parry**.

AI

Victor Mallet, Nikesh Shukla & Daniel Trilling:
The Far-Right Has Risen



12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Across the world, the far-right is emboldened, on the rise, gathering support by demonising migrants, scapegoating minorities, and demanding the closure of borders. Join *Financial Times* senior world desk editor **Victor Mallet** (*Far-Right France*), author **Nikesh Shukla** (*Hope Must Be Held In a Clenched Fist*), and journalist **Daniel Trilling** (*If We Tolerate This*) for an urgent discussion about what's causing this ongoing threat to global order, how it can be fought, and what it says about us. Chaired by **Talat Yaqoob**.

AI

Donna Ashworth & Hannah Richell:
Life Beyond Loss

12:15-13:15
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Navigating loss is a path we will all have to tread. **Donna Ashworth** and **Hannah Richell** help us plot a course. *An Ocean and a Day* is Richell's account of her journey through the first years following the death of her husband, Matt. Ashworth's *Loss* is a specially selected collection of her poems for the bereaved. Join them for a moving conversation about grief, hope, and holding space for what comes next. Chaired by **Sarah Gwonyoma**.

AI

Have Lunch with Santiago Lastra

13:00-16:00
Elliott's Studio
£100.00

When a Michelin-starred chef invites you to lunch, you come hungry. Secure your front-row seat to *Mexican Soul* author **Santiago Lastra's** masterclass in sour, smoky, and spicy flavours inspired by his Morelos upbringing. Usually behind the scenes at London restaurants Kol and Fonda, this is a rare chance to hear his tips firsthand and see (and sample) his artistry up close. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink, a multi-course lunch, and specially paired wine on the table.*

AI



Lorraine Kelly, 11:45-12:45

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | Live Captioned | AI Captions
Formats: Remote Appearance | Food & Drink

The Front List: Lewis Goodall & Edward Wong

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

What's the current state of the 'special relationship' between the USA and the UK? As America's new approach to geopolitics redefines the global order, what engagement strategy is the UK taking, is it effective, and how on Earth do journalists keep up? In this 250th year since America separated from British rule, *New York Times* diplomatic correspondent **Edward Wong** and co-host of British podcast *The News Agents* **Lewis Goodall** take us behind the scenes of how to make sense of an unprecedented time in international politics, and what it means for the future of US-UK relations. Supported by the AEB Charitable Trust.

CC



Lucy Caldwell & Nell Stevens: Short Story Magic

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

BBC National Short Story Award-winning **Lucy Caldwell** (author of *Openings* and *These Days*) and **Nell Stevens** (author of *The Original* and Somerset Maugham Award-winning *Mrs Gaskell & Me*) are both masters at catapulting you into characters' lives, conjuring entirely new worlds in a matter of pages. In this conversation they discuss their new story collections, *Devotions* and *The Good Time*, talking stories of love, grief, haunted lives, emotional crossroads, and irresistible humour with **Di Speirs**.

AI

Natasha Walter & Talat Yaqoob: A Feminist Response to Polycrises

13:45-14:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Writers and activists **Natasha Walter** and **Talat Yaqoob** come together for a vital conversation on global feminism. In *Feminism for a World on Fire*, Walter calls for collective resistance beyond individualism, while Yaqoob's *Building a Feminist Nation* explores practical feminist change in times of multiple crises. With women facing rights rollbacks across the world, and with their safety and freedoms under attack, Walter and Yaqoob ask: how can feminism respond to a world on fire?

AI

Close Read: Mr Norris Changes Trains by Christopher Isherwood

14:00-15:00
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In our Close Read series, a brilliant author guides you through a deep-diving discussion of a classic text or genre that's inspired them. Think of it as an event blending friendly book club vibes with insightful study notes. Today, party historian **Imogen Willetts** (author of *Up All Night: A History of Going Out*) guides you through the simmering tensions and messy nights out of Christopher Isherwood's *Mr Norris Changes Trains*, an evocative novel of 1930s Berlin, and inspiration for the musical *Cabaret*.

Tara Menon & Cecile Pin: Lives in Aftermath

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Tara Menon's stunning debut, *Under Water*, and **Cecile Pin's** exquisite *Celestial Lights* are two haunting novels of retrospection, in which private lives are altered by forces far larger than themselves: a lost friend on a post-tsunami Thai island; a husband and father hurtling towards a distant moon. From ecological catastrophe to the costs of ambition, they open up a poignant conversation about memory, love, sacrifice, and the ways we hold on to the people who define us. Chaired by **Rachelle Atalla**.

AI

Sarah Perry: Death of an Ordinary Man

15:15-16:15
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *Death of an Ordinary Man* - an unflinching, tender work of non-fiction - **Sarah Perry** trains her gaze on the dying process itself, taking us to the bedside of her father-in-law as his life ends, just days after his cancer diagnosis. The author of *The Essex Serpent* and Booker-nominated *Enlightenment*, reflects on why she chose to write about this intimate time of heightened experience and astonishment - a conversation as much about living as it is about dying. Chaired by **Di Speirs**.

AI

Shida Bazayr: The Nights Are Quiet in Tehran

15:30-16:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Laced with secrets, sorrow, and the longing of exile, *The Nights Are Quiet in Tehran* tells the human story of political upheaval. **Shida Bazayr** reveals the reality of leaving your homeland and living in hope, following one family from the Iranian Revolution to present-day Germany. Shortlisted for 2026's International Booker Prize, it draws on Bazayr's parents' memories and the dissonance of witnessing Iran's turmoil from afar. A rare chance to hear her reflections firsthand. Chaired by **Marjorie Lotfi**.

CC

Derek Forbes: A Very Simple Mind

15:45-16:45
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From their early days as late-70s Glasgow post-punks to the international success of 'Don't You (Forget About Me)', bassist **Derek Forbes** was a key player in Simple Minds' first decade. Having also recorded and performed with Iggy Pop, David Bowie, Big Country, Kirsty MacColl, and many others, the Scottish music icon arrives at the Festival brimming with anecdotes from his autobiography, *A Very Simple Mind*. He'll even bring his guitar for a song or two.

AI

Leila Elder & Mahmud El Sayed: Future Histories

16:30-17:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Where will the world be in 25 years? How about two centuries from now? Today, two writers with audacious imaginations are here to share their predictions. A pioneer of sci-fi genre Arabfuturism, **Mahmud El Sayed** foresees political unrest aboard a spaceship in *The Republic of Memory*. He joins **Leila Elder** - editor of the short story anthology, *Iran +100*, which imagines the country in the year 2053 - for a thought-provoking discussion about imagined futures. Chaired by **Irenosen Okojie**.

CC



Sarah Perry, 15:15-16:15



Shida Bazayr, 15:30-16:30



Mahmud El Sayed, 16:30-17:30



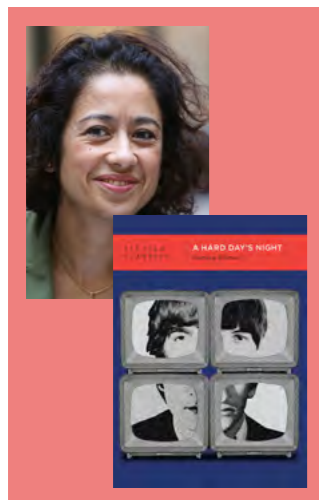
Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
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Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [C] Remote Appearance [F&D] Food & Drink



Charlotte Higgins, 17:15-18:15



Samira Ahmed, 18:45-19:45



Ian Leslie, 18:45-19:45

Bias, Impartiality, and the Future of News

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In an age of conflict, conspiracies, and unchecked AI generation, having news sources we can trust has never been more vital. But how does our media maintain balance on such rocky ground? Is complete impartiality the best way to tell a story? And how might emerging technologies bake bias into our journalistic landscape? Our panel tackling these pressing questions includes **Lewis Goodall** (*The News Agents* podcast) and **Fergus McIntosh** (*The New Yorker*) more exciting guests to be announced - check online for full line-up.

(AI)

Andrew Durbin: The Wonderful World That Almost Was

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The Wonderful World That Almost Was explores the lives of two key figures in New York's art scene. Penned by *Frieze* magazine editor, **Andrew Durbin**, it traces the relationship between Peter Hujar and Paul Thek: their first encounter in '50s Miami, their intense creative and sexual relationship in the '60s, their fall out in the '70s. Hear Durbin unpacking this love story of art, history, and the glamour and grit of mid-20th-century NYC.

(AI)

Speak Up: A Spoken Word Poetry Workshop with Katie Ailes & Kevin Mclean

17:00-19:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Join poets **Katie Ailes** and **Kevin Mclean**, directors of Scotland's award-winning Loud Poets, for this inspiring spoken word poetry workshop. Explore what makes dynamic, innovative spoken word poems, and then get stuck into exercises on writing for performance. Sharing work out loud can be scary, so the pair will share plenty of tips on how to kick nerves and build confidence performing onstage - and there'll be an opportunity to practice at the mic. No experience needed.

Charlotte Higgins: Ukrainian Lessons

17:15-18:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In 2022, **Charlotte Higgins** headed to Ukraine to cover a literary festival, an experience that transformed her life. *Ukrainian Lessons: Art in a Time of War* explores how culture is weaponised during times of war, the lasting impact on society, and how art so easily shifts from collateral damage to a central front. Hear the *Guardian's* chief culture writer delving into art as a form of resistance during devastating times. Chaired by **Allan Little**.

(AI)

Brief Encounters with Buffy's Book Club

18:00-20:00
Spiegel tent
£25.00 [£20.00]

Lizzy Hadfield has long been a tastemaker, but with Buffy's Book Club she took London and New York's literary scenes by storm. Join her at this special event to sip, socialise, and compare TBR lists with other discerning book lovers in celebration of **Vintage Classic's Brief Encounters** collection. Enjoy a drink as 'Bibliotherapists' pair you with the perfect short novel for your taste - whether that's an Edith Wharton ghost story or a lesser-known gem by Virginia Woolf - which you'll get to take home.

(AI) 🍷

Samira Ahmed & Ian Leslie: Two of Us

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

They may be one of the most legendary and influential groups to have ever existed but there's still so much to know about the Beatles. **Ian Leslie's** *John and Paul* reframes Lennon and McCartney's relationship like never before, while **Samira Ahmed's** *A Hard Day's Night* reveals how the Beatles' first film transformed the band. The pair come together today to chat about their joyous, myth-challenging biographies, offering fresh perspectives on the lads from Liverpool. Chaired by **Vikki Reilly**.

(AI)

Gemma Cairney: The Immortal Sisterhood

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Travellers have often looked to the stars for guidance; but, for award-winning broadcaster and author **Gemma Cairney**, her constellation is a cluster of 12 inspirational women across history. Cairney talks to us about her radiant book, *The Immortal Sisterhood* - full of dream-like essays that, like the boundary-breaking women who influence them, defy expectation and form. Discover Cairney's immortal sisterhood in a conversation that'll leave you reflecting on your own guiding stars and how they've shaped you. Chaired by **Sarah Gwonyoma**.

(AI)

Pen Pals: Tash Aw & Édouard Louis

19:00-20:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From the moment they met at a literary festival, **Tash Aw** and **Édouard Louis'** friendship was intertwined with their creative processes. Aw, whose novel *The South* was longlisted for the 2025 Booker Prize, began a daily exchange of ideas with Louis, the depth of their understanding making him a natural choice to translate the French author's gut-wrenchingly personal books - most recently, *Collapse*. They come together to discuss their friendship as a 'laboratory for creation'. Chaired by **Daniel Hahn**.

(AI)

Alison Irvine: Barrowland

20:00-21:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Playing Glasgow's iconic Barrowland Ballroom is a 'Made it!' moment for bands around the world. Acts including David Bowie, Blondie, Biffy Clyro, The Clash, and thousands more have had its sprung floors bouncing, and sweat dripping from its star-studded ceiling. There's no other room like it in the world. Today, *Barrowland* author **Alison Irvine** takes us into its backstage corners to reveal the venue's unseen story, celebrating some of its electric gigs and demands for 'WAN MAIR CHOON!'.

(AI)

Hollie McNish: Virgin

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Virginity is something **Hollie McNish** has spent years thinking about, from the looming presence we can feel it has in our youth, to whether the Virgin Mary ever got annoyed by her eternal nickname. In *Virgin*, McNish picks at the six-letter word with her trademark mix of softness, frankness, and humour, to explore its true power. Hear the Ted Hughes Award-winning author of *Lobster* and *Slug* dive further into these thoughts and experience her electric stage presence firsthand. Chaired by **Sarah Gwonyoma**.

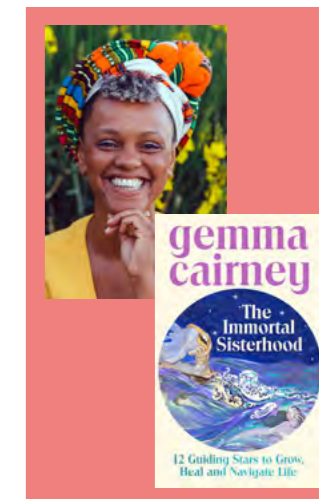
(AI) 📺

404 Ink: Ten Years of Publishing Loudly

21:00-22:30
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Publishing loudly was always the name of the game at alternative press 404 Ink, but all good things must come to an end. After 10 years fostering some of the country's most exciting literary talent, innovating every step of the way, you're invited to join co-founders **Heather McDaid** and **Laura Jones-Rivera** as they end their story not with a whimper, but a banging celebration of their brilliant authors. Featuring **Genevieve Jagger**, **Nadine Aisha Jassat**, **Carrie Marshall**, **Elle Nash**, **Andrés N Ordorica**, and **Arusa Qureshi**. Note: this is a standing, party-style event with limited seating.

(AI)



Gemma Cairney, 18:45-19:45



Hollie McNish, 20:30-21:30

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: 📺 Livestreamed | 🗣️ British Sign Language | 🗣️ Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance | 🍷 Food & Drink





Candice Carty-Williams, 12:00-13:00



Jess Elliott Dennison, 13:00-16:00

The Inside Scoop on Investigations

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

There is no better definition of good information than diligent, impartial, well-resourced investigative journalism, where rumours are sifted from verified facts which lead to action. Discussing this most specialised of fields are a panel including Centre for Investigative Journalism chair **Isabel Hilton** and **Lucia Osborne-Crowley**, whose acclaimed book, *The Lasting Harm: Witnessing the Trial of Ghislaine Maxwell*, draws on firsthand court reporting from one of the most high-profile cases in living memory.

(AI)

The Compassion Salon: Book Festival Edition

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Compassion is at the heart of community, something which social entrepreneur, healthcare academic, and author Dr **Marti Balaam** has nurtured in Edinburgh since 2019 with her uplifting literary salon celebrating literature that focuses on empathy and wellbeing. The Compassion Salon is a space for people to connect and reflect on what it is to be human. Today's event, in partnership with Edinburgh Medical School 300, features writer and GP **Gavin Francis**, poet **Hollie McNish**, and Edinburgh's Makar **Michael Pedersen**.

(AI)

Rebecca Birrell & Megan Hunter: Love Against the Shadows

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In **Megan Hunter's** *Day of Light*, an enchanted afternoon in Bloomsbury-inspired Sussex ends in a tragedy which echoes across six decades, while **Rebecca Birrell's** *Venus, Vanishing* evokes the heady, dangerous world of 1930s Berlin. In both, beauty and risk intertwine, and queer love blazes defiantly under the shadow of loss, repression, and catastrophe. Hear major new talent Birrell, and author of *The End We Start from*, Hunter, discussing art, hidden histories, and the fierce, fragile force of love.

(AI)

Candice Carty-Williams: Queenie is Working on It

12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Some protagonists are so full of life, they become as real to us as friends. **Candice Carty-Williams'** *Queenie* is among the best of them. What a treat that we get to meet her again in the much-anticipated sequel, *Queenie is Working on It* - 10 years older but apparently none the wiser. Don't miss Carty-Williams in conversation about the singular pressures of 30-something womanhood and why she just couldn't quit the character that launched her writing career. Chaired by **Sarah Gwonyoma**.

(AI)

Have Lunch with Jess Elliott Dennison

13:00-16:00
Elliott's Studio
£100.00

Crispy fennel and lemon bhajis. Courgette and ricotta lasagne. **Jess Elliott Dennison** is at the peak of her creative powers in *Vegetable Recipes*, and today she brings her knack for Earth-grown deliciousness to the very place her ideas begin. Join Elliott Dennison in her Studio as she shares the endless possibilities of simple, seasonal cooking, all while creating you an utterly sumptuous lunch. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink, a generous multi-course lunch, and paired wine on the table.*

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The Front List: Charlie Mackesy

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Charlie Mackesy's bestselling illustrated book *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse* (and its Academy Award-winning BBC animation) gifted readers a timely reminder of the beauty, hope, and comfort which can be found in the world around us - and, most of all, within one another. Mackesy joins us to celebrate his newest book *Always Remember: The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, the Horse and the Storm*, about this very special group of friends. This event, with live drawing and a discussion on where the characters are now, is for everyone and anyone aged over 12.

(BSL) (AI)

Howard Cunnell & Blake Morrison: A Life Observed

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Blake Morrison and **Howard Cunnell** are masters of the everyday, balancing honesty and care in equal measure. Morrison's *On Memoir: An A-Z of Life Writing* offers delightful musings on the art of narrative non-fiction, while his poetry collection *Afterburn* illuminates the small intimacies that bind us to others. Cunnell's *Sun Country*, meanwhile, is a luminous memoir journeying from sorrow to acceptance. They join us to discuss these tender books about stories, memory, and family histories. Chaired by **Di Speirs**.

(AI)

Richard Collett & Andrew Hussey: Talking to Strangers

13:45-14:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Do we have more in common than that which divides us? In their latest works, **Andrew Hussey** (*Fractured France: Journey Through a Divided Nation*) and **Richard Collett** (*Along the Borders: In Search of What Divides and Unites the British Isles*) travelled through France and Britain, talking to strangers to find the heart of each nation. Today, they share stories of their conversations - from the profound to the ridiculous - reflecting on what brings us all together.

(AI)

Deep Listening: A Workshop with Emily Kasriel

14:00-15:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£24.00/£8.00]

In a society where empathetic dialogue feels increasingly rare, BBC journalist, executive coach, and mediator **Emily Kasriel** has developed Deep Listening: a transformative practice that moves beyond surface-level conversation to create genuine connection, foster authentic expression, and open pathways to understanding - even when we profoundly disagree. In this interactive workshop, Kasriel will demonstrate this innovative approach and give participants a chance to put it into practice and consider its potential in their own lives.

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [O] Remote Appearance [🍴] Food & Drink

Poorna Bell: She Wanted More

14:00-15:00
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

She Wanted More is **Poorna Bell's** urgent and wise exploration of women who have shunned society's 'rules' to forge their own paths, no longer settling for what others expect across careers, romance, motherhood, and more. Join Bell today, alongside podcaster **Sam Baker** and poet **Hollie McNish**, as they lead an expectation-busting rallying cry to reimagine our own roadmaps and to know that, at any age, we can reshape our futures.

(AI)

Ione Gamble & Philippa Snow: Icons Only

15:00-16:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *It's Terrible the Things I Have to Do to Be Me*, **Philippa Snow** gives us a radical study of female icons through pairs of famous women. It's full of the glamour and debauchery of Hollywood, just like **Ione Gamble's** *The Polyester Book of (Bad) Taste*: a deep dive into the joy and power of personal pleasures, quirks, obsessions, and bad taste. Join the duo's discussion on pop culture, exposure, punishment, and the gruelling demands of femininity and fame. Chaired by **Tomiwa Folorunso**.

(AI)

Fergus McIntosh: The Matter of Facts

15:15-16:15
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In an era of post-truth, deepfakes, AI misinformation, and underfunded newsrooms, guardians of truth are more important than ever. *The New Yorker's* head research editor **Fergus McIntosh** leads an exacting, AI-free operation, which doesn't just check every article, story, poem, cartoon, and piece of cover art for essential truth, but also has to adjudicate every day on what exactly constitutes 'fact' in the first place. He joins us with compelling tales from the frontline of preserving objective reality. Chaired by **Lucia Osborne-Crowley**.

(AI)

Stephen Grosz: Love's Labour

15:30-16:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

If **Stephen Grosz's** bestseller *The Examined Life* was a guidebook for living well, *Love's Labour* is a roadmap for how to love better: our friends, our families, our partners, and ourselves. Perfectly dubbed 'the poet laureate of human emotion' by Elizabeth Day, today the psychoanalyst shares his gift of pinpointing what ails the heartsick. Expect candid tales from the consulting room, some tricky home truths, and a whole lot of love. Chaired by **Chitra Ramaswamy**.

(AI)

Close Read: The Waves by Virginia Woolf

17:00-18:00
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In our Close Read series, a brilliant author guides you through a deep-diving discussion of a classic text or genre that's inspired them. Think of it as an event blending friendly book club vibes with insightful study notes. Today, **Brian Dillon** (author of *Ambivalence*) unpacks Virginia Woolf's stylistic masterpiece, *The Waves* - an exploration of individuality, self, and community that is regarded by many as her greatest work. Join us to discover Woolf like never before.

Julie Farrell, Fergus Murray & Lucy Rose: Someone Like Me

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Society often puts us into boxes, watering down a diversity of experiences into one singular story. *Someone Like Me* says: no more. This non-fiction anthology, edited by Clem Bastow and Jo Case, offers an eclectic mix of stories from Autistic writers to expand our understanding of the Autistic experience. Join contributors **Fergus Murray**, **Julie Farrell**, and **Lucy Rose** as they explode stereotypes and discuss everything from intrusive thoughts and Autistic affirmation in families to stargazing and mermaids.

(CC)

Jacqueline Wilson: Picture Imperfect

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

For millennials everywhere, **Jacqueline Wilson** is cherished for creating some of our favourite childhood characters, from Tracy Beaker to Vicky Angel. Today, the icon of children's literature introduces her latest novel for adults, *Picture Imperfect* - a sequel to 1999's beloved *The Illustrated Mum*. In this wonderfully nostalgic, moving event, we catch up with Wilson and hear about a grown-up Dolphin Westward, torn between two possible futures, and the continued chaos of her mother, Marigold.

(AI)

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Chris Kraus: The Four Spent the Day Together

17:15-18:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Against an increasingly polarised backdrop of Trumpian, right-wing politics, how can we begin to understand the America of today? With her urgent new novel, *The Four Spent the Day Together*, **Chris Kraus** offers her unflinchingly honest attempt via the histories of three generations of American lives. Join the author of modern classic *I Love Dick* for a conversation about repeated patterns, fresh starts, and making sense of chaos. Chaired by **Harry Josephine Giles**.

(AI)

Lauren Elkin & Astrid Jorgensen: Raise Your Voice

18:00-19:30
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Pitchy or pitch-perfect, our voices hold power. In *Average at Best*, **Astrid Jorgensen** details her journey from introvert to stage star, converting strangers into united musical forces at her phenomenal Pub Choir events. She joins **Lauren Elkin**, author of *Scaffolding*, *Art Monsters*, and *Vocal Break*: a fist-pumping history of how female singing voices intersect with activism. Hear **Sinéad Gleeson** lead a full-throated conversation, then unleash your own vocal cords under the tutelage of Jorgensen herself.

(CC)

Laura Jones-Rivera & Heather McDavid: Publisher Not Found

18:30-19:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

They've published *New York Times* bestsellers, international stars, and countless debut authors. But after a decade of running the award-winning 404 Ink, **Laura Jones-Rivera** and **Heather McDavid** are winding down on their own terms. *Publisher Not Found*, part of their innovative *Inklings* series, is an honest, enlightening, behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to run a small press. In this celebratory conversation, the trailblazing pair discuss disruption, transparency, meaningful support, and what's next. Chaired by **Claire Sawers**.

(AI)

Niamh Hargan & Kiran Millwood Hargrave: Soulmates and Sliding Doors

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A match made in heaven, **Nyla Ahmad** meets two contemporary writers to debate the role of fate in finding 'The One'. **Niamh Hargan's** *Nothing Good Happens After 2am* follows rival bartenders on East London's cocktail scene while **Kiran Millwood Hargrave's** *Almost Life* is a tender tale of two women who meet on the steps of the Sacré-Coeur in Paris and keep meeting, again and again. If you've read *One Day* five times over, this conversation's for you.

(AI)

Harriet Tyce: Witch Trial

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Crime writers don't often find themselves caught in a web of deceit and treachery - but that's exactly where author and contestant **Harriet Tyce** was during series four of *The Traitors*. A former barrister (and forever Faithful), Tyce's gripping new title, *Witch Trial*, finds an 18-year-old dead in Edinburgh's Inverleith Park - and her best friends charged with murder. Join Tyce to discuss modern day witch-hunts and obsessions, and whether she's been inspired by her duplicitous co-stars. Chaired by **Bryan Burnett**.

(D) (BSL) (AI)

Michael Pollan & Anil Seth: Considering Consciousness

19:00-20:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]



In *A World Appears* and *Being You*, **Michael Pollan** and **Anil Seth** ask one of the biggest questions there is: how does consciousness happen? From brain labs to Buddhist caves, controlled hallucinations to psychedelic revelation, Pollan - the endlessly inquisitive author of *How to Change Your Mind* - joins leading neuroscientist Seth to discuss Seth's groundbreaking theory of consciousness, alongside perception, reality, selfhood, and the limits of objective neuroscience in explaining who we are. *Please note: Michael Pollan will join remotely.*

(AI) (C)

Evelyn Clarke: The Ending Writes Itself

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Beginnings are tough, but endings can be murderous - just ask **V E Schwab** (internationally bestselling author) and **Cat Clarke** (acclaimed YA author and screenwriter). Joining forces as **Evelyn Clarke**, the longtime pals-turned-literary-double-act share *The Ending Writes Itself*: their fiendishly clever joint-debut featuring six writers, a private island, and a life-changing publishing opportunity that might turn deadly. Today, the pair get into the nitty gritty of mystery, satirising their own industry, and the fun of co-writing 2026's most hotly anticipated thriller.

(D) (AI)

10 Years After David Bowie: Sound & Visions

20:30-22:00
Spiegeltent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Ten years since we lost David Bowie, journalist and broadcaster **Nicola Meighan** hosts an exuberant evening celebrating the music, writing, iconography, theatrical worlds, and cinematic wonder of the Thin White Duke. Expect Bowie covers from brilliant artists, and some very special guests reflecting on the impact of Ziggy Stardust, *Aladdin Sane*, and the wild and trailblazing work of the man who fell to earth, then fired it up.

(AI)



Jacqueline Wilson, 17:00-18:00



Harriet Tyce, 18:45-19:45



Evelyn Clarke, 20:30-21:30

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (C) Remote Appearance | (U) Food & Drink

First Edition

10:00-11:00
Spiegel tent
Pay What You Can

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is - but we know how hard it can be to keep up. That's what our First Edition events are for: offering you the chance to join leading journalists from across the media (and the world) as they discuss the day's breaking news over a cup of coffee. Check website for today's guests.

AI

Emily Kasriel & Gabrielle Rifkind: A Manifesto for Radical Listening

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How do we connect and really hear each other amid the cacophony of our world? Former BBC journalist, mediator, and executive coach **Emily Kasriel** and world-leading conflict mediator and psychotherapist **Gabrielle Rifkind** have some ideas. They join us to discuss *Deep Listening* and *How to Agree to Disagree*, both expert guides for tackling conflict in the modern day, exploring how to empower yourself (even when in fierce disagreement), increase empathy, and foster understanding across divides. Chaired by **Alisha Fernandez Miranda**.

AI

Shared Reading with Open Book

11:00-12:00
Venue A
Free Ticketed

Join Open Book Lead Readers for an informal and relaxed shared reading session. Each session will explore a chapter from a debut book from this year's Festival Programme. No experience necessary, all reading materials will be provided on the day.

Anil Seth: Being You

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How does the feeling of 'being you' emerge from billions of neurons? Pioneering neuroscientist **Anil Seth**'s spent decades investigating that question. His bestselling *Being You* offers an astonishing answer: consciousness is not a window onto reality but a controlled hallucination our brains generate to keep us alive. Hear the author of one of the most exhilarating science books of recent years discuss perception, selfhood, and why nothing is quite as it seems with **Gavin Francis**.

AI

Hannah French: The Rolling Year

12:00-13:00
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Eating with the seasons is one thing, but have you ever tuned your ear to them? Dr **Hannah French** did while writing *The Rolling Year: Listening to the Seasons with Vivaldi*. Today the BBC Radio 3 presenter and musicologist shares her fresh perspective on one of the world's most cherished musical scores, drawing from experts in science, health, food, and more. 300 years on, what can Vivaldi still teach us about the beauty and brutality of nature? Chaired by **Kate Molleson**.

AI

Erica Wagner: Wash

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Erica Wagner brings us *Wash*, one of the most critically acclaimed historical novels of 2026. Reimagining the life of Washington 'Augustus' Roebling, the man who oversaw the building of the iconic Brooklyn Bridge, the book is something of an 'anti-biography'. Meet Wagner today - a literary personality of truly polymathic range - to discover how a singular but little-known life can unspool themes of growth, yearning, the price of achievement, and roads not taken.

AI

Oliver Bullough & Caroline Knowles: Dirty Money

12:15-13:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Our cities are built and rebuilt on the billions of private investors. Funds are pumped in, shifted around, and squirrelled away - movements that have been closely scrutinised by **Oliver Bullough** and **Caroline Knowles** in their new books *Everybody Loves Our Dollars* and *Uneasy Streets*. Where Bullough discusses just how much of the world's GDP is 'dirty', Knowles explores the impact on the ground, as developments are left unfinished when political tides turn and investment dries up.

