



Festival Programme

9 - 24 August



Using the brochure

With over 600 events across three programmes - including our brand-new and hugely exciting Young Adults programme - you can sometimes feel almost too spoilt for choice.

To make things even more exciting, we add events to our programme right up til we open (sorry, not sorry) - so to make sure you've not missed out on any fresh additions, visit: edbookfest.co.uk/the-festival/whats-on/recently-added

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 p4-11.

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.

- Remote appearances**
Some participants will join on a screen.
- Outdoor event**
Events that are outdoors - bring SPF50, an umbrella, or both!
- Active event**
Events may include walking - activity level noted per event.
- Livestreamed**
We livestream events globally on our website, which are often also available on demand.
- Live captioned**
These events will be captioned live by captioners in the room.
- AI captioned**
We're trialling AI captions with Deaf Action. We welcome feedback on how our audiences find this experience.
- British Sign Language**
BSL interpretation is also available on request - see p145.
- Learning Disability**
These events are suitable for those with learning disabilities.

What's on site

We're settling into our stunning new home at the Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), and you'll notice a few changes around.

This year, you'll find our brand new Kids Zone with fun-filled new creative areas indoors and the popular Children's Tent outdoors on the north east lawn. There's extra space to chat and hang out under cover in The Reading Room on Level 1, new and delicious catering options, more lawn on which to eat, drink, and make merry in The Courtyard, and our brand new Festival site entrance on the corner of Porters Walk and Middle Meadow Walk - you'd really have to try to miss it!

The legendary Festival Bookshop of course returns, brought to you by our retail partners Waterstones. Our Spiegeltent and Courtyard Theatre continue to be resplendent, and we're presenting even more events at McEwan Hall and Elliott's Studio (as well as cheekily popping up at the National Library of Scotland and Dynamic Earth).

You can flip to the site map on p149 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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Explore the Festival



Welcome to the 2025 Edinburgh International Book Festival

This year, we celebrate the power of books, writing, and ideas to expand our horizons – from untold histories of African queens and the outer edges of space to the drama of the football pitch and the quiet ache of a broken heart. Writers help us see the world anew, and we invite you to explore the infinite ways they feed our imagination and open our minds.

In an age of constant conflict and noise, creating space for ideas to be heard is both a privilege and a challenge. We don't expect everyone to agree on the questions posed in our events, but we do hope the rich tapestry of voices presented sparks healthy, nuanced debate - and maybe even a change of mind. Our Festival is a place to listen, to participate, and to be part of something bigger.

This year's theme is Repair - a word that speaks to hope, resilience, and action. From sustainability and fast fashion to political polarisation, our events offer ideas for how we might mend what's broken. You're warmly invited to roll up your sleeves: take part in our expanded workshop programme, pick up a new skill, fix something - or simply enjoy a mouthwatering conversation over a marvellous lunch.

There is something timeless and powerful about gathering with others to hear a story beautifully told, a lyric that hits home, or a truth bravely spoken. We invite you to experience that collective magic with friends old and new at the Book Festival this year. So, stop scrolling, turn off your phone, and join us at the heart of the world's favourite festival city this August.

Jenny Niven
Director & CEO



Jenny Niven
Festival Director & CEO

Thank You to our Supporters

The Edinburgh International Book Festival is only possible thanks to the generosity of individuals, companies, trusts, and partners who have supported us this year. Your gifts, sponsorship, enthusiasm, and commitment help us turn big ideas into unforgettable moments, strengthen our community, and inspire future generations.

We can’t wait to celebrate words and ideas with all of you in August. Thank you.

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but make a big impact.

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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.

Themes

What can be repaired – and what can't? Can we learn to mend what's been broken, together? From our climate and politics to our bodies, histories, and cultural institutions, the idea of repair runs through our lives in ways both intimate and structural. How are writers, artists, environmentalists, storytellers, and policymakers confronting this question? What new approaches are emerging – and what wisdom have we forgotten?

We've invited a constellation of bold thinkers to respond to this vital idea, and we open the Festival with our Repair Gala: an evening of brand-new commissions from extraordinary voices including **Jenni Fagan**, **Amitav Ghosh**, **Rachel Kushner**, and **Najwan Darwish**.

Over the 15 days that follow, we'll dive into the theme from every angle.

With sustainability at the heart of this year's programme, we ask how we can repair our relationship with the natural world. **Robert Macfarlane**, **Louise Welsh**, and 'barrister for the earth' **Monica Faria-Tinta** debate whether rivers should be granted personhood, **Chantal Lyons**, **Sophie Pavelle**, and **Peter Cairns** explore rewilding - including the possible return of beavers and bears to Scotland - and **Adam Alexander**, **Mo Wilde**, and **Andy Hamilton** share the physical and emotional benefits of foraging and food resilience.

Political repair and conflict resolution are in the spotlight as **Philippe Sands** and **Steve Crawshaw** ask whether 'justice' can really be restored, while **Olesya Khromeychuk** and **Jen Stout** honour the legacy of Ukrainian novelist and war crimes researcher **Victoria Amelina**, who died from injuries caused by a Russian missile attack.

We hear stories of personal and physical healing from **Hanif Kureishi**, reflecting on recovery after a devastating fall, and **Naga Munchetty**, who powerfully advocates for systemic change in women's healthcare.

We'll explore the moral terrain of reparations and post-colonial reckoning with **Priya Basil** and **Madeleine Thien**, while **Melissa Lucashenko** and **Tanya Talaga** illuminate First Nations perspectives on truth, legacy, and repair. **William Dalrymple** and **Anita Anand** investigate the contested journeys of the world's most looted artefacts, and **Peter Frankopan** reconsiders the Silk Road with fresh eyes.

Aja Barber, **Anna Freemantle-Zee**, and **Alena Ivanova** challenge us to stop buying and rethink our relationship with fashion, while **Siôn Parkinson** and **Nicholas P Money** champion the infinite potential of mushrooms, and **Poppy Okotcha** and **Kathy Slack** delve into the transformative power of the humble garden, from nurturing soil to fostering community.

If you're inspired to act, there are lots of chances to take part. Try the Japanese art of kintsugi with **Halle O'Neal**, explore 'multisolving' with **Alex Pearson**, get into nature with **Glen Consquer**, or repair your own narrative arc in a plotting session with **Eleanor Catton**.

Taking the theme to a ghoulish extreme (and why not?), **Jenni Fagan** leads the charge in our *Frankenstein* themed cabaret night in celebration of a rich tradition of monsters, the uncanny, and stitching things back together...

And we want to know, what does repair mean to you? So around our Festival site you'll find chances to mend, to learn, and to share your own stories of restoration.

Discover all the events in the Repair theme at edbookfest.co.uk/repair, or look for the green boxes throughout the brochure.



There's nothing more brilliant than immersing yourself in the minds, lives, and worlds conjured by the world's most skilled and visionary fiction writers.

Whether you're hoping for comfort, searching for adventure, yearning for romance, or wishing for fantasy, there's nothing you can't experience in the multifaceted landscape of our fiction events.

Homegrown talent **Ali Smith** cannily evokes a near-future dystopia, and Leith legend **Irvine Welsh** continues the antics of the *Trainspotting* crew through the 1980s and 90s. **Isabel Allende** returns to her multi-generational saga with *My Name is Emilia del Valle*, **Alan Hollinghurst** explores becoming a man in a changing Britain, **Bella Mackie** brings us a comical mystery of fatal family dynamics, **Rachel Kushner** re-invents the spy novel through an uproarious feminist lens, *Girl on the Train* author **Paula Hawkins** introduces her new thriller, **Nussaibah Younis** blends the unusual elements of heartbreak, comedy, and an internment camp for ISIS brides, **Samantha Harvey** reflects on her 2024 Booker Prize-winning novel *Orbital*, **Conn Iggulden** adds a new volume to his bestselling *Nero* trilogy, **Adrian Tchaikovsky** explores the dystopian potential of bioethics, and **Torrey Peters** leads a dance spanning time periods and gender identities.

We're also joined by a host of other glittering Scottish writers including crime-writing royalty **Denise Mina** and **Chris Brookmyre**, and debut novelist (but well kent poet) **Michael Pedersen**. **Chris McQueer** investigates incel culture, **Heather Parry** goes gloriously gothic, **Sara Sheridan** takes to the high seas, and **Judy Murray** plays a match of mystery and murder.

Bringing the best of international literature to Edinburgh, and widening our understanding of the world are writers including Australia's **Michelle de Kretser**, Ireland's **Eimear McBride** and **Colum McCann**, Canada's **Miriam Toews**, Malaysia's **Tash Aw**, Israel's **Etgar Keret**, Aotearoa-New Zealand's **Becky Manawatu**, France's **Laurent Binet**, Canada's **Tanya Talaga**, Spain's **Javier Cercas**, and Germany's **Daniel Kehlman**.

There are stories to expand your mind (or bend it), lift your heart (or break it), and ignite your senses (or soothe them), because with writers this imaginative, absolutely anything is possible...



Brilliant Fiction

We're returning to McEwan Hall, in partnership with Underbelly, to present an expanded series of exciting events, representing the breadth of the Book Festival's offering.

Maggie O'Farrell celebrates 25 years of extraordinary publishing, **Nicola Sturgeon** launches her much-anticipated memoir, **Yulia Navalnaya** speaks about her late husband **Alex Navalny's** powerful work *Patriot*, the masterful **Ian McEwan** looks back on his career and forward to the future, **R F Kuang** unveils her mythical new release *Katabasis*, **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie** discusses her return to the world of literature after a decade, *Butter* author and breakthrough sensation, Japanese author **Asako Yuzuki** makes her first Festival appearance, bestselling children's author **A F Steadman** chats about ferocious unicorns, and we're joined by sporting hero **Ally McCoist** who shares the pleasure - and pain - of following the Tartan Army.

The jam-packed programme also includes ultimate British film enthusiast **Mark Kermode** (alongside special guests including *Succession's* **Brian Cox**), journalist, activist, and sociopolitical writer **Ta-Nehisi Coates**, *Gavin and Stacey* co-creator and novelist **Ruth Jones**, and two journalists with ringside seats for the changing state of America, **Anne Applebaum** and **Edward Wong**.



The Front List

With murky algorithms controlling much of the media, how can you trust what you see? You know you're being manipulated, but how, and who (or even what) by? Is it possible to get to the truth?

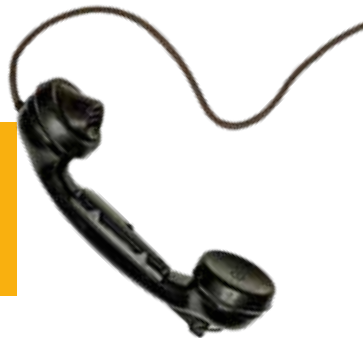
None of these questions have simple answers, but our **Good Information** theme features events with reliable experts with experience in sifting out the hard facts, identifying bad actors, and cutting through cultural hysteria to have nuanced conversations about topics which are often unhelpfully sensationalised.

Technology adviser to the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales **Richard Susskind** explains the impacts of AI, **Gabriel Gatehouse**, **Deborah Baker**, and **Leor Zmigrod** explore why conspiracy theories can be so seductive, **Deborah Frances-White** tackle how to have difficult conversations, philosopher **A C Grayling** takes on the culture wars, **Laura Bates** examines modern sexism, and **Devi Sridhar** advocates for the lifesaving potential of accountability.

Jenny Kleeman, **Anshel Pfeffer**, and **Danny Sriskandarajah** also use their unique experiences to offer confidence in separating reality from a darkly biased fiction.