AI

**Stephen McGinty: One Morning in March**

12:45-13:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

On 13 March 1996, at Dunblane Primary School, 16 pupils and one teacher were murdered, and many more injured, in the deadliest mass shooting in British history. The crime didn't just shock the nation, it changed it - but only after an extraordinary political battle by a group of grieving parents determined that the atrocity would never be repeated. Journalist and BAFTA award-winning documentarian **Stephen McGinty**, author of *One Morning in March*, reveals the story of that devastating day, the troubling events which preceded it, and its lasting legacy.

AI

Marina Warner: Sanctuary

13:45-14:45
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What is 'sanctuary'? Is it a sacred place where travellers and refugees might find safety and solace? Or is it a homeland to be shuttered and defended against incomers from the outside world? Exploring the concept throughout history and myth in her book *Sanctuary*, prolific critic, cultural historian, and Booker Prize-shortlisted novelist **Marina Warner** joins us today to ask profound and urgent questions about the right to safety, home, freedom of movement, and peace. Chaired by **Charlotte Higgins**.

AI

THE FREDERICK HOOD
MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Front List: David Olusoga

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Author, broadcaster, historian, and *The Celebrity Traitors*' ultimate Faithful, **David Olusoga** has been pivotal in broadening the scope of British history. Through titles including *Black and British: A Forgotten History*, and TV series like *Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners* and the beloved *A House Through Time* (which recently featured a property on Edinburgh's Calton Hill), he's exposed racial injustice throughout history, and told a more honest, comprehensive story of our past. Today he reflects on his impressive career and what's yet to be achieved.

BSL AI

Close Read: In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

14:00-15:00
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In our Close Read series, a brilliant author guides you through a deep-diving discussion of a classic text or genre that's inspired them. Think of it as an event blending friendly book club vibes with insightful study notes. Today, **Chris Kraus** (author of *I Love Dick* and *The Four Spent the Day Together*) turns her critic's gaze on *In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote's true-crime trailblazer. Together, uncover the layers of Capote's controversial, compelling non-fiction novel.

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [O] Remote Appearance [U] Food & Drink





Kathy Lette, 15:30-16:30

Peter Ross: Journeys in Ancient Britain and Ireland

14:00-15:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Ancient places, structures, and monuments can be key sites of wonder and wondering, as **Peter Ross** finds in *Upon A White Horse*. Combining historical research and archaeological insights with fascinating stories, the bestselling, prize-winning author of *Steeple Chasing* journeys through Britain and Ireland's prehistoric sites, drawing on their influence on our art, culture, and society. Today, he discusses his travels, his findings (including a wooden goddess in Edinburgh), and the mysteries encountered along the way. Chaired by **Caroline Eden**.

(AI)

John Lanchester: Look What You Made Me Do

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Picture settling down to watch the year's buzziest TV show, only to realise it's based on the toe-curling details of your own marriage. That's the premise behind *Look What You Made Me Do*, **John Lanchester's** darkly funny jaunt through the resentments and entitlements of the middle classes - his first novel since Booker-longlisted *The Wall*. **Dan Richards** chats to him about our public and private faces and the differences that pull taut between generations.

(AI)

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND EVENT

John Curtice: Is Two-Party Politics Over?

15:00-16:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]



Sir **John Curtice**, Professor of Politics at the University of Strathclyde, has become known as one of our most incisive, animated, and well-regarded political commentators on TV through his clear and knowledgeable translations of polling data. In the wake of election results across Scotland, England, and Wales - which saw distinct shifts in voting and political power - he shares his view on the status of the two party political system at Westminster, and how its demise would herald the biggest change in our electoral landscape since the 1920s.

(AI)

David Turner: A History of Resistance

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Those who write the history books shape the stories we come to know - but who gets left out? Historian and professor **David Turner** considers this in *Disability: A History of Resistance*. Spanning centuries of British history, he unearths not just historic hardships, but also untold narratives of resistance, resourcefulness, and resilience excluded from mainstream accounts. Hear Turner reflect on how understanding our nation's past offers us the opportunity to create a truly inclusive future.

(AI)

Kathy Lette: The Sisterhood Rules

15:30-16:30
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Veteran bon vivant **Kathy Lette** has a knack for bringing levity to life's curveballs. Her new novel, *The Sisterhood Rules* - called 'deliciously rude and darkly funny' by Nicole Kidman - follows twins whose bond is shattered when one has an affair with the other's husband. Forced to co-operate when their mother goes missing, it's a romp through the bumpy terrain of siblinghood. Join Lette for a natter about lust, loyalty, and the ties that bind us. Chaired by **Jenny Colgan**.

(AI)

Brigid Collins & Christine De Luca: Such Fragile Futures

15:45-16:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What does it mean to bring tender attention to our encounters with nature? Join artist **Brigid Collins** and poet **Christine De Luca** as they unfold their year-long creative collaboration in Dr Neil's Garden beside Edinburgh's Duddingston Loch. With readings from *Such Fragile Futures: An Artist and a Poet Reflect in a Garden*, and artworks so sensuous you want to reach out and touch them, discover how humans might begin healing our world.

(AI)

Benjamin Wood: Seascraper

15:45-16:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A tang of sea salt in the air, and a thundering wave of acclaim - buckle up for an encounter with **Benjamin Wood's** Nero Book Award-winning and Booker Prize-longlisted *Seascraper*, a novel that challenges the limits of literary realism. Today, hear Wood chatting with us about his haunting world, where a young, duty-bound shrimp-fisherman is offered a tantalising out. You'll feel the razor shells crunch underfoot in this conversation that asks: Can we ever, really, break free? Chaired by **Sinéad Gleeson**.

(AI)

Y M Abdel-Magied & Meena Kandasamy: Putting the World to Rights

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Author, screenwriter, and award-winning social advocate **Y M Abdel-Magied** joins poet, activist, and novelist **Meena Kandasamy** for a galvanising conversation about principles and power dynamics in a divided world. In *At Sea*, Abdel-Magied draws on her past life as a drilling engineer to confront urgent questions about the cost of human ambition, while Kandasamy's *Fieldwork as a Sex Object* follows the fuse from online incel threats to offline nationalist violence. Two clear-eyed commentators in their element. Chaired by **Nicola Sturgeon**.

(AI)

Oliver Bullough: Everybody Loves Our Dollars

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Following his oligarch-busting *Butler to the World*, **Oliver Bullough** returns to hang the world's dirty money out to dry. In *Everybody Loves Our Dollars*, Bullough suggests there's never been a better time to be a criminal in the UK. Moving and hiding money couldn't be easier and despite efforts to legislate, it's estimated as much as 5% of world GDP is on the grubbier side. This revelatory conversation brings a murky underworld into razor-sharp focus.

(AI)

Kapka Kassabova: Borrowed Land

17:30-18:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What does it mean to truly fight for your home when faced with the forces of colonialism, industry, and depopulation? In *Borrowed Land*, **Kapka Kassabova** draws a stunning portrait of the Scottish Highlands, telling the epic and urgent stories of the last true Highlanders and their battle for preservation. Today, the award-winning writer, whose recent Balkan quartet concluded with the spellbinding *Anima*, delves into the extraordinary, centuries-old connections between the land, nature, and people. Chaired by **Angus Peter Campbell**. Supported by *Claire & Mark Urquhart*.

(AI)

Communities Cabaret: Changing Your Mind

18:00-19:00
Spiegel tent
Pay What You Can



We've challenged local writers and poets to respond to this year's Festival theme: Changing Your Mind. Join us as we bring them together to perform their work and create a patchwork of ideas on trying new things, listening to different perspectives, and keeping a sense of wonder in our ever-changing world. You can expect a diverse, thought-provoking, and energising evening of live music, poetry, and storytelling.

(AI)

Doug Johnstone: Ghost Notes

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Ghost Notes is the latest instalment in **Doug Johnstone's** addictive series following the Skelf women: three generations of funeral-directors-turned-private-investigators. This time, they're thrown into the murky world of 'grief tech', a booming industry that creates digital avatars of the dead. Hear one of Scotland's most reliably entertaining authors - now in his 20th year of publishing - reflect on his career so far and chat about writing the death industry with characteristic humour, insight, and heart.

(AI)

Frank Dikötter: Red Dawn Over China

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Over a century ago, the Chinese Communist Party emerged as a band of radical, Soviet Union-backed countryside insurgents. Now, it presides over one of the world's major economic, technological, and military powers, with a population of 1.4 billion. **Isabel Hilton** talks to leading China historian and Samuel Johnson Prize-winner **Frank Dikötter** about his gripping new history, *Red Dawn Over China*, unpacking China's path to Communism and how it shaped the world we know today.

(AI)

Brian Dillon: Ambivalence

19:15-20:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

For many of us, reading is more than a syllabus - it is sustenance. In *Ambivalence*, boundary-breaking essayist **Brian Dillon** looks back on his formative years in Dublin, tracing an education shaped less by classrooms than by books, grief, and radical ideas. The acclaimed author of *Essayism* discusses the seductions of ambiguity and how reading freethinking writers like Woolf, Beckett, Benjamin, and Barthes gave form to a mind devoted to the process of becoming. Chaired by **Charlotte Higgins**.

(AI)



Y M Abdel-Magied, 17:00-18:00

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (O) Remote Appearance | (U) Food & Drink



Nonomiya / Song of Rona Island

19:00-21:00
Greyfriars Kirk
£30.00 [£25.00/£20.00/£5.00]



As part of *Scotland to the World*, we bring you a unique fusion of Japanese and Scottish culture. Rarely experienced outside its home country, Noh is a 600-year-old form of classical Japanese musical drama, into which the experimental Noh Reimagined theatre company is breathing new life. They bring us today's two-part performance: introducing Noh Theatre in Part One with a piece based on the oldest novel of all time, followed by a new and contemporary collaboration blending Scottish and Japanese folklore, myth and music in Part Two. *Part of Scotland to the World. Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown, British Council, and The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.*

This performance is repeated on Tue 25 Aug at 19:00.

Part One: Nonomiya (Wildwood Shrine) (15th century)

Nonomiya is a masterwork of Noh theatre, written by Konparu Zenchiku in the 15th century, based on the 11th-century classic, *The Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu. This performance presents the famous second act, in which the spirit of Lady Rokujo reveals her lingering passion and sorrow.

Part Two: Song of Rona Island (2025)

A once-in-a-lifetime chance to experience the groundbreaking union of Scottish culture and the 600-year-old art of Japanese Noh theatre, inspired by former Makar **Kathleen Jamie**'s essay 'On Rona' from her collection, *Sightlines*. Through dialogue, chant, dance, and music, five Noh performers and Scots musicians **Aidan O'Rourke** and **Brighde Chaimbeul** take us on an ecological journey to an abandoned Hebridean island to discover its haunting past.

Jason Burke: The Revolutionists

19:15-20:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In the 1970s a new breed of charismatic and violent extremists publicised their causes before a global audience through hijackings, hostage-taking, and terrorist bombing campaigns - the attention tactics they employed have never gone away. Today the *Guardian*'s international security correspondent **Jason Burke** discusses *The Revolutionists*, his thrilling, unsettling secret history of the decade through profiles of unpredictable anti-West characters including Leila Khaled, Carlos the Jackal, and the Baader-Meinhof gang. Chaired by **Allan Little**.

(AI)

Åsne Seierstad: Russian Lives at War

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In an at-war nation which has shut down dissent and reportage, how can we glimpse behind the curtain? Discussing *Unpeace: Russian Lives at War*, **Åsne Seierstad** (author of *The Bookseller of Kabul* and called 'the supreme non-fiction writer of her generation') draws upon the testimony of Wagner Group defector Andrey Medvedev and her own time living in Russia to craft an intimate yet far-reaching, unflinching portrait of Russian life in the Putin age.

(D) (CC)

The Immortal Sisterhood - Live

20:30-22:00
Spiegelentent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Connection lies at the heart of the Immortal Sisterhood. Fresh from Lincoln Center in NYC, they take to the Spiegelentent today for a mesmerising blend of music and words: a radiant experiment in literary ritual. Defying expectation, much like the women whose stories inspired them, this event is an ode to great women from history and the threads that bond us. Featuring **Gemma Cairney** alongside an amazing cast of performers, including **Candice Carty-Williams**, **Natasha Cottrill**, and **Camara Lundestad Joof**.

(AI)

First Edition: PEN International

10:00-11:00
Spiegelentent
Pay What You Can

Start your day with the facts. In 2025, the 91st PEN International Congress in Kraków passed a resolution on the role of writers during a breakdown of peace and international order, and the urgent need for an active opposition. Today, **Viv Groskop** (PEN International Writers Circle) speaks to writers and journalists about the vital role of writers to defend facts, propel empathy, and hold governments accountable in a time of authoritarianism, disinformation, and inequality.

(AI)

How to Talk Across Divides: A Workshop with Sarah Stein Lubrano



11:00-13:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Researcher and author of *Don't Talk About Politics: How to Change 21st-Century Minds*, **Sarah Stein Lubrano** knows why most conversations achieve nothing, as well as why few have changed the world. In today's workshop, Stein Lubrano will guide participants of diverse viewpoints and opinions through how to approach conversations with openness, curiosity, and strategy, using learnings from ancient philosophy to modern neuroscience to help us move beyond endless circular arguments and raised voices to considerate, constructive discussions - and hopefully positive collaboration. Democracy depends on it.

Fresh Words: Roundhouse Collective

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
Pay What You Can

It's lunchtime, but there's no need to doomscroll over your meal deal. Be the first to discover the literary stars of the future, instead. In partnership with Scottish Book Trust and other leading UK talent spotters, this lively event showcases electrifying new voices, so grab your seat before everyone else does. Today, we partner with London's Roundhouse Poetry Collective, hearing readings from an amazing line-up of poets - check website for full details.

(AI)

Kirsty Gunn, Alan Riach & James Robertson: Scotland 1926

12:15-13:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

100 years ago, Scottish literature was crackling with new energy. In this lively panel chat, **Kirsty Gunn**, **Alan Riach**, and **James Robertson** revisit the Scottish Renaissance through landmark works including Hugh MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, the early work of Neil M Gunn (newly reissued this year), and other under-sung voices including Willa Muir and Helen Cruickshank. Deep dive into a remarkable literary moment and the writers who helped reshape Scotland's imaginative life.

(AI)

James Crawford: The Vanishing Earth

12:45-13:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In our insatiable pursuit of economic growth, modern civilisation has upended the planet; our relentless extraction of resources has created environmental and social carnage. Yet, within the same landscapes experiencing the ruins of extraction, radical alternatives are emerging. Discussing his incisive new book, *The Vanishing Earth*, acclaimed historian, writer, and BBC Radio 4's *Take Four Books* presenter **James Crawford** exposes the cost of endless growth on our planet and the essential actions that could save it.

(D) (AI)

Susie Boyt: Loved and Missed

13:45-14:45
Spiegelentent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Published to critical acclaim in the COVID summer of 2021, **Susie Boyt**'s *Loved and Missed* become a hand-sell favourite of booksellers, passionately recommended through a network of book-lovers and book-clubbers the whole world over. A 'quietly heroic' novel that explores the limits, disappointments, and excesses of love in all its forms - we're thrilled to finally welcome Boyt to Edinburgh to discuss this gorgeous slow-burn of a book with **Lisa Owens**.

(AI)



Sarah Stein Lubrano, 11:00-13:00



James Crawford, 12:45-13:45

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (O) Remote Appearance | (F) Food & Drink

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

The Front List:
Kiran Desai

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

After a 20-year wait, **Kiran Desai** returns with another spellbinding epic. Following two young lovers across continents, *The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny* is a sweeping love story and a dazzling meditation on class, race, migration, and the many forms of modern loneliness. This is a rare opportunity to hear the Booker Prize-winning author of *The Inheritance of Loss* reflect on solitude in all its forms, and why sometimes only novels can truly get at the raw truth of human experience. Chaired by **Georgina Godwin**.

(AI)



John Lanchester & Alexander Starritt:
Work/Life Balance

14:00-15:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two masters of observational fiction come together to explore why our feelings around work and money can reveal the deepest truths. **Alexander Starritt's** *Drayton and Mackenzie*, a friendship epic about two entrepreneurs, was the first novel in 15 years to grace the *Financial Times's* Business Book of the Year longlist, while **John Lanchester's** black comedy, *Look What You Made Me Do*, poses the question: is it ever ethical to profit from another person's pain? Supported by **Claire & Mark Urquhart**.

(AI)

Angus Peter Campbell:
Donald and His Seven Cows

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Whether in English or in Gaelic, land and memory sit at the heart of **Angus Peter Campbell's** absorbing, melodic writing. In *Donald and His Seven Cows*, Campbell explores the changes facing island life through the rituals and daily routines of Donald and his small herd, set against the vividly rendered backdrop of his native South Uist. Hear Campbell discuss the connections between land, history, folklore, and cultural memory. Chaired by **Joyce McMillan**.

(AI)

A C Grayling:
For the People

15:00-16:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The great British philosopher and academic **A C Grayling's** appearances are always an intellectual highlight of the Book Festival, as he turns a forensic, yet empathetic, gaze upon defining issues of our time. This year, Grayling addresses the urgent theme of his new book, *For the People*, exploring how the forces of authoritarianism, election interference, and loss of faith in our institutions threaten the collapse of democracy, while offering bold suggestions for its survival.

(BSL) (CC)

Paul French:
The Last Emperor of China

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The road to modern China began with the 1912 abdication of the final emperor Puyi and the establishment of the People's Republic, ending half a millennium of imperial rule from the mysterious Forbidden City. Award-winning historian of modern China, **Paul French**, brings all his expertise to bear in the meticulously-researched *The Last Emperor of China*, and today reveals the hidden story of the last days of empire and how they influenced all that followed.

(AI)

Lani Watson:
Why Ask Questions?

15:30-16:30
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Every once in a while, a book changes how you move through life. *Q: The Hidden Power of Questions in a World that Wants Answers* is one of those books: a revelatory examination, by philosopher **Lani Watson**, of the ways enquiry - not certainty - powered human progress from Socrates to the age of AI. Today she reveals how asking 'why?' enhances every conversation and relationship in our lives. Join us - there'll be plenty of time for questions.

(AI)

Celebrating Zoë Wicomb:
Writing Between Worlds

15:45-16:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Beloved writer, teacher, and thinker Zoë Wicomb transformed South African and Scottish literature with work of extraordinary intelligence, nuance, and moral clarity. In this special tribute event, we honour the life and work of the author of *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town*, *David's Story*, and *Still Life*, celebrating her voice, her influence, and the enduring power of work that reshaped how we understand home, history, and belonging. Join friends and colleagues including **Louise Welsh** and **Chitra Ramaswamy** to discuss this astonishing individual.

(AI)

Mikhail Fishman & Martin Sixsmith:
Fear and Loathing in the Kremlin

15:45-16:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

As new wars flare elsewhere, Russia's attacks on Ukraine haven't abated since 2022's full-scale invasion, and began well before it. Hear unique and urgent perspectives on how we got here from exiled Russian journalist **Mikhail Fishman** - whose *The Successor* charts Russia's decline from 1990 to 2015 through the life of assassinated activist and opposition leader, Boris Nemtsov - and Russia expert and former BBC Moscow correspondent, **Martin Sixsmith**, whose *Suing the Kremlin* documents efforts to recover the oligarch era's lost billions. Supported by the *Turtleton Charitable Trust*.

(CC)

Close Read: The Driver's Seat
by Muriel Spark

17:00-18:00
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In our Close Read series, a brilliant author guides you through a deep-diving discussion of a classic text or genre that's inspired them. Think of it as an event blending friendly book club vibes with insightful study notes. Today, **James Bailey** (author of *Like a Cat Loves a Bird*) unpacks Muriel Spark's metaphorical 'whydunnit', *The Driver's Seat*. With Bailey's expert insight into the author's life, get closer to Spark's globetrotting tale of self-destruction.

Tim Key: L.A. Baby!

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Following packed-out events with us in 2024 and 2025, comedian and writer **Tim Key** returns to the Festival with poetry collection, *L.A. Baby!*, created with his long-time design collaborator, Emily Juniper. Described by the *Guardian* as 'a hilarious and dreamlike chronicle', Key's latest collection constantly finds and pokes fun at gild of Hollywood. Join Key for an hour of laugh-out-loud poetry and anecdotes about his hectic adventures during his time cast adrift in La-La Land.

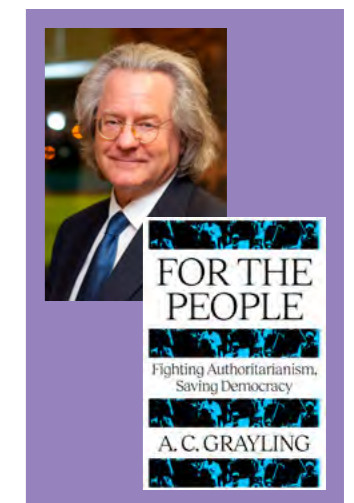
(AI)

Angharad Hampshire & Katja Hoyer:
What Would You Do?

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The Mare - journalist **Angharad Hampshire's** Walter Scott Prize-shortlisted debut novel - is a gripping portrait of an ordinary woman's descent into inhumanity during World War II. Historian **Katja Hoyer's** *Weimar: Life on the Edge of Catastrophe* draws on archival research to explore the true story of how, as the war enveloped them, the inhabitants of the ancient German town of Weimar became witnesses, perpetrators, victims, and bystanders. Together they discuss what we're all capable of when faced with catastrophe.

(AI)



A C Grayling, 15:00-16:00

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed (BSL) British Sign Language (CC) Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (C) Remote Appearance (U) Food & Drink



HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Claudia Rankine: Triage



17:30-18:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Genre-defying, multi-awarding-winning poet, essayist, and playwright **Claudia Rankine** returns to the Festival to discuss her remarkable new work, *Triage*. Through a hypnotic blend of narrative, memoir, and imagery, the novel follows a turbulent friendship that's buckled under the weight of the world. In this special event, Rankine speaks with **Marjorie Lotfi** about how beautiful, complicated friendships help us make sense of our lives, and that in the midst of anger, and exhaustion, there is hope.

(AI)



Cecilia Knapp & Lisa Owens: Girl, Woman, Mother?

17:30-18:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *Lack*, **Cecilia Knapp** writes a woman grappling with uncertainty about bringing new life into a burning world. In *Natural Disaster*, **Lisa Owens** follows a woman across the final 24 hours of parental leave, capturing the literal and existential challenges of being a mother, employee, and partner. Hear the authors discussing how their novels, from opposite sides of motherhood, speak to each other and to the push and pull of what it means to be a woman today.

(AI)

A Kick Up the Arts with Nicola Meighan – Live

18:00-19:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Arts writer and broadcaster supreme **Nicola Meighan** (*BBC Radio Scotland*, *BBC Radio 4*, *The Herald*) presents a live recording of her popular arts and culture podcast, *A Kick Up the Arts*, where she's hosted guests ranging from Val McDermid and Deacon Blue to Irvine Welsh and Barbara Dickson, as well as countless other brilliant voices. Enjoy an hour of live music and deep dive into albums, films, and books with some truly special guests. Check website for line-up.

(AI)

THE ANDERSON STRATHERN EVENT

Liam Byrne, Sarah Stein Lubrano & Marius Ostrowski: Can You Change Your Mind?

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]



How did we get so entrenched in our political and ideological positions? Can we change other people's minds about anything? And what does our newfound certainty about everything mean for society, for politics, and for our relationships? MP **Liam Byrne** (*Why Populists Are Winning: and How to Beat Them*), writer and researcher **Sarah Stein Lubrano** (*Don't Talk About Politics: How to Change 21st-Century Minds*), and historian **Marius Ostrowski** (*How We Think: Ten Thinker-Types to Understand Ourselves and Those Around Us*) explore these critical questions and more.

(D) (AI)

Gwendoline Riley: The Palm House

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Nobody writes the humour and pathos of ordinary lives quite like **Gwendoline Riley**, recently awarded the prestigious Windham-Campbell Prize. In *The Palm House*, she turns her unerring ear and razor-sharp wit to a long friendship weathering bereavement, bad bosses, and old hurts that still bite. Talking with **Sinéad Gleeson** today, Riley (author of *First Love* and *My Phantoms*) brings her eviscerating powers of observation to discuss her portrait of enduring friendship and a meeting of minds.

(AI)

Nonomiya / Song of Rona Island



19:00-21:00
Greyfriars Kirk
£30.00 [£25.00/£20.00/£5.00]

As part of Scotland to the World, we bring you a unique fusion of Japanese and Scottish culture. Rarely experienced outside its home country, Noh is a 600-year-old form of classical Japanese musical drama, into which the experimental Noh Reimagined theatre company is breathing new life.

They bring us today's two-part performance, introducing Noh Theatre in Part One with *Nonomiya* - a piece based on the oldest novel of all time, followed by *Song of Rona Island* - a new and contemporary collaboration, based on **Kathleen Jamie's** essay 'On Rona', which blends Scottish and Japanese folklore, myth and music, in Part Two. Read more about this event on p.58.

Part of Scotland to the World. Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown, British Council, and The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.

Note: This is a repeat of the performance on Mon 24 Aug at 19:00.

Kim Sherwood: James Bond – Hurricane Room

19:15-20:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What's it like to write one of the world's most famous characters? Commissioned by the Ian Fleming Estate to expand on the James Bond canon, **Kim Sherwood's** trilogy comes to an explosive conclusion with *Hurricane Room*. Lauded for how her *Double O* novels 'feel both as old as time and fresh and new' (John Yorke), Sherwood returns to the Festival to talk about the beloved spy saga on the cusp of the final showdown. Chaired by **Dan Richards**.

(AI)

Daniel Kehlmann: The Director

19:15-20:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Hollywood to Nazi Germany, Garbo to Goebbels - *The Director* is **Daniel Kehlmann's** imaginative take on filmmaker G W Pabst and the heady entanglement of art, politics, and power at the peak of the Nazi regime. Exploring complicity and moral compromise, the rise and fall of German cinema, and the politics and propaganda of the silver screen, don't miss International Booker Prize-shortlisted Kehlmann discussing his controversial, magnificent book and his storied career with our Festival director, **Jenny Niven**.

(AI)

The Book That Changed My Mind



20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Books can soothe, expand, and stimulate our minds - but can they change them completely? In this thought-provoking panel event - chaired by journalist and Emeritus Director of the International Booker Prize **Fiammetta Rocco** - incredible authors encourage us to reflect on the turning-point books that shape our worldviews. Compare notes with **Kiran Desai** (*The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny*) and **Claudia Rankine** (*Triage*) on the revelatory books in their literary lives.

(AI)

GUBSMACKED: Flyte Nyte 2026

20:30-22:30
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Like the modern rap battle, 'flytings' flourished in 15th-century Scotland as a form of entertainment, and as a means of garnering respect, attention, and speaking truth to power. Today, GUBSMACKED return to the Festival with the dazzlingly rude and boisterous Flyte Nyte! Join your hosts, **Colin Bramwell**, **Leyla Josephine**, and **Iona Lee** and witness poets, rappers, and spoken word artists all fighting to become the evening's Flying Champion using nothing but wit, verse, extravagant verbal abuse, and name-calling - bring it on!

(AI)



Gwendoline Riley, 18:45-19:45



Daniel Kehlmann, 19:15-20:15

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned | Formats: (C) Remote Appearance | (F) Food & Drink

Tuesday 25

Tuesday 25

The Front List: Mel Giedroyc

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Comedian, presenter, and *Sunday Times* bestselling author **Mel Giedroyc** is at the peak of her powers... unlike Gill, protagonist of *The Comeback*. A failed performer who spies a chance at glory by staging a spectacular show for her local theatre's 100th anniversary, Gill finds herself at war with a diva artistic director who wants to draw the curtain early. Join Giedroyc for a big-hearted chat about dreams, drama, and community, chaired by none other than comedian, author, and Giedroyc's lifelong pal and comedy partner, **Sue Perkins**. A real Festival highlight!

BSL AI



First Edition

10:00-11:00
Spiegel tent
Pay What You Can

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is - but we know how hard it can be to keep up. That's what our First Edition events are for: offering you the chance to join leading journalists from across the media (and the world) as they discuss the day's breaking news over a cup of coffee. Check website for today's guests.

AI

Shared Reading with Open Book

11:00-12:00
Venue A
Free Ticketed

Join Open Book Lead Readers for an informal and relaxed shared reading session. Each session will explore a chapter from a debut book from this year's Festival Programme. No experience necessary, all reading materials will be provided on the day.

James Bailey: The Nine Lives of Muriel Spark

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

20 years have passed since the death of Scottish literary icon Muriel Spark, and in 2027, Edinburgh will see a new statue installed in her honour. **James Bailey**, in *Like a Cat Loves a Bird*, captures the essence of Spark's chaotic and remarkable life. As we sit just a stone's throw from the Miss Jean Brodie Steps, Bailey shares an enthralling insight on the woman behind Edinburgh's most formidable schoolteacher.

AI

Close Read with Open Book: The News from Dublin by Colm Tóibín

13:00-14:30
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Join **Jess Orr** and **Claire Urquhart** from Open Book, a charity organising shared reading and creative groups, as they lead a warm, lively discussion on Colm Tóibín's breathtaking new short story collection, *The News from Dublin*. Dig into these subtle, powerful stories of longing, loss, and life far from home by the renowned author of *Brooklyn*. No preparation required, reading materials will be provided. Expect an open discussion from the start.

Juno Dawson & Daisy Dixon: When Art Offends

13:45-14:45
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Prize-winning philosopher **Daisy Dixon's** *Depraved: The Story of Dangerous Art* takes readers through some of history's most contentious artworks. Meanwhile, bestselling author **Juno Dawson** knows firsthand what it's like to be the target of censorship; her 2014 YA title, *This Book is Gay*, is listed as one of the most frequently banned books in the USA. Today, the pair discuss the 'morality' of art, and why what we choose to condemn reveals so much about us.

CC

Beyond Borders: Women in Conflict

14:00-15:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The Women in Conflict 1325 Fellowship Programme - funded by the Scottish Government and run by international dialogue and cultural exchange platform Beyond Borders Scotland - brings together women from all over the world who are working at the frontlines of peacemaking and conflict resolution. Hear some of their remarkable stories, connecting the dots between conflict resolution, climate, and human rights, and explore Scotland's ambitions to bring together organisations involved in peace and reconciliation. See website for line-up.

CC

Jennifer Higgle: Bedlam

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A painter of fairies, a deranged murderer, and an inmate of history's most notorious insane asylum: Victorian artist Richard Dadd is the mesmerising subject of **Jennifer Higgle's** 'dream-fever' of a novel, *Bedlam*. Former editor of *Frieze* magazine, Turner Prize judge, and celebrated author of *The Other Side*, Higgle brings her formidable art critic's intelligence to an enthralling conversation with **Di Speirs** about art and illness, vision and delusion, and the transcendent, unsettling power of paint.

AI

Peter Meades & Frank Tallis: Midlife, Masculinity, and Meaning

15:00-16:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How do you keep going when the old ways of coping no longer work? Clinical psychologists **Frank Tallis** and **Peter Meades** approach this question from complementary angles: Tallis through the psychology of aging, Meades through the current crisis in men's mental health. With *Wise* and *I'm Fine (But Not Really)*, the authors bring compassion and insight to a conversation with **Jamie Jauncey** about aging well, expectations around 'masculinity', and finding new paths towards resilience.

AI

Non-Fiction Reporting: A Workshop with Sally Hayden

15:00-16:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£24.00/£8.00]

Orwell Prize-winning journalist **Sally Hayden** (*This is Also a Love Story*) leads you through how to turn non-fiction reporting into a book, in a workshop that'll get you thinking about how to nail the start, end, and overall structure. This is a rare opportunity to ask one of our finest journalists - who's covered migration, conflict, and humanitarian crises throughout her career - your burning questions on everything from book proposals to the editing process. Ideal for those who've already done some research into their topic of interest. Supported by Culture Ireland.

Tahmima Anam & Balsam Karam: Stand Up, Fight Back

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two masters of their craft, **Tahmima Anam** and **Balsam Karam**, weave stories of resistance and solidarity in their latest novels. In Anam's *Uprising*, Kusum is brought to an island of subjugated women, sparking rebellion when she refuses to yield to power. In Karam's *Event Horizon*, Milde must choose between execution or an experimental space mission to an uncharted black hole. Join these bold writers discussing how fiction can help us imagine alternative ways to live. Chaired by **Rachelle Atalla**.

AI

The Ukraine Shelf: What to Read about Ukraine

15:30-16:30
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In the fifth year of Russia's full-scale invasion, *The Ukraine Shelf* podcast brings together leading writers and thinkers for lively, informed discussion on what we should be reading to better understand Ukraine during this crucial period. Today, the hosts - **Olesya Khromeychuk** (director of the Ukrainian Institute London and author of *The Death of a Soldier Told by His Sister*) and literary translator and scholar **Uilleam Blacker** - chat to Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Culture and journalist **Bohdana Laiuk** and *Guardian* chief culture writer **Charlotte Higgins**, author of *Ukrainian Lessons: Art in a Time of War*.

CC

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction The Front List Good Information New World Orders How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk Fascinating Non-Fiction Music, Performance & Podcasts Poetry Workshops

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned
Formats: Remote Appearance Food & Drink



Ella Risbridger, 16:00-17:30

Gabriella Bennett & Bruce Peter: Designs For Life

15:45-16:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From bomb-resistant bedrooms in Ukraine to hidden Art Deco gems in Glasgow, architecture reveals so much about the society it serves. **Gabriella Bennett**, journalist and author of *How to Build a City*, sits down with **Bruce Peter**, Professor of Design History at Glasgow School of Art and author of *Art Deco Scotland*, for an illuminating discussion about buildings as portals to the past - and blueprints for a better future.

(AI)

Sue Black: An Expert Witness

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

World-leading anatomist and forensic anthropologist **Sue Black** is no stranger to putting her reputation on the line in the name of justice. Now, in *An Expert Witness*, she puts forensic science on trial to understand where it sits in the judicial balance, and just how little it can take to make or break a verdict. Hear Black talking with us about how, in seismic events, the answers often lie in the smallest of details. Chaired by **Peggy Hughes**.

(BSL) (AI)

Tracy Borman: The House of Boleyn

15:45-16:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In her novel *The House of Boleyn*, **Tracy Borman**, Chief Historian at Historic Royal Palaces, brings the Boleyns' calculated rise and swift fall to vivid life in their most intimate and unwitnessed space: Hever Castle. Exploring the relationships and conversations not captured in conventional history books, Borman joins **Vic Murray** to discuss the secrets, danger, and passion which drove a family and changed the country forever, all absorbed by the walls of their home.

(AI)

Angela Flournoy & Claudia Rankine: How Do You Write About America?

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two exquisite writers, **Angela Flournoy** (*The Turner House*, *The Wilderness*) and **Claudia Rankine** (the *American* trilogy, *Triage*), parse the problems and potential of writing about contemporary America. Both unflinching in their interrogation of its culture, politics, and deep inequalities, today they come together for a frank conversation about why their homeland stays at the centre of their work, and what the freedom of fiction, poetry, and narrative essay reveals about America that other forms cannot. Chaired by **Dina Nayeri**.

(CC)

The Kitchen Book: A Table Talk with Ella Risbridger

16:00-17:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00]

Ella Risbridger is as deft with a pen as she is with a spatula, a writer who can turn a recipe for Marmite soup into stomach-rumbling poetry. Watch her rustle up something hearty from *The Kitchen Book*, her cooking companion that promises to make every meal '10% better', then listen to her wax lyrical about food as the purest form of happiness. Chaired by **Nyla Ahmad**. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

🍷

Nicolas Niarchos & Alex Perry: Blood & Oil

17:30-18:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We're all aware of the environmental cost of using fossil fuels to power our lives, but the human and cultural impact is arguably just as damaging. In *Blood Will Flow*, investigative journalist **Alex Perry** illuminates the dark underbelly of the oil industry through a massacre in Mozambique, while *The New Yorker* writer **Nicolas Niarchos'** *The Elements of Power* examines the bloody history of cobalt, from Congolese mines to our phone batteries. Chaired by **Sally Hayden**.

(AI)

THE AUDIBLE EVENT

Russell Tovey: Starlings

18:00-19:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A leading light on our screens for decades, **Russell Tovey** is known for roles in everything from *The History Boys* to *American Horror Story*. Now, the beloved actor and co-host of the popular *Talk Art* podcast is set to debut his Audible Original novel, featuring a cast led by Andrew Scott and George MacKay. He joins us to chat about *Starlings*, a beautiful coming-of-age story of identity and estrangement centring on the reconciliation of two brothers.

(AI)

Scott Anderson: King of Kings

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In 1978, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, entertained US President Jimmy Carter in Tehran where they congratulated themselves on a peaceful period in both their countries. A year later, the Shah was dethroned in a violent revolution led by the exiled Ayatollah Khomeini and his supporters. Pulitzer Prize shortlistee **Scott Anderson** joins us to discuss *King of Kings*, a finely-researched, thrilling account of the last days of the Shah's regime and how it set the tone for US-Iran relations to this day.

(CC)

Bryony Gordon: People Pleaser

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Sunday Times bestseller **Bryony Gordon** adds 'debut novelist' to her impressive skillset with *People Pleaser*. The hugely popular author of *The Wrong Knickers*, host of *The Life of Bryony* podcast, *Daily Mail* columnist, and award-winning mental health campaigner, Gordon now takes a laugh-'til-you-cry look at pleasing everyone else... then saying NO. Hear one of our most honest stars discuss why women don't often do this - and the joy of breaking free.

(AI)

Long Day? Cook This: A Table Talk with Justin Tsang

19:00-20:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00]

Justin Tsang's *Long Day? Cook This* is the sort of book that'll stay permanently open in your kitchen, bursting with easy East Asian recipes that taste anything but: firecracker rice, tangy instant noodle salad, and kimchi egg ribbon udon soup. Watch 'Justin the Dustbin' (his moniker on socials) whip up a treat as he chats flavour pairings, kitchen shortcuts, and cutting his teeth at his family's Chinese restaurant. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

🍷

Anand Gopal: Days of Love and Rage

19:15-20:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In 2011, in the Syrian city of Manbij, a small group of individuals began a movement that overthrew a brutal dictatorship. Pulitzer Prize-finalist and *The New Yorker* journalist **Anand Gopal's** *Days of Love and Rage* is a sweeping account of Syrians fighting for a better world and in doing so, undertaking one of the most remarkable experiments in democracy of modern times. Less than two years after the Assad regime's fall, Gopal discusses his masterful work that's gained comparisons to Phillip Gourevitch and Katherine Boo.

(AI)

Spartans: The Way We See It

19:15-20:15
Venue B
Pay What You Can

Join us to celebrate a collection of amazing work from young people reflecting their experiences of the world and their place in it. Original, imaginative writing and personal manifestos combine to give us a look at life through the eyes of the bright, brave, and brilliant pupils who attend Spartans Community Foundation's Alternative School. This event is a collaboration between the young people and the Book Festival's Writers in Residence, **Owen Sutcliffe** and **Chris Barkley**.

(AI)

Andrey Kurkov: Telling the Truth

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

One of Ukraine's finest novelists (and he's written 19 of them!), **Andrey Kurkov** also writes vividly about the personal, political, and social cost of the invasion of his home country. Today, we're honoured to welcome him back to talk both fact and fiction: discussing the third instalment of his International Booker Prize-longlisted *Kyiv Mysteries* series, *The Lost Soldiers*, alongside the third volume of his war diaries, *Three Years on Fire*, chronicling the third year of Russia's invasion. Chaired by **Rosie Goldsmith**.

(B) (AI)

Hamish Hawk: Life in a Scotch Sitting Room, Vol. 0 - The Encore

20:30-22:00
Spiegelent
£25.00 [£23.00/£15.00/£5.00]

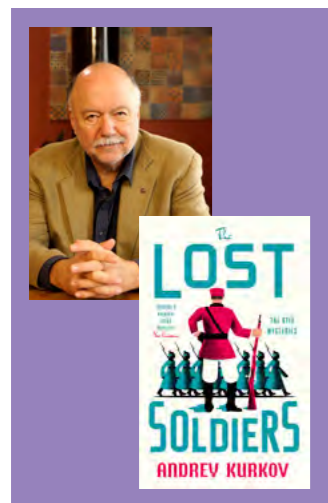
After two sold out 2025 performances and a packed UK tour, local indie hero **Hamish Hawk** returns to the Spiegelent with his mesmerising Book Festival-commissioned *Life in a Scotch Sitting Room, Vol. 0* for a very special homecoming performance. Blending his own take on some of Scottish poet eccentric Ivor Cutler's iconic works with his own original passages and compositions, don't miss your last chance to enjoy what's bound to be one of the hottest tickets in this year's programme.



Hamish Hawk, 20:30-22:00



Sue Black, 17:00-18:00



Andrey Kurkov, 20:30-21:30

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (O) Remote Appearance | 🍷 Food & Drink

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND EVENT

The Front List:
Lyse Doucet

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

As the BBC's chief international correspondent, **Lyse Doucet** has witnessed 30 years of seismic events at dangerously close quarters. With *The Finest Hotel in Kabul: A People's History of Afghanistan*, she's also been shortlisted for 2026's Women's Prize for Nonfiction. Examining decades of deadly political tumult in Afghanistan through the story of the Hotel Intercontinental and its extraordinary staff, join journalist **Sally Hayden** for a critical conversation with Doucet about current global events - drawing on her experience in global postings from Tehran to Abidjan - and their potential future outcomes.

Ⓒ



First Edition

10:00-11:00
Spiegelent
Pay What You Can

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is - but we know how hard it can be to keep up. That's what our First Edition events are for: offering you the chance to join leading journalists from across the media (and the world) as they discuss the day's breaking news over a cup of coffee. Today's guests include the BBC's chief international correspondent **Lyse Doucet**. Check website for full line-up.

Ⓐ

Jacek Dukaj & Ursula Phillips: Ice

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In **Jacek Dukaj's** *Ice*, the Tunguska asteroid has plunged the world into eternal winter, freezing not just the land but history itself. A Polish mathematician is sent deep into a transformed Siberia - and into one of the most inventive alternate histories ever written. Joining Dukaj is translator **Ursula Phillips**, whose remarkable English translation navigates the novel's intricate tensions between Polish, Russian, and a deranged reality. Together they explore the art of carrying audacious imagined worlds across languages.

Ⓐ

Ways of Seeing Food: A Writing Workshop with Tamar Adler

12:00-13:30
Elliott's Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

Tamar Adler - author of *An Everlasting Meal* and *Feast on Your Life* - is adored among chefs and home cooks alike for her rhapsodic writing about food. Today, she invites you for a special masterclass on how to approach food writing sideways. Through writing exercises and open discussion, Adler guides you through how to render food beyond its taste and texture, exploring the symbolism, memories, and emotional weight it carries. With fresh coffee and baked goods on hand, just bring your creativity.

🍷

Introduction to Graphic Novels: A Workshop with Lizzy Stewart

13:00-15:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Lizzy Stewart (author-illustrator of the breathtaking, genre-defying books *The Wreck*, *Alison*, and *Walking Distance*) introduces you today to the world of graphic storytelling. During this workshop, you'll look at character, how to find inspiration, and the way that time can bend and stretch within a graphic novel or comic book. All of this will come together in a short-form comic strip which could form the basis of your own future full-length masterpiece.

Louis de Bernières: Smelling of Rooks

14:00-15:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Known for his tender and spirited writing, **Louis de Bernières** has built a reputation as one of the UK's finest novelists. But with his memoir, *Smelling of Rooks*, the author of *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* turns the lens on himself, offering a portrait of a writer's life in rural Norfolk. Today, he joins us for a conversation about gathering a decade of reflections on everything from cats to politics, and the unpredictable joys of country living. Chaired by **Rosie Goldsmith**.

Ⓐ

Alex Hyde & Lisa Tuttle: Artist Turned Object

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

When art and obsession coalesce, the blurred lines can quickly become sinister. **Alex Hyde's** *Exhibition* follows a photographer drawn into the intoxicating world of her artist best friend, with destructive results. **Lisa Tuttle's** *My Death* is a rollercoaster of a novella about a writer's exploration of an artist forgotten by history. Join them for a discussion on their uncanny works, asking questions about the sometimes dark, always complex relationship between art, identity, and authenticity. Chaired by **Octavia Bright**.

Ⓐ

Prue Leith: Being Old and Learning to Love It

15:00-16:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Only the lucky grow old - so why is the thought of aging filled with fear and judgement for so many? Former judge of *The Great British Bake Off* and culinary legend **Prue Leith**, author of *Being Old and Learning to Love It*, is on a mission to change that. As a modern woman in her eighties, nothing is off-limits, as she shares the many unexpected joys of getting older, as well as its taboos. Join Leith for a discussion full of wit, wisdom, and her trademark no-nonsense charm. Chaired by **Sam Baker**.

BSL Ⓐ

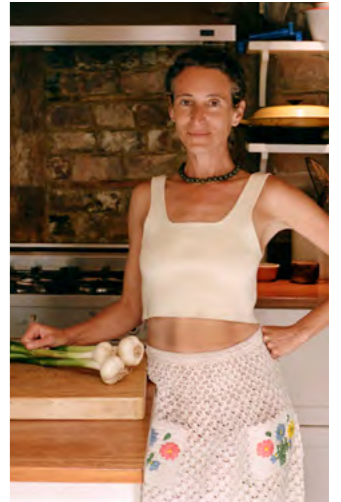
THE BRITISH ACADEMY EVENT

Lucy Ash: Russia's Church from Pagans to Putin

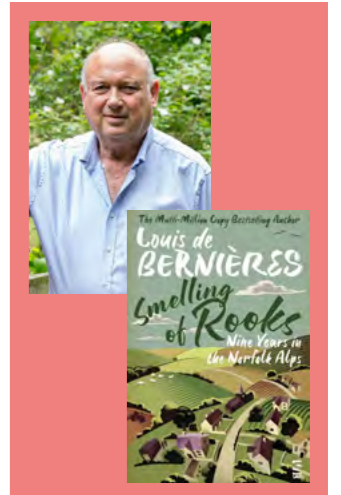
15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Moving away from the atheism of the 20th century's Soviet Union, Putin's Russia has granted the ancient Russian Orthodox Church great power. BBC reporter and Russia expert **Lucy Ash** joins us to discuss her provocative new book, *The Baton and the Cross*, a finalist for both the Orwell and British Academy Book Prizes. Hear her unpack Russian Orthodoxy's history and how, under Putin, religion is being stripped of its spirituality, used instead as a weapon of control. Chaired by **Misha Glenn**.

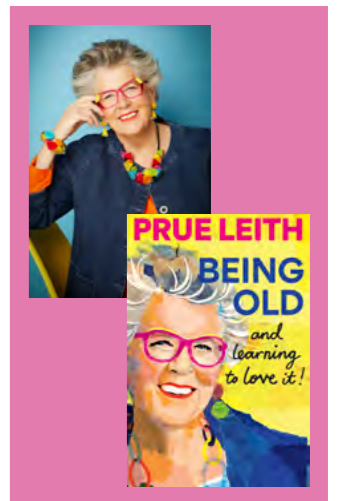
Ⓒ



Tamar Adler, 12:00-13:30



Louis de Bernières, 14:00-15:00



Prue Leith, 15:00-16:00

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [C] Remote Appearance [🍷] Food & Drink



Ana Kinsella, 17:00-18:00



Lizzy Stewart, 17:00-18:00

Caden Armstrong, Nadine Aisha Jassat & Ella Risbridger: Love on the Brain

15:30-16:30
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Slow burns and bodice rippers, unrequited yearning and enemies-to-lovers: romantic fiction contains whole universes of passion, pain, and stomach-flipping chemistry. Its domination of bestseller lists proves we all want a little more love in our lives, so join this celebration of our culture's most enduring genre, featuring *In Love with Love* author **Ella Risbridger**, Edinburgh's Book Lovers Bookshop owner **Caden Armstrong**, and poet, author, and avid romance-reader **Nadine Aisha Jassat**. Chaired by **Alisha Fernandez Miranda**.

AI

Hannah Lavery, Jennifer Wong & Nidhi Zak/Aria Eipe: Migratory Patterns

15:45-16:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Jennifer Wong's *Light Year* is a moving, generation-spanning examination of family history. **Hannah Lavery's** *Everything Everyday* is both witness and archive, putting shape on a year of chaos and upheaval. **Nidhi Zak/Aria Eipe's** *Auguries of a Minor God* is a skilful, profound account of home, migration, and exile. These extraordinary poets come together in conversation to discuss their practice and how they articulate the matter of human migration into poetry, song, and myth.

AI

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND EVENT

Mariana Mazzucato: The Common Good Economy

15:45-16:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What if our economy served the whole planet, and not just the few? An acclaimed Professor of Economics and policy advisor, honoured by both the Pope and King for her work, **Mariana Mazzucato's** *The Common Good Economy* draws on decades of expertise to offer a systemic reinvention - creating a space for us all to flourish. Discover the practical, scalable ways we can collectively fix our broken systems and work towards a purposeful future, together. Chaired by **Benny Higgins**.

AI

Feast on Your Life: A Table Talk with Tamar Adler

16:00-17:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00]

Feast on Your Life sums up **Tamar Adler's** philosophy: that cooking can be a devotion, a way to bring life-affirming joy to even the most mundane days. Today she whips us up something delicious as she shares her meditations on food as self-love, the power of a passed-down recipe, and the most meaningful meals of her life. You'll leave seeing your kitchen in a warm new light. Chaired by **Marjorie Lotfi**. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

🍷

Ana Kinsella & Lizzy Stewart: Feelings and Faultlines

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *Frida Slattery as Herself* - **Ana Kinsella's** absorbing love letter to artistic expression - an actor and director walk a messy line between collaboration and connection. In *The Wreck*, the literary graphic novel from illustrator **Lizzy Stewart**, undercurrents and double standards are laid bare when two creative couples experiment in communal living. Together, they'll dive into the long-simmering tensions that underpin many of our so-called closest relationships and what's really acceptable in the name of art.

AI

Jeremy Vine: Turn the Dial for Death

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We're in Sidmouth on Devon's south coast, usually the picture of seaside bliss... until a local doctor is found dead in the woods. So begins **Jeremy Vine's** *Turn the Dial for Death*, the multi-layered sequel to his *Sunday Times* bestseller, *Murder on Line One*. Hear the beloved journalist, broadcaster, and host of BBC Radio 2's ever popular lunchtime show chatting today about what (and where and who) inspired his turn to crime fiction. Chaired by **Bryan Burnett**.

📺 AI

Hoda Barakat, Alycia Pirmohamed & Ece Temelkuran: Hope when Home is Lost

17:30-18:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How does our understanding of the ideas of 'home' and 'belonging' shift in a war-torn and warming world? Today's event features a powerful conversation with three authors writing urgently about displacement and connection: **Hoda Barakat** (International Prize for Arabic Fiction-winning author of *Voices of the Lost*), **Alycia Pirmohamed** (poet and winner of the Nan Shepherd Prize with non-fiction debut, *Shorelines*), and **Ece Temelkuran** (essayist and Women's Prize for Nonfiction-shortlisted author of *Nation of Strangers*).

AI

Steve Mason: Failure is Always an Option

18:00-19:00
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Edinburgh's Beta Band had the world at their feet, with Hollywood's seal of approval through the film version of Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*, and praise from Noel Gallagher and Radiohead. Then it all fell apart in a blaze of self-indulgence, wrong decisions, and mental health crises. Two decades on, and with the band on tour once more, charismatic frontman **Steve Mason** chats about his memoir *Failure is Always an Option*, telling a glorious rock-underdog tale.

AI

THE KIMPTON CHARLOTTE SQUARE EVENT

Matt Haig: The Midnight Train

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Few authors take residence inside a reader's heart like **Matt Haig**, who follows up his multi-million copy bestseller *The Midnight Library* with a new story set in the same world. *The Midnight Train* is a moving tale of time-travel, love, and adventure, which asks: which of your past mistakes would you choose to resolve if given the chance? Haig today discusses the seductive power of second chances, and the countless lives we never lived due to the choices we did - and didn't - make. Chaired by **Sophie Gee**.

BSL AI

Fiona Mozley: Awake Awake

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

When Mary begins remembering things that can't be real, she must reconnect with friends long since scattered to reconstruct the truth. Set between the misplaced optimism of the New Labour years and the post-financial-crash 2010s, *Awake Awake* is the absorbing new novel from **Fiona Mozley**, Booker Prize-shortlisted author of the groundbreaking *Elmet* and *Hot Stew*. Hear Mozley explore the formation of identity and how the self is less stable than we'd like to believe.

AI

Five Tastes: A Table Talk with Fuchsia Dunlop

19:00-20:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00]

Fuchsia Dunlop has long been both master and student of Sichuan cuisine, and in *Five Tastes* - which she launches with us this evening - she breaks down exactly how to build dishes that balance sweet and salty notes. Part chef, part magician, witness (and taste) her brilliance as she walks us through the training, travel, and endless trial and error that's earned her respect across China and beyond. Chaired by **Chitra Ramaswamy**. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

🍷



Jeremy Vine, 17:00-18:00



Matt Haig, 18:45-19:45



Fuchsia Dunlop, 19:00-20:30

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: 📺 Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | 🗣️ Live Captioned | AI AI Captioned
Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance | 🍷 Food & Drink

Len Pennie & Paul Leonard-Morgan: Delusions – A Performance

19:00-21:00
Greyfriars Kirk
£25.00 [£23.00/£15.00/£5.00]

This breathtaking collaboration between acclaimed poet **Len Pennie** and BAFTA-winning composer **Paul Leonard-Morgan**, which premiered at 2026's Celtic Connections festival, blends poetry and spoken word with epic sound for a genre-defying performance in the beautiful surroundings of Greyfriars Kirk. Tackling themes of love, loss, wonder, and rage, *Delusions* melds Pennie's gut-punching words with Leonard-Morgan's soaring music, performed on piano, strings, and electronica. No heart will leave unmoved. *Part of Scotland to the World. Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown.*



Lawrence Abu Hamdan: Radical Listening

19:15-20:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From his 2012 documentary *The Whole Truth*, to his 2019 Turner Prize-winning installation *Walled Unwalled*, visionary artist **Lawrence Abu Hamdan** makes use of sound to investigate that which is not seen, but heard. In 2023, he founded the organisation Earshot, dedicated to the study of audio for human rights and environmental advocacy. Today, he discusses combining the role of artist and investigator and offers an introduction to Earshot's transformation of sound into a tool of justice.

(AI)

Missouri Williams: The Vivisectors

19:15-20:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Missouri Williams' work holds up a mirror to the many contradictions that make up our humanity. She captured the world's attention with cult debut *The Doloriad*, a gothic tale of depravity and salvation in a post-apocalyptic world, and now she's back with *The Vivisectors*, a satire about a misanthropic graduate who gets tangled up in a campus conspiracy. Don't miss this thought-provoking conversation with a writer who sees right into the darkest corners of our minds.

(AI)

All Star Poetry

20:30-22:00
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Pin-drop silence, riotous laughter, and back-of-the-neck goosebumps are just a few common side effects from our poetry evenings, and it doesn't get much better than this spectacular showcase of internationally acclaimed poets. Join us for a dazzling evening of performance with poets including **Brian Bilston**. Check website for the full line-up.

(AI)

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Mieko Kawakami: Sisters in Yellow

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Superstar **Mieko Kawakami** is one of the driving forces behind the explosion of popularity of Japanese fiction in the UK; the seven top selling translated authors in 2025 were all Japanese. Following her smash hit, *Breasts and Eggs*, Mieko Kawakami brings us *Sisters in Yellow*, a tale of friendship, betrayal, and dive bars set in the gritty alleyways of 90's Tokyo - every bit as brilliantly unorthodox as her last novel. Presented in partnership with the award-winning ESEA Lit Fest, today's conversation sees her chatting about it with **Maria Garbutt-Lucero**. *Supported by The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.*

(D) (AI)



Gordon Brown: The Future Starts with Us

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In an age of global instability and civic decline, what's gone wrong and what can ordinary people do to bring positive change to the world? As former British Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a current United Nations special envoy, World Health Organisation ambassador, and special envoy on global finance to the current UK government, **Gordon Brown** is well-placed to answer these questions in his new book *The Future Starts with Us*. Hear his reflections today in conversation with **Lyse Doucet**.

(BSL) (AI)

First Edition: Equator

10:00-11:00
Spiegel tent
Pay What You Can

Start your day with the facts. *Equator* magazine is dedicated to politics, culture, and art, founded on the conviction of a small group of writers and editors that much of the Anglophone West's media is in a state of crisis and beyond reform. Today, join the magazine's editors, writers, and contributors, including **Pankaj Mishra** (*The World After Gaza*), discussing creating a new outlet for a globalised and interconnected era, and why the widely proclaimed 'end of the West' isn't the end of the world.

(AI)

But Tell It Slant: A Workshop with Katie Goh

11:00-13:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Kickstart your creative nonfiction writing project with **Katie Goh** - writer, editor, and author of Jhalak Prize-shortlisted memoir, *Foreign Fruit*. Explore the many innovative ways that essays, memoir, and other forms of creative nonfiction can tell a story, then get stuck into exercises that'll leave you buzzing with ideas for your own writing. This workshop, presented in partnership with the award-winning ESEA Lit Fest, is best suited to new or emerging writers.

Fresh Words: Women's Prize Trust Discoveries

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
Pay What You Can

It's lunchtime, but there's no need to doomscroll over your meal deal. Be the first to discover the literary stars of the future, instead. In partnership with Scottish Book Trust and other leading UK talent spotters, this lively event showcases electrifying new voices, so grab your seat before everyone else does. Today, we partner with the Women's Prize Trust Discoveries Award, hearing readings from an amazing line-up of writers - check website for full details.

(AI)

Scotland to the World: On Adaptation

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Words can create melody, rhythm, even symphonies. Our Scotland to the World series takes this a step further, pairing notable writers with acclaimed musicians to create new performances. **Kate Molleson** talks to **Ali Smith** and New European Ensemble principal artistic director **Emlyn Stam** about the collaboration process behind *Seasonal Quartet*, alongside poet **Len Pennie** and BAFTA Award-winning composer **Paul Leonard-Morgan**, who reflect on their genre-defying performance, *Delusions. Part of Scotland to the World.*

(AI)

Fuchsia Dunlop: The Magic of Flavour in a Chinese Kitchen

12:00-13:00
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

There aren't many Brits who've immersed themselves in Chinese food culture quite like **Fuchsia Dunlop** - lauded as a 'world authority' (*Observer Food Monthly*) who 'understands Chinese cuisine better than any other foreigner I know' (food documentarian Chen Xiaoping), Dunlop's books bring her culinary explorations to a Western audience. Today she chats about *Five Tastes*, celebrating the philosophy that good health and pleasure are inseparable when it comes to food.

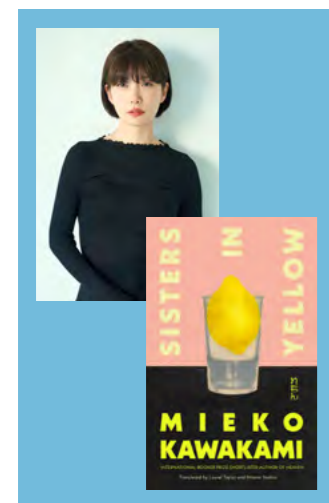
(AI)

Sebastian Mallaby & Tim Wu: The Extraction Machine

12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Tech development continues at an unprecedented rate; how do we ensure it works for the good of humanity, not the enrichment of a few? Two authors with unique insight behind the digital curtain thrash out the problem and possible solutions with **Misha Glenny**. **Sebastian Mallaby** discusses *The Infinity Machine* - his biography of DeepMind founder, Demis Hassabis - and **Tim Wu** talks *The Age of Extraction* and tech monopolists' quest to mine humanity for data, attention, intention, and profit.