And get the inside scoop on the day's news with leading and trustworthy journalists from across the media (and the world) in our daily **First Edition** events.

Good Information



Keeping up with current affairs can feel impossible when the world becomes more complex with each passing moment.

So, to help us understand the shifting sands upon which we stand, we're bringing together the most authoritative voices across international and domestic politics, conflict, economics, and law.

Vince Cable explores the emergence of new superstates, **Will Hutton** examines how both the political Left and Right have failed us, **Peter Frankopan** marks ten years since the publication of his seminal work *The Silk Road*, **Anne Applebaum** exposes modern dictatorships, and **Anshel Pfeffer**, **Ece Temelkuran**, and **Shaun Walker** take on the grave global consequences of authoritarian 'strongman' leaders.

With global conflicts continually intensifying, **Andrey Kurkov** reports from the frontlines of the war in Ukraine, former British ambassador to Afghanistan, Russia, and Azerbaijan **Laurie Bristow** shares the human cost of applying military solutions to political problems, and a host of voices including **Avi Shlaim**, **Ilan Pappé**, **Pankaj Mishra**, **Penny Johnson**, **Raja Shehadeh**, **Omar El Akadd**, and **Fady Judah** unravel the long and catastrophic history between Israel and Palestine, including the most recent and devastating series of attacks.

New World Orders



Get ready to explore all things cranial, including mental health, neuroscience, and psychology.

A host of scientists, psychologists, technologists, and authors offer their, at times challenging, insights into the wonders and limitations of what lies between our ears (and beyond), including mathematician **Marcus du Sautoy**'s exploration of the creativity of numbers, **Joseph Jebelli**'s treatise for the transformative power of rest, and **Lucy Easthope**'s framework on how to cope with crisis.

Adam Zeman and **Ben Alderson-Day** unpack the quantifiable science that powers our imaginations, and **Nussaibah Younis** and **Leor Zmigrod** tackle what goes on inside the head of a fundamentalist, and what makes someone susceptible to radicalisation.

Elsewhere, neurologist **Suzanne O'Sullivan** and psychiatrist **Sami Timimi** share their provocative but important perspectives on other aspects of mental health and psychology which may help us more carefully consider both ourselves and others.

Brainwaves



Join us in diving beneath the waves of a stormy world to discover new and deeper ways of creating connection, resilience, hope, and hopefully a sense of peace amongst the chaos.



How to Live a Meaningful Life

Discover **Sophie Elmhirst**'s exploration of survival through the true story of a couple shipwrecked in the Pacific, **Grace Spence Green** embraces radical acceptance, and **Sami Tamimi**, **José Pizarro**, and **Jenny Lau** reflect on the importance of food to our sense of home. And since there's no doubt that connection to nature is essential to our sense of wellbeing, **Roger Clough** and **Kerri Andrews** uncover the transformative partnership of walking and writing, **Chloe Dalton** shares the story of the hare that changed her life, and **Callum Robinson** and **Clare Hunter** revel in the process of crafting items, and community, from the natural world.

Also sharing their valuable insights to improve our lives are **Rachel Charlton-Dailey**, **Chitra Ramaswamy**, **Hattie Crisell**, **Daisy Buchanan**, **Bee Wilson**, **Halle O'Neal**, and **Donna Ashworth**.

And beloved writer, broadcaster, and former Bishop of Edinburgh, **Richard Holloway**, discusses what he says will be his final book, *Last Words*, in a moving evening of literature and music.

We relished the appetite for our Table Talk events last year, so in 2025 we're offering up extra helpings of events that offer you the chance to connect to your favourite chefs and food writers over their beautiful (and tasty) creations. Maybe even washed down with a paired glass of wine (or a soft drink, of course)?

You can savour a leisurely time and **Have Lunch** with Spanish culinary icon **José Pizarro**, celebrate the inventiveness of Brazilian cuisine with **Ixta Belfrage**, and enjoy the taste of **Sami Tamimi**'s first solo cookbook *Boustany*, which draws inspiration from his childhood in Palestine. Fill yourself with sumptuous *Weekend Recipes* from local favourite **Jess Elliott Dennison**, and indulge in a very special supper with social media sensation **Rosie Kellett**.

Table Talk



Great British Bake Off contestant **Benamina Ebuehi** invites you to treat yourself to **Something Sweet**; and you can enjoy a lighter bite with our **Table Talk** events, with chefs including Persian food expert **Sabrina Ghayour**, owner of popular Glasgow restaurant, Ga Ga Kitchen, **Julie Lin**, as well as **Diana Henry**, **Alissa Timoshkina**, and **Michèle Roberts**. And in a special evening event, join *Guardian* wine critic **Hannah Crosbie** to celebrate *Corker*, her seriously unserious wine book.

You can also develop your own culinary skills in a fermenting workshop with **Kenji Morimoto**, or join **Buffy's Book Club** for an intimate evening of bookish conversation and tipples.

You bring the chat, we'll bring the napkins.

Often, the most fantastical stories are those which are true, and we're proud to feature the most thought-provoking, well-researched, and conversation-driving writers bringing us essential new non-fiction.

From moving memoirs to scientific excavations, family odysseys to travelogues, every curious mind will find something to satisfy.

Hallie Rubenhold excavates the life of a murder victim overlooked by history, **Richard Flanagan** tenderly explores emotional and global chain reactions, **Philippe Sands** connects the dots between the SS and the Pinochet regime (and recounts his role advising the prosecution), **Hanif Kureishi** reflects on the paralysing fall that changed his life, the magnificent **Amitav Ghosh** brings together a quarter century of his lyrical

essay writing, **Naga Munchetty** exposes rife misogyny in the British healthcare system, and **Paul French** unveils the untold story of Wallis Simpson's heady time in 1920s Shanghai.

From the world of entertainment, smash-hit podcaster **Adam Buxton** rambles on in his inimitable manner with new memoir, *I Love You, Byeee*, and indefatigable comedian **Ivo Graham** extolls the benefits of failure.

Also shining a light on topics fascinating and fundamental are writers including **Ekow Eshun**, **Pankaj Mishra**, **Shon Faye**, and **Yiyun Li**.



Fascinating Non-Fiction

Catch fresh poetic talent with **Push the Boat Out's** Open Mic, **Loud Poets'** Grand Slam Final, and **GUBSMACKED's** Flyte Nyte, alongside well-established voices like Poet Laureate **Simon Armitage**, Makar **Peter Mackay**, **Karen McCarthy Woolf**, **Len Pennie** and **Michael Mullen**. New Zealand and Scottish poets collaborate in From Aotearoa to Alba: A Literary Exchange, and our All Star Poetry Night packs a poetic punch.

Local indie legend **Hamish Hawk** reimagines Ivor Cutler's work in a bold, exclusive new commission, Radiohead bassist **Colin Greenwood** shares the band's inside story, legendary record producer **Joe Boyd** journeys through global music, actress **Harriet Walter** gives voice to Shakespeare's women, and writer **James Runcie** and violinist **Fenella Humphries** movingly navigate grief and love.

Val McDermid unveils the world premiere reading of her brand-new play, *And Midnight Never Come*, a starry cast including **Vanessa Redgrave** and **Viggo Mortensen** perform powerful messages of protest from around the world in *The People Speak*, and there's turns from **Malachy Tallack**, **Simone Seales**, and **Mele Broomes**, Belle and Sebastian's **Stuart Murdoch**, and more. Phew!



Music Poetry & Performance

Sometimes we all need to shake loose a bit, and there's plenty of fun times and upbeat vibes to be had with this selection of quirky and unusual events.

All designed to be enjoyed with a glass of something chilled in your hand, a gaggle of pals by your side, and an up-for-it attitude; you might not know exactly what to expect, but a great time is guaranteed!



Special Editions

Crowdslayers the **Fun Lovin' Crime Writers** return to murder more of your favourite tunes, *Outlander's* **Sam Heughan** raises a glass to the art of the cocktail and the moments they've marked on his incredible journey, **Torrey Peters** presents an extravaganza of trans writing, **Jenni Fagan** sews together amazing writers and musicians for an electrifying *Frankenstein* Cabaret, comedian **Tim Key** tells of high tales and low moments in Hollywood, and **Caroline O'Donoghue's** wildly popular *Sentimental Garbage* podcast returns with another live Book Festival edition, while **Chitra Ramaswamy**, **Emma Pollock**, **Nicola Meighan**, **Cora Bissett**, and **Carrie Marshall** remind us all that Britpop wasn't just a boys' game in 1995: Grrrls Aloud.

Eager to burrow deep beneath the skin of a topic, take a magnifying glass to the little details that make a writer's work really sing, or expand your own creative skills? Good news – there's a workshop for all of that, and plenty more besides.

Our **Thought Exercise** series gives you the chance to hear from, and engage with, some of the most knowledgeable minds around, including Pulitzer Prize-finalist **Deborah Baker**, author and psychoanalyst **Josh Cohen**, diplomat **Laurie Bristow**, and economist **John Kay**. Together with the others in your small group, you'll explore the challenges and opportunities in creating a better, fairer world for us all.

The ever-popular **Close Reads** workshops invite you to join a leading author as they guide you on a deep-dive into a classic text or genre that's inspired them, which this year includes **Francesca Wade** on Gertrude Stein, **Désha Osborne** on Andrea Levy, and **Marjori Lotfi** and **Claire Urquhart** on Ali Smith.

Practice the ancient reparative art of kintsugi with **Halle O'Neal**, and explore the archives of **Muriel Spark** and **Jackie Kay** at the National Library of Scotland. Hone your creative work by exploring how to write honestly about sex with **Jeremy Atherton Lin**, imagining the world from a child's perspective with **Catherine Chidgey**, exploring manuscript repair with **Eleanor Catton**, and realising the potential of fantasy writing with **Catherina Prasifk**.

Workshops



Young Adults

This year we're piloting a brand-new programme of events focused on audiences under 30 (though open to anyone who's young at heart!).

We're collaborating with the brilliant **House of YA** for a very special takeover of the Spiegeltent on Monday 11 August, hosted by thriller author **Cynthia Murphy**, with panels and a whole host of exciting, free, drop-in events (as well as some tasty giveaways and free swag).

We're delighted to welcome back **Alice Oseman**, creator of the smash-hit *Heartstopper* series, **R F Kuang** unveils 2025's most unexpected love story as part of **The Front List** in McEwan Hall, and **Caroline O'Donoghue**, **Molly X Chang**, **Elodie Harper**, **Saara El-Arifi**, **Juno Dawson**, **Imani Erriu**, and **Samantha Shannon** join us to chat about their exciting new titles.

There will also be the chance to get tips on getting your own work published, and enlivening workshops with the Sad Ghost Club's **Lize Meddings** and **Ashley Hickson-Lovence**, as well as a special Festival edition of the Bookshop Crawl UK, and the first Scottish edition of the Insta-popular Buffy's Book Club with **Lizzy Hadfield**.

Check out p108 for full Young Adult event listings.



Children and Families

It just wouldn't be a Festival without loads of fun-filled events for kids and their grown-ups!

This year you'll find the Children's Tent in our expanded Kids Zone in EFI's northwest corner, including indoor space for kids to read, relax, or even make a start on their own literary epics.

Most events are just £6 for kids, and there are free events every day, including our ever-popular **Are You Sitting Comfortably?** and **Bookbug** series, and energetic **Sprog Rock**. You can snap a selfie with **Pikachu**, the **Gruffalo**, and **Supertato**, and go on the hunt for missing **Mr. Men** and **Little Miss**.

And, of course, you'll hear from all your favourite children's authors, including the legends that are **Michael Rosen** and **Jacqueline Wilson**, *How to Train Your Dragon*'s **Cressida Cowell**, *There's a Bear on My Chair*'s **Ross Collins**, illustrator **Rob Biddulph**, former Children's Laureate **Joseph Coelho**, the vibrant **Pamela Butchart**, and so very many more. With something to ignite every imagination, where will you start?

You can see our full Children's listings on p118.



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 until it's seared into your brain forever? You're in luck!

Many of our events are livestreamed to audiences across the world and available to watch on demand for a period afterwards, on a Pay What You Can basis. And this year we're expanding our online events offering with a slew more events available to enjoy on demand from Autumn.

Look out for  to identify livestreamed events, and sign up for our mailing list at edbookfest.co.uk to get news on the release of our additional on demand offering.

Global Ink: Discover the Power of International Collaboration

Global Ink is our flagship industry event - bringing together publishing professionals from Scotland, the UK, and around the world.

Taking place on Tuesday 12 August, it's a must-attend for authors, publishers, translators, festival organisers, and anyone passionate about working across borders.

Join us for an afternoon of bold ideas and global perspectives, with two thought-provoking panel discussions featuring leading international figures from across the literary world. And afterwards, continue the conversation at a relaxed networking reception where you can enjoy a drink, connect with peers, and celebrate the spirit of international collaboration.

Tickets: £30 [Concession: £20]

Spaces are limited - to view the full programme visit edbookfest.co.uk/industry

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International Booker Prize
Jenny Brown Associates
My Kind of Book
National Library of Scotland
National Museums of Scotland
New Writing North
NSPCC
Open Book
PAMIS
Pitlochry Festival Theatre

Push the Boat Out
Refuwegee
Scots Language Centre
Scottish Book Trust
Spartans Community Football Club
The Andrea Levy Scholarship
The Kavya Prize
The London Centre for the Humanities
The Sensory Sessions
University of Durham
Wasafiri Magazine
Welcome To The Fringe Palestine
Women's Prize Trust
Writers Mosaic
Zero Waste Scotland

We're here for our (and your) communities...

We're on a mission to spread the power of words and ideas – how they can empower people to better understand themselves, each other, and the world around them. We believe everyone has a story to tell and that stories can change lives, open minds, and boost happiness levels.

We do this all year round (yes that's right, we don't exist only in August) by running vibrant community projects in community centres, schools, libraries, hospitals, prisons, and care homes, to make sure everyone gets the chance to discover and celebrate their inner reader, writer, thinker or dreamer.

In 2024:

1,248

participants engaged with **181** creative community sessions

70%

attended **three or more** sessions

83%

said that they were **more likely to read** a book

78%

said they were **more likely to try something new**, as a direct result of taking part

100%

agreed our projects made them **feel more connected** to their community

86%

shared that they were **inspired to make new social connections**

And that's just the start. In 2025 we're launching a ground-breaking collaboration with five Edinburgh libraries, including the city's two new mobile libraries, to co-create projects, events, and resources in line with local community wants and needs.

We want to ensure that the Book Festival continues to exist for, and is accessible to, anyone with a curious mind. But we can't continue to serve those most in need without your help and support...

Our Communities programme is made possible by players of People's Postcode Lottery.



...and together we can enrich more lives

As a charity, we rely on gifts and donations from generous supporters to make the Festival possible – including our year-round work in schools and communities, and all the fun on offer on-site each August – as less than half our annual income is derived from ticket sales and public funding.

Want to help? There are a number of ways (both little and large) to support us, some of which give you a host of exciting benefits back in return.

Let's be Friends

Our Memberships offer ways to get more from the Festival with exclusive benefits for you to enjoy.

From just £60 a year, become our Friend and receive:

Advance booking:

Enjoy early access before general booking opens, to make sure you secure the tickets you want (limited to 2 tickets per event).

Private events:

You'll be invited to exclusive Member only events throughout the year.

Regular updates:

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£10

will support someone on a low income to attend a Festival event

£25

will enable a hospital patient or care home resident to take part in a group activity session with an author

£100

will help fund an emerging writer to attend the Festival

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

Ready to help?

Head to our **Support Us** webpage.

Scan here to visit:
edbookfest.co.uk/support-us





Sara Sheridan, 12:00-13:00



Jess Elliott Dennison, 13:00-16:00



Daniel Kehlmann, 13:30-14:30

Sat 9 – Sun 17 August
Words from the Wards:
The Exhibition

All day
The Gallery
Free Non-Ticketed

Last year, through our Words from the Wards project, we asked the people of Edinburgh to share stories about the former Royal Infirmary, to honour the experiences and memories that people connect with the building’s previous life. Following the success of the project, we worked with Edinburgh College of Art students to illustrate the collected stories. Join us to view the stories and illustrations side by side in our new festival gallery.

Katie Kitamura, Yiyun Li
& Mahmoud Muna:
The Case for Books

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

The freedom to write and sell books is fundamental to a democracy, so in these censorious times how best can we disagree without silencing? Here to talk it out robustly are *Audition* author **Katie Kitamura**, who’s spoken out against Trump’s attacks on language; novelist **Yiyun Li**, who’s written about self-censorship in China and online; and bookseller **Mahmoud Muna**, whose Educational Bookshop in Jerusalem was recently raided by the Israeli Army, accused of ‘disrupting order’ by selling books and educational material.

AI

Sara Sheridan: Feminism
on the High Seas

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

Beloved Scottish historical fiction writer **Sara Sheridan**’s latest novel is a swashbuckling rollick of feminist fervour and seductive suspense. From civil war-torn Brazil to Georgian London, you’ll be enchanted by the fierce heroine and enigmatic captain at the heart of *On Starlit Seas*. The author of *The Fair Botanists* (Waterstones Scottish Book of the Year 2022) talks today about combining creativity with history and diverse readings of historical facts.

BSL CC

Open House

12:15-13:15
Spiegeltent
Pay What You Can

You’re invited to our Open House! Bring your friends and join Festival director **Jenny Niven** as she takes you through highlights of the Festival: 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 be your helpful guide across the next two weeks. Join her in conversation with **Yassmin Abdel-Magied**.

AI

Have Lunch with
Jess Elliott Dennison

13:00-16:00
Elliott’s Studio
£100.00 [£90.00/£75.00]

We’re kicking off 2025’s lunch series with the founder of Elliott’s Studio herself: the effortlessly chic **Jess Elliott Dennison**. Her approach could be summed up as ‘good food, cooked simply’ - think crispy-edged kimchi and cheddar fritters, self-saucing chocolate puddings, vinegar-spiked baked baby potatoes with lashings of crème fraîche and comté cheese. Hear Elliott Dennison share her approachable attitude to food while she creates a sumptuous lunch from her newly launched cookbook, *Weekend Recipes*. *Ticket includes: a welcome snack and drink, and a generous lunch with drinks on the table.*

FD

Daniel Kehlmann:
From Dangerous Illusions

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

Hollywood to Nazi Germany, Garbo to Goebbels - *The Director* is **Daniel Kehlmann**’s imaginative take on the eminent 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 this chance to hear international star Kehlmann, distill his controversial, magnificent book - and his storied career.

AI



Freedom of Expression:
The Long View

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

The debate around freedom of expression feels more contested than ever. But the concept of freedom of expression in the arts is relatively recent, and it was only in 1968 that censorship of plays was abolished in Britain. Today’s event takes a long and wide view of this fragile artistic right, and how it can be protected today. Panellists include philosopher **Richard Sennett** and shadow culture secretary, **Thangam Debonnaire**.

AI

Close Read with Open Book:
Poetry and Repair

15:00-16:30
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Join **Marjorie Lotfi** and **Claire Urquhart** from Open Book, a charity organising shared reading and creative writing groups, as they lead a warm, lively discussion on a selection of poems that chime with our 2025 Festival theme of Repair. Explore language’s healing potential and how the act of creating poetry can salve deep emotional hurt. Reading materials will be provided, no preparation required.

Repair

Krystal Evans: From the Ashes

14:45-15:45
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Escaping the house fire which tragically killed your sister and left you with PTSD at the age of 14 might not seem an obvious basis for a stand-up show, but **Krystal Evans** managed exactly that with her award-nominated hour, and now debut book, *The Hottest Girl at Burn Camp*. Evans’ memoir shares how she went from the ashes of disaster to centre stage in a true story that’s dark, heartbreaking, inspiring, and hilarious (often all at once).

AI

Reverend Richard Coles:
Murder in the Parish

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

Reverend Richard Coles has lived many lives: pop star, priest, public figure, and now bestselling author of the Canon Clement Mysteries. In *A Death on Location*, the arrival of a glamorous movie set causes a stir around town, not least when a murder takes place during filming. Join Coles to find out what makes a former man of the cloth want to write about murder, and whether Canon Clement can solve this latest crime.

AI

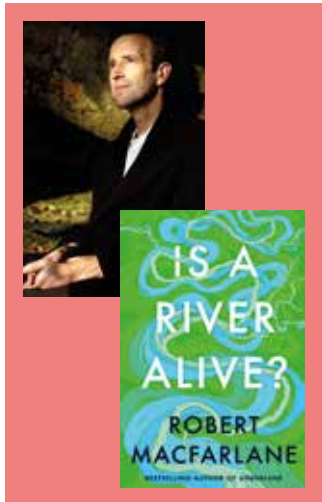


Krystal Evans, 14:45-15:45

Programme key

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

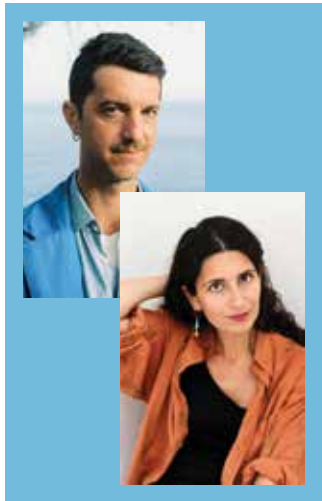
Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



Robert Macfarlane, 15:15-16:15



Linder & Marina Warner, 16:30-17:30



Vincenzo Latronico & Ayşegül Savaş, 17:00-18:00

THE WOODLAND TRUST SCOTLAND EVENT

Robert Macfarlane:
The Beinghood of Nature

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

Robert Macfarlane’s radiant writing on nature, people, and place is in a class unto itself, and the *Guardian* has slated *Is a River Alive?* as the biggest publishing event of 2025. This passionate, perspective-shifting treatise revives the idea that rivers are living beings and should be treated as such. Macfarlane will discuss ‘thirsty notebooks’, rivers as co-authors, and writing his most personal and political book to date.

AI

Repair

Emma Forrest & Emma Jane Unsworth: The Messy Glory of Youth

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

Emma Forrest’s *Father Figure* sketches a larger-than-life portrait of a smart, impulsive young woman as she embarks on an ill-advised affair with a school friend’s father. Meanwhile, in *Slags*, Emma Jane Unsworth’s fictional sisters take a whisky-fuelled roadtrip, trying to unpick the missteps of their teenage years. Join the authors of these gutsy, vivacious novels for a lively discussion with Nyla Ahmad on the fearless nature of obsession and the bruising reality of teenage infatuation.