(AI)



Mieko Kawakami, 20:30-21:30

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (D) Livestreamed (BSL) British Sign Language (CC) Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (O) Remote Appearance (U) Food & Drink

The Front List:
Elif Shafak

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Elif Shafak has published 21 books, including 13 acclaimed novels, and been translated into 58 languages. Following a sold out event discussing *There are Rivers in the Sky* in 2024, today's special celebratory event sees Shafak - a powerful advocate for women's and LGBTQ+ rights and freedom of speech - reflects on her rich career to date, what it means to be a truly global author and citizen, and the impact of putting her personal and political beliefs into tangible action. Chaired by **Rosie Goldsmith**.

BSL AI



HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Daniyal Mueenuddin:
This is Where the Serpent Lives

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

An epic saga set in modern Pakistan, *This Is Where the Serpent Lives* is **Daniyal Mueenuddin's** much-anticipated debut novel, following his acclaimed story collection, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*. The novel, shifting between the perspectives of a dozen characters, builds a compelling portrait of the feudal division of land and labour in contemporary Pakistan. Join this fascinating conversation with Mueenuddin, exploring choice and survival, caste and capital, resilience and tragedy. Chaired by **Sana Goyal**.

AI

Rana Dasgupta & Ece Temelkuran: Crossing Borders

13:45-14:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

National borders are an increasing source of friction as many demand their security, cross them seeking refuge, invade over them, or no longer feel at home within them. **Esa Aldegheri** talks about these human-made faultlines with essayist **Rana Dasgupta** - who, in *After Nations*, explores the creation of modern nation states and their present turmoil - and journalist **Ece Temelkuran** - whose *Nation of Strangers* weaves an urgent tapestry of exile and displacement, asking what 'home' means.

AI

Sarah Howe, Rachel Long & Sarah Stewart: Lyric Memory

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Poetry has the capacity to say what other forms cannot. In **Sarah Howe's** *Foretokens*, for example, the T. S. Eliot Prize-winner forms a portrait of a mother in search of her past and herself. **Sarah Stewart's** *Devour Everything*, meanwhile, wrestles with issues of motherhood, memory, and loss. And **Rachel Long's** *Sparrow on the Rooftop* interrogates the experience of self as other. Join these remarkable poets discussing their new collections with **Marjorie Lotfi** today.

AI

How to Write the Future:
A Workshop with Saleem Haddad

14:00-15:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£24.00/£8.00]

Join filmmaker and *Floodlines* author, **Saleem Haddad**, to explore how, as writers, we can imagine the future in times of turbulence and uncertainty, and how to create speculative fiction that feels both emotionally and politically resonant. Combining textual analysis, group discussion, and guided writing exercises, this workshop is suitable for writers of all levels who want to illuminate the dystopia - or utopia - into which we may be heading.

Colm Tóibín:
The News from Dublin

15:15-16:15
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Colm Tóibín - author of 12 books including the multi-award-winning *Brooklyn* - is one of modern Ireland's greatest writers. He talks with **Chris Power** about his breathtaking new story collection, *The News from Dublin*, exploring the lives of those living far from home: from Galway to Barcelona, Enniscorthy to San Francisco, and beyond. This promises to be an illuminating conversation with a true master of the craft. *Supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart and Culture Ireland.*

BSL AI



Fern Brady:
High Energy Unpleasant

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

With her bestselling memoir, *Strong Female Character*, comedian **Fern Brady** proved her caustic wit could handle the heaviest themes on the page as well as on stage. Her frank, disarming (and often hilarious) style of storytelling returns in force in her debut novel of medical misogyny, *High Energy Unpleasant*, published this autumn. In this special preview event, you'll cry, snort, and nod in recognition as Brady unveils the story of a woman with chronic pain who'll stop at absolutely nothing to feel better. Chaired by **Nyla Ahmad**.

AI

Fatima Bhutto & Ayşegül Savaş: Who Am I Now?

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Some life events are so all-consuming that they melt you down and remake you anew. For the writer and columnist **Fatima Bhutto**, it was leaving the coercive relationship she writes about in *The Hour of the Wolf* that helped her feel solid again. She joins *The Anthropologists* author **Ayşegül Savaş**, who details the destabilising impact of motherhood in *The Wilderness*, for a radically honest conversation about how they came back to themselves. Chaired by **Octavia Bright**.

AI

Molly Crabapple: Here Where We Live Is Our Country

16:30-17:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Here Where We Live Is Our Country tells the story of the Jewish Bund, a revolutionary movement not given enough space in recorded history - until now. **Molly Crabapple** draws on the lives of 20th-century rebels - including her own great-grandfather - who stood up to the Tsar, the Nazis, and ethnonationalists in the name of freedom. With high praise from Naomi Klein and Angela Davis, we can't wait to hear her brilliance live and direct. Chaired by **Seth Anziska**.

AI

Angela Flournoy & Agnes Lidbeck: Love and Politics

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We've all felt relationships changing shape as they're buffeted by external winds, but none have written about this quite as beautifully as **Angela Flournoy** and **Agnes Lidbeck**. The authors join forces today to discuss this thread running through their novels. In *The Wilderness*, four women weather the storms of rising conservatism and new motherhood, while *All My Love* follows two couples who find their desires shifting with the political currents.

AI

Sally Hayden & Roxani Krystalli: War and Peace

17:15-18:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *This is Also a Love Story*, **Sally Hayden** - Orwell Prize-winning journalist and author of *My Fourth Time, We Drowned* - offers a staggering account of human kindness against the backdrop of global crises. As both an academic and humanitarian, **Roxani Krystalli** works at the intersection of gender and peacebuilding, examining the role of love and care in remaking worlds after loss. They discuss with **Esa Aldegheri** what sustains life in the face of crises and what's needed to create a better world.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Maria Stepanova:
The Disappearing Act

18:15-19:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Severed from her homeland and language, the exiled writer at the centre of *The Disappearing Act* has a lot in common with her creator, **Maria Stepanova**. This dreamlike meditation on Russian guilt, tainted identity, and starting over asks whether it is ever really possible to begin again. One of Russia's greatest living writers, the author of *In Memory of Memory* explores what remains when home becomes the enemy. Chaired by **Chris Power**.

AI

Katy Hessel:
How to Live an Artful Life

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

As modern life pulls our attention in every direction, how can we carve space for our creative lives? **Katy Hessel** has a few ideas - 365 to be exact. After years dedicated to spotlighting the Great Women Artists, the historian, podcaster, and bestselling author of *The Story of Art Without Men*, joins us to share *How to Live an Artful Life*: a year-full of inspiration to help us all slow down and view the world anew. Chaired by **Octavia Bright**.

AI

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: B Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | CC Live Captioned | AI AI Captioned
Formats: AI Remote Appearance | U Food & Drink

**Seasonal Quartet:
New European Ensemble &
Ali Smith**

19:00-21:00
Greyfriars Kirk
£30.00 [£25.00/£20.00/£5.00]

Ali Smith's evocative *Seasonal Quartet* novels are brought to life anew in this special collaboration with **Netherlands' New European Ensemble** (NEuE). Four female composers have created new musical works inspired by the series' themes of interconnectedness, migration, and our place in a troubled world. Experience an unforgettable performance blending new commissions from leading European musicians with moving readings from the author herself. *Part of Scotland to the World. Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the UK.*



**Tareq Baconi & Saleem Haddad:
Fire and Flood**

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Both **Tareq Baconi's** *Fire in Every Direction* and **Saleem Haddad's** *Floodlines* consider the generational impacts of family myths and global conflicts - the former through an intimate memoir, and the latter through a fictional tale influenced by his family stories. Examining queerness, art, displacement, and the relationship between the Middle East and UK, join them for a thoughtful and personal discussion about memories, estrangement, reconnection, and the meaning of home. Chaired by **Mohamed Tonsy**.

(AI)

Eyal Weizman: Ungrounding

19:00-20:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Director of Forensic Architecture, **Eyal Weizman** is a world-leading expert on the relationship between conflict and the built and natural environments. Since 2023, the group has worked to produce evidence for the International Court of Justice's genocide case against Israel, using architectural and territorial analysis. In *Ungrounding*, he unveils an insider's view of the history and 'deep cartography' of the war, unflinchingly cataloguing the campaigns of violence and displacement that have reshaped Gaza. An eye-opening discussion on how the new interdisciplinary field of forensic architecture is used to uncover the truth.

(AI)

**Hélène Giannecchini &
Joelle Taylor: Chosen Families**

20:00-21:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Joelle Taylor (*Maryville*) and **Hélène Giannecchini** (*An Army of Lovers Cannot Fail*) consider the political power and potential of queer kinship, each resisting the notion that friendships are second to family and romance. By mixing personal history, imagination, and archival research, Taylor and Giannecchini's work promises a lively conversation on what sustains queer life, from solidarity to resistance, grief to joy.

(AI)

**Meg Mason:
Sophie, Standing There**

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Meg Mason wrang our hearts with her wit and compassion in *Sorrow and Bliss*. Now she follows that Women's Prize-shortlisted success with her darkly humorous new novel, *Sophie, Standing There*, following a book festival employee who becomes obsessed with a star writer. Join **Cathy Rentzenbrink** today as she chats with Mason about loneliness and laughter, the peculiar power of literary festivals, and whether a person can really read themselves better.

(AI)

**Caledonia Screaming:
50 Years of Punk**

20:30-22:30
Spiegel tent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Hey! Ho! Let's Go! It's been 50 years since the first punk gig in Scotland so we're throwing a suitably anarchic bash to celebrate. **Grant McPhee** gives us the lowdown via his oral history of Scottish punk, *Caledonia Screaming*. Then we're thrilled to welcome a specially formed supergroup including legends **Fay Fife** (The Rezillos), **Alex Fergusson** (Alternative TV/Psychic TV), **Ken McCluskey** (The Bluebells), and **James King** (James King and the Lonewolves) for an electric performance! Chaired by **Nicola Meighan**.

(AI)

**Mike Gayle:
On We Go**

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Since the late 90s, **Mike Gayle** has written ordinary characters dealing with everyday chaos with humour, romance, and grace: from life after university (*My Legendary Girlfriend*), to mid-twenties relationships (*Mr Commitment*) and the reality of moving back in with parents (*Turning Thirty*). His latest novel, *On We Go*, is about grief, awkward reunions, and even awkward holidays. Hear Gayle delve into the twists, turns, and tempers that only a trip with your extended family can bring.

(AI)

**Saira Hameed &
Madeleine Pownall:
The Gender Health Gap**

10:15-11:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Women have long made significant contributions to our understanding of psychology and health, yet gender inequality in research and practice remains. **Saira Hameed's** *Signals: The Inside Story of Our Hormones* addresses common misconceptions about health and hormones, while Dr **Madeleine Pownall's** *Absent Minds: The Untold Story of the Women Who Changed Psychology* Forever uncovers lost legacies of female psychologists who radically shaped the field. Hear this formidable duo talking today about righting wrongs. Chaired by **Devi Sridhar**.

(AI)

**Poetry and Beyond:
A Workshop with
Joelle Taylor**

10:30-12:30
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Ever wondered where a poem could go when it leaves the page? Join T. S. Eliot Prize-winning poet, author, and playwright **Joelle Taylor** to explore what new shapes poems can take on, whether they expand into novels, transform into short films, or stretch into dance. With writing exercises throughout, participants will experiment with different forms, considering which elements make each distinct, and which most fire their imagination. Suitable for everyone willing to play and take risks.

**Ali Smith:
Glyph**

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

For Scotland's own, beloved **Ali Smith**, words are never neutral - they are alive, exuberant, political. *Glyph*, a dazzling companion to last year's *Gliff*, is a powerful yet playful anti-war novel set in a state turned hostile to curiosity and understanding. She returns to the Festival today to celebrate stories within stories, language as resistance, and the power of words to confront dark times and help us see other perspectives. Chaired by **Claire Armitstead**.

(AI)

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Future Library

12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Norway's Future Library is a powerful gesture of hope for a world beyond our lifetime. Created by Scottish artist **Katie Paterson** in 2014, every year, for 100 years, an author writes a new text to be placed inside the library. Every text remains unread until 2114. Join Paterson and Future Library's **Anne Beate Hovind** talking about the remarkable project with previous contributors **Elif Shafak** and **Valeria Luiselli**, then be among the first to find out the sensational new writer contributing to the Future Library in 2027. Supported by *Edinburgh Futures Institute*.

(AI)

**Ian Patterson &
Cathy Rentzenbrink:
Reading Remedies**

12:15-13:15
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We suspect that telling you lot about the radical importance of reading is a bit preach-to-the-choir. Humour us though, as poet and translator **Ian Patterson** (*Books - A Manifesto*) encourages reading past your comfort zone - adding avant-garde poems or a bonkbuster to your shelves, perhaps. He's joined by journalist and bestseller **Cathy Rentzenbrink** who, in *The Agatha Christie Cure*, looks through Christie's canon, asking: who are books for, why do we read, and why do we sometimes stop? Chaired by **Jonty Claypole**.

(AI)

Programme key

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Access: (D) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (O) Remote Appearance | (F) Food & Drink



The Front List:
Ann Patchett

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Ann Patchett is one of the most masterful and beloved writers of our time. Her new novel, *Whistler*, is a radiant story about the power of human connection to defy time, as a woman unexpectedly encounters her former stepfather years after a brief but life-shaping bond. In this unmissable conversation, the incomparable cartographer of human emotion, and author of *Bel Canto* and *The Dutch House*, reflects on memory, belonging, and a literary life devoted to exploring what makes us who we are. Chaired by **Roxani Krystalli**.

📺 (AI)

**Have Lunch with**
Dara Klein

13:00-16:00
Elliott's Studio
£100.00

Raised in her parents' restaurant, **Dara Klein** could layer lasagna with her eyes closed. With the flair for family-style Puglian cooking in her blood, she's just launched London's buzziest new eatery, Tiella. We're thrilled to have this top chef with us, fresh from writing *La Trattoria*, to cook up an exceptional Italian lunch and share the skills she's been sharpening since childhood. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink, a generous multi-course lunch, and paired wine on the table.*

🍷

Y M Abdel-Magied,
Molly Crabapple &
Hannah Lillith Assadi:
Global Solidarities

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What shapes can solidarities take in these times we live in? Join **Sana Goyal**, editor and publishing director of *Wasafiri*, for a conversation on connection and public and private revolutions with **Y M Abdel-Magied**, whose novel *At Sea* offers a searing takedown of Big Oil; **Molly Crabapple**, who tells the story of the Jewish Bund movement in *Here Where We Live Is Our Country*; and **Hannah Lillith Assadi**, whose *Paradiso 17* is loosely based on her father's exile from Palestine after the Nakba.

©

The True Power of Story:
A Novel Workshop with
John Yorke

14:00-16:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

If you've always wanted to write a novel but are struggling to structure your work, make your ideas leap off the page, or even just get started, then join **John Yorke** - the UK's foremost narrative expert, founder of the BBC Writers Academy, and author of acclaimed craft books including *Into the Woods* and *Trip to the Moon* - for this masterclass on the principles of story structure, where they come from, and why they exist.

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT**Holly Pester & Anthony Tao:**
A Place Like No Other

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In her latest collection, *Cafés*, **Holly Pester** considers how, despite its 'normalness', a café remakes itself through the people who pass through it. **Anthony Tao's** *We Met in Beijing*, meanwhile, interrogates the profound sense of place that exists in a city of such multitudes. Join the poets for a discussion on writing around physical spaces, community centre points, and the people who inhabit cross-sections of society. Chaired by **Samuel Tongue**.

(AI)

Queerly Beloved

14:00-15:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We're gathered here today, under the canvas of the Spiegelent, to celebrate queer lives, voices, and literature. Hear from a lively panel of queer writers - including author and activist **Tareq Baconi** (*Fire in Every Direction*), poet **Joelle Taylor** (*Maryville*), and novelist **Sara Torres** (*X Is Where I Am*) - sharing the art that's inspired them, the stories they wish they'd found sooner, and why it matters to see your experiences represented in the culture you consume. Check website for the full line-up.

BSL (AI)

Philippe Sands:
10 Years of East West Street

15:15-16:15
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From Gaza to Ukraine to America and beyond, the rule-bound international legal order appears to be collapsing. Yet, as lawyer and author **Philippe Sands** argued in the *Guardian* recently, 'the assault on international rules has been more or less continual since 1945'. 10 years on from *East West Street* - his landmark, Baillie Gifford Prize-winning family memoir uncovering the origin of the concept of genocide - Sands reflects on the ongoing defence of international law against its enemies.

📺 (AI)

Sarah Wang:
New Skin

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In her incisive debut, *New Skin*, **Sarah Wang** mixes a heady cocktail of unattainable beauty standards, assimilation, and the poison of the American dream with a splash of body horror. Setting a mother-daughter relationship in its sights and a lot of botched plastic surgery, fans of 2024's cult favourite *The Substance* will love this genre-busting ride of a book. **Colm Tóibín** calls the novel 'intense, engaging, original, and hilarious' - join him in conversation with Wang today.

(AI)

Tim Wu:
The Age of Extraction

15:30-16:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Professor at Columbia Law School, special assistant to President Biden for technology and competition policy, and inventor of the term 'net neutrality' - **Tim Wu's** work places him at the cutting edge of legal and ethical questions about the new information age. Joining us with *The Age of Extraction*, he breaks down the accelerating quest to extract data, attention, and profit from us, as well as how to break the tech monopoly and bring prosperity for all.

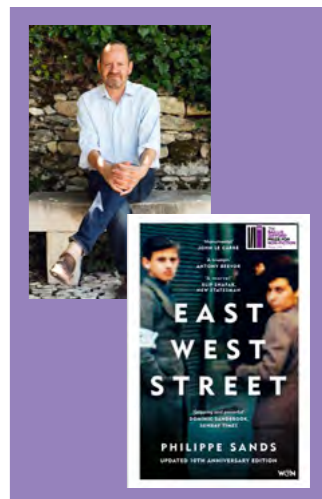
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The Secret Life of Books - Live

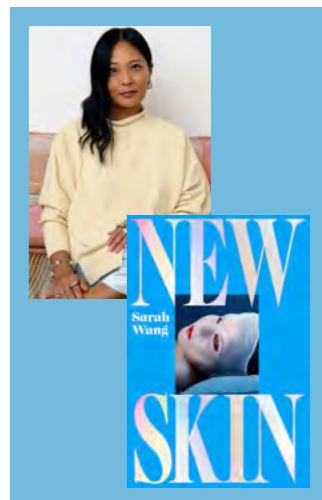
15:45-16:45
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In this riotous and revelatory live recording of their hit *Secret Life of Books* podcast, **Sophie Gee** and **Jonty Claypole** welcome Women's Prize Award-winning author of *Hamnet* and *Land*, **Maggie O'Farrell**, and Durham University's Professor of Psychology, who heads up the ReaderBank study, **Ben Alderson-Day**, to talk all things books, brains, and imaginations. Expect a quick-witted conversation about what on Earth is going on in our heads when we read (and write) books!

(AI)



Philippe Sands, 15:15-16:15



Sarah Wang, 15:15-16:15

**Programme key**

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

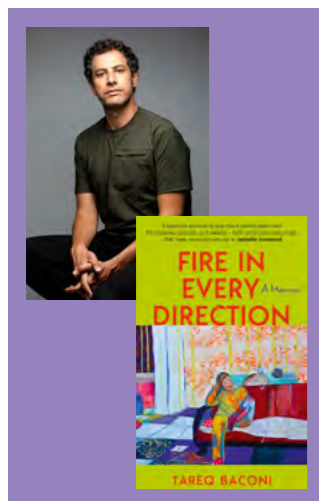
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Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance | 🍷 Food & Drink



Fatima Bhutto, 17:15-18:15



Joelle Taylor, 18:00-19:00



Tareq Baqoni, 18:45-19:45

Isabel Waidner: Seeing Double

16:30-17:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Things aren't always what they seem in **Isabel Waidner's** surreal, inventive work. *As If*, Waidner's latest novel, following the Goldsmiths Prize-winning *Sterling Karat Gold*, sees two men with lives that mirror each other's test the theory of whether it's ever possible to choose a different path. Hear Waidner talking about this surprising, slyly poignant book and reflecting on grief, loss, ambition, and the choices we make. Chaired by **Chris Power**.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Valeria Luiselli & Sara Torres: The Trouble with Beginnings

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A mother and daughter on the road in Sicily. A young woman in Barcelona caught between a dying mother and a new lover. In **Valeria Luiselli's** *Beginning Middle End* and **Sara Torres' X Is Where I Am, family dynamics loom large as women navigate love, grief, and starting over. Together, Luiselli (author of *Lost Children Archive*) and Torres (a bold new voice in Spanish literature) explore origins, memory, and the stories that shape a life. Chaired by **Octavia Bright**.**

AI

Pen Pals: Meg Mason & Ann Patchett

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

You'll know **Meg Mason** for her poetically funny *Sorrow and Bliss* and *Sophie, Standing There*. You'll know **Ann Patchett** for her dazzling *Bel Canto*, *The Dutch House*, and this year's *Whistler*. What you might not know is that a deep friendship blossomed between them when a professional email turned into daily voice notes about life, death, and creativity. Listen in as the novelists unpack their one-of-a-kind connection and how it's inspired each of them in profound ways.

AI

Fatima Bhutto: Gaza – The Story of a Genocide

17:15-18:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Edited by **Fatima Bhutto** and Sonia Faleiro, *Gaza: The Story of a Genocide* is an urgent, powerful collection of personal testimony, poetry, art, and frontline reportage, bearing witness to the vast, ongoing destruction inflicted on Palestine. Today, Bhutto is joined by some of the collection's award-winning contributors, including writer and activist **Tareq Baqoni**, to reflect on their pieces and experiences, the horror of existing under current conditions, and what future lies ahead for the Palestinian people. Check website for the full line-up.

CC

Joelle Taylor: Maryville

18:00-19:00
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Joelle Taylor, the luminous T. S. Eliot and Polari Prize-winning author of *C+nto & Othered Poems*, brings her raucous storytelling back to Edinburgh for another knockout event. Delve into her remarkable new collection, *Maryville*, an innovative history-in-poems of lesbian culture and LGBTQ+ rights, told through the lens of an imagined dyke bar in London and the four butch lesbians that inhabit it. Don't miss the riotous energy tonight as Taylor chats about and performs from the collection!

AI

Helle Helle & Vigdis Hjorth: Ordinary Miracles

18:15-19:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two heavyweights of Nordic fiction meet on stage for a sparky conversation with **Sophie Gee** about daily life as rich material. **Helle Helle** is a household name in Denmark, where her striking novels about ordinary people (*This Should be Written in the Present Tense, they*) have won every major prize. She's joined by Norway's **Vigdis Hjorth** (*Is Mother Dead, Repetition*), known for her sharp wit and the sort of unflinching autofiction that occasionally gets her into trouble.

AI

Tareq Baqoni & Ilan Pappé: Restorative Justice

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Despite the 'ceasefire', the war in the Palestinian Occupied Territories has continued with impunity. Palestinian activist, scholar, and author of *Hamas Contained: A History of Palestinian Resistance*, **Tareq Baqoni**, joins British-Israeli 'new historian', **Ilan Pappé** (*Israel on the Brink*), who argues that Israel's greatest threat is now not external forces, but itself. They reflect on how the latest phase of the conflict has developed, the complicated evolution of Hamas, and what steps need to be taken for restorative justice and reconciliation. Chaired by **Esa Aldegheri**.

CC

Xiao Hai: Adrift in the South

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

China's migrant workers' literature movement has seen a boom in recent years, with fascinating autobiographical works produced by writers involved in the nation's gig and service economy. **Xiao Hai's** *Adrift in the South* is a landmark memoir in this movement, offering a first-hand account of a decade spent moving between cities and factory jobs. Today, the essayist and poet provides a rare perspective on survival, dignity, and the human cost of the country's economic rise. Chaired by **Anthony Tao**.

AI

Karan Mahajan & Omar Musa: Exploring Legacies

19:00-20:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Karan Mahajan and **Omar Musa** have produced poetry, personal essays, and hip-hop albums between them, but today their fiercely creative minds meet to discuss the familial threads connecting their novels. In Musa's *Fierceland*, winner of Australia's Victorian Premier's Prize for Fiction, siblings return to Malaysian Borneo in the wake of their father's death, while *The Complex* by Mahajan (author of *The Association of Small Bombs*) follows a political dynasty in Delhi. Chaired by **Sana Goyal**.

AI

Hannah Lillith Assadi: Paradiso 17

20:00-21:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Hannah Lillith Assadi began writing the 2026 Women's Prize-longlisted *Paradiso 17* - a sweeping tale of an exiled Palestinian searching for home - in the final days of her father's life. With it, she hoped to disprove a worry he'd whispered on his deathbed: that his life had been wasted. Hear Assadi speak from the heart about writing through grief to complete her powerful tribute to immigrant tenacity and the connections that endure across continents.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Ben Lerner: Transcription

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What can fiction record that our devices can't? In **Ben Lerner's** *Transcription*, a novelist arrives to interview his aging mentor, then drops his phone (i.e. his only recording device) in the sink. What unfolds is a searching meditation on human connection and the strange ways technology reshapes our memories. The acclaimed poet and author of *The Topeka School* and *Leaving the Atocha Station* reflects with **Max Porter** on memory, parenthood, and relationships.

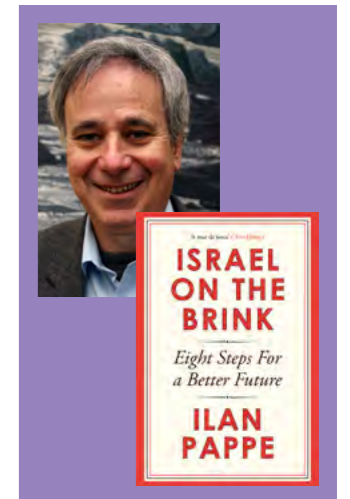
AI

Michael Pedersen and Friends

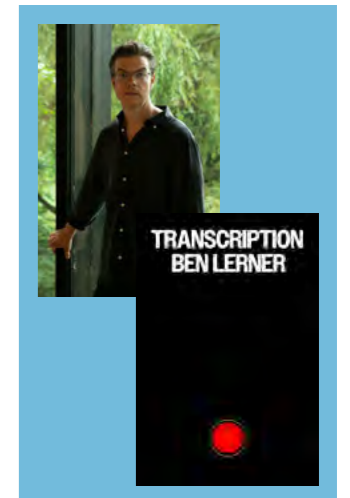
20:30-22:00
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Get ready for a glorious, riotous, chat-show style evening, hosted by one of Scotland's best-loved poets and novelists, the Edinburgh Makar himself, **Michael Pedersen**. Listen in to his wonderfully winding conversations with special guests including **Douglas Stuart** (Booker Prize-winning author of *Shuggie Bain*, *Young Mungo*, and *John of John*) and poet and singer-songwriter **Iona Zajac** (who'll bring us a few tunes!). This will be a real Festival highlight. Check the website for the full line-up.

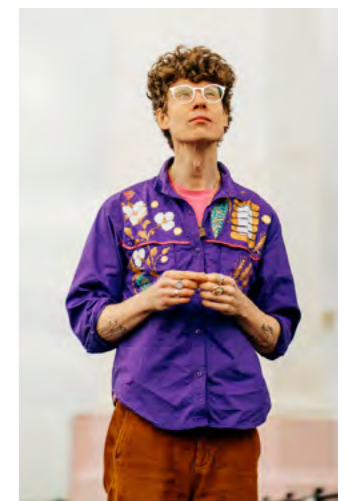
AI



Ilan Pappé, 18:45-19:45



Ben Lerner, 20:30-21:30



Michael Pedersen, 20:30-22:00

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life
Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned
Formats: [O] Remote Appearance [FD] Food & Drink



Meera Syal, 11:45-12:45



Yasmin Khan, 13:00-16:00

Pen Pals:
Jenny Colgan & Mike Gayle

10:15-11:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The friendship between novelists **Jenny Colgan** and **Mike Gayle** constantly yields inspiration and cup-filling conversations. When they met in 2000, Colgan was an unpublished hopeful drawn to Gayle's first novel, *My Legendary Girlfriend*, and their mutual reverence for romance. Since then, she's sold 15 million books and he's won the Romantic Novelists' Association Outstanding Achievement Award. Today, they chat about the importance of friends who not only understand your craft but have your back.

(AI)

Julian Baggini:
The Book of Coffee

10:30-11:30
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What does coffee mean to you? Perhaps it's fuel, a morning ritual, a grounding moment of mindfulness. In *The Book of Coffee*, philosopher **Julian Baggini** (*How the World Eats*), dives into the steamy depths to uncover how coffee worked its way into the fabric of our culture and what it can teach us about living. Join him for a talk and tasting (hosted by Edinburgh roasters **Santu Coffee**) that'll leave you feeling more alive (and alert) than ever.

(AI) ♻️

Nature Journaling:
A Workshop with J C Niala

10:30-12:00
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

J C Niala (*The New Eden*) is an award-winning writer, environmental historian, and anthropologist specialising in human-nature interactions; today, she leads an inspiring workshop for anyone curious about starting - or developing - a nature journaling practice. You'll start with the senses and explore ways into creatively recording your relationship with the natural world. Then, under Niala's expert guidance, you'll experiment with creative approaches to celebrating the many forms 'nature' takes - in landscapes, cities, and our own lives.

Meera Syal:
Vigilauntie

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Sometimes an offhand comment can change your entire life. Just ask **Meera Syal**, who's spent a lifetime refashioning random remarks - from aunts to industry execs - into comedy gold. Today, the creator of BBC sitcom *Goodness Gracious Me* and star of *The Kumars at No. 42* joins us with her heartwarming, hilarious memoir, *Vigilauntie*, sharing stories from her family's past in India to her career as one of Britain's best-loved comedy legends. Chaired by **Chitra Ramaswamy**.

(B) (BSL) (AI)

André Aciman:
Stowaways

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Global bestseller *Call Me by Your Name* showed us **André Aciman's** gift for crafting delicately heartbreaking love stories. We're thrilled he's back, and this time he's asking the tantalising question: what might have been? *Stowaways* follows happily married Julian as his world is upended by a flash drive revealing a whole, hidden life. Aciman joins us for a conversation about forks in the road and regrets that reach through the decades. Chaired by **Jonty Clappole**.

(AI)

Anthony Seldon:
The Brexit Effect

12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

10 years after the Brexit referendum turned British politics on its head, the culture war ignited by our exit from the European Union continues to blaze. Why did the referendum happen? What effects has it had? And what does our future outside of an embattled Europe hold? Today, **Anthony Seldon** - respected author, historian, biographer of eight Prime Ministers, and editor of the recent *The Brexit Effect, 2016-2026* - reckons with the legacy of this historic, divisive event. Supported by **Claire & Mark Urquhart**.

(AI)

Zakia Sewell & Rebecca Tamás:
The Rituals We Share

12:15-13:15
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Ancient traditions and folk culture can offer up unique ways to craft our own forms of meaning and connection. Writer and NTS Radio host **Zakia Sewell's** *Finding Albion* questions whether today's new folk revival could unite our increasingly divided country, while **Rebecca Tamás's** *The Book of Mysteries* interrogates how traditional practices can transform our relationship to nature and time. In this enlightening conversation, both authors explore their meditations on folklore.

(AI)



The Front List: Douglas Stuart

13:00-14:00
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

With his debut, *Shuggie Bain*, **Douglas Stuart** created a Scottish publishing sensation and seized the 2020 Booker Prize. His hotly anticipated new work, *John of John* (deemed by Lauren Groff 'a fierce, glorious sting of a novel!'), follows art school graduate Cal as he returns to the Isle of Harris, tripping straight back into the old life he thought he'd burst beyond. Join Stuart for this rare and special event: an insightful exploration of family and religion, the fragility of community, and the beauty and bleakness of island life. Chaired by **Jackie Kay**. Supported by VisitScotland.

(B) (AI)

Have Lunch with
Yasmin Khan

13:00-16:00
Elliott's Studio
£100.00

Yasmin Khan's Irani-Pakistani heritage deeply informs her cooking, from the vegetable-rich, flavour-forward recipes she's famous for to the important daily ritual of a communal meal. Today the broadcaster and award-winning author of travel cookbooks *Zaitoun*, *Ripe Figs*, and *Sabzi* gathers us around the table to pass stories and brimming platters of her lovingly-made food between us. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink, a generous multi-course lunch, and paired wine on the table.*

♻️

Javier Cercas:
The Anatomy of a Moment

13:45-14:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

February 1981. Shots ring out in Spain's parliament. Cameras keep rolling. In *The Anatomy of a Moment*, one of Spain's most important books of the past 50 years, **Javier Cercas** revisited the only coup ever captured live on film, transforming the footage into a forensic, gripping narrative. Now, on the 45th anniversary of its inciting event, he reflects on using a novelist's tools to interrogate a nation's defining crisis and reveal its very soul. Chaired by **Chris Power**.

(AI)

Junk Journaling:
A Workshop with Rachel Hazell

14:00-15:30
17:00-18:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

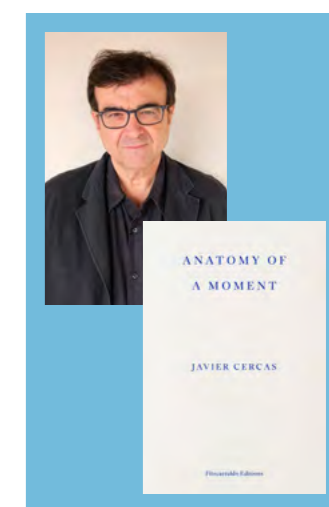
Explore the Festival's overarching Changing Your Mind theme through the art of junk journaling: transforming discarded ephemera into beautiful books. With bookbinder **Rachel Hazell**, you'll engage in mindful making through collage and chat through the many benefits - neurological and otherwise - of creative, repetitive tasks like book making. Materials are provided, though you can bring your own 'found handwriting' (old shopping lists, birthday cards, etc) to work with. *This event is repeated at the times above.*

Elizabeth McCracken:
A Long Game

13:30-14:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Write what you know. Never miss a day. Kill your darlings. **Elizabeth McCracken** is having none of it. In *A Long Game*, the Guggenheim Fellow, National Book Award finalist, and much-loved teacher dismantles the tired rules of fiction - from punctuation to plot - with wit, warmth, and a glorious streak of crankiness. Today, she reflects on doubt, discipline, and why the writing life is less about mastery than defending the strange, singular work only you can make. Chaired by **Sam Baker**.

(AI)



Javier Cercas, 13:45-14:45

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: (B) Livestreamed | (BSL) British Sign Language | (CC) Live Captioned | (AI) AI Captioned
Formats: (C) Remote Appearance | ♻️ Food & Drink



Anita Anand, 15:15-16:15

Victoria Bennett: The Apothecary by the Sea

14:00-15:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

With the years of early motherhood behind her, **Victoria Bennett** uprooted her family and moved from Cumbria 500 miles north to Orkney, where she set about transforming a scrappy backyard into a wild seaside garden. From teas and tinctures to tides and storms, this nourishing conversation with the award-winning author of *All My Wild Mothers* will explore the restorative power of growing found in her latest memoir, *The Apothecary by the Sea*.

AI

Cal Flynn & J C Niala: The World Beyond Ourselves

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What does it mean to live alongside nature? Why do humans seek it out? Can we balance our need for wilderness with our desire for community? **Cal Flynn** and **J C Niala** reflect on these questions in their books. In *The Savage Landscape*, journalist Flynn (author of *Islands of Abandonment*) explores humanity's relationship with wilderness; in *The New Eden*, award-winning nature writer Niala celebrates the nature in our cities. Together, they discuss their visions for the future. Chaired by **David Farrier**.

AI

Anita Anand & William Dalrymple: Empire Podcast – Live

15:15-16:15
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Terrific storytellers and co-hosts of the *Empire* podcast series, **Anita Anand** and **William Dalrymple** are experts at getting to the heart of some of history's biggest power struggles, from the British Empire to the Ottomans and Ancient India. Today the pair take you behind the scenes, chatting about what goes into writing their hit podcast, and reflecting on times when their research into the past has led them to change their minds and reframe their relationship with history. *Supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart*.

AI

Philippe Sands & Colm Tóibín: Remembering the Dirty War

15:30-16:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From 1976 until 1983, the Argentine military junta's Dirty War was a brutal campaign of violence - tens of thousands of citizens 'disappeared', murdered by the state. 50 years on, join *Brooklyn* author **Colm Tóibín** - whose 1996 novel, *The Story of the Night*, was inspired by his own experiences in Argentina - and international lawyer and *East West Street* author **Philippe Sands** as they consider the long-lasting impact of the war.

AI

Lucas Jones: I Still Believe in Miracles

15:45-16:45
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Do you believe in miracles? **Lucas Jones** does. He's inspired millions with poems that capture moments to hold onto in the darkness of a divided world. Celebrating lives full of living, real connections in our over-connected world, and glimmers of hope, Lucas joins us today to chat about his collection *I Still Believe in Miracles* (and perform from it too). Discover what it takes, and means, to choose to love despite it all.

AI

Cynan Jones: Pulse

16:30-17:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Master of the short form and winner of the BBC National Short Story Award **Cynan Jones** returns to the Festival with his precise and compelling collection of stories, *Pulse*. Jones explores the realities of life in the working countryside with an intimacy born of experience, alert to the struggle between people and nature. In this radiant conversation, Jones discusses the highs and lows - isolation, peril, but also connection and unexpected joy - of a rural life.

AI

Patrick Ryan: Buckeye

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Patrick Ryan's astonishing debut novel *Buckeye* earned him comparisons to J D Salinger and William Faulkner - and highest praise from his close friend **Ann Patchett**, who chairs this special event. Set in a small Ohio town, the novel traces the far-reaching consequences of a stolen moment of passion as they ripple through generations shaped by war, grief, and longing. This unforgettable conversation will explore intimacy, secrecy, forgiveness, desire, and writing lives entangled by history.

AI

André Aciman & Sarah Maxwell-McNicol: Call Me by Your Name

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

André Aciman's million-copy bestseller, *Call Me by Your Name*, was adapted for the screen to Oscar-winning success by James Ivory in 2017. Now, artist **Sarah Maxwell-McNicol** gives new life to this moving story of first love through a gorgeously illustrated graphic novel. Aciman and Maxwell-McNicol reflect today on their co-creation process, bringing existing characters to life in new ways, and what goes into adapting a beloved queer cult classic for new audiences. Chaired by **Andrés N Ordorica**.

AI

Elizabeth McCracken & John Yorke: Rules of the Game

17:15-18:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What makes a story work? **Elizabeth McCracken**'s gloriously contrarian *A Long Game* tears up the rulebook of fiction writing, while **John Yorke**'s *Trip to the Moon* uncovers the hidden narrative structures powering everything from beach reads to political propaganda. McCracken, a beloved teacher and author of *The Giant's House* joins the legendary story expert and author of *Into the Woods*, Yorke, for a sparky, illuminating conversation on craft, instinct, form, and the unruly power of a well-told tale. Chaired by **Chris Power**.

AI

Madeline Cash & Angela Tomaski: Ruin Runs in the Family

18:15-19:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Family legends, open marriages, sibling chaos, criminal conspiracies: two standout debut novelists bring riotous new energy to the family saga. Taking us from a crumbling English manor to an imploding American household - and finding love, absurdity, and catastrophe in both - **Angela Tomaski**'s *The Infamous Gilberts* and **Madeline Cash**'s *Lost Lambs* open up a lively, hilarious conversation about inheritance, kinship, and mining comedy from the messiest, most intimate corners of family life.

AI

Natsuo Kirino: Swallows

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Natsuo Kirino's complex feminist noir crime novels have awarded her cult status in Japan and abroad. *Swallows* follows a woman led by economic desperation to become a surrogate mother, and an infertile couple desperate to pass on their 'elite' genes. **Kirsty Logan** leads this incisive conversation with one of Japan's literary lights about bodily autonomy, the injustices of class and gender, and what it means to be 'in control'. *Supported by The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation*.

AI

THE NOBLE CALEDONIA EVENT

Maggie O'Farrell: Land

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Beginning on a windswept peninsula on the west of Ireland and charting a journey spanning generations, *Land* is **Maggie O'Farrell**'s most ambitious novel to date. Following an Oscar nomination for the poignant screenplay of her novel *Hamnet*, O'Farrell discusses this epic new tale of colonisation and rebellion inspired by family history. We knew it already, but *Land* cements O'Farrell's status as one of our finest writers working today. Chaired by **Sam Baker**.

AI

For the Love of Agnes: A Celebration of Agnes Owens

19:00-20:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Agnes Owens was a writer's writer, beloved by all from James Kelman to Liz Lochhead for her guileless prose and mastery of what Ali Smith called the 'deadpan gothic'. In her centenary year, publisher Birlinn introduce Owens to a new generation of readers with special editions of her most-loved books. Booker Prize-winner **Douglas Stuart**, **Jenni Fagan**, and **William Letford** come together to celebrate the life and writing of one of Scotland's singular undersung talents. Chaired by **Chitra Ramaswamy**. *Supported by the Dr David Summers Charitable Trust*.

AI

The Fun Lovin Crime Writers

19:00-20:00
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

'Murdering songs for fun in front of anyone who will listen' is how this crime-writing super-group describe themselves. Tonight, they return to the scene of the crime: our Spiegelent, where they performed their very first gig. Join **Mark Billingham**, **Chris Brookmyre**, **Doug Johnstone**, **Stuart Neville**, **Val McDermid**, and **Luca Veste** as the group swap their desks for the stage and put on an unmissable, riotous evening of rock and roll to close out this year's Festival.



Colm Tóibín & Philippe Sands, 15:30-16:30



Natsuo Kirino, 18:45-19:45



Maggie O'Farrell, 18:45-19:45

Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction | The Front List | Good Information | New World Orders | How to Live a Meaningful Life | Table Talk | Fascinating Non-Fiction | Music, Performance & Podcasts | Poetry | Workshops

Access: Livestreamed | British Sign Language | Live Captioned | AI Captioned | Formats: Remote Appearance | Food & Drink

Young Adults

Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé

Dean Atta

Holly Bourne



Buffy's Book Club

Juno Dawson

Jack Edwards & Jem Calder

Saara El-Arifi & Nikita Gill



Gubsmacked

House of YA

Zoulfa Katouh

L D Lapinski

Loud Poets

Hollie McNish



Emma-Lee Moss (Emmy the Great)

Patrick Ness

Aleema Omotoni

Ella Risbridger

Rock the Boat



Samantha Shannon

Sophia Smith Galer & Len Pennie

Chanté Timothy

Write your story, find your people

Our Young Adults Programme – curated for those under 30 (or anyone who's young at heart) – is all about helping you find your people, bringing together the curious, imaginative, and creative. Everyone's welcome to come as they are to revel in meeting brilliant authors and enjoying some of the friendliest events in town.

Whether you're the kind of reader who devours any genre you come across, or there's one book so close to your heart you could recite it from cover to cover... we have something for you.

You can check out all our Young Adults events, and get right to what you love, using the filters on our website. A few events might not be suitable for under 18s – so keep an eye out for our guidance notes.

The who's who of YA

We're as buzzing as you are to catch the brightest names in the YA sphere chatting about their brand new books. Genre Queen **Juno Dawson** brings dystopian thriller *Survival Show*, about a young woman forced to risk everything in a deadly reality TV show; **Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé** discusses her fresh new title *The Heirs*, following five genius siblings whose father is murdered; and the international bestselling author of *As Long As the Lemon Trees Grow*, **Zoulfa Katouh** unfurls the story of Jihad, a young woman navigating a prestigious new school as its only Muslim student. You can also join **Patrick Ness** to discover more about *Piper at the Gates of Dusk* (the newest installment of his *Chaos Walking* series), shudder at **Holly Bourne's** unsettling *And Then We Screamed*, and unpack the twists of **Aleema Omotoni's** high stakes *Winners & Liars*. Phew!

House of YA

...is BACK for another cracking collaboration! After last year's epic day, House of YA will take over the Spiegeltent on Friday 28 August. Join them for a smorgasbord of book-based festivities, including a book launch, romantasy panel, crafts, and activities. It's basically a festival within the Festival.

Your story, your way

With sessions from illustrator **Chanté Timothy** and graphic novelist **L D Lapinski**, as well as Q&As with publishing professionals and the **Scottish Book Trust** team, find out what you need to be the industry's next wunderkind – or the genius who publishes them!

Electrifying performances

Join the legendary **Loud Poets** for their annual Grand Slam Final, **GUBSMACKED's** Flyte Night takes the stage by storm, and our pals at **Push the Boat Out** bring their Open Mic to the Spiegeltent (maybe featuring you?). Festival favourite **Kae Tempest** will be at McEwan Hall discussing his latest novel, and don't miss **Len Pennie** in the stunning Greyfriars Kirk where she'll be in beautiful harmony with BAFTA-winning composer **Paul Leonard-Morgan** performing their brand new work *Delusions*.

Social sensations

One of the most in-demand events of 2025, Buffy's Book Club returns – this time in the Spiegeltent, so even more of you can get involved. And that's where you'll also find 'the internet's librarian' and TikTok star **Jack Edwards** chatting to **Jem Calder** about his excruciatingly relatable new novel, *I Want You to Be Happy*.

Find your BFFs

(That's Book Friends Forever!) There's nothing better than dissecting every last detail of your favourite book with a similar-minded pal, so we've got lots of chances for you to meet new BFFs. Stay and chat after meeting a literary legend, join in a crafting or creative session, or simply hang out in our cosy Book Nook with fellow book fans – maybe with something tasty from our award-winning food trucks or laid-back bar. Check our website for details of what's on when.

Book signings

Most events will be followed by a signing with the author at our Festival Bookshop, run by our retail partners Waterstones. We dare you to leave without at least one new book...

And more

As well as the events in our Young Adults Programme, there are hundreds more in our Adults Programme – so why not see what else catches your eye?

Saturday 15

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Len Pennie & Sophia Smith Galer: Use It or Lose It

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

When a language disappears, what else are we at risk of losing - culturally, politically, and personally? In her powerful new book *How to Kill a Language*, award-winning author and journalist **Sophia Smith Galer** journeys across continents and generations to ask this crucial question. Today, she's joined by iconic Scots poet and broadcaster **Len Pennie**, author of the defiant *Poyums Annaw*, to explore bilingual identity, the erasure of languages, and the efforts being made to revitalise them. *Supported by the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.*

(AI)

Loud Poets Grand Slam Final

15:30-17:30
Venue T
£10.50 [£5.00]

Back again for another year of electrifying slam poetry, this heated competition from Loud Poets gives new meaning to the phrase 'poetry in motion'. Having qualified through a series of nationwide Slams, 10 poets compete for a cash prize, glory, and the coveted title of Slam Champion. Host **Kevin Mclean** brings you along for the final showdown in an event that promises to deliver a grand slam of poetic knockout.

(CC)

Emma-Lee Moss: My Cantopop Nights

18:00-19:00
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Singer-songwriter **Emma-Lee Moss**, aka Emmy the Great, reflects on her personal journey through music, fandom, and identity (and performs a few songs for us too). *My Cantopop Nights* explores the stars Moss idolised throughout her Hong Kong upbringing and the subsequent loss of identity when her family moved to England. Hear her trace how this hidden passion intertwined with Hong Kong's post-colonial tensions, becoming both a refuge and a symbol of her childhood self. Chaired by **Katie Goh**.

(AI)

Your Voice Matters with Manjeet Mann

18:30-19:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

What does it mean to find your voice? What would it mean to ROAR with it? Get inspired as award-winning author and performer **Manjeet Mann** shares the real-life story behind *Roar*: her bold new verse novel of resistance, based on the activism of Sampat Pal and the Pink Sari Gang. Discover how Manjeet first got into writing and the experiences that have shaped her, then tap into your own courage to create a fresh new work.

(AI)

Sunday 16

Jill Dawson: Pixie

12:15-13:15
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Thousands consult Tarot cards about the paths they should be taking, but few know the name of Pamela 'Pixie' Colman Smith, illustrator of the world's most iconic Tarot deck. In fictionalised biography *Pixie*, her life as a plucky fin-de-siècle artist drawn to the occult is conjured up by Orange Prize-shortlisted author **Jill Dawson**. A qualified Jungian Tarot reader herself, if you bring your dilemmas today, Jill might just show you the way.

(AI)

Sounding Home: A Songwriting Session with Emma-Lee Moss

14:00-16:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

How do we remember where we've been? Which songs help shape and preserve our identities? This playful session - led by musician and *My Cantopop Nights* author **Emma-Lee Moss** (AKA Emmy the Great) - invites you to explore gentle creative exercises, share the songs that remind you of home, and write about your own special places. Together, you'll build a communal song that weaves a collective dream of a shared world. Open to all experience levels. Instruments welcome, though not required.

Naomi Ishiguro & Katalina Watt: High-Octane Folklore

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

If fast-paced fantasy plots are your thing, secure your seat for **Naomi Ishiguro** and **Katalina Watt**. In *The Rainshadow Orphans*, Naomi draws on Japanese folklore and Studio Ghibli to tell a story of righteous revenge, while Katalina's *Saltswept* takes us on a perilous quest through Southeast Asian mythology in search of hidden treasure. Join them for a fascinating chat about magical histories and why the world's oldest stories still have so much to teach us. Chaired by **Kirsty Logan**.

(AI)

Zoulfa Katouh: The Ocean Would Paint Me Blue

16:30-17:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

How do you start from scratch when grief looms large? In *The Ocean Would Paint Me Blue*, **Zoulfa Katouh** tells the story of Jihad, a young woman navigating a prestigious new school as the only Muslim student there. The internationally bestselling author of *As Long as the Lemon Trees Grow* joins the Festival for a chat about friendship, resilience, and identity - we'd love for you to be part of the conversation too.

(AI)

Tarot for Fiction Writers: A Session with Jill Dawson

17:00-18:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£24.00/£8.00]

While writing her novel *Fred and Edie*, **Jill Dawson** was stuck and decided, as a writing exercise, to give the book's protagonist a tarot reading. 26 years later, and now a qualified Jungian Tarot reader, Jill has used tarot to develop her writing in many ways since. Join her for this interactive, playful session exploring using the tarot to overcome creative blocks, unlock voice and form, solve narrative puzzles, and expand your writing practice. No experience of tarot needed!

Annie Lord, Elle McNicoll & Bobby Palmer: Love, or Something Like It

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Packed with stories that take on love in unconventional ways, contemporary romance has got hot again. Just ask *Vogue* columnist **Annie Lord** (*The Project*), YA author turned debut novelist **Elle McNicoll** (*Unapologetic Love Story*), and bestselling author and journalist **Bobby Palmer** (*Main Characters*) - all of whose novels explore modern relationships, intimacy, and profound connections. **Nyla Ahmad** chairs this uplifting chat about 21st-century love stories, and why we still believe.

(AI)



Len Pennie & Sophia Smith Galer, 11:45-12:45



Manjeet Mann, 18:30-19:30



Jill Dawson, 12:15-13:15



Zoulfa Katouh, 16:30-17:30

Programme key

Genres: **Activism** **Food, Lifestyle & Wellness** **LGBTQ+** **Music, Performance & Podcasts**
Romance & Romantasy **Interactive** **Buzzy Fiction** **Fantasy, Sci-Fi & Horror** **Poetry**

Access: **D** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **AI** AI Captioned
Formats: **FD** Food & Drink



Monday 17

Saara El-Arifi & Nikita Gill: Of Queens and Goddesses

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

We're thrilled to welcome back two outstanding talents this year, who've both chosen powerful, complex women to inspire their latest works. Poet **Nikita Gill**, whose novel *Hekate* breathes new life into the Greek goddess of witchcraft through heart-thudding verse, joins **Saara El-Arifi**, the *Faebound* author turning her hand to historical fiction with *Cleopatra* - a re-imagining of the iconic queen's life through a Black woman's lens. Strap in for an unapologetically feminist meeting of minds.

AI



Saara El-Arifi, 18:45-19:45



Nikita Gill, 18:45-19:45

Tuesday 18

Dean Atta: Big Man

17:00-18:00
Venue NW
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Is there anything **Dean Atta** can't do? As well as being a beloved YA and children's author, 'one of poetry's greatest modern voices' according to *Gay Times*, and a recent BAFTA winner for his short animation *Two Black Boys in Paradise*, the Festival favourite now presents his highly anticipated adult literary debut, *Big Man*. Join Dean today as he discusses his tender yet playful story and its themes of queer aging, race, and living authentically.

AI

Rock the Boat: Poetry Open Mic

18:00-19:30
Spiegeltent
Pay What You Can

Whether you're ready to hit the mic or just keen to soak up the vibes, this event has you covered. Our friends at Push the Boat Out - Edinburgh's genre-bending international poetry festival - host a special edition of their vibrant monthly open mic to celebrate dynamic contemporary poetry and performance. So, sit back and enjoy - or take to the stage and showcase your own work. Visit our website to find out how you can get involved.

AI

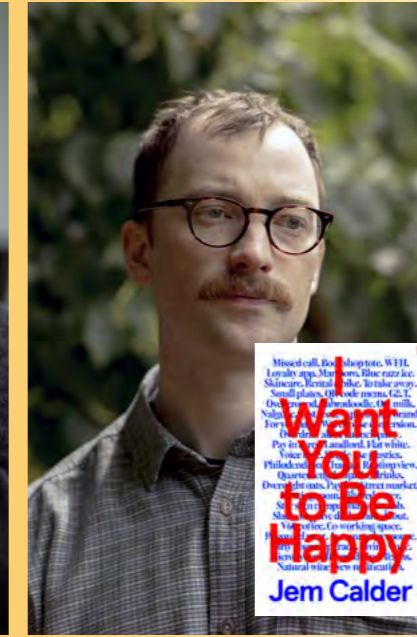
Thursday 20



Translation Surgery with Polly Barton

12:00-14:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£30.00/£10.00]

Polly Barton is the acclaimed translator of books including Asako Yuzuki's publishing sensation, *Butter*, Mieko Kanai's *Mild Vertigo*, and Saou Ichikawa's *Hunchback*. In this fun problem-solving session for practising translators, Polly invites you to bring along the translation issue that's been irking you. From the granular to the abstract, witness the extraordinary creative forces unleashed when translators put their minds together! All languages and experience levels are welcome.



See Yourself in Writing with Maisie Chan

17:00-18:00
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

If you want to be a writer, it's time to get started! Lucky for you, **Maisie Chan**, the brilliant author of *Danny Chung Does Not Do Maths*, is here to get you inspired. Ask all the questions you've always wanted to put to a published author (How do I write memorable characters? Where do I even begin?) and start developing your own ideas. Everyone's welcome, whether you're totally new to writing or sitting on jotters full of plots.

Jem Calder & Jack Edwards: Inklings Book Club - Live

20:30-22:00
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Jack Edwards has a knack for knowing exactly which novels will set our hearts alight, and today 'the internet's resident librarian' sits down with **Jem Calder** for a special live recording of the *Inklings Book Club* podcast. Discovered by Sally Rooney, who first published his writing in *The Stinging Fly*, Calder's spot-on debut about the listlessness, precarity, and wild joy of being in your 20s and 30s will make for an unmissable chat.

AI

Friday 21

Winners, Liars... and Crafts with Aleema Omotoni

17:30-18:30
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Stately homes, rich-kid rivals, a high stakes competition to win a multi-million-pound fortune - **Aleema Omotoni**'s twisty new YA thriller, *Winners and Liars*, serves up dark academia with a side of *Knives Out*. In other words: unmissable. Hear Aleema talk about the book's themes of wealth, loss, history, and black girlhood, then get your craft on and make something together with other readers.

AI

Samantha Shannon: Among the Burning Flowers

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Samantha Shannon is an expert worldbuilder - with her million-copy bestseller *The Priory of the Orange Tree* (a feminist reimagining of Saint George and the Dragon) she gave us a portal into a magical universe of fire-breathing creatures so real you almost felt the heat. We're delighted to have her brilliant mind back at the Festival to unpack *Among the Burning Flowers*, a prequel that imbues this well-loved world with a darker backstory of heartbreak and human resilience.

AI



Programme key

Genres: **Activism** **Food, Lifestyle & Wellness** **LGBTQ+** **Music, Performance & Podcasts**
Romance & Romantasy **Interactive** **Buzzy Fiction** **Fantasy, Sci-Fi & Horror** **Poetry**

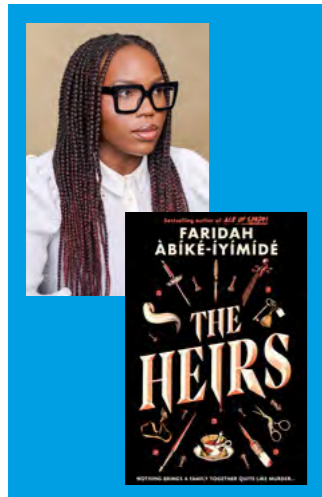
Access: **L** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **AI** AI Captioned
Formats: **FD** Food & Drink

Saturday 22

Speak Up: A Spoken Word Poetry Workshop with Katie Ailes & Kevin McLean

17:00-19:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]
Age limit: 18+

Join poets **Katie Ailes** and **Kevin McLean**, directors of Scotland's award-winning Loud Poets, for this inspiring spoken word poetry workshop. Explore what makes dynamic, innovative spoken word poems, then get stuck into exercises on writing for performance. Sharing work out loud can be scary, so the pair will share plenty of tips on how to kick nerves and build confidence performing onstage - and there'll be an opportunity to practice at the mic. No experience needed.



Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé, 18:15-19:15



Holly Bourne, 16:45-17:45

Brief Encounters with Buffy's Book Club

18:00-20:00
Spiegeltent
£25.00 [£20.00]
Age limit: 18+

Lizzy Hadfield has long been a tastemaker, but with Buffy's Book Club she took London and New York's literary scenes by storm. Join her at this special event to sip, socialise, and compare TBR lists with other discerning book lovers in celebration of **Vintage Classic's Brief Encounters** collection. Enjoy a drink as 'Bibliotherapists' pair you with the perfect short novel for your taste - whether that's an Edith Wharton ghost story or a lesser-known gem by Virginia Woolf - which you'll get to take home.

AI ♪

Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé: The Heirs

18:15-19:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Secrets, lies, murder, and money - all the ingredients needed for a killer read. **Faridah Àbíké-Íyímídé** gives us a rollercoaster of twists in her gripping thriller, *The Heirs*, following the five genius children of an infamous billionaire. Come along to meet and hear from the bestselling author of *Ace of Spades* and *Where Sleeping Girls Lie*, and after, you'll get a chance to hang out with fellow readers and fans of a good murder mystery.

AI

Hollie McNish: Virgin

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Virginity is something **Hollie McNish** has spent years thinking about, from the looming presence we can feel it has in our youth, to whether the Virgin Mary ever got annoyed by her eternal nickname. In *Virgin*, McNish picks at the six-letter word with her trademark mix of softness, frankness, and humour to explore its true power. Hear the Ted Hughes Award-winning author of *Lobster* and *Slug* dive further into these thoughts and experience her electric stage presence firsthand.