AI

Loud Poets Grand Slam Final 2025

16:00-18:00
Courtyard Theatre
£10.00 [£5.00]

Returning for a third year, the highly anticipated Loud Poets Grand Slam Final promises to be a Festival highlight, combining music with fist-thumping, side-tickling poetry. Having qualified through a series of nationwide Slams, 12 poets compete for a £3,000 prize and the coveted title of Slam Champion. Hosted by Kevin Mclean with musical accompaniment from Jack Hinks, plus a special performance from last year’s winner, and this year’s sacrificial poet, EmmaClaire Brightlyn.

AI

Linder & Marina Warner: Gimme Danger

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

Linder is one of Britain’s great pop-culture provocateurs: a post-punk musician and widely exhibited photocollage artist (infamously on the sleeve of the Buzzcocks’ ‘Orgasm Addict’ single). Here she’ll collide in discussion with the great, Booker Prize-shortlisted feminist writer Marina Warner on subjects including feminism, fashion, fairytales, and her artistic obsession with the human body, building upon the release of the pair’s collaborative Linder retrospective, *Danger Came Smiling*. Chaired by Edinburgh Art Festival director Kim McAleese.

AI

Nell Zink: Grow Up, Get Old, Get Down

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

‘Her work insistently raises the possibility that the world is larger and stranger than the world you think you know,’ says Jonathan Franzen of Nell Zink. Today she joins us in Edinburgh, talking about *Sister Europe*: a worldly hangout novel of 21st century manners set against the backdrop of a hedonistic night out in Berlin. Today, join a novelist who’s increasingly known as one the sharpest satirists of our time.

AI

Vincenzo Latronico & Ayşegül Savaş: Modern Life Under the Microscope

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

Leading lights of international fiction Vincenzo Latronico and Ayşegül Savaş join us with two very different novels, both subjecting millennial couples and their lives to the microscope. Latronico’s International Booker-shortlisted *Perfection* delivers a scathing satire of aspirational consumerism, while Savas’ impeccable *The Anthropologists* is an intimate celebration of ordinary moments and watching life go by. Hear the authors talk about the modern pursuit of authenticity and how to live a meaningful life. Chaired by Adam Biles.

AI

Opening Gala: Repair

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

Celebrate the opening of this year’s Festival in this special Gala event. We’ll bring you a kaleidoscope of perspectives and provocations from a diverse line-up of stellar writers, including Najwan Darwish, Jenni Fagan, Amitav Ghosh, Rachel Kushner, and Cacica Juma Xipaia, as they each read a newly-commissioned piece of writing, responding to our 2025 theme of Repair. Hosted by Festival director Jenny Niven.

CC

Repair

Brian Chikwava & Alana S Portero: Becoming Who We Are

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

The paths we take to become who we are can separate us widely from our roots. In Alana S Portero’s *Bad Habit*, a nameless trans woman from working-class Madrid finds community in the city’s colourful underbelly. In Brian Chikwava’s *Shamiso*, the titular character leaves Zimbabwe for Brighton, falling in love with genderfluid Georgie. Hear the authors discuss their propulsive portraits with Jess Brough in a conversation that will leave your heart and mind blazing.

AI

Rowe Irvin, Florence Knapp & Roisín O’Donnell: Places of Refuge

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

We bring together three debut novelists whose new works have grasped the attention of readers and critics alike. Rowe Irvin (*Life Cycle of a Moth*), Florence Knapp (*The Names*), and Roisín O’Donnell (*Nesting*) each probe the boundaries of what home, family, and control mean. Ultimately they ponder the question: what are humans capable of? Join them for a conversation about the fraught and fragile times they are writing in, about, and around. Supported by Culture Ireland.

AI

Tash Aw & Alan Hollinghurst: Intimate Histories

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

One of our finest contemporary authors, Alan Hollinghurst’s *Our Evenings* spans half a century, following its protagonist from his school days to becoming an artist, as Britain transforms around him. Tash Aw’s *The South*, the first in a sweeping four-book series, tells of the longing that blooms between two boys as they and their families navigate great change. Two master novelists meet today for a spellbinding conversation.

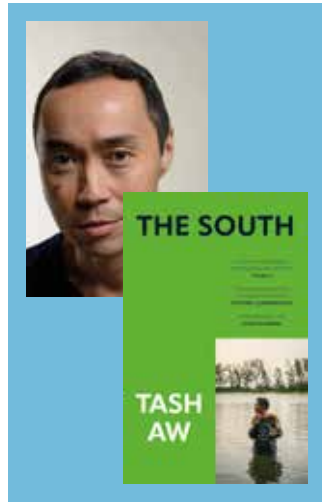
AI

Men with Pens

20:00-21:00
Venue B
Pay What You Can

Over the spring, award-winning poet, author and playwright Ross MacKay led a series of creative writing workshops for men living with mental health conditions. Working with groups at the AK Bell Library (Perth) and Granton Library (Edinburgh) the men were paired anonymously and exchanged letters over four months. This celebratory event brings together the participants for the first time to meet each other and share the writing that developed over the project.

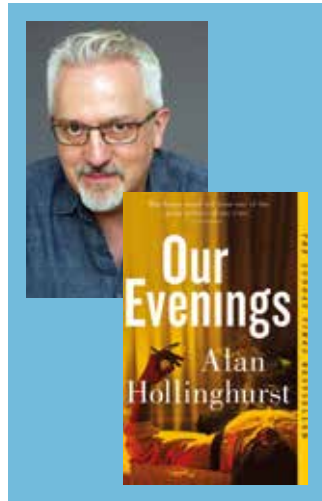
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Tash Aw, 19:30-20:30



Roisín O’Donnell, 18:45-19:45

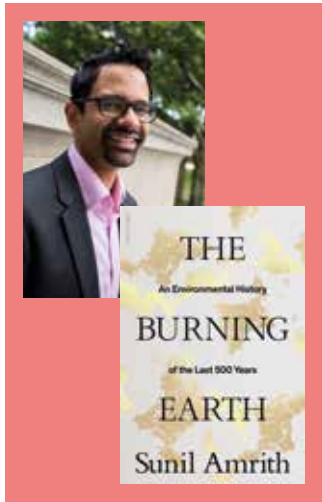


Alan Hollinghurst, 19:30-20:30

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



Sunil Amrith, 12:00-13:00



Olia Hercules, 10:30-11:30



Harry Josephine Giles,
14:00-15:30

Jonathan Watts: Dom Phillips' How to Save the Amazon

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

In 2022, while on a research trip for *How to Save the Amazon*, journalist Dom Phillips and Indigenous rights defender Bruno Pereira were murdered. In a show of solidarity, fuelled by their conviction that rigorous journalism must not be silenced, colleagues and supporters worked together to complete the book which tells the stories of rainforest defenders. Today we speak to **Jonathan Watts**, the *Guardian*'s global environment editor, to celebrate Phillips' life and work.

AI

Olia Hercules: A Taste of Ukrainian History

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

When Russia launched its most recent invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Ukrainian chef **Olia Hercules** decided it was finally time to tell her story. Yet her book, *Strong Roots*, reaches far beyond her own life span. It's by turns a memoir, a family history, a recipe guide, and an ode to Ukraine, brimming with grief and hope. Today she joins **Roxani Krystalli** to discuss the deep connection between food, resilience, and the idea of home.

AI

Sunil Amrith: The Burning Earth

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

In *The Burning Earth*, environmental historian at Yale University and MacArthur Genius fellow **Sunil Amrith** creates an ambitiously complete history of the way 500 years of human development has driven environmental change and destruction. From empires and their colonisation of the globe, coal mining to oil extraction, and the legacy of 20th century wars, he'll reveal today the full cost of the journey from there to here.

AI

Repair

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Katie Kitamura: Authenticity Unmasked

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

Shakespeare once wrote, 'All the world's a stage, and the men and women merely players'. We are all constantly playing roles: parent, child, partner, friend. So, who are we really? Join author of *Intimacies*, **Katie Kitamura**, as she discusses her hotly anticipated new novel, *Audition*, exploring what it means to truly know our authentic self and the different roles we play to the outside world. Chaired by **Adam Biles**.

AI

Gettin Stairtit wi Writin Scots: A Workshop with Harry Josephine Giles

14:00-15:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

In all its glorious forms, Scots is a rich and descriptive language - how can you make it your own? Today, Orcadian poet and novelist **Harry Josephine Giles** (*Deep Wheel Orcadia and Them!*) leads a series of exercises for folk looking for a way into working with Scots. Join in to open up the language, play games, learn words, and discover Scots anew. Suitable for anyone with a healthy beginner's mindset.

Thought Exercise: Deborah Baker

14:30-16:00
Venue B
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£5.00]

Dig deeper with our Thought Exercise series. Hear from experts on urgent issues of our time, then join in on the discussion during a wide-ranging, interactive exchange. Today's guest is Pulitzer Prize-finalist **Deborah Baker**, who - in *Charlottesville* - explores how a catastrophic weekend in August 2017 became emblematic for the fight for the soul of contemporary America. Together, participants will discuss the precariousness of democracy, how history repeats itself, and why resistance isn't just urgent - it can actually work.



Harriet Walter: Beyond The Bard

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

Harriet Walter has lived and breathed Shakespeare. Having brought many of his characters to sparkling life on stage, she knows them more intimately than most. *She Speaks!* is an audacious exercise of imagination and wit, where The Bard's female characters finally speak their minds. **Jackie Wylie** talks to Walter (renowned for her Oliver Award-winning stage performances, and her many screen appearances including *Succession* and *Killing Eve*) about what it's like to step into Shakespeare's shoes.

AI

Marina Warner: A Place of Sanctuary

14:45-15:45
Spiegeltent
£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 new 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.

AI

Something Sweet with Benjamina Ebuehi

15:00-18:00
Elliott's Studio
£85.00 [£78/£70]

A *Great British Bake Off* quarter-finalist at just 23, **Benjamina Ebuehi** has since stirred, whisked, and glazed her way to writing her third scrumptious cookbook, *I'll Bring Dessert*. A regular columnist for *Guardian Feast* and ambassador for social enterprise Luminary Bakery, don't miss Ebuehi at Elliott's Studio for this delicious, immersive afternoon of conversation and cake as she swaps baking secrets with us and proves that dessert is the best part of every meal. *Ticket includes a welcome snack and drink, and a generous spread of sweet treats with tea, coffee and plenty of fizz.*

UD



Benjamina Ebuehi, 15:00-18:00

Programme key

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

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned [LD] Learning Disability Friendly Formats: [O] Remote Appearance [O] Outdoor [A] Active [UD] Food & Drink



Nell Zink & Nicola Barker:
Our Big, Strange World

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

Great comic novels remind us that the world is bigger and weirder than we think. **Camilla Grudova** joins two modern virtuosos of this enduring form: **Nell Zink** and **Nicola Barker**. Zink’s *Sister Europe* takes us on a rambunctious, hedonistic tour of Berlin; Barker’s *TonyInterruptor* pursues the truth of the titular disruptor. Both will remind you that fringe behaviour has much to say about us all - that’s the crux of the comic spirit.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Abdulrazak Gurnah: Coming
of Age During Global Change

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

Winner of the 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature for ‘his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fate of the refugee’, it’s an honour to welcome **Abdulrazak Gurnah** to the Festival to discuss his latest novel, *Theft*. Writing on three experiences of young adulthood in 1990s Zanzibar, Gurnah brings us a coming-of-age tale that digs deep into the meaning of hope, change, and possibility in postcolonial East Africa.