AI

Sunday 23

Ione Gamble & Philippa Snow: Icons Only

15:00-16:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

In *It's Terrible the Things I Have to Do to be Me*, **Philippa Snow** gives us a radical study of female icons through pairs of famous women. It's full of the glamour and debauchery of Hollywood, just like **Ione Gamble's** *The Polyester Book of (Bad) Taste*: a deep dive into the joy and power of personal pleasures, quirks, obsessions, and bad taste. Join the duo's discussion on pop culture, exposure, punishment, and the gruelling demands of femininity and fame. Chaired by **Tomiwa Folorunso**.

AI

Schemes, Screams, and Secrets with Holly Bourne

16:45-17:45
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

If all the girls around you started screaming, would you laugh? Or would you run? From the searingly honest mind behind the *Spinster Club* series, YA author **Holly Bourne** chats today about her thrilling new novel, *And Then We Screamed*. Set amongst the strange goings-on in the seemingly perfect town of Maple Lakes, wannabe investigative journalist Clover (and her crush Brody) are determined to discover why their town is suddenly under an ear-splitting spell.

AI

Tuesday 25

Get Your Graphic Novel Started with Chanté Timothy

17:45-18:30
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Chanté Timothy is a brilliant graphic novelist - the creator of the award-winning series about a brainy young super-scientist, *Supa Nova*. If you've always dreamed of getting your own stories down on the page, Chanté's here to help you on your way with a gentle introduction to storytelling through illustration. Whether you're already an art whizz, or just want to do stick figure comics, Chanté knows how to get those sketches story ready.

AI

GUBSMACKED: Flyte Nyte 2026

20:30-22:30
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Like the modern rap battle, 'flytings' flourished in 15th-century Scotland as a form of entertainment, and as a means of garnering respect, attention, and speaking truth to power. Today, GUBSMACKED return to the Festival with the dazzlingly rude and boisterous Flyte Nyte! Join your hosts, **Colin Bramwell**, **Leyla Josephine**, and **Iona Lee**, and witness poets, rappers, and spoken word artists all fighting to become the evening's Flyting Champion using nothing but wit, verse, extravagant verbal abuse, and name-calling - bring it on!

AI

Wednesday 26

The Kitchen Book: A Table Talk with Ella Risbridger

16:00-17:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£25.00]
Age limit: 18+

Ella Risbridger is as deft with a pen as she is with a spatula, a writer who can turn a recipe for Marmite soup into stomach-rumbling poetry. Watch her rustle up something hearty from *The Kitchen Book*, her cooking companion that promises to make every meal '10% more lovely', then listen to her wax lyrical about food as the purest form of happiness. Chaired by **Nyla Ahmad**. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

AI ♪

Finding Your People with L D Lapinski

17:30-18:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

When labels just don't fit, life's rarely smooth sailing. Or smooth skating, as is the case in **L D Lapinski's** *Kickflip*. The thoughtful graphic novel follows non-binary teen Elliot as they struggle to merge school life with their passion for skateboarding. Join Lapinski for a unique event about friendship, writing, and the sheer joy of being able to express yourself creatively. There'll also be time to meet and chat with like-minded folk afterwards!

AI

Let's Write! with the Scottish Book Trust

18:15-19:15
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Our pals at the Scottish Book Trust - inventor of the New Writers Awards - know all about writing, and what you need to take that next step to publication. In this interactive session, they'll be offering top tips, exercises, and excellent chat which could help on your writing journey. *Presented by the Scottish Book Trust.*

Long Day? Cook This: A Table Talk with Justin Tsang

19:00-20:30
Elliott's Studio
£35.00 [£25.00]
Age limit: 18+

Justin Tsang's *Long Day? Cook This* is the sort of book that'll stay permanently open in your kitchen, bursting with easy East Asian recipes that taste anything but: firecracker rice, tangy instant noodle salad, Kimchi egg ribbon udon soup. Watch 'Justin the Dustbin' (his moniker on socials) whip up a treat as he chats flavour pairings, kitchen shortcuts, and cutting his teeth at his family's Chinese restaurant. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

AI ♪



Chanté Timothy, 17:45-18:30



L D Lapinski, 17:30-18:15

Programme key

Genres: **Activism** **Food, Lifestyle & Wellness** **LGBTQ+** **Music, Performance & Podcasts**
Romance & Romantasy **Interactive** **Buzzy Fiction** **Fantasy, Sci-Fi & Horror** **Poetry**

Access: **D** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **AI** AI Captioned
Formats: **AI** Food & Drink

Thursday 27

Graphic Novels with Lizzy Stewart

13:00-15:00
Venue A
£40.00 [£36.00/£30.00/£10.00]

Lizzy Stewart (author-illustrator of the breathtaking, genre-defying books *The Wreck*, *Alison*, and *Walking Distance*) introduces you today to the world of graphic storytelling. During this session, you'll look at character, how to find inspiration, and the way that time can bend and stretch within a graphic novel or comic book. All of this will come together in a short-form comic strip which could form the basis of your own future full-length masterpiece.

Caden Armstrong, Nadine Aisha Jassat & Ella Risbridger: Love on the Brain

15:30-16:30
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Slow burns and bodice rippers, unrequited yearning and enemies-to-lovers: romantic fiction contains whole universes of passion, pain, and stomach-flipping chemistry. Its domination of bestseller lists proves we all want a little more love in our lives, so join this celebration of our culture's most enduring genre, featuring *In Love with Love* author **Ella Risbridger**, Edinburgh's Book Lovers Bookshop owner **Caden Armstrong**, and poet, author, and avid romance-reader **Nadine Aisha Jassat**. Chaired by **Alisha Fernandez Miranda**.

(AI)

Juno Dawson: Survival Show

17:30-18:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Ready for the performance of your life? In **Juno Dawson's** new YA novel, *Survival Show*, a young woman enters the most watched reality TV show in the world in order to help her family, but soon comes face to face with the work of a brutal regime. Come meet the utterly brilliant author of *Clean* and *Her Majesty's Royal Coven* and listen in to her thoughtful chat about the dangers of fame, power, and survival.

(AI)

Friday 28

House of YA x Edinburgh International Book Festival Spiegelent Takeover

14:00-18:00
Spiegelent
£15.00 [£12.00]

House of YA is back! They'll be taking over the Spiegelent again this year with another selection of the hottest titles in Young Adult fiction, all wrapped in a cosy afternoon of good company. Your ticket will get you access to everything, so stay for the whole thing or pop in and out as much as you like. Although when you see the line-up, you won't want to be anywhere else.

(AI)

The Divine Bea Fitzgerald

14:15-15:00
Spiegelent

Bea Fitzgerald is here with an exclusive early launch event of her brand new book, *This Divine Revelry*, a captivating, witty, feminist take on the myth of Ariadne and Dionysus. Bea's romantasy books - including *Girl, Goddess, Queen* - are massive hits so we know you'll enjoy this delicious escape into a mythology-inspired world. And she'll be signing afterwards too!

AMA: YA Editor Edition!

15:30-16:00
Spiegelent

What makes a good book? How polished should a first draft be? We've got a Penguin YA Editor in the house to answer all your burning questions. Whether you're in the early stages of thinking about getting that epic tale out of your head or you're almost ready to send it out into the world - we got you.



Bingo Time!

16:15-16:45
Spiegelent

Eyes down for Trope or Nope bingo... there may be prizes. It will be gently chaotic. Let's go!

Romance, Fantasy, and You

17:00-17:45
Spiegelent

What's better than one amazing author? A whole bloomin' bunch of them! Today's brilliant romantasy panel includes **Lauryn Hamilton Murray** and other fantastic authors. Hear them being quizzed about the inspirations behind their EPIC romances and their writing processes - then get your book signed afterwards.

AND, as if that wasn't enough, there'll be loads of activities to keep the afternoon buzzing. Think: a snuggly reading booth, mindful colouring, and a specialist recommendations section with the chance to 'Read One, Pass It On'. And with anyone in their craft era, we'll be doing some lush collaging to create your own Housemate reader profile.

Get a break from real life and come hide with us in the prettiest venue in town.

Writing the Darkness with Patrick Ness

15:30-16:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Patrick Ness is a titan of Young Adult literature. Author of modern classic, *The Knife of Never Letting Go*, he returns to the world of the bestselling *Chaos Walking* trilogy with *Piper at the Gates of Dusk*. Blending sci-fi, speculative fiction, and adventure, it's a story of power, division, and hope. Hear Patrick talk about going back to a world he created nearly 20 years ago and what it takes to write award-winning science fiction.

(AI)

Katy Hessel: How to Live an Artful Life

18:45-19:45
Venue T
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

As modern life pulls our attention in every direction, how can we carve space for our creative lives? **Katy Hessel** has a few ideas - 365 to be exact. After years dedicated to spotlighting the Great Women Artists, the historian, podcaster, and bestselling author of *The Story of Art Without Men*, joins us to share *How to Live an Artful Life*: a year-full of inspiration to help us all slow down and view the world anew.

(AI)

Sunday 30

Zakia Sewell & Rebecca Tamás: The Rituals We Share

12:15-13:15
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Ancient traditions and folk culture can offer up unique ways to craft our own forms of meaning and connection. Writer and NTS Radio host **Zakia Sewell's** *Finding Albion* questions whether today's new folk revival could unite our increasingly divided country, while **Rebecca Tamás' The Book of Mysteries** interrogates how traditional practices can transform our relationship to nature and time. In this enlightening conversation, both authors explore their meditations on the nation's folklore.

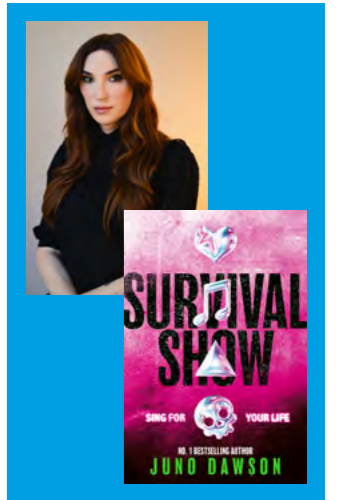
(AI)

Lucas Jones: I Still Believe in Miracles

15:45-16:45
Spiegelent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Do you believe in miracles? **Lucas Jones** does. He's inspired millions with poems that capture moments to hold onto in the darkness of a divided world. Celebrating lives full of living, real connections in our over-connected world, and glimmers of hope, Lucas joins us today to chat about his collection *I Still Believe in Miracles* (and perform from it to). Discover what it takes, and means, to choose to love despite it all.

(AI)



Juno Dawson, 17:30-18:30



Zakia Sewell, 12:15-13:15



Rebecca Tamás, 12:15-13:15

Programme key

Genres: **Activism** **Food, Lifestyle & Wellness** **LGBTQ+** **Music, Performance & Podcasts**
Romance & Romantasy **Interactive** **Buzzy Fiction** **Fantasy, Sci-Fi & Horror** **Poetry**

Access: **D** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **(AI)** AI Captioned
Formats: **U** Food & Drink

Children & Families

Corinne Bailey Rae

The Beano

Rob Biddulph

Neill Cameron & The Donut Squad

Joseph Coelho

Cressida Cowell

Julia Donaldson

**Jodie Ounsley
(Fury from Gladiators)**

Anna James

Paul Linnet & Supertato

Karen Mabon

Ross MacKay

Ben Nuttall

Dougie Payne & Rachel Seago

Pip & Posy

Chris Riddell

Katherine Rundell

Bookbug

Rashmi Sirdeshpande

A F Steadman

Louie Stowell

The Gruffalo

Jacqueline Wilson

Harry Woodgate

and over 100 more!



Where stories come to life

The kids might be heading back to school, but we're keeping the summer vibe going with 150+ events for babes-in-arms to teenagers and their families – and everyone in between.

What better way to celebrate 2026 being the National Year of Reading than by seeing your favourite author or illustrator, and sharing a story with those you love most? From animals, history, and science, to dragons, dancing, and (whisper it) farting, there's something for every interest. Most events are £6 for kids (or free), and £8 for adults.

A tip for grown-ups

Events are flagged with a recommended age range from 0-14 years. We work these out with help from our publisher pals, but they're intended as guidance only - you know your child best. If you need further information on any events to make the best decision, please email us at boxoffice@edbookfest.co.uk

You can also explore all our Children's events using the filters on our website, including by age range, so you find the perfect event for your family.

The LNER Kids Zone

Children's Tent

Fun drop in activities every day! Designed around a new theme each day, there's always something new to have a blast with. See overleaf for details.

The Families Hangout returns!

This totally free-to-enjoy area is the perfect spot to relax between events: munch your packed lunch, pick up something exciting to read, or get creative with an activity (adults, that includes you!).

Get hands on

As well as events, you can get to grips with our exciting free installation in Venue C. Full of fun textures and interactive elements at different heights for different ages, with lots of drop in sessions from the 24-28 August.

Can I have a snack?

If you're in need of a tummy-filling treat, there are lots of options on site, including pizza, ice cream, wraps, and a snack selection specially for kids in the Canopy Café, just by the Children's Tent. You're also very welcome to bring your own food along, and enjoy it anywhere on the site (except in our event venues, please - a tasty looking snack can distract an author!).

Uh oh... we've lost Pip and Posy®

Can you help us find them by using our special Trail? If you do, there's a special treat in store... Pick up your free activity sheet from the Box Office or Families Hangout every day of the Festival.

Character cuddles

We all love a bit of celeb spotting, and we've got the best names in the business, including the Gruffalo, Pip and Posy®, and sticky heroes from the Donut Squad! Check our listings for who's around when for hellos, cuddles, and selfies.

Free activities daily

From enjoying an 'Are You Sitting Comfortably?' storytelling event, or a 'Bookbug' session (including our first Polish language edition), to getting hands on with making and creating, there's lots to see and do without spending a penny.

Baby tickets

If you're bringing a baby under two years to an event for older children, ask our Box Office team for a free baby ticket on the day of the event. Please keep babies on an accompanying adult's lap throughout the event.

Festival Bookshop

Looking to take home a souvenir of your Festival day out? There's none better than a new book to treasure! You'll be spoilt for choice in our Festival Bookshop, and loads of our authors will be signing books after their events.

The Pip and Posy Trail



Pop down and mosey through the Pip and Posy character trail

Illustration © Axel Scheffler 2012

Can you find Pip and Posy®, along with their friends, hiding around the Festival?

Pick up your free activity sheet from the Box Office or Families Hangout any day of the Festival. Search high and low to spot them. Once you've found them all, head to the Bookshop for a surprise!

Free fun, all day long!

Whether you know it as the wriggles and wiggles, zoomies, full of beans, or GOING TURBO MODE, when your kid is just bursting with energy to spare, our Festival site with dedicated kids spaces is a great place to let it all out (and all are completely free!).

Drop in for hands on, try-it-out activities in the Children's Tent

If there was an award for the most fun spot in town, we reckon our Children's Tent would run away with it. When there's not a scheduled event taking place (check out the Children's Tent listings over the following pages) drop in for themed daily activities until 17:00 each day!

Come by to let loose, stretch out, get hands on, and make the most of your time on site. No booking is needed, it's all totally free, and everyone is welcomed.

Music, language, movement, and even 'unlikely heroes'... each day's activities will be inspired by a theme-of-the-day. So if you're visiting a few times over the Festival, there'll always be something new to explore and enjoy.

Find details of each day's theme over at edbookfest.co.uk/2026/childrens-tent-activities



Know a teeny tiny book lover? Stop by our sensory installation

We've gone into the construction business to build a so-cute-you-will-squeal installation for new humans to explore, experience, and enjoy.

Thanks to Little Simon (an imprint of publishers Simon & Schuster), pre-readers can feel, touch, and play their way around some friendly *Tuck Me In* animals and *Slide, Spin, Find* characters in Venue C between **Monday 24** and **Friday 28 August**. Think cute cats in PJs, dogs that need dressed, I-spy playing dinosaurs, and sparkly shining unicorns!

You'll find some simple prompts to inspire magical moments between you and your tot. And, at certain times (check the website for updates), there'll be facilitated play sessions AND a visit from the *Tuck Me In* author and illustrator **Naomi Tipping!**

Visiting another day? Don't fret - you'll find a character in the Families Hangout all Festival long.

Swing by and stop in for the sweetest moment of your Festival visit.



Saturday 15

The More You Know with the National Museum of Scotland

10:00-12:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 6 to 8

How does a cyclops become a mammoth, or a tiger become a cat? Come and find out in this drop-in session with our brilliant pals from the National Museum of Scotland. Get hands-on and find out how we're always learning new things about the past, then discover more about the prehistoric animals in the Museum's *Giants* exhibition and what on earth it means to be a palaeontologist!



Luna Loves the Festival with Joseph Coelho & Fiona Lumbers

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

She loves scouring library bookshelves, digging in gardens, dancing, and looking at famous art. And now Luna's giving sports a go in *Luna Loves Sport*. Curious, creative, imaginative, and affirming, the *Luna Loves* books are family favourites as **Joseph Coelho's** poetic storytelling and **Fiona Lumbers'** magical illustrations bring the power of connection and self-expression to life. Settle in for a friendly, interactive event - perfect for curious little ones.

(AI)



Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Welcome to Sparkleopolis with Rashmi Sirdeshpande

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0 to 5

Sparkleopolis is a city that's bright, busy, and fun, but it's like parties - sometimes, it can just be a bit much. That's why we need a superhero like **Rashmi Sirdeshpande's** *Super Uma!* Her strength isn't laser vision, she doesn't have a cape - she just notices things, she listens, she cares, and that can really help to solve people's problems. Come and meet Rashmi, chat unicorns, and enjoy a super-sparkly special musical guest!

(AI)

The Great Big Story Show

10:15-11:15
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 11

Let's get this Festival staaar-tedddd! We're bringing together authors, storytellers, and poets for a fun-packed hour of stories, games, and very (very!) silly challenges. Who will create the creepiest creature, or write the best poem about moustaches? Find out today, peek at some of the best books on the block, AND be in with the chance of winning a prize! Amazing. Get the full line-up online.

(AI)

Stories & Crafts with Edinburgh for Under Fives

11:15-12:15
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

The team from that parental lifesaver, *Edinburgh for Under Fives*, is back to entertain little ones with a story and art activity to take home. All are welcome!

A Birthday Party for... Winnie the Pooh

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Mark your calendars, dust off your dancing shoes, and get ready to party! Loads of our favourite books have big anniversaries this year so we're throwing some of them a special birthday bash. Come along today to celebrate *Winnie the Pooh*, A A Milne's beloved children's classic that's now a giant 100 years old! There'll be storytime, party games, dancing, and singing as we wish our favourite silly old bear many happy returns.

Baby Animals are the Best with Holly Webb

12:15-13:15
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

If you adore animals - especially fluffy ones - here's a warm and cuddly event for you. Author **Holly Webb** is here to chat about how she researches her animal-themed stories, and she's got lots of baby animal pictures to show you! Hear all about *The Proud Puppy*, and what inspired her to write about Emmie and her adorable puppy Loki as they get ready for her uncle's wedding.

(AI)



Come on a Catwalk with Karen Mabon

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 9

Love fashion? Love cats? Here's the purrrrrfect event for you! Come on a fabulous global adventure with Scottish designer **Karen Mabon** and her new book, *A Catwalk Around the World*. Hang out with the best-dressed cats you've ever met and discover incredible things about our world through fashions in Paris, China, and beyond - then get crafty with a fashionably fun activity. It's going to be un-fur-gettable!

(AI)

Meet the Gruffalo

13:30-14:00
14:30-15:00
15:30-16:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 0 to 5

Oh help! Oh no! It's the Gruffalo! But don't worry, he's incredibly friendly and can't wait to meet you! Come along for a photo and a cuddle while he's visiting from the deep dark wood.



Animal Magic with Catherine Rayner

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

If you can't get enough of animals and art, get your tickets quick! Beloved author-illustrator **Catherine Rayner** will show you how she makes her beautiful beasts spring off the page. No one captures an animal's expression, personality, and movement quite like Catherine - just look at *Augustus and his Smile!* This friendly session will encourage everyone to believe in their own drawing, writing, and creativity as Catherine shares her brand new book.

(AI)

Write Your Own Animal Story with Holly Webb

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Are you bursting with ideas for your own animal story? Well, brilliant animal-story expert **Holly Webb** will help you write it! Come along to Holly's super-friendly session and get scribbling. See what characters, plots, and animal adventures pop out of your head. Pets, porcupines, pterodactyls? Everyone's welcome at this playful event. No experience or materials needed - just bring your imagination!

(AI)

So Many Feelings with Nat Luurtsema & Rashmi Sirdeshpande

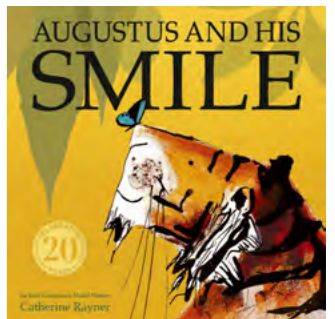
16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

If you've ever had worries, friends, dreams, or felt, like, any feelings ever... this one's for you. **Nat Luurtsema's** *The Overthinkers Club* follows Birdie who's dealing with A LOT and making a Happy List to cheer herself up. **Rashmi Sirdeshpande's** *Hari Kumar* follows Hari, whose dreams of Bollywood stardom might come true... if things would just go to plan. Hear two very funny writers chat about how comedy and feelings make the perfect book recipe.

(AI)



Karen Mabon, 13:00-14:00



Catherine Rayner, 13:30-14:30

Programme key

Genres: Adventure Animals & Nature Character Appearance Comics & Illustration Creativity Funny History Making Change Picture Books Science Storytime, Music & Hobbies Wellbeing

Access: (D) Livestreamed (BSL) British Sign Language (CC) Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned (LD) Learning Disability Friendly

Sunday 16



Mike Stirling & Craig Graham, 10:00-11:00



Dougie Payne, 10:00-11:00

The More You Know with the National Museum of Scotland

10:00-12:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

How does a cyclops become a mammoth, or a tiger become a cat? Come and find out in this drop-in session with our brilliant pals from the National Museum of Scotland. Get hands-on and find out how we're always learning new things about the past, then discover more about the prehistoric animals in the Museum's *Giants* exhibition and what on Earth it means to be a palaeontologist!

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Beano: Lost in Time with Mike Stirling & Craig Graham

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 11

What's the only thing better than reading a comic? BEING IN ONE! With the help of *Beano's* directors of mischief and mayhem, **Mike Stirling** and **Craig Graham**, YOU'LL be the main character as you try to keep Dennis the Menace and Walter from erasing each other from history! The directors will do the writing and drawing, but you'll need to bring every ounce of your energy - be prepared for something EPIC!

AI

Relaxed Screening

Venue B
Pay What You Can

Some of us thrive better in smaller, informal spaces. That's why we're putting on this relaxed screening of 'Beano: Lost in Time' for anyone with sensory sensitivities. Come along to watch the livestream of the above event while being able to move around, come and go, and make noise in this friendly, chilled out space.

AI

Music and Mayhem with Dougie Payne & Rachel Seago

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0 to 5

Lonely, scruffy, and hopelessly clumsy, Pete's feet have always got him in trouble - until he stumbles into a music shop and finds his place in the world. Discover *Poochie Pete and his Very Big Feet*, a radiant rhyming tale written by **Dougie Payne** (who grown-ups might know from Glasgow band, Travis) and illustrated by **Rachel Seago**, in this event full of heart, song, stories, and drawing.

AI

Reimagining Fairy Tales with Craigmillar Literacy Trust

11:15-12:15
Venue C
Free Ticketed
All Ages

Join us to hear some of your favourite classic tales from around the world - but possibly not as you remember them! We'll enjoy a selection of stunning picture books then make a simple puppet theatre to share your own stories at home. **Katie Swann** from Craigmillar Literacy Trust hosts this hands-on and interactive event for children and their grown-ups to explore, learn, and get creative together.

AI

Sparkling Creativity with Harriet Muncaster

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Woohoo, our favourite half-vampire half-fairy Isadora Moon is 10 years old! Join the celebrations with **Harriet Muncaster** and her magical book, *Isadora Moon Has a Birthday*. Along with spellbinding interactive and creative activities, Harriet will read adorable tales about Isadora and Pink Rabbit, and also share her brand new book, *The Diary of Wiska Wildflower: The New School*. Let's chat about friendship, courage, and life changes in the sweetest, sparkliest way possible.

AI

Vote For a Laugh with Nadia Shireen

12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Fancy a bit of woodland wackiness? You've come to the right place! Drop in on the latest goings-on in the *Grimwood* series, with its hilarious creator **Nadia Shireen**. You can bet she'll have you laughing your socks off as she shares her latest story, *Grimwood: Rock the Vote*. This time, the loveably loopy animals are choosing a new mayor... but who's got what it takes? A warm and interactive event filled with animal antics.

AI

A Birthday Party for... Pip and Posy®

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Mark your calendars, dust off your dancing shoes, and get ready to party! Loads of our favourite books have big anniversaries this year so we're throwing some of them a special birthday bash. Come along today to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the *Pip and Posy®* series by Camilla Reid and Axel Scheffler. There'll be storytime, party games, dancing, and singing as we wish our favourite friends many happy returns.

A Freshly-Baked Mystery with Harry Woodgate

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

When rival bakers Victoria Sponge and Madeleine Macaroon cook up wicked ways to win the Great Cake Carnival, it's time for local girl Cinnamon Crumb to turn detective. In **Harry Woodgate's** delectable new chapter book, *Cinnamon Crumb, Baking Detective: The Great Cake Caper*, plots rise and sabotage spreads. So come and grab a taste of Harry's yummy new series and roll up your sleeves for a delicious group activity.

AI



Harriet Muncaster, 11:45-12:45



Nadia Shireen, 12:00-13:00



Harry Woodgate, 13:00-14:00



Illustration © Axel Scheffler 2026

Programme key

Genres: Adventure Animals & Nature Character Appearance Comics & Illustration Creativity Funny History Making Change Picture Books Science Storytime, Music & Hobbies Wellbeing

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly

Sunday 16

Meet Pip and Posy®

13:30-14:00
14:30-15:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 0 to 5

Our favourite mouse and rabbit friends are back! **Pip and Posy®** would love to say hello and introduce you to their brilliant new trail around the Children's Tent. Pose for a photo, cosy in for a cuddle, or give them a high-five - come and hang out with the kindest characters in town.

Famous Fun & Games with Little People, BIG DREAMS

14:00-15:00
Spiegel tent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 9

Calling all BIG DREAMERS! Fancy taking part in a gameshow that's all about believing in yourself? Come and celebrate 10 years of *Little People, BIG DREAMS*, the books that show you how famous people believed in their true selves and made a difference. Meet author **Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara** in this fun-filled feast of singalongs, quizzes, prizes, and much, much more hosted by comedian **Athena Kugblenu**. Because courage and self-confidence are what it's all about!

(AI)

Shadow School with Peter Burns

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Reckon you've got what it takes to make it as a professional thief at Beaufort's School for Deceptive Arts? Join author **Peter Burns**, who'll test whether you're ready for the Shadow League. He'll introduce you to the mysterious world of his series, *Shadow Thieves*, featuring plucky orphan Tom, whose survival skills are put to the test when he must battle the great villain, the Duke of Nimes. Would your street smarts be up to the task?

(AI)

History's Most Epic Fails with Athena Kugblenu

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

History's full of daring deeds, mighty heroes, and incredible inventions. But it's also full of huge FAILS! Discover the truths behind the world's biggest howlers with comedian and CBBC *Horrible Histories* writer, **Athena Kugblenu**, author of *History's Most Epic Fails*. Whether it's silly mishaps that changed the course of history or mistakes that did us all a favour, Athena will take you on a riotous ride through the past.

(AI)

Monday 17

Pop in and Play

10:00-10:30 / 12:00-12:30
14:00-14:30 / 16:00-16:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Come and play with us! Everyone is welcome for our 30-minute guided sessions of fun and games, ideal to keep your wee ones busy. We know that great stories can come from great playtimes (no matter your age) so on your marks... get set... imagine!

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Confetti with Dean Atta

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
All Ages

This event has been specially designed for our visitors with learning disabilities, including PMLD. **Dean Atta** will lead an event full of sensory moments in a gently playful telling of his delightful picture book, *Confetti*. Doors will open early so you can get yourself settled in, and additional staff will be on hand to make sure everyone feels comfortable and welcome.

(AI) (LD)

Everybody Dance! With Mariko Miyata-Jancey

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Mariko Miyata-Jancey loves to dance... and she'd love it if you danced too! Coming on a special trip from Norway, she's bringing her beautiful picture book *Mieko Danser* which is all about being just who you are... and having a brilliant boogie while you're at it. With dancing, music, and lots of happiness, this is a rare chance to see an incredible writer and performer in action.

(AI)

Tuesday 18

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Sensory Stories with Ailie Finlay

11:00-11:20 / 13:00-13:20
15:00-15:20
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Join storyteller **Ailie Finlay** from My Kind of Book for 20 minutes of inclusive sensory storytelling fun! This is an exciting and engaging session for everyone but particularly suitable for children with additional needs and their families and friends.

(LD)

Bring Back the Smile with Dean Atta

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

When you love someone, it feels wonderful. When they're not around any more, it can be hard to know what to feel. Come and hear the uplifting story of *Auntie's Bangles*, about two little cousins learning to celebrate the joy their auntie leaves behind by remembering the jingle-jangle of her bracelets. Poet (and recent BAFTA winner!) **Dean Atta** will help little ones find their own way to celebrate someone they've lost in a get-together full of hope.