LD AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Najwan Darwish:
Poems for Palestine

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Najwan Darwish’s lyrical and pulsating poetry has never been more relevant. His collection, *No One Will Know You Tomorrow*, draws from five volumes published in Arabic, here translated into English, alongside new work, to showcase the horror of living in a war-torn land, while shining a light on the beauty of the Palestinian landscape. Hear Darwish - described as one of the foremost contemporary Arab poets - discuss what it means to survive, how to avoid bring desensitised by conflict, and the incredible tenacity of the human spirit. Chaired by **Marjorie Lotfi**.

AI

Uilleam Blacker &
Olesya Khromeychuk:
The Ukraine Shelf

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

As the war in Ukraine continues, *The Ukraine Shelf* podcast brings together leading authors, scholars, and journalists for lively and informed discussions about what we should be reading to better understand Ukraine and its place in the world during this crucial period. This special live edition is hosted by the podcast’s creators **Olesya Khromeychuk** (author *The Death of a Soldier Told By His Sister* and director of the Ukraine Institute London) and literary translator and Ukraine scholar, **Uilleam Blacker**.

AI

Poppy Okotcha & Kathy Slack:
Repair – Gardens and Beings

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

The theme for this year’s Festival is Repair, and in a world seeking restoration, **Poppy Okotcha** and **Kathy Slack** offer a path towards healing through the garden. In both *A Wilder Way* and *Rough Patch*, they delve into the transformative power of regenerative practices, from nurturing soil to fostering community. With **Leonie Bell**, they discuss how tending to the Earth cultivates repair within ourselves, and the opportunity to reconnect with the wider world.

AI

Repair

Natasha Brown & Hari Kunzru:
Fiction for a Fractured World

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

Natasha Brown and **Hari Kunzru** certainly don’t shy away from the creeping anxiety of our times in their latest books. In *Universality* and *Blue Ruin*, they each grapple with big ideas about beauty, power, and capitalism and, today, they join **Chitra Ramaswamy** to unpack these themes. Come along for a compelling discussion between two incisive minds on the complex power dynamics in our rapidly changing world.

AI

Yiyun Li: A New Alphabet,
A New Vocabulary

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

How do we coexist with unimaginable loss? **Yiyun Li** is one of our most important authors, whose life has been touched by unthinkable tragedy. In *Things in Nature Merely Grow*, she uses her astonishing gifts as a writer to process the suicides of her two teenage sons. In this impactful conversation she’ll reflect on finding words to say the difficult things, how grief transforms time, and the power of the verb ‘to be’.

AI

THE WATER WITNESS EVENT

Should Rivers Be Afforded
Personhood?

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Around the world, a growing movement seeks to protect rivers by declaring them living beings entitled to fundamental rights. With her petition to grant legal personhood to the Clyde, novelist **Louise Welsh** brought this campaign to Scotland. She’s joined by **Robert Macfarlane**, whose latest book is a passionate treatise supporting this idea, and **Monica Feria-Tinta**, the pioneering barrister at the forefront of the climate justice movement. This vital, perspective-shifting panel - a cornerstone of our Repair theme - is chaired by *Guardian* environmental editor, **Jonathan Watts**.

BSL CC

Repair

Queerly Beloved

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

We are gathered here today, under the canvas of the Spiegeltent, to celebrate queer lives, voices, and literature! Join **Kirsty Logan** as she chats to a warm and lively panel of queer writers, including **Harry Josephine Giles** and **Alan Hollinghurst**, as they share the books which inspired them as writers, the stories they wish they could have read sooner, and why it matters so much to see your experiences represented in the culture you consume. Check our website for the full panel line-up.

CC

Rose Keating & So Mayer:
Beyond Reality

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

Everything is not as it seems in **Rose Keating** and **So Mayer**’s unique and lively new short story collections. Keating’s *Oddbody* is bold and unsettling, confronting themes of desire, fear and shame. Mayer’s *Truth & Dare* is a queer and propulsive tour through what was, what is, and what could have been. Join them for a discussion with **Sasha de Buyl** about their playful, provocative forms, storytelling, and bringing fresh new perspectives to the human condition. *Supported by Culture Ireland*.

AI

Guadalupe Nettel
& Ayşegül Savaş:
The Extraordinary Ordinary

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

The art of the story is to say much with less, and today **Roxani Krystalli** talks to the authors of two perceptive new collections speaking volumes. Both **Guadalupe Nettel**’s *The Accidentals* and **Ayşegül Savaş**’ *Long Distance* mine contemporary life and relationships to bring us electrifying stories of connection and disconnection, the familiar and the strange. Hear these luminous talents (and friends!) talk about what preoccupies them as writers and their shared eye for precision.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Rachel Kushner: Profound
and Wickedly Entertaining

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Rachel Kushner has called writing her Booker Prize-shortlisted novel *Creation Lake* ‘the most fun I’ve ever had in my life’. Meet Sadie Smith, a sardonic, 30-something spy-for-hire sent to infiltrate a gang of radical eco-activists whose leader lives in a cave. But beneath this parodic spy novel lies a profound treatise on human history. Kushner talks with us about reinventing the espionage novel, her obsession with Neanderthal genetics, and the shortcomings of modern man.

AI



Abdulrazak Gurnah, 15:15-16:15



Yiyun Li, 17:00-18:00



Rachel Kushner, 19:30-20:30

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

Philippe Sands: Bringing Evil to Justice

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

Philippe Sands’ career as a leading international lawyer has been complemented by his writing, not least his 2016 Baillie Gifford Prize-winner, *East West Street*. *38 Londres Street* is another fine example of his singular blend of memoir, travelogue, detective story, and courtroom drama, this time focusing on Sands’ experiences working for the prosecution of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet and the investigation into an exiled Nazi with ties to Pinochet’s regime. Chaired by **Gavin Francis**.

📺 AI



Michael Amherst & John Patrick McHugh: Growing Up

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

There are as many boyhoods and young-man-hoods as there are boys and young men, each distinct and complex; today we meet the chroniclers of two. With the quietly devastating *The Boyhood of Cain*, **Michael Amherst** charts the first painful rite of passage: from boy to adolescent. And with the darkly comic *Fun and Games*, **John Patrick McHugh** charts the second: from adolescence to manhood. Expect discussion of alternative masculinities of sensitivity, honesty, and frailty. *Supported by Culture Ireland*.

AI

David Baddiel: A Family Affair

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

My Family: The Memoir sees writer, comedian, and documentarian **David Baddiel** adapt his hit stand-up show into prose. It’s a frank, very funny look at his middle-class Jewish upbringing in London, including his mother’s decades-long affair with a golfing memorabilia salesman and the poignancy of his father’s dementia. The *Guardian* says the book ‘engagingly overshares’ - expect much more of that and Baddiel’s familiar wit in this energetic conversation.

📺 AI

1995: Grrrls Aloud

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

Murrayfield might be basking in Oasis nostalgia, but the mid-90s wasn’t all blokes and Britpop. Join BBC broadcaster and *A Kick Up the Arts* host **Nicola Meighan** for a celebration of Scotland’s femme-powered revolution, circa ‘95. **Emma Pollock** (Delgados/Chemikal Underground) reflects on that time and its reverberations alongside writers **Carrie Marshall**, **Chitra Ramaswamy**, and theatre livewire **Cora Bissett**, soundtracked by a fired-up playlist, with live music from Hen Hoose Collective’s **Cariss Crosbie**. What’s the story? Oh, there’s always more than one...

AI

Thought Exercise: John Kay

10:15-11:45
Venue B
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£5.00]

Dig deeper with our Thought Exercise series. Hear from experts on urgent issues of our time, then join in on the discussion during a wide-ranging, interactive exchange. Today’s guest is leading British economist **John Kay**, sharing his incisive and provocative new book, *The Corporation in the 21st Century*. Together, discuss how we might redefine what successful commercial activity and leadership looks like, and how businesses can - and do - add value to society.

Olesya Khromeychuk & Jen Stout: Remembering Victoria Amelina

10:45-11:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Victoria Amelina was a Ukrainian novelist, literary festival curator, and, following Russia’s invasion, a war crimes investigator. Halfway through writing her non-fiction account of the war, Amelina was wounded in a Russian missile attack - days later, she died of her injuries. In the aftermath, writers and friends came together to edit and assemble her manuscript, *Looking at Women Looking at War*. Today, in conversation with **Roxani Krystalli**, **Olesya Khromeychuk** and **Jen Stout** pay moving tribute to Amelina’s extraordinary life and legacy.

AI

Repair

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.

Devi Sridhar: Health For All

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

What’s the key to a longer, healthier life? Is the answer in self-help books and disciplined individual optimisation, or should we be holding governments to account for their policies on everything from pandemic preparedness to water treatment? Edinburgh University’s Personal Chair of Global Health **Devi Sridhar** (who became a household name during the pandemic), believes it’s the latter, as she makes clear in today’s no-nonsense conversation about *How Not to Die (Too Soon)*. Chaired by **Isabel Hardman**.

📺 AI

Leila Aboulela & Karen Campbell: Watch Me Begin Again

11:30-12:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

What would you do if you were given a second chance? An opportunity to start again and do things differently? **Leila Aboulela**’s *A New Year* and **Karen Campbell**’s *This Bright Life* explore what happens when we are forced to rebuild our lives. Join us for this heartwarming event celebrating the Festival’s theme of Repair.

AI

Repair

Joe Dunthorne: The Other Side of the Story

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

Cult writer **Joe Dunthorne** has an eye and ear for life’s absurdity; in *Children of Radium*, he’s finely tuned to his own. Setting out to write about his difficult-to-impress Edinburgh grandmother’s escape from the Nazis, he began his research by finally reading the unpublished 2,000-page memoir by his great-grandfather: inventor of radioactive toothpaste, WWII refugee, and, as Dunthorne found, much, much more. With humour and insight, Dunthorne talks to **Andrew O’Hagan** about a family memoir like no other.

AI



Cacica Juma Xipaia, 12:15-13:15

Cacica Juma Xipaia: Standing Up

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

At just 24, **Cacica Juma Xipaia** became the Middle Xingu region’s first female Chief, but when she uncovered government corruption in 2017, she was forced to flee Brazil. Xipaia later became the first Xipaya representative to speak at the United Nations, going on to establish Instituto Juma which campaigns for the protection of the rainforest and the autonomy of Indigenous peoples. We’re honoured to welcome this inspiring leader today, talking about her fight against environmental devastation and for the rights of her people.

AI

Repair

Hallie Rubenhold: Not Just Victims

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

Medical fraudsters, fevered manhunts, sudden disappearances - the infamous true story of an Edwardian crime comes to life in *Story of a Murder: The Wives, the Mistress and Dr Crippen*. **Hallie Rubenhold** (bestselling author of *The Five: The Untold Lives of the Women Killed by Jack the Ripper*) is a virtuoso in giving voice to women ignored by history. Talking with **Val McDermid**, she discusses her project to restore female figures to their rightful place.

📺 BSL CC

Programme key

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

Access: 📺 Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance 🌿 Outdoor 🗣️ Active 🍽️ Food & Drink



Daisy Buchanan & Hattie Crisell: Shelf-Help

13:15-14:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Hit podcasters **Daisy Buchanan** and **Hattie Crisell** bring us two must-read books shining a light on the wonderful world of reading and creativity. Crissell's *In Writing* is a perceptive and smart insider's guide to the creative process, while Buchanan's *Read Yourself Happy* is a thoughtful handbook for alleviating anxiety through reading. In this brilliantly bookish event, the authors share some of the wise, funny, and reassuring insights their volumes contain.

AI

Repair

Nick Makoha: Making Myth a Reality

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

'Like Dante entering hell through a rip in the universe, Makoha enters history.' So wrote the *Guardian* about **Nick Makoha**, winner of the Ivan Juritz and Poetry London Prizes. He joins us to discuss how his latest collection was partly inspired by his time as poet-in-residence at the ICA in London, the 'exploded' collages of Jean-Michel Basquiat, his own childhood escape from Idi Amin's Uganda, and the myth of Icarus.

AI

Ulrike Herrman, Emma Holten & Cahal Moran: The True Cost of Capitalism

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

What does an economic system stacked against most of its users and the planet itself reveal about what we most value? Dig into this thorny topic with journalist, broadcaster, and former banker, **Ulrike Herrman** (*The End of Capitalism*); activist and gender policy consultant **Emma Holten** (*Deficit*); and economist and host of the *Unlearning Economics* YouTube channel, **Cahal Moran** (*Why We're Getting Poorer*). They come together for an eye-opening conversation that will educate, enrage, and - most importantly - inspire.

AI

Rachel Cockerell & Joe Dunthorne: Comparing Notes

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

Rachel Cockerell (*Melting Point*) and **Joe Dunthorne** (*Children of Radium*) have written two of the most surprising and inventive family memoirs in memory, through resourcing and reference, eyewitness testimony, and following their noses. Both found non-traditional paths to telling their stories (Cockerell by cutting out her own words, and Dunthorne by reading a 2,000-page memoir by his grandfather). Hear them chat about their innovative accounts and methods of uncovering.

AI

Deborah Baker, Gabriel Gatehouse & Leor Zmigrod: Against Misinformation

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

With the US Capitol attack, the Charlottesville riots, and far-right ideology infiltrating the media, should we - indeed, could we - have seen things coming? In a modernity that often feels like a frightening maelstrom of disinformation, conspiracy theories, and dark impulses, if ever a conversation could be described as urgent - this is it. Today we interrogate this far-reaching topic with authors **Deborah Baker** (*Charlottesville*), **Gabriel Gatehouse** (*The Coming Storm*), and **Leor Zmigrod** (*The Ideological Brain*).

AI

Rachel Kushner & James Rebanks: These Days

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

Sometimes writers share a commonality of genre or style. Sometimes they share a passion for one another's work. So it is with **James Rebanks** (*The Place of Tides*) and **Rachel Kushner** (*Creation Lake*), who come together today to discuss being inspired by their unconventional origins, and the challenges and revelations of writing about contemporary society in the context of what's gone before, in both the US and UK.

AI

Julie Farrell, Elizabeth Kellingley & Cat Mitchell: Towards an Inclusive Future

16:45-17:45
Venue NW
Pay What You Can

Diversity and inclusion are hot topics, but are we making headway or is it lip service? Author and Inklusion Guide co-founder, **Julie Farrell**, senior Publishing lecturer at the University of Derby, **Cat Mitchell**, and **Elizabeth Kellingley**, access manager at Bloomsbury discuss the impact of their collective disability activism on authors, readers, employees, and organisations. Join them to hear about the creation of the new UK Disability Network and their exciting plans for an inclusive future.

AI

Paula Akpan: Histories Rewritten

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

You might think you know your queens, but what about Queen Nzinga of Ndongo and Matamba and her brilliant military tactics? Maybe Makobo Modjadji VI, Rain Queen of Balobedu? Or Ranavalona I, Queen of Madagascar (and ruthless dictator)? Join *When We Ruled* author **Paula Akpan** as she shares the gripping stories of twelve African queens and warriors. Some were brave and noble, others unpredictable and volatile, but all shaped the African continent - so why don't we all know their names?

AI



Monica Feria-Tinta: Litigating for Mother Nature

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

If corporations can have legal rights, why shouldn't nature? Meet the pioneering British-Peruvian lawyer at the forefront of the climate justice movement: **Monica Feria-Tinta**. In *A Barrister for the Earth*, she unravels her most inspiring successes helping ordinary people hold the biggest perpetrators of environmental damage to account. She talks with us today about the groundbreaking potential of these new legal frameworks to help repair the relationship between people and the planet.

AI

Repair



Mahmoud Muna & Matthew Teller: This Is Gaza

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

Today, **Mahmoud Muna** and **Matthew Teller** join us to discuss *Daybreak in Gaza*, an anthology they have co-edited which illuminates in vivid detail the extraordinary individuals, meaningful places, and incredible richness of a people, culture, and heritage undergoing traumatic devastation. Through vignettes of writers and artists, but also farmers, doctors, students, athletes, shopkeepers and teachers, *Daybreak in Gaza* offers unforgettable stories of hope, life, loss, and survival, and of communities determined to resist and prevail. This is Gaza, evoked by the voices of the people of Gaza themselves.

AI

Our Mother Tongues

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

To celebrate his inaugural year as Makar, **Peter Mackay** brings together poets working in Scotland today who showcase the range of languages being spoken and written in across the country. From English to Gaelic and from Polish to Arabic (and beyond!), this special event will weave together a tapestry of multi-language poetry, featuring performances from: **Colin Bramwell**, **Roshni Gallagher**, **Niall O'Gallagher**, **Andrés N Ordorica**, **Anne Pia**, and **Gabriela Milkova Robins**.

AI

Carrie Marshall & Gary West: God Save the Scene

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

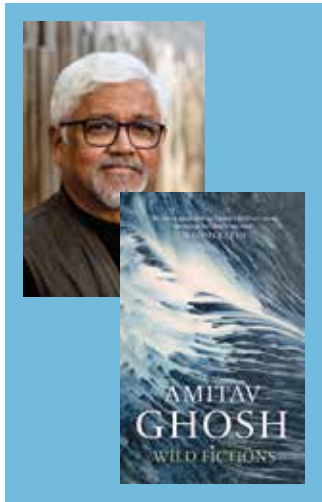
In this energising conversation, we bring together the authors of two fascinating books on Scotland's radical music past. *Scotsman* Book of the Year-winner **Carrie Marshall** shares *Small Town Joy*, unpacking how LGBTQ+ artists changed Scotland's soundtrack and celebrating the music that opened minds. Meanwhile, ethnologist and piper **Gary West** discusses *Brave New Music*, about the late Martyn Bennett whose blend of tradition and technology created an audacious new sound that was uniquely his own.

AI

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



Amitav Ghosh, 20:30-21:30

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND EVENT

Gabriel Gatehouse:
The Conspiracy That Could
Bring Down Democracy

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

Conspiracy theories are a scourge of online life, but how have they been weaponised to distort reality for political gain? *BBC Newsnight*'s former international editor, **Gabriel Gatehouse**, was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize for Journalism and won a Broadcasting Press Guild award for his *The Coming Storm* podcast, which goes down the rabbit hole of conspiracies upending US politics, and became a vital book. He talks to Festival director **Jenny Niven** about the threat technology poses to democracy itself.

📺 AI

Together We Repair

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

We believe that everyone has a story to tell and that stories help us make sense of our world. We've challenged local writers and poets, this year, to respond to 2025's Festival theme: Repair. Join us as we bring them together to perform their work: a patchwork of ideas on how to make the world a better place. Check our website for today's line up.

AI

Repair

The Art of Asking: A Workshop
with Hattie Crisell

19:30-20:30
Venue A
£25.00 [£23.00/£18.00/£5.00]

Hone your interview skills with *In Writing* podcast host and author **Hattie Crisell** as she shares what she's learnt from six years of interviewing writers, and many more besides, in journalism. Whether you're researching a novel or hosting a live event, find out how to build an unmissable conversation, when to ask difficult questions, how to sensitively navigate someone else's story, and where the line lies between controlling an interview and allowing surprises to unfold.

Steve Crawshaw
& Philippe Sands:
Prosecuting the Powerful

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Is justice possible when war crimes have been committed? Should retribution, reconciliation, or something else be the goal? Two leading authors discuss this tense subject from their own experience. Writer and international lawyer **Philippe Sands KC** represented Palestine at the International Court of Justice in recent key rulings, while as a former journalist and UK director of Human Rights Watch, **Steve Crawshaw** reports in *Prosecuting the Powerful* on the history of putting national leaders on trial.

AI

Repair

Stress Test – Live

20:00-21:30
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A highlight of our annual programme, Stress Test (created by writers **Joe Dunthorne** and **Ella Frears**) sees poets and musicians join forces to create a brand-new song in front of your very eyes and ears... in just 15 minutes! It might result in an absolute banger, or things could go completely off-piste - it's all up to that mysterious muse. But what is guaranteed is a fun and fascinating hour of witnessing creativity in action. See our website for the special guest.

Stories and Scran

20:15-21:30
Venue NW
Pay What You Can

Stories and Scran celebrates the dynamic and thought-provoking work created by communities across Edinburgh and beyond. Expect diverse and creative talent from the Book Festival's own **Adults Writing Group** and **Citizen Collective**, plus a special performance from Dance Base's Prime Elders Dance Company. And **Scran Academy** are back to serve up a delicious, sweet treat you can enjoy during the event.

AI

THE BRITISH ACADEMY EVENT

Amitav Ghosh:
The Spaces We Inhabit

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

Best known for his *Ibis* trilogy, **Amitav Ghosh** is a colossus of postcolonial literature. Today, the venerated writer joins us to discuss *Wild Fictions*, an extraordinary collection of his writing from the last 25 years. Covering a sweeping gamut of urgent and compelling themes relating to the ways in which we understand and interact with our world, this is a conversation not to be missed.

📺 CC

Michael Pedersen, Hollie McNish, Gordon Buchanan & Lomond Campbell:
Dynamic Earth

20:30-21:30
Dynamic Earth
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Beholding the vastness of space can help put our planet and its challenges into perspective, allowing room for hope. Join us under the stars in Dynamic Earth's breathtaking planetarium to celebrate our world, and look towards its future in poetry, imagery, and music in a truly out-of-this-world event hosted by Edinburgh Makar **Michael Pedersen**. Guests include poet **Hollie McNish**, wildlife photographer **Gordon Buchanan**, and BAFTA winning musician **Lomond Campbell**.

First Edition:
We Are Not Numbers

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

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, and trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is, so in our First Edition events you can 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 Palestinian journalist **Ahmed Alnaouq**, co-founder and director of We Are Not Numbers.

AI

Sue Lawrence:
Secrets Unearthed

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

We're delighted to welcome prolific cookery writer, novelist, and journalist **Sue Lawrence** back with her latest enthralling historical novel, *Whispers in the Glen*. Set across both World Wars, sisters Effie and Nell love each other dearly, but when a plane carrying British and Canadian soldiers crashes in their village, how far will they will go to keep secrets hidden from each other? Join Lawrence as she delves into this captivating story today.

AI

Close Read with Open Book:
The Stories of Ali Smith

11:00-12:30
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Join **Marjorie Lotfi** and **Claire Urquhart** from Open Book, a charity organising shared reading and creative writing groups, as they lead a warm, lively discussion on the short stories of Ali Smith, a writer the *Observer* has described as 'Scotland's Nobel Laureate-in-waiting'. Reading materials will be provided, no preparation required.

Roland Allen & Hattie Crisell:
The Writer and the Page

11:30-12:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two authors compare notes today on the act of writing. **Roland Allen's** *The Notebook* deep dives into the history of this humble invention, providing a tantalising glimpse into the privately recorded thoughts of some of history's finest intellects. Meanwhile, **Hattie Crisell's** *In Writing* uncovers the mysteries of the creative process through interviews with our most-read contemporary writers. What does this human desire to put words down tell us about ourselves?