(AI)

What If...? with Tom Schamp

13:30-14:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0 to 5

What if your bed was a sandcastle? What would bunny toast look like? Ever seen a Triangle-o-saurus? Well, bestselling author-illustrator **Tom Schamp** has drawn all of these wacky things (and more) in his multiple-choice picture book, *What If?* - so come along and meet him in this fun-filled story-building event to wake up your imagination.

(AI)

Underwater Escapades with Chris Riddell

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Splash splash - dive into a world of mermaids and mayhem! You're going to be swept away by the latest storybook from much-loved author-illustrator **Chris Riddell**. In *A Mermaid's Rescue*, shy Atalanta chases through Mer City to rescue her vanished best buddy. But will time run out? Chris tells you how he gets stunning stories and pictures to pour from his pen, and how you can too. An event for budding artists, storytellers, and mermaid fans alike.

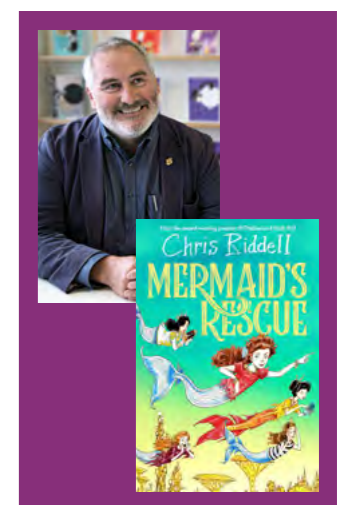
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Maria Isabel Sánchez Vegara,
14:00-15:00



Dean Atta, 11:15-12:15



Chris Riddell, 16:30-17:30



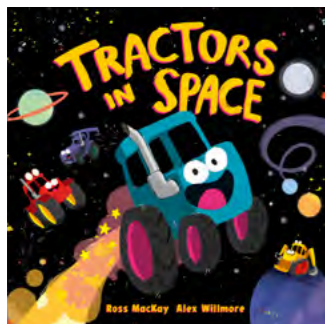
Illustration © Axel Scheffler 2012

Programme key

Genres: Adventure Animals & Nature Character Appearance Comics & Illustration Creativity Funny
History Making Change Picture Books Science Storytime, Music & Hobbies Wellbeing

Access: (D) Livestreamed (BSL) British Sign Language (CC) Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned (LD) Learning Disability Friendly

Wednesday 19



Ross MacKay, 11:15-11:45



Tracey Corderoy, 12:15-12:45

Pop in and Play with Dads Rock

10:00-11:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Are you ready to rock? Dads Rock are here and they want to make some noise with you! Join the friendliest dads in town for a fun-filled session of stories and play.

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Stories in Space with Ross MacKay

11:15-11:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

When a determined tractor swaps farm life for an out-of-this-world adventure, silliness ensues. Join author **Ross MacKay** for a delightful event all about his awesome new book, *Tractors in Space*: a Saturn-surfing, moon-bouncing, galaxy-hopping good time exploring the wonders of the universe with heaps of heart and new friends aplenty. You'll have an absolute blast.

(AI)

Doggy Treats with Tracey Corderoy & Steven Lenton

12:15-12:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Shifty McGifty and Slippery Sam are back, and this time they've got two action-packed mysteries: *The Robber Ghost* and *The Spooky School*. The former robbers-turned-baker-dogs are out on a Halloween adventure, featuring ghosts, baked goods, and dastardly plans... can they use their doggy detective skills to save the day? Join author **Tracey Corderoy** and illustrator **Steven Lenton** for some spook-tacular storytelling, draw-offs, and heaps of audience participation.

(AI)

Music Day!

13:00-13:30
15:00-15:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

What have music and books got in common? Find out with the Book Festival team, and help us use rhythm and simple instruments to make brilliant new poems. Everyone is welcome, and no experience is needed so come for the drop-in session, stay for the poetical inspiration!

Baby and Toddler Rhymetime with Craigmillar Books for Babies

13:15-13:45
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 0 to 2

Let your little stars twinkle with Craigmillar Books for Babies in this special Baby and Toddler Rhymetime. Enjoy bouncy songs, tickle rhymes, and lots of cuddles, while building attachment and bonding with your little ones.

Scots Rhymetime with Craigmillar Books for Babies

14:15-14:45
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 0 to 2

Dinnae fash yersel like a craw on a waw, come doon and join Craigmillar Books for Babies with a special Scots Rhymetime! Enjoy Scots rhymes, songs, lots of cuddles, and fun to support attachment and bonding with your wee ones.

Thursday 20

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Pop in and Play with Cròileagan Dhùn Èideann

10:30-12:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Would you like to introduce your wee one to Gaelic? Join the playleaders from Cròileagan Dhùn Èideann, Edinburgh's Gaelic playgroup for 0-5s, to learn some simple Gaelic words and phrases together with your child, through songs, stories, and play. A relaxed and fun-filled session; no prior knowledge of Gaelic required.

Polish Bookbug

11:00-11:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 0 to 5

Witamy Wszystkich! Czas na polską sesję 'Bookbug'! Join us for this special Polish Bookbug Session - enjoy songs, stories, and rhymes in this fun, interactive event. All welcome, no prior knowledge of the Polish language necessary.

Make Friends with a Panda with Maisie Chan

12:00-13:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Can you imagine a panda so gorgeous, she became world famous? It actually happened! And you can hear her incredible story when you join author **Maisie Chan** for a cosy chat about her new picture book, *Chi Chi the Panda*. From Chi Chi's birth in China, to living in zoos all around the world, to becoming the best-known animal in England... it's a BAMBOO-zling journey. The perfect event to show young animal lovers what made this panda so special.

(AI)

Teach Us Your Language

13:00-15:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

We love that the Book Festival brings together people from all over the world, and that includes you. Whether you're a grown-up or very new to talking, if you can speak (even a wee bit) of a different language then come along to our drop-in session and teach us. We speak baby, and even our littlest visitors will be very welcome to contribute!

Myths and Magic with Carlos Sánchez

17:30-18:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]
Age 12 to 15

When dark magic and druids meet dragons and delicious desserts, you know it's *Rune* time! Get sucked into **Carlos Sánchez's** latest mind-warping graphic novel, *Rune: The Tale of the Winged Sorceress*. Discover what it takes to plan a comic, learn how Carlos got the idea to use sign language as a superpower for his deaf heroine Chiri, and throw yourself into some fantastical drawing challenges in a creative session that'll leave you spellbound.

(BSL) (AI)



Maisie Chan, 12:00-13:00



Carlos Sánchez, 17:30-18:30

Programme key

Genres: **Adventure** **Animals & Nature** **Character Appearance** **Comics & Illustration** **Creativity** **Funny**
History **Making Change** **Picture Books** **Science** **Storytime, Music & Hobbies** **Wellbeing**

Access: **D** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **AI** AI Captioned **LD** Learning Disability Friendly

Friday 21

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Move It Day

10:30-10:50
11:30-11:50
12:30-12:50
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

It's Friday and we need to streeeeetch! We'll be using inspiration from some of our favourite stories to move, dance, and have lots of fun. These sessions will be a perfect opportunity to get those end of the week wriggles out, while answering the very important question: what would the Gruffalo's favourite yoga pose be? Everyone is welcome to join in however they'd like to.

Bookbug with Edinburgh Libraries

11:00-11:30
12:30-13:00
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Hello everyone! It's time for Bookbug. Join Edinburgh Libraries for songs, stories, and rhymes in this much-loved, fun, interactive event. We heard that we might get a visit from the one and only Bookbug, so you can even get a photo, a hug, and a cheeky high-five! Part of the Scottish Book Trust's Early Years Programme.

The Truth About Tech

13:45-14:45
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12 to 15

What would a perfect AI world look like, and would you want to live in it? Today, we're bringing together brilliant author **K L Kettle** (author of *Control Alter Delete*) with AI experts and a very special guest from the National Robotarium to test your tech knowledge and explore how books and stories can help us make sense of a confusing future. Come along to see if you can tell truth from fiction.

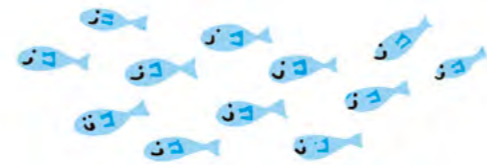
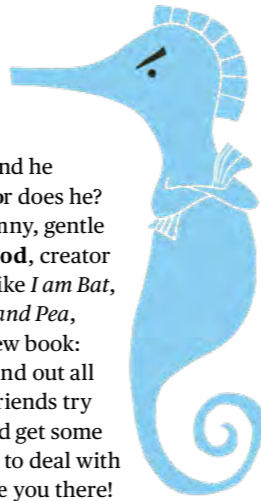
(AI)

Come On, Smile! with Morag Hood

14:00-15:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Seahorse is grumpy and he needs cheering up... or does he? Come along to this funny, gentle event with **Morag Hood**, creator of wonderful stories like *I am Bat*, *Colin and Lee*, *Carrot and Pea*, and now the brand new book: *Seahorse is Furious*. Find out all the ways Seahorse's friends try to make him smile and get some nifty ideas about how to deal with your own feelings. See you there!

(AI)



Saturday 22

Supertato Silliness with Paul Linnet

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Stories, songs, and silly times await in this event with the author of everybody's favourite spud: Supertato! Join **Paul Linnet** to celebrate the release of the latest adventure, *Supertato: Despicable Bean*. The brand new book sees Supertato and squad go on a hilarious holiday where the heat is on. Find out if the gang make their getaway as a mean, green baddie returns to rile everyone up and cause some serious trouble.

(AI)

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Move It: Build Cars, Trucks, and Anything That Goes!

14:30-15:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 6 to 11

Vroom vroom, it's Friday, and we're getting this show on the road! Want to build your very own moving vehicle from cardboard and other recycled stuff? You've parked in the right place. Inspired by Richard Scarry's classic book, *Cars and Trucks and Things That Go*, join the Festival's Communities Team to hear the story and enjoy an afternoon filled with crafting fun. We'll bring the materials, you bring your creative ideas.

Perfectly Dystopian with K L Kettle

15:45-16:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12 to 15

A new world has dawned and it's perfect. But... it's not real. In *Control Alter Delete* - **K L Kettle**'s speculative thriller - gamer Hal could win everything she ever wanted, or her entire reality could come crashing down. How will she choose what she really wants? Join K L as she chats about writing, finding hope in dystopia, and how she created the incredible world of the book.

(AI)



Paul Linnet, 10:00-11:00



K L Kettle, 15:45-16:45



Programme key

Genres: Adventure Animals & Nature Character Appearance Comics & Illustration Creativity Funny History Making Change Picture Books Science Storytime, Music & Hobbies Wellbeing

Access: (D) Livestreamed (BSL) British Sign Language (CC) Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned (LD) Learning Disability Friendly

A Birthday Party for... Isadora Moon

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Mark your calendars, dust off your dancing shoes, and get ready to party! Loads of our favourite books have big anniversaries this year so we're throwing some of them a special birthday bash. Come along today to celebrate 10 years since Harriet Muncaster published the first Isadora Moon book, *Isadora Moon Has a Birthday*. There'll be storytime, party games, dancing, and singing as we wish our favourite half-fairy, half-vampire friend many happy returns.

You are Ready! with Jodie Ounsley

10:30-11:30
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

There are loads of different ways to be strong, and who better to guide you through them than athlete and real-life Gladiator **Jodie Ounsley** (AKA Fury)? Off the back of new book *Keep Smashing It*, Jodie shares stories, advice, and tips which will give you the confidence to back yourself and smash barriers - something she's done all her life, from playing professional rugby to becoming the first deaf Gladiator.

BSL AI



Jodie Ounsley, 10:30-11:30

Meet the Star Kitties with Laura Ellen Anderson

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

If your idea of a PURR-fect day is one spent around some adorable kitty-cats, then you'll want to meet **Laura Ellen Anderson's** newest creations, the Star Kitties! And if you already know and love *Amelia Fang* and *Rainbow Grey*, then you'll know that Laura's artwork is pretty awesome. Get ready to see the world of her new story, *Star Kitties: The Big Birthday Mystery*, in glorious colour. It's gonna be un-FUR-gettable!

AI

Meet Supertato

11:30-12:00
12:30-13:00
13:30-14:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Is it a bird, is it a plane? No! It's a massive superhero potato, of course! Come along for a chance to meet Supertato and give everyone's favourite vegetable a high five and pose for a photo... just promise you're not actually Evil Pea in disguise. Veggies unite!

Leap Into the World of Ballet with Steven McRae

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Steven McRae is here to make your ballet dreams come true. Steven's a principal dancer with The Royal Ballet and his brilliant new book, *Anything Is Possible with Ballet*, shows how dancing is for absolutely everyone. Come hear him chat about everything from jumps and positions, to taking care of yourself along the way. So, leap right in and celebrate self-belief. No ballet experience (or tutus) needed!

AI



You Donut Want to Miss This with Neill Cameron

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Fresh from causing chaos on the pages of *The Phoenix*, **Neill Cameron's** Donut Squad have taken the world by storm, one glazed, zany adventure at a time. Today, Neill presents another battle of the baked goods in *Donut Squad: Make a Mess*. Hear more about the antics of Jammyboi, Spronky, and salty seadog Caramel Jack (bagels strictly NOT invited).

AI

Relaxed Screening

Venue C
Pay What You Can

Some of us thrive better in smaller, informal spaces. That's why we're putting on this relaxed screening for anyone with sensory sensitivities. Come along to watch the livestream of 'You Don't Want to Miss This' while being able to move around, come and go, and make noise in this friendly, chilled out space.

AI

Get Bizzy with Benji Davies

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0 to 5

Let's dream up a new *Bizzy Bear* story! And let's watch clever author-illustrator **Benji Davies**, creator of *The Storm Whale*, bring it to life with his amazing paints and pens! Roll up your sleeves and get arty as Benji takes you on his latest illustration adventure, *Bizzy Bear Tractor Trouble*, and tells you all about his brilliant *Bizzy Bear* world. A perfect event to develop early learning skills and spark imagination.

AI

Mates, Magic, Mystery with Yassmin Abdel-Magied

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12 to 15

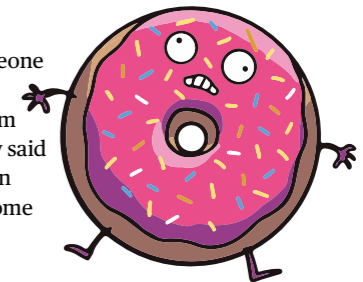
Warm, funny, and a powerhouse of imagination, **Yassmin Abdel-Magied** chats about the first book in her new fantasy series featuring characters so relatable it feels like you're reading about your own mates. *Silverbrook: Yumna and the Golden Horse* is about a quiet nothing-ever-happens town that suddenly comes alive with magic and secrets. When teens start developing powers and one of them disappears, it takes someone extraordinarily ordinary to get to the bottom of it all.

AI

Meet the Donut Squad

15:00-15:30
16:00-16:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Oh no... this could get messy. Someone has let Donut Squad on site, and there might just be a couple of them hanging about to take photos. They said something about Sprinkles being in charge, so please expect chaos. Come and meet them if you don't mind sticky situations!



Friends Vs Fiends with Rob Biddulph

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Love stories with bite? Here's a howling hit of an event with **Rob Biddulph**, of YouTube's *Draw with Rob* fame. Prepare for your spine to be chilled as Rob reveals his new nailbiter, *The Moonhaven Chronicles: The Last Wolf*. Four friends sneak out after dark in a town where some people carry the werewolf gene. Watch out for the full moon... Explore fear, family, and friendships, with audience participation aplenty.

AI



Rob Biddulph, 15:15-16:15

Programme key

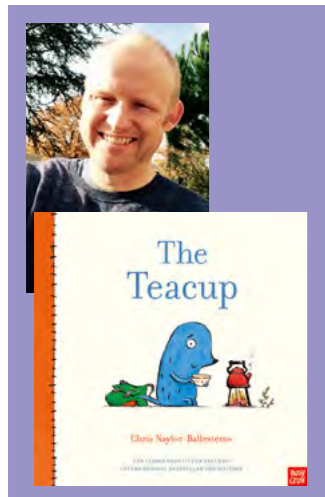
Genres: Adventure Animals & Nature Character Appearance Comics & Illustration Creativity Funny History Making Change Picture Books Science Storytime, Music & Hobbies Wellbeing

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language Live Captioned AI AI Captioned Learning Disability Friendly

Sunday 23



Neill Cameron, 10:30-12:00



Chris Naylor-Ballesteros, 11:15-12:15

Music and Making with Wild Wings of Hope

10:00-10:30 / 11:00-11:30
12:00-12:30 / 13:00-13:30
14:00-14:30 / 15:00-15:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Did you know there's a bird called a swift which travels all the way from Edinburgh to Africa every year? Amazing, right? Join Wild Wings of Hope for a delightful drop in session packed with stories, papercrafts, and drumming inspired by those brilliant wee birds. With Scottish artist **Ed Harrison** and Ghanaian storyteller and musician **Chief Gift Amu**.

Sprog Rock

10:00-10:45
11:15-12:00
Spiegel tent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Returning to rock the Book Festival for the sixth year, it's Sprog Rock! Get ready to dance at this rocking and (nursery) rhyming extravaganza, as the group brings their unique, catchy songs back to our Spiegel tent. Fun for under-fives and their grooviest grown-ups, friends, and families.

(AI)

Meet the Mubbles with Liz Pichon

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Step through the Uncertain Curtain with **Liz Pichon**, and journey to the Isle of Smile where you'll find the Wibbles, the singing Earworms, the Slug of Knowledge, the one-eyed Drib Drab, and just for today, YOU! Liz already brought us the brilliant *Tom Gates* series, and now she shares her third *Mubbles* book, *The Good, the Bad and the Perky*. Find out all about it today and get ready for singing, laughter, and general silliness!

(AI)

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Changemakers with Paterson Joseph & David Olusoga

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Don't miss this powerful session on Black British history with author, historian, broadcaster and *The Traitors'* Faithful **David Olusoga** and author and actor **Paterson Joseph**. David's *Black and British: An Illustrated History for young readers* is jam-packed with facts, stories, and stunning pictures, while Paterson's *TEN: Children Who Changed the World* introduces 10 incredible children who were born when slavery was still legal. This will be a super interesting chat about neglected histories and remarkable figures.

(AI)

How to Make Awesome Comics with Neill Cameron

10:30-12:00
Venue A
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

The Phoenix favourite and creator of the *Mega Robo Bros* and *Donut Squad* series **Neill Cameron** hosts a hands on skills session to spill the secrets behind making divinely daft comics. From naming characters to framing stories and putting as much chaos into a tiny box as possible, this is a creative, cosy event for anyone who's a fan of Sprinkles, Spronky, and the rest of the silly, sticky gang.

Skandar's Secrets with A F Steadman

10:15-11:15
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Ferocious unicorns, nail-biting battles, and elemental magic - expect this and more in *Skandar and the Spirit War*, the final instalment of **A F Steadman's** epic series. The Mainland is under threat after the Chaos Cup - can Skandar become the leader he needs to be? Hear from the bestselling author as she answers your burning questions about our favourite unlikely hero, his unicorn rider friends, and what it takes to build a fantastical world.

(AI)

Football Freestyling with Ben Nuttall

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

The undisputed World Number One football freestyler (he even performs for Manchester United) and social media superstar brings us his book, *Ben Nuttall's Footy Factory!* But will **Ben Nuttall** just be talking about his tricks? Oh no, he'll be showing you step-by-step how to do them - and you'll also hear the incredible stories of the famous players who performed them for real on matchday! Your mind will be BLOWN.

(AI)

A Cupful of Kindness with Chris Naylor-Ballesteros

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

When a mysterious stranger arrives with a teacup, the animals think "Thief!". But things really aren't that simple. Be moved and mesmerised by **Chris Naylor-Ballesteros's** gorgeous new picture book, *The Teacup* - the follow-up to his runaway success, *The Suitcase*. Snuggle in and stretch your imagination in this gentle event about kindness to strangers and tolerance for others who might seem different to us - an inspiring event that you'll both love and learn from.

(AI)

In a Monster Pickle with Rong Rong

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Twiggy the Log Monster's planning a sleepover - and you're invited! It's the funnest party ever, so get set for heaps of hilarious hijinks with **Rong Rong's** *Jolly Monster Town: The Party Pickle*. Hear all about Ralph the Pufferfish Monster and Uno the Cyclops Cat, then get crafty (and a bit daft) with Rong Rong as you dream up a friendly monster together. An event that's big on creative play. Be there or be square!

(AI)

Who Am I? with Jacqueline Wilson

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

The creator of *Tracy Beaker* hardly needs any introduction - **Jacqueline Wilson** is literally a legend. Back at the Festival after a sold out show last year, she brings us her latest book, *Esme Pepper* - if Tracy was loudly 'this is my life!', Esme is more 'Who am I, and where do I fit?' The Jacqueline Wilson story stardust is as sparkly as ever, and today she'll take us into the heart of how she weaves her unique magic. Jacqueline megafans assemble!

(AI)



Rong Rong, 13:00-14:00



Jacqueline Wilson, 13:30-14:30

Programme key

Genres: **Adventure** **Animals & Nature** **Character Appearance** **Comics & Illustration** **Creativity** **Funny**
History **Making Change** **Picture Books** **Science** **Storytime, Music & Hobbies** **Wellbeing**

Access: **D** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **AI** AI Captioned **LD** Learning Disability Friendly



Sunday 23

Know Your Gnomes with Loes Riphagen

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Want to know what gnomes eat, what pets they keep, what disguises they wear? You're about to become an expert! Delve deep into the weird and wonderful world of gnomes, as author-illustrator **Loes Riphagen** shares her fabulously fact-packed masterpiece: *The Gnome Book*. Hear gnome-tastic stories, take part in gnome-ific craft activities, and even receive a Little Gnome Diploma at the end. For miniature-size magic, it's a must!

(AI)



Loes Riphagen, 14:45-15:45

Animal Magic with Hannah Gold

15:15-16:15
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Hannah Gold's adventure stories, including her latest *The Lone Husky*, have one thing in common - the call of the Arctic wild. April Wood made friends with a polar bear in *The Last Bear*; this time, it's a husky with a troubled past. This event's for anyone who's felt a connection with animals and knows how important they are. With their habitats in danger all over the world, imagine - like April - if every person did just one thing...

(AI)



Anna James, 16:30-17:30

Phoenix Draw-Off: Penguins vs Donuts!

15:45-16:45
Spiegel tent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

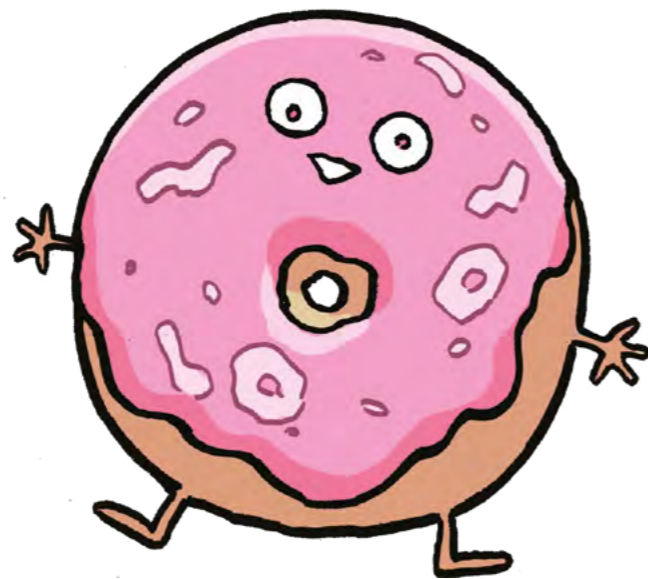
The Phoenix fans unite! It's the ultimate daredevil draw-off... the epic Evil Emperor Penguin vs the dynamic Donut Squad. Who will win? Only you can decide! Join us for a Very Important and Not at All Silly competition between comic heroes **Laura Ellen Anderson** and **Neill Cameron**. Pens at the ready...!

(AI)

A Mad Chatter Tea Party with Anna James

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Ever wonder what happened when Alice emerged from the rabbit hole, grew up, and had a family of her own? **Anna James'** beautiful sort-of sequel, *Alice with a Why*, imagines a return to Wonderland as Alice's granddaughter finds herself among the whimsy and weirdness of her childhood stories. Hear all about it in this whimsical tea party themed event - don't be late, don't be late, it's a very important date.



Monday 24

Pop in and Play

10:00-10:30
12:00-12:30
14:00-14:30
16:00-16:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Come and play with us! Everyone is welcome for our 30-minute guided sessions of fun and games, ideal to keep your wee ones busy. We know that great stories can come from great playtimes (no matter your age) so on your marks... get set... imagine!

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Scots Bookbug with Scots Language Centre

11:00-11:30
12:00-12:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Bring yer wee yins along fir a Scots Bookbug wi songs, rhymes, an stories. Abody's welcome, whither ye're a gallus Scots speaker or a wee feartie!



Tuesday 25

Pop in and Play with Edinburgh for Under Fives

10:00-10:30
12:00-12:30
14:00-14:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 3 to 5

The team from that parental lifesaver, *Edinburgh for Under Fives*, is back to entertain little ones with a story and art activity to take home. All are welcome!

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Appearing today: **Naomi Tipping**.

Snuggle in with Naomi Tipping

11:00-11:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0 to 3

Cosy in for a playful story session with **Naomi Tipping**, whose hand-painted board books were part of the inspiration for the Little Simon installation. *Dogs Get Dressed* is the perfect way to start the day, while *Night, Night Cats* gets little ones ready for bed in the company of some very cute kittens.

Stay playful at our Sensory Installation!

Whether you've met Naomi Tipping at an event, or want your little eager learners to have a cosy Book Festival moment, spend some time at our sensory installation - featuring Naomi's characters - in Venue C.

Bring along your pre-readers to Venue C on Tuesday 25 for facilitated play sessions at 12:30, 13:30, and 14:30.

Touch, feel, and play your way around larger than life versions of Naomi's characters plus other pals from Little Simon book series.

The installation is available for general play between **Monday 24** and **Friday 28** August (whenever there's not an event taking place in the room). Find out more about the installation on page 99.

Wednesday 26

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Thursday 27

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

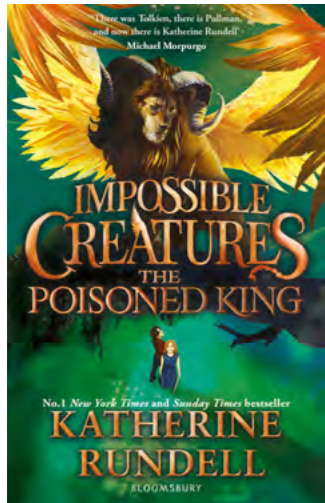


Programme key

Genres: Adventure Animals & Nature Character Appearance Comics & Illustration Creativity Funny History Making Change Picture Books Science Storytime, Music & Hobbies Wellbeing

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned [LD] Learning Disability Friendly

Friday 28



Katherine Rundell, 13:30-14:30

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Gaelic Bookbug

11:30-12:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 0 to 5

Halò a h-uile duine! Join our friends from Scottish Book Trust for Gaelic songs, rhymes and stories in this special Gaelic Bookbug Session. This session will feature the books included in the Gaelic Bookbug Bags. All welcome, no prior knowledge of Gaelic language necessary!

Polish Bookbug

12:00-12:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 0 to 5

Witamy Wszystkich! Czas na polską sesję 'Bookbug'! Join us for this special Polish Bookbug Session - enjoy songs, stories, and rhymes in this fun, interactive event. All welcome, no prior knowledge of the Polish language necessary.

Impossible Creatures Made Real with Katherine Rundell

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Dragons, griffins, sphinxes, centaurs - on a cluster of magical islands called the Archipelago, creatures of myth still live. **Katherine Rundell's** multi-award-winning *Impossible Creatures* series tells the story of how an ordinary boy and a flying girl get swept up in adventures they'll never forget. Today Katherine shares the epic third book, *The Neverfear* - how did she create such a richly imagined world? And what tips does she have for budding young writers with wild imaginations?

(AI)

Scots Storytelling with the Scots Language Centre

14:00-14:30: Age 6 to 8
15:00-15:30: Age 9 to 11
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed

Bring the bairns along for a Scots storytelling session. Abody's welcome, whither ye ken Scots weel ir ye ir jist lairnin. It's goin tae be brow!

Bookbug with Edinburgh Libraries

14:00-14:30
15:00-15:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 0 to 5

Hello everyone! It's time for Bookbug. Join Edinburgh Libraries for songs, stories, and rhymes in this much-loved, fun, interactive event. We heard that we might get a visit from the one and only Bookbug, so you can even get a photo, a hug, and a cheeky high-five! Part of the Scottish Book Trust's Early Years Programme.

Saturday 29

The Wonderful World of Julia Donaldson

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0 to 5

It's **Julia Donaldson** time! Join the UK's bestselling author of stories like *The Gruffalo*, *Room on the Broom*, and *A Squash and a Squeeze* for a fun-packed hour of songs, poems, and stories, featuring lots of your family's favourite characters. Prepare your singing voices and get ready to boogie - it's going to be great!

(AI)

Relaxed Screening

Venue B
Pay What You Can

Some of us thrive better in smaller, informal spaces. That's why we're putting on this relaxed screening for anyone with sensory sensitivities. You can watch the livestream of 'The Wonderful World of Julia Donaldson' while being able to move around, come and go, and make noise in this friendly, chilled out space.

(AI)

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Looking at Art Again with Katy Hessel

10:30-11:30
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Sometimes, it can look like the only people who ever made art were men. But the author of *The Story of Art Without Men*, **Katy Hessel, knows different - and she's here to tell you about extraordinary, rebellious, game-changing women artists, and the amazing art they created. You'll learn how to read hidden messages and find stories secretly buried in paintings. Art will never look the same again!**

(AI)

Fire-Breathing Facts with David Macphail

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Get ready for a dragon-tastic tour of a very cool castle! Blaze the Dragon will be your guide, as you step back in time in **David Macphail's** new book, *Where's Dragon in His Castle?* With dungeons, jousting, and turrets to explore, you'll discover incredible facts about the Middle Ages. And because David's a real-life castle steward, he's bringing cartloads of medieval activities for you to enjoy. It's the funnest, friendliest introduction to history ever.