AI

Thought Exercise:
Barbara Demick

12:00-13:30
Venue B
£30 [£27.00/£20.00/£5.00]

Dig deeper with our Thought Exercise series. Hear from experts on urgent issues of our time, then join in on the discussion during a wide-ranging, interactive exchange. Today's guest is multi-award-winning journalist, **Barbara Demick** (*Nothing to Envy*, *Daughters of the Bamboo Grove*), who has extensive experience covering authoritarian regimes in China and North Korea, and the unfolding political situation in America under Trump. Together, discuss how the rise of authoritarianism makes journalists' role of providing good information both more perilous - and crucial.

Fresh Words: The Kavya Prize

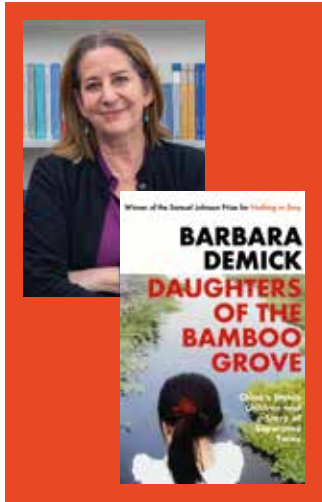
12:00-13:00
Spiegeltent
Pay What You Can

It's lunchtime, and (hallelujah!) there's no need to doomscroll over a sad desk salad. Be the first to discover the literary stars of the future, instead. In partnership with Scottish Book Trust and other leading talent spotters across the UK, this lively lunchtime event showcases electrifying new voices, so grab your seat before everyone else does. Today, we partner with The Kavya Prize, hearing from writers including 2023 prize winner **Jinling Wu** and shortlisted author **Samina Chaudry**.

AI



Sue Lawrence, 10:30-11:30



Barbara Demick, 12:00-13:30

Programme key

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

Access: 📺 Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | CC Live Captioned | AI AI Captioned | LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance | 🌳 Outdoor | 🗣️ Active | 🍽️ Food & Drink



Dawn O’Porter: Friendship Forever

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

Growing up in Guernsey had a deep impact on *Sunday Times* bestseller **Dawn O’Porter**, with island life seeping into her writing. In *Honeybee* - the third of her Renée and Flo novels - the childhood friends, now in their early 20s, return to Guernsey to face their past and work out what being an adult really means. Join O’Porter today for a lively chat about friendship, islanders, and those heady years of early adulthood. Chaired by **Denise Mina**.

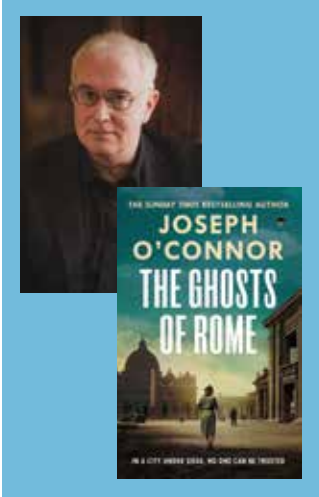


Translating Poetry: A Workshop with Peter Mackay

13:30-14:30
Venue A
£25.00 [£23.00/£18.00/£5.00]

This workshop with Scotland’s Makar, **Peter Mackay** (Pàdraig MacAoidh), is a playful exploration of translation (especially of poetry) and the kinds of practical, ethical, and comedic difficulties that arise: false friends, disappearing cases, and the nightmare of rhyme. Together you’ll draw on examples from different languages, including Gaelic, and be encouraged to speak from your own background. No translation experience necessary.

Tuesday 12



Joseph O'Connor, 12:15-13:15

From There to Here: A Table Talk with Diana Henry

12:00-13:30
Elliott’s Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

One of the UK’s best-loved food writers, **Diana Henry** (author of *How to Eat a Peach* and *A Bird in the Hand*, among many beloved *Telegraph* features) joins us with a new edition of the cookbook that started it all: *Crazy Water, Pickled Lemons*. Hear her share stories with *Times* restaurant critic **Chitra Ramaswamy**, unpacking the aromatic Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and North African dishes that inspired the book - which you can sample yourself today. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*



Joseph O’Connor: Beleaguered City

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

International award-winning author **Joseph O’Connor** returns to the Festival with the next novel in his thrilling, historical *Rome Escape Line* series. In *The Ghosts of Rome*, the activists are on a mission to smuggle refugees to safety, until their work is compromised by the arrival of a mysterious parachutist - is he an ally or an imposter? O’Connor joins us to discuss his brilliant career as one of Ireland’s most prolific historical novelists. *Supported by Culture Ireland.*



Conn Iggulden: Return to Rome

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

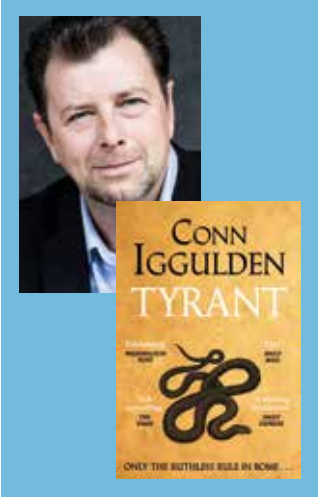
As British Book Award-winner and the first person to top the UK fiction and non-fiction charts at the same time, **Conn Iggulden** is a superstar of historical writing. *Tyrant*, his latest novel in the bestselling *Nero* trilogy, returns to ancient Rome to find newly crowned Emperor Nero defending his position by becoming the most feared ruler in Roman history. Join us today to hear how Iggulden interweaves fiction with fact to create page-turning stories.



James Rebanks: Living on the Edge

13:15-14:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

With his much-loved autobiographical works *A Shepherd’s Life* and *English Pastoral*, Cumbrian sheep farmer **James Rebanks** has given us a new, deeply personal perspective on working life amid the English countryside. Talking today about his quietly profound *The Place of Tides*, Rebanks takes us to the Vega archipelago off the north coast of Norway, and a season spent learning lessons in self-sufficiency from an elderly woman living at the edge of the world. Chaired by **Caroline Eden**.



Conn Iggulden, 12:45-13:45

Tuesday 12

Programme key

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

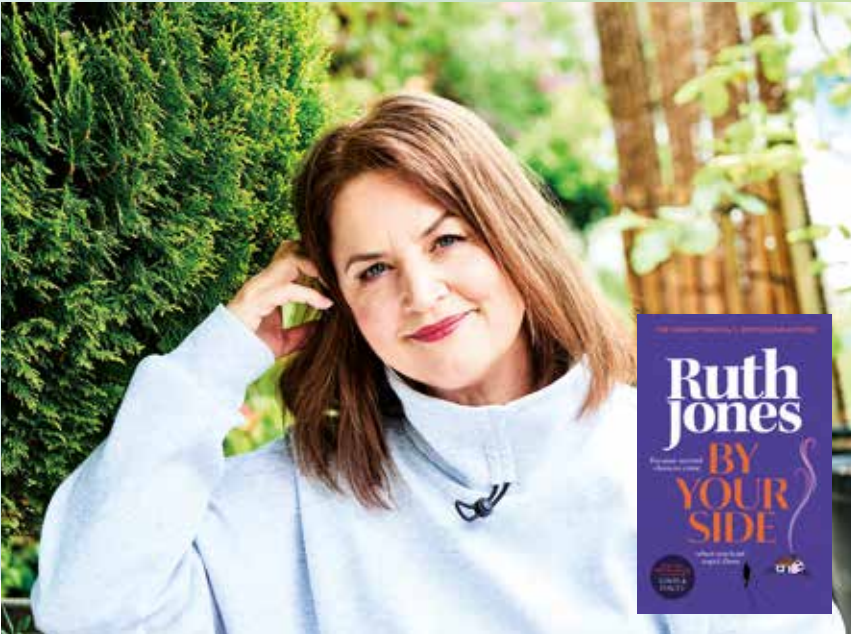
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Formats: [R] Remote Appearance [O] Outdoor [A] Active [FD] Food & Drink

The Front List: Ruth Jones

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Co-creator of beloved sitcom *Gavin and Stacey* (and acting force behind the iconic Nessa), **Ruth Jones** knows the power of a great story. The actor, writer, and comedian has perfected the art of telling beautiful tales packed with complex characters and gripping plots. But how does she make audiences cry with laughter one moment, and weep with empathy the next? Find out as Jones discusses both her writing craft and uplifting new novel, *By Your Side*.

LD BSL CC



HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Liu Zhenyun:
Behind the Mask of Humour

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

‘The Chinese attitude towards tragedy is a little unusual: it’s humorous, it’s forgetful. We make it into comedy.’ This is how **Liu Zhenyun**, one of China’s finest and most decorated writers, accounts for the humour in his work. His celebrated works include *I Am Not Madame Bovary* and *One Day Three Autumns*, each renowned for their cultural and philosophical significance. Today, he’ll discuss his exquisite analyses of Chinese society with **Lijia Zhang**.

AI

Joseph Jebelli:
We Need to Calm Down

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

When was the last time you stopped to rest and just let your mind wander? Well, if you need any encouragement to do that more, come hear neuroscientist **Joseph Jebelli** discussing the findings of his latest book, *The Brain at Rest*. By deftly blending science with personal stories and practical tips, Jebelli unpacks how resting can have profound implications on just about everything - from creativity to life expectancy. Sign us up! *Supported by the Jasmine Foundation*.

AI

Sam Dalrymple:
The Legacy of Partition

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

Filmmaker and historian of the global south **Sam Dalrymple** has responded to 1947’s partition of India and Pakistan by co-founding Project Dastaan, which uses VR technology to connect displaced families with the villages of their roots. His first book, *Shattered Lands*, goes even further, examining five key partitions which broke up the enormous Asian territory formerly known as the Indian Empire. Join him today for an insightful conversation about the complex history and geopolitics of Asia. Chaired by **Anita Anand**.

AI

Stig Abell:
Letters from a Murderer

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

Archaeology is the art of revealing and discovering human history so we can learn and grow into the future. But sometimes, things are meant to stay buried and remain lost beneath the earth’s surface. A love letter to the crime genre, *The Burial Place* explores what happens when a retired city detective, a group of archaeologists, and a murderer descend upon a small idyllic town. Writer and broadcaster **Stig Abell**’s event is for crime lovers everywhere.

LD AI

Diana Henry: A Life in Food

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

Diana Henry is one of the UK’s best loved food writers, celebrated for her vivid, nourishing essays and cookbooks. Henry has plentiful stories to share from over two decades travelling, writing, and, most importantly, eating her way across the globe, from the suburbs of Rome to the hillsides of Vermont. Reflecting on *Crazy Water*, *Pickled Lemons*, join this warm, inspiring conversation, chaired by **Marjorie Lotfi**, about the joy and power of good food. *Supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart*.

AI

The Adventure of
Fermentation: A Table Talk
with Kenji Morimoto

15:30-17:00
Elliott’s Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

If you didn’t know the world of fermentation and food preservation could be fascinating, downright delicious and, well, mind-bendingly cool, chances are you’ve never come across **Kenji Morimoto** or his new cookbook, *Ferment*. Get down to Elliott’s to see this fermenting guru in action as he talks with **Candice Chung**, sharing stories and tips on how to fold the ancient technique of food preservation and flavour into your everyday cooking - then taste for yourself what he’s created. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster*.

LD

Esther García Llovet & Rosa Ribas: Queens of Spanish Noir

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

Esther García Llovet’s *Spanish Beauty* follows a magnetic police officer - born of an English gangster father and flamenco dancing mother - with a rather unorthodox relationship to the law. And in *Far*, **Rosa Ribas** tells the atmospheric story of two conflicting communities living within, and creeping towards, an unfinished luxury living development. Join two of Spain’s most exciting contemporary writers to discover how, even in the blazing Spanish sun, they’ve found dark corners for secrets to lurk within.