(AI)



Katy Hessel, 10:30-11:30



David Macphail, 11:15-12:15

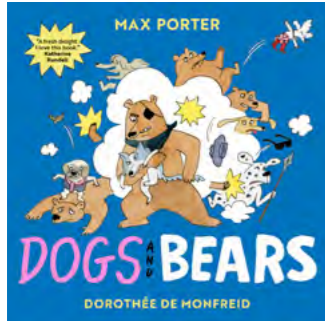


Programme key

Genres: **Adventure** **Animals & Nature** **Character Appearance** **Comics & Illustration** **Creativity** **Funny**
History **Making Change** **Picture Books** **Science** **Storytime, Music & Hobbies** **Wellbeing**

Access: **D** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **(AI)** AI Captioned **(LD)** Learning Disability Friendly

Saturday 29



Max Porter & Dorothee de Monfreid, 11:45-12:45



Alex Milway, 13:00-14:00



Meet the Gruffalo

11:30-12:00 / 12:30-13:00
13:30-14:00 / 14:30-15:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Oh help! Oh no! It's the Gruffalo! But don't worry, he's incredibly friendly and can't wait to meet you! Come along for a photo and a cuddle while he's visiting from the deep dark wood.

It's Raining Squid (Hallelujah!) with Max Porter & Dorothee de Monfreid

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0 to 5

When it starts raining squid, what do you do? Stop fighting... and work together! That's the kinda thing that happens in the barking world author **Max Porter** and illustrator **Dorothee de Monfreid** have created. Their whimsical new book, *Dogs and Bears*, is the story of a squabble that finally stops, leaving wagging tails and bearhugs all around. Get stuck into quizzes, drawing, and more in this seriously silly session about the meaning of teamwork.

(AI)

A Birthday Party for... Charlie and Lola

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Mark your calendars, dust off your dancing shoes, and get ready to party! Loads of our favourite books have big anniversaries this year so we're throwing some of them a special birthday bash. Come along today to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Lauren Child's wonderful, whimsical series, *Charlie and Lola*. There'll be storytime, party games, dancing, and singing (and absolutely NO tomatoes!) as we wish everyone's favourite siblings many happy returns.

Sunshine is Guaranteed with Alex Milway

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

All aboard the sunshine cruise on a ship bursting with animals! It's Captain Bella's first day commanding the Sunshine, but it's no easy task for her and the crew. With entertaining penguins and brave seadogs to lend a hand, do they have what it takes? In this charming event with **Alex Milway**, bestselling author-illustrator of *Hotel Flamingo*, set sail on an enchanting voyage around friendship and teamwork with his terrific new book, *Captain Sunshine*.

(AI)

A Seriously Epic Conversation with Katie Kirby

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Come see writer, illustrator, and inventor of the properly hilarious world of Lottie Brooks, **Katie Kirby**, as she spills the beans on book number nine, *The Seriously Epic Holiday of Lottie Brooks*. This time, Lottie's going skiing - what could possibly go wrong? A brilliantly fun, feel-good event that'll show you how you're not the only one going through extremely embarrassing, mega-complicated, totally disastrous, completely chaotic, or majorly awkward moments.

(AI)



Rhyme After Rhyme with Joseph Coelho & Shirley Hottier

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Poems can be about anything - messages in bottles or travelling to the centre of the Earth - and they are really fun to read out loud. Poet and former Waterstones Children's Laureate **Joseph Coelho** is here today to do just that. He's got loads of poems in his new book, *Rapunzel is a Lettuce*, and he'll be joined by illustrator **Shirley Hottier**, who'll show you how she's turned them into beautiful pictures. See you there!

(AI)

Sketching for Stories: An Illustration Session with Tita Berredo

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12 to 15

What makes a drawing into an illustration? Find out in this encouraging skills session with artist **Tita Berredo** who'll help you figure out how to turn all those brilliant ideas you have into powerful illustrations you can be proud of. Spend a relaxing hour in your arty headspace and see where inspiration can take you. *Presented by SCBWI Scotland.*



Katie Kirby, 13:30-14:30



Joseph Coelho & Shirley Hottier, 14:45-15:45

Programme key

Genres: Adventure Animals & Nature Character Appearance Comics & Illustration Creativity Funny History Making Change Picture Books Science Storytime, Music & Hobbies Wellbeing

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned [LD] Learning Disability Friendly

Sunday 30

When Chaos Comes Calling with Louie Stowell

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Something's up in Midgard and it's down to our favourite trickster to figure it out. **Louie Stowell** returns with her wildly popular *Loki* series following the mighty god who, after getting banished by Odin for bad behaviour, is forced to live on Earth as an 11-year-old boy. In this laugh-out-loud event, Louie introduces *Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Causing Chaos*. Dress as Thor at your own risk!

(AI)

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3 to 5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

In Stitches with Guy Bass

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

If you're into spooky stuff and having a good laugh, this is the perfect event for you. Author **Guy Bass** invites you inside his weird and wonderful *Stitch Head* world - now a super cool film starring Asa Butterfield and Fern Brady. This fast and funny event reveals how Guy dreamed up his stories about the young boy who's a mad professor's forgotten creation. Full of ghoulish giggles, and a chance to explore the excitement of books and writing.

(AI)

Octopus Antics with Alastair Chisholm

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

Ker-splash! Sylvester the Octopus invites you to dive into the cheekiest counting book ever! **Alastair Chisholm's** fantastic new picture book, *One Cheeky Octopus*, is full of fishy foolishness as Sylvester uses his tentacles to nab and grab his friends' games and toys... and even their false teeth! In this wonderfully welcoming event for wee ones, you can count on plenty of opportunities to join in. And as Sylvester learns about sharing, we can all learn our 1-2-3s.

(AI)

Parade Prep!

11:00-13:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

We'll create colourful crafts to wear, hold, and wave in our afternoon session (think rainbows, confetti, and streamers). It's a whole family affair, and no one is too young (or old) to come together to celebrate community, joy, and the end of another fantastic Book Festival!

Funny Bunnies with Philip Ardagh

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3 to 5

3... 2...1... blast into space with some very funny bunnies! Hop along to this cosmicly funny event with **Philip Ardagh**, author of over 100 books (!) including *Bunnies in a Rocket*, the latest adventure featuring the Sunny Town Bunnies. This time they're heading for the moon, but what will they find when they get there? Carrot-shaped aliens for sure! Buckle up for a properly goofy event - the silliness will be out of this world.

(AI)

Major Doodle Alert with Sarah Bowie

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Can you honestly think of anything better than drawing with someone who draws for a job!? Do just that today with **Sarah Bowie** who draws and writes about characters like Nina Peanut and Megan BUMFACE, including Nina's latest outing, *Major Drama Alert!* Come and doodle with Sarah as she chats about Nina: amazing frozen-pizza chef, ghost hunter, mystery solver, jet-setter, creative genius, and drama queen. Maybe you'll leave with your own graphic novel idea! Supported by Culture Ireland.

(AI)

Dragons, Vikings, and Enemy Ships with Cressida Cowell

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Calling all dragon pals and adventurers! Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third and his dragons, Toothless and Windwalker, are back for another escapade at the Isle of Berk's Training School. **Cressida Cowell**, author and illustrator of the globally bestselling *How to Train Your Dragon* series, joins us with new spin-off book, *How to Train Your Dragon School: Fight of the Flamestrike: Book 2*. Expect a fun-filled event as Cressida chats Viking heroes and mysterious vessels.

(AI)

Relaxed Screening

Venue C
Pay What You Can

Some of us thrive better in smaller, informal spaces. That's why we're putting on this relaxed screening for anyone with sensory sensitivities. Come along to watch the livestream of 'Dragons, Vikings, and Enemy Ships' while being able to move around, come and go, and make noise in this friendly, chilled out space.

(AI)

The Last Hurrah with Mama G

14:00-16:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All Ages

Join pantomime dame, and author, **Mama G** for a fabulous story time and parade, to celebrate the end of another amazing Children's Programme. Kids of all ages are invited to bring their brightest smiles to our colourful, joyful carnival and party all around the festival site. Let's spread some happiness!

Put Your Records on with Corinne Bailey Rae

14:00-15:00
Spiegel tent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6 to 8

Whatever emotion you're feeling (or want to feel), there's a song out there for it. That's what much loved singer-songwriter **Corinne Bailey Rae** explores in her charming new picture book, *Put Your Records On*, inspired by her multi-platinum hit song. Celebrate the joy of music in this super chilled Sunday session, and hear the story of Bea: a young girl who discovers her great-aunt's attic is stocked with songs for every single mood.

(AI)

Unicorn Boy with Dave Roman

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9 to 11

Would you like to meet a brilliant comic creator whose brain is like a high-speed blender of ideas? Have you ever wondered what would happen if an ordinary kid grew a massive unicorn horn?! Then it's time for you to meet author-illustrator **Dave Roman**, coming to the Festival from New York with his latest creation: *Unicorn Boy and the Slumber Party of Doom*. Get ready for magic, talking muffins, and very unlikely heroes.

(AI)

End of Festival Kids Party

16:30-17:30
Venue C
Pay What You Can
Age 0 to 11

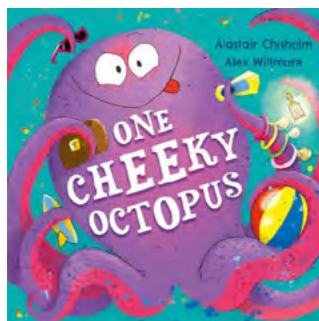
Phew... we made it! We've chatted, read, listened, and even danced for the entire Festival, and now it's time to party, with special guest, the brilliant **Sarah Bowie**. Join us for some games, songs, and a chance to tell us what you liked best, and what you'd like to happen next year. You never know, your idea could make it into a future Book Festival!



Louie Stowell, 10:00-11:00



Guy Bass, 10:00-11:00



Alastair Chisholm, 10:15-11:15



Cressida Cowell, 13:30-14:30



Corinne Bailey Rae, 14:00-15:00

Programme key

Genres: **Adventure** **Animals & Nature** **Character Appearance** **Comics & Illustration** **Creativity** **Funny**
History **Making Change** **Picture Books** **Science** **Storytime, Music & Hobbies** **Wellbeing**

Access: **D** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **AI** AI Captioned **LD** Learning Disability Friendly

How to Book

Book tickets at edbookfest.co.uk
Bookings open at 10:00 on
Thursday 25 June.

We recommend creating an account on our website before booking opens on Thursday 25 June to avoid disappointment, and signing up to our e-news for handy reminders of on sale dates and more. Visit edbookfest.co.uk to sign up.

Some tips for easier booking:

1. Log in to your account at edbookfest.co.uk
2. There will be a queuing system on the website on opening day - this is usually our busiest day.
3. The queue will open at 10:00. You will only enter the queue once you have hit an event's 'Book now' button.
4. You must keep the queue window open and stay logged in to your device and browser to remain in the queue.
5. Read our 'How to Book' guide on our website (edbookfest.co.uk/how-to-book) for full details.

Box Office telephone

If you are unable to book tickets on the website, our Box Office phonenumber is 0345 373 5888. Please note: we have a small team dealing with phone bookings and enquiries; please only use the phonenumber if you cannot book on the website. It will help to reduce wait times for customers who cannot book in any other way or need assistance. We will do our best to deal with calls quickly, however you may not get through immediately.

Calls are charged at the same rate as a local call to a landline. Please check your mobile contract as network charges may differ.

Box Office opening hours

Before the Festival, from 25 June: **10:00-17:00, Monday to Friday**. During the Festival, from 15 August: **09:30-20:45, daily**.

Your tickets

We'll send you your e-tickets by email (one email for each event you book) with a link to a QR code. We'll also send you a reminder by email or text message 24 hours before your event. Alternatively, you can log in to your edbookfest.co.uk account to download a PDF copy of your e-tickets from the Account section.

Please read your ticket information carefully to ensure that you are at the correct venue.

Booking tickets in person

Our Box Office counter is located next to the Festival entrance and open daily from **Saturday 15 August: 09:30-20:45**.

Tickets cannot be bought in person before this date.

Concession ticket prices

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy the wonders of storytelling, creativity, and inspiring conversation at the Book Festival. That's why we offer reduced ticket prices for anyone over 60, students, anyone under 30, and guests with access requirements (assistants go free - see below for details). We also offer those receiving low income benefits £5 tickets for many events, and a special under 18s price on selected events. Ticket prices, including concession prices, vary across events - you'll find them listed in brackets after each event, and also displayed in full on our website.

Children and Families tickets

Children's tickets for events in our Children and Families Programme are £6, or free. Adult tickets are £8, unless otherwise noted.

Pay What You Can tickets

We offer a Pay What You Can (PWYC) pricing option for some of our in-person events, and all our livestreamed and on demand events. PWYC makes the Festival more accessible to all book lovers, and you can select how much you can pay at point of booking.

By purchasing at our standard ticket price, you help us continue offering reduced ticket prices to those who need it most, as well as supporting the Book Festival. As a charity, we rely on ticket sales and donations to carry out our work throughout the year.



Assistance tickets

If you need a support person or aide to attend events, they are entitled to a free Assistance ticket. Contact the Box Office on 0345 373 5888 or email boxoffice@edbookfest.co.uk as soon as possible after booking your ticket. Free Assistance tickets cannot be booked online. For popular events or on the first day of bookings, we recommend purchasing an extra ticket for your assistant, then contacting the Box Office for reimbursement.

Baby tickets

If you are bringing a baby under two years to an event for older children, please request a free baby ticket from the Box Office on the day of the event. If the event is created for children under two, you will need to buy an event ticket as usual. Please keep babies on an accompanying adult's lap throughout the event.

Payment and fees

We accept Visa/Maestro/Mastercard. We do not charge any booking fees.

If you've chosen to Pay What You Can to watch an event, your payment will be treated as a donation to the Book Festival Charity, and you will be asked if you'd like to Gift Aid it (UK taxpayers only).

Refund policy

Tickets can only be exchanged or refunded when an event is cancelled or substantially changed. Where demand is high for sold out events, we may accept returns at our discretion. Refunds are not available to latecomers.

Venue seating

All venues have unreserved seating, although McEwan Hall offers unreserved seating within different seating areas (please note that the Circle level and Upper Circle level seats in McEwan Hall are not suitable for those with mobility issues, or a fear of heights).

See our website for more detailed information about venues: edbookfest.co.uk/visit-us/venues

Latecomers

Please allow yourself plenty of time to get to your event venue. We don't admit latecomers after the start of events in most of our venues due to layout and nature of the events (some of which are filmed). If you are late, we won't be able to seat you. Latecomers are not entitled to a refund. Please see our website for more information about seating and venues: edbookfest.co.uk/visit-us/venues

On demand

Lots of our online events are available to watch on demand on the website's video player pages immediately after the live broadcast. Further events which were not livestreamed may be available to watch on demand in Autumn 2026. Not all livestreamed events are available on demand.

Visiting the Festival



What you can expect from our events

Though no two of our events are the same, our usual format features an author or authors sitting on stage for a chat (in some very comfy chairs). There'll be fascinating insights, and sometimes differing opinions, but there's always appreciation of each other. The conversation flows and before you know it, it could be your turn to join in with a question or two. Usually, the author signs their book in the Festival Bookshop after the event, so you could meet them, or even see them wandering around the Book Festival.

Our less-than-usual events could see you getting out and about, hunting for Pip and Posy®, rolling your sleeves up for hands on activities, enjoying food and drink, and plenty in between and beyond.

Bringing the Festival to you

We know it's not always possible to join us in person, so where possible, we'll bring events to you wherever you are. Most of the events in our largest venues, Venue T and McEwan Hall, will be livestreamed and available to watch both in person and online.

For a full list of livestreamed and on demand events, visit edbookfest.co.uk

Remote event participants

Some authors take part remotely from wherever they are in the world. They will appear on a screen in the venue. Anyone appearing remotely will be highlighted in the programme.

In-person and livestreamed events

Our largest capacity venue at Edinburgh Futures Institute, Venue T, and McEwan Hall are set up to serve both in-person and online audiences. The theatre will have a range of fixed and roving cameras to capture and broadcast live footage of the authors on stage and may also capture shots of the audiences watching or asking questions.

Site map

Check out our site map on p129, and see any updates at edbookfest.co.uk/visit-us/our-site

Festival photographers and film crews

Our friendly roving photographers and video creators will be present throughout the Festival, capturing images and interviews with visitors and authors. If you'd prefer not to be in any photos, please let the photographer or a member of our team know.

What's on site

Spaces to eat, drink, and chill

The Festival wouldn't be complete without lashings of food, drink, and space to kick back, so you'll find food trucks from a range of independent suppliers in The Courtyard, and the Canopy Kitchen & Courtyard in the EFI building also offers a host of tasty treats.

And there are lots of cosy nooks inside where you can hang out and stay dry if summer turns reliably Scottish.

Picnics and packed lunches

You're welcome to bring your own food and soft drinks to enjoy outdoors or in our indoor seating areas - there's plenty of space, and even kid-size tables in our LNER Kids Zone.

Bookshop and signing

The Festival Bookshop in The Courtyard is brought to you by Waterstones. The shelves are full of books from the authors in the programme, plus lots of other titles.

For families – everything you need away from home (well, almost)

You'll find places dotted throughout the site to leave a buggy*. There are toilets and baby changing throughout the building across all levels, as well as drinking water taps, and plenty of space to keep you comfy when you visit.

*Buggies cannot be taken into the theatres, so please leave your buggy outside in some of our dedicated spaces, before entering the event. Please note: these are not staffed, and items are left at your own risk.

Drinking water taps

Drinking water taps are plentiful inside Edinburgh Futures Institute, so you can fill up as you go.

Festival access

Help with access

Our dedicated Access Manager can help with any specific needs for your visit, and they'll be happy to answer questions. Please contact access@edbookfest.co.uk

Braille, audio, and large print

Contact us at mailinglist@edbookfest.co.uk or on 0131 718 5666 and we will do our best to get you the brochure in the format you need.

Toilets

We have toilets for everyone, including gender neutral toilets, wheelchair accessible toilets, and a fully accessible Changing Places toilet, complete with a hoist and changing table (please provide your own sling).

Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome. Please let the Box Office know at least a day before your event so we can make sure you are seated somewhere suitable.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to our trained staff that you may need additional support or help as you navigate the Book Festival site and attend events. Lanyards are available at the Box Office.

Sound enhancement in theatres

Infrared and audio induction loop systems are available in our theatres at Edinburgh Futures Institute and McEwan Hall. Please ask at the Box Office to collect your headset.

Wheelchair access

The Book Festival's site and venues are fully wheelchair accessible. We have wheelchairs you can borrow. Please call our Box Office on 0345 373 5888 or email boxoffice@edbookfest.co.uk when you book your tickets if you require assistance (keep reading for seating requests).

Accessibility at the Book Festival is supported by players of Postcode Lottery.



Seating requests

If you have a wheelchair or need to sit in a specific area (aisle, for example) please let the Box Office know as soon as possible when you book, or at least two days before your event. We want to ensure that the most accessible seats are available for those who need them, so due to space and demand we cannot also reserve seats for others in your group.

Assistance tickets

One free Assistance ticket is available with each Access ticket bought. For more details, see How to Book on p123.

Captioned / BSL events

A selection of events, both in-person and livestreamed, are scheduled with live captioning, AI captioning or a BSL interpreter. Look for the tag under each event or filter events on the website to see the full list.

BSL on request

You can request a BSL interpreter for any event in the programme. Given demands on their time, please do let us know as soon as you have booked tickets. How it works:

- Buy tickets to the event you want to see in the usual way
- Email bsl@edbookfest.co.uk or phone 0345 373 5888 to request an interpreter
- We will process requests weekly in July and make arrangements with our BSL interpreters before confirming your request
- We cannot accept requests after Friday 7 August.

If we are unable to fulfil a request, we will refund or exchange your tickets.

Accessible parking

Unfortunately, there are no parking spaces at Edinburgh Futures Institute, however there is a Q-Park close by with 10 accessible spaces.

Quiet Space

There's a lot to see and do at the Festival, and sometimes you might want to take a moment to yourself if it all feels a bit much. For those who would like to step away from the hubbub of the main areas, we will have a dedicated Quiet Space where you can take the time and space you need.

Watching online

Where possible we offer captioned streams of our online events. To search for accessible online events, visit edbookfest.co.uk/events

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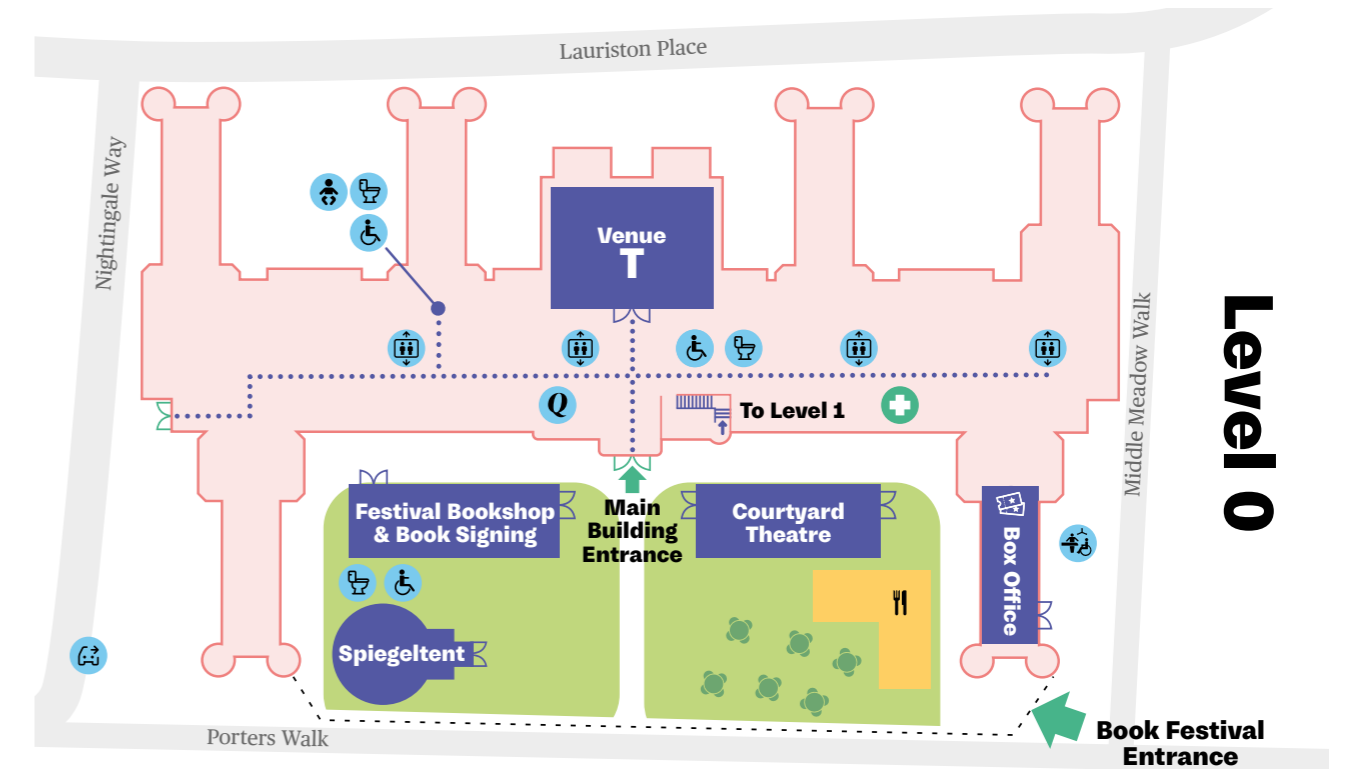
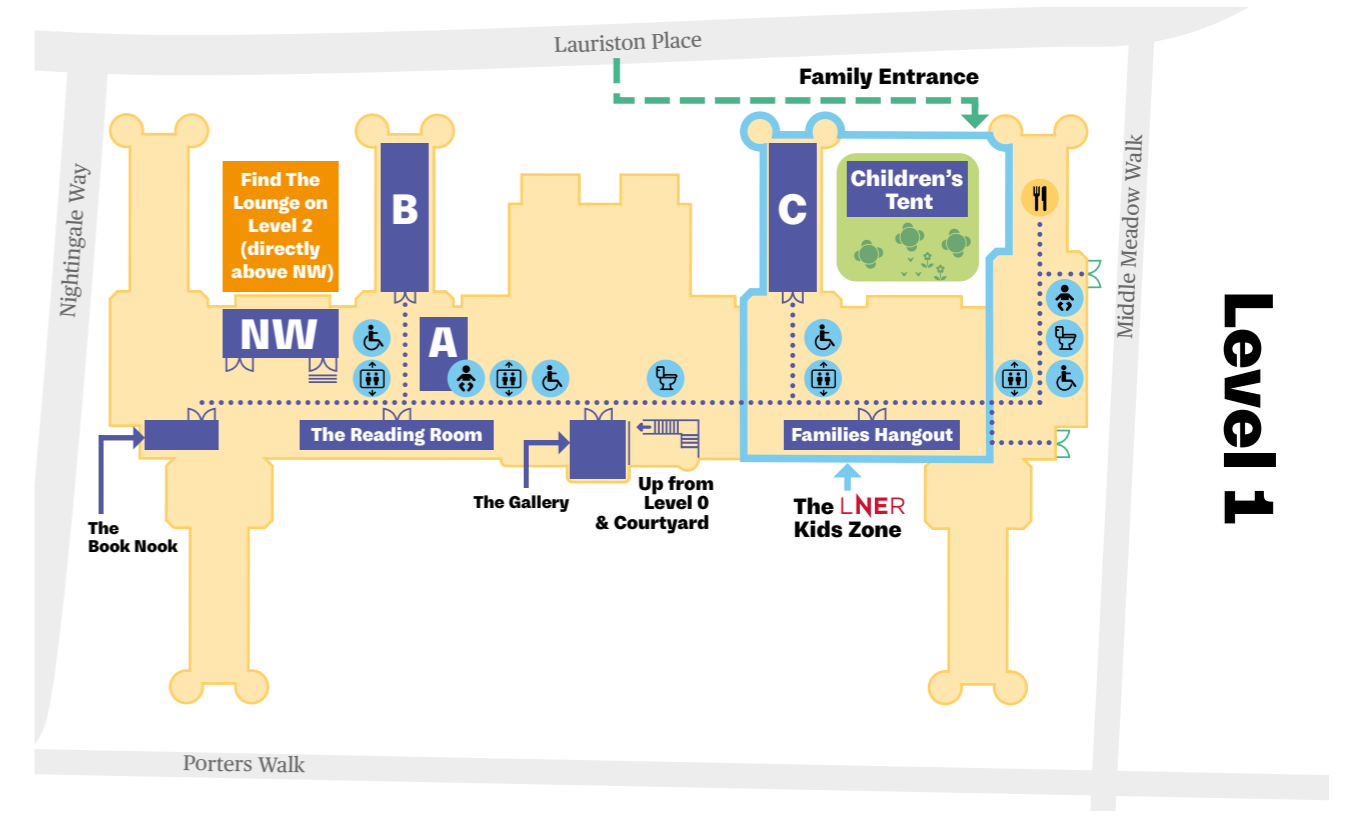
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Site Map

Festival opening hours:
09:30-23:00 daily



Plus events at Elliott's Studio, McEwan Hall, and Greyfriars Kirk

Key

- Level entrance
- Accessible entrance
- Food & Drink
- Toilets
- Accessible toilet
- Mobilo
- Baby changing
- Lift
- Quiet Zone



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Our locations

The Book Festival is free to enter and enjoy. Savour food, drink, and relaxation at the indoor café, Courtyard pop-ups, or nearby green spaces, with cosy indoor nooks for shelter if needed. Check out the listings for ticket prices.

Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI)

The main Book Festival site, where most events happen, is located at 1 Lauriston Place, Edinburgh, EH3 9EF.

The main Book Festival entrance is at the corner of Middle Meadow Walk and Porters Walk (just opposite the coffee shop). If using What 3 Words, you'll find it at [///lock.sprint.shape](https://www.what3words.com/lock.sprint.shape)

McEwan Hall

A 5-minute walk from EFI, you'll find the iconic, circular McEwan Hall on Teviot Place, EH8 9AG, by Bristo Square.

Elliott's Studio

Elliott's Studio is on the other side of the Meadows from EFI, at 21 Sciennes Road, EH9 1NX - about an 18-min walk away from our main site. Look out for a green-fronted tenement.

Greyfriars Kirk

Most Scotland to the World events take place in the historic Greyfriars Kirk, a 5-minute walk down the road at Greyfriars Place, EH1 2QQ.

Getting here

We'd love it if you could get to us in the most sustainable way possible.

By bus (Lothian Bus)

Numbers 12, 23, 27, 35, 45, 47 and 47B stop on Lauriston Place in both directions, and many other bus routes have stops 5-minutes walk away or less.

By train

Waverley Station is within walking distance, but please bear in mind that Edinburgh is especially busy during August, and you will have to navigate visitors and performers lining the streets. Give yourself plenty of time to get to the Book Festival and find your event venue.

By car

The closest car park is Q-Park Quartermile, Simpson Loan, EH3 9AU, with 374 parking spaces and 10 accessible spaces.

By bicycle

There's ample bike racks in The Courtyard, which are unsupervised, and bikes are left at your own risk.

Opening hours

The Festival is open daily from 15-30 August from 09:30-23:00.