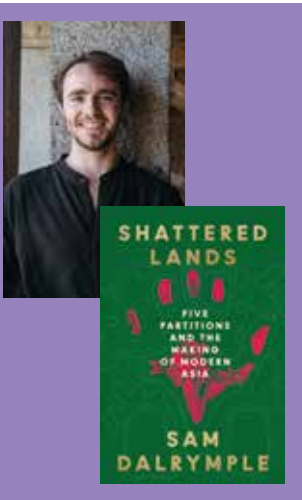
AI

Caroline Eden & Monisha Rajesh:
The Track Less Travelled

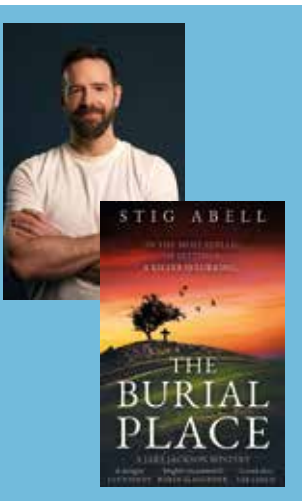
16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

All aboard for two globe-spanning journeys! *Cold Kitchen* author **Caroline Eden** returns to the Festival with *Green Mountains*, tasting her way from Armenia, across Georgia, and ending at the Black Sea. Meanwhile, *Around the World in 80 Trains* author **Monisha Rajesh** continues her travels in *Moonlight Express*, this time travelling by sleepers through Norway, Peru, and Pakistan. The authors discuss their wondrous travelogues and what they learned along the way with **Dan Richards**.

AI



Sam Dalrymple, 15:00-16:00



Stig Abell, 15:00-16:00



Diana Henry, 15:30-16:30



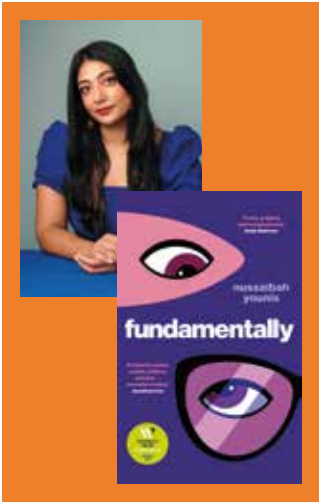
Programme key

Themes: Brilliant Fiction The Front List Good Information New World Orders Brainwaves How to Live a Meaningful Life
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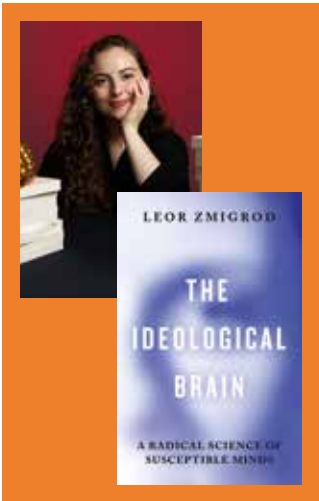
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Isabel Allende, 17:00-18:00



Nussaibah Younis, 16:45-17:45



Leor Zmigrod, 16:45-17:45

Nussaibah Younis & Leor Zmigrod: The Science (and Art) of Radicalisation

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

What goes on in a fundamentalist's head? The authors of two very different books try to answer this question today. In *The Ideological Brain*, award-winning writer and neuroscientist **Leor Zmigrod** explains the science behind susceptibility to radicalisation. Meanwhile, Women's Prize-shortlisted novel *Fundamentally* by **Dr Nussaibah Younis** (a globally recognised expert on contemporary Iraq), used her research and experience to write what *The Times* call 'Bridget Jones in Iraq'.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Isabel Allende: Identity and Destiny

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

Isabel Allende (appearing remotely) is one of world literature's luminaries, winning international acclaim more than 40 years ago with her iconic debut, *The House of Spirits*. Today, she joins us remotely for an unmissable conversation about her life in letters, and her triumphant return to the multi-generational saga, *My Name is Emilia del Valle*. This unforgettable novel of love, war, and redemption features a restless young Chilean-American writer uncovering family (and personal) truths in an unfamiliar homeland.

AI

Close Read: Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

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

In our popular Close Read series, a leading 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, **Nicholas Jubber** (*Monsterland*) dissects Mary Shelley's gothic classic, *Frankenstein*, peeling back its layers of language and morality to reach the heart of a tale which has never beaten more strongly.

THE PETER & PAUL EVENT

Mark Kermode & Jenny Nelson: The Sound of Movie Music

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Jaws, *Indiana Jones*, *Jurassic Park*... Would these movies be quite as iconic without their incredible scores? Journalist, broadcaster and ultimate film authority, **Mark Kermode**, alongside writer and expert audio producer **Jenny Nelson**, are better placed than anyone to explore this question. Co-authors of *Surround Sound: The Stories of Movie Music*, they'll discuss their shared passion for the craft of making music for movies and a composer's ability to elevate a film from 'great' to 'epic'. Chaired by **Anna Bogutskaya**.

AI

Peter Mackay: Meeting One's Makar

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

In December 2024, **Peter Mackay** (Pàdraig MacAoidh) became our new Makar (the national poet of Scotland) - a monumental occasion, as he's the first writer to be appointed who works primarily in Gaelic. At this unique event, we introduce this trailblazing poet, academic, and broadcaster, and discovers how a son of the Western Isles became the fifth incumbent in this totemic Scottish literary role. Tha fàilte air càch! Supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart.

AI

THE ROYAL SOCIETY EVENT

Kelly Weinersmith: To Boldly Go?

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

Last year, Zach and **Kelly Weinersmith's** *A City on Mars* won the Royal Society Science Book Prize, a book asking one of humanity's biggest questions: will we (and how would we, and should we actually maybe not) ever live in space? Hear Weinersmith chat with us about this hilarious, wise, deeply-researched project that makes us glad to still live on our third rock from the sun. Plus, find out which books made 2025's prize shortlist.

AI

John Kay: Everything You Know About Business is Wrong

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

Over leading economist **John Kay's** decades-long career, the role of corporations in the economy has changed, even as public opinion of them has dwindled. Now, in the age of tech monopolies, pharma bros, and the destructive pursuit of shareholder value, the sometime academic, journalist, and governmental advisor joins us with *The Corporation in the Twenty-First Century* (a *Financial Times* and *New Statesman* book of 2024), discussing why our ideas about business need an update.

AI

A Workshop with Kenji Morimoto: Follow Your Gut

19:00-20:30
Elliott's Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

Want to do your microbiome a massive favour, while also feeling like you're definitely where it's at in the food world? Well, get stuck right into this hands-on workshop on fermentation at Elliott's, led by the extremely engaging **Kenji Morimoto**, author of *Ferment*. You'll have drinks, samples, and yes - make your own pickles to take away. And please believe us - you think you know pickles. But you really, really don't. Follow your gut and find out!

FD

Together We Repair

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

We believe that everyone has a story to tell and that stories help us make sense of our world. We've challenged local writers and poets, this year, to respond to 2025's Festival theme: Repair. Join us as we bring them together to perform their work: a patchwork of ideas on how to make the world a better place. Today featuring writing and performances from the **Open Book Creative Writers**.

AI

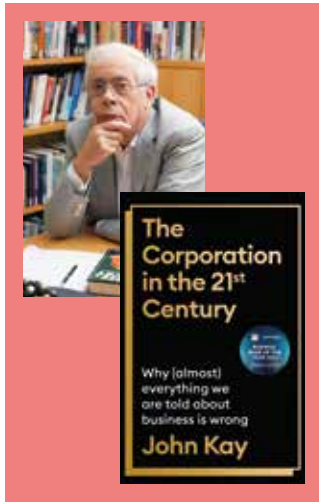
Repair

Peter F Hamilton: Space Opera Goes Digital

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

AD 43,000, the Centauri Cluster: the abandoned Earth is a mere footnote in humanity's ancient, intergalactic history. This is the setting of space opera titan **Peter F Hamilton's** latest novel, *Exodus: The Archimedes Engine*, as well as that of a bold new action-adventure video game from Archetype Entertainment. Today, Hamilton talks about the thrill of imagining a wildly far-flung future and his dual roles as novelist and video game consultant.

AI



John Kay, 18:45-19:45



Kenji Morimoto, 19:00-20:30



Peter F Hamilton, 19:30-20:30

Programme key

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

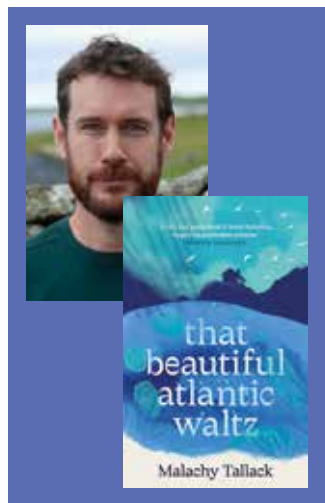
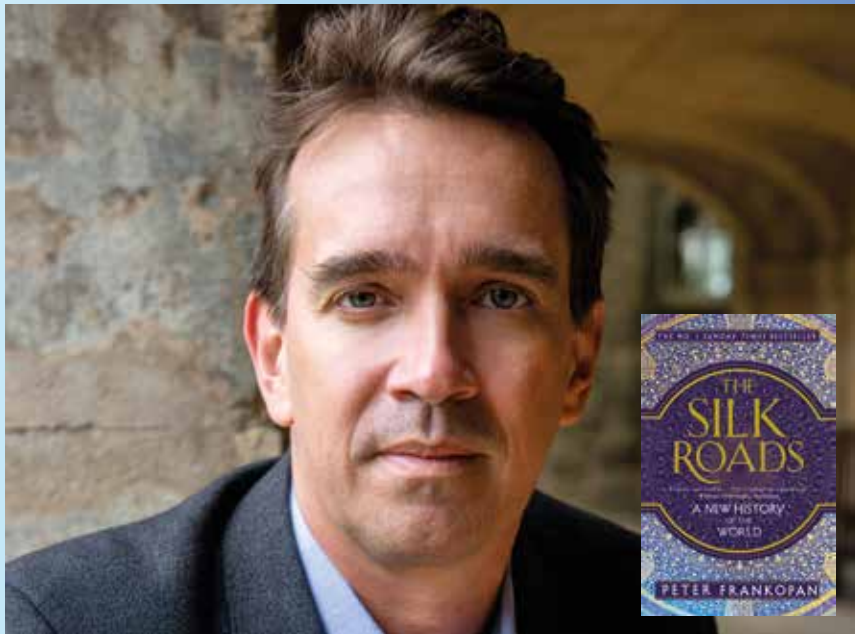
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Peter Frankopan: Ten Years Trekking the Silk Road

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

Ten years ago, **Peter Frankopan** changed the way we think about the historical relationship between East and West, with *The Silk Road: A New History of the World*. The book lived up to its title, shifting focus from the West towards the Eastern crucibles of civilisation, religion, and industry, and opening up a treasure trove of research on previous eras of exchange and collaboration. With our trading relationships with India and China still very much at the fore, join Frankopan as we revisit this seminal book and its ongoing implications.

BSL CC



Malachy Tallack, 20:00-21:30

Malachy Tallack: That Beautiful Atlantic Waltz

20:00-21:30
Spiegel tent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Malachy Tallack's novel, *That Beautiful Atlantic Waltz*, tells the story of Jack, a Shetlander growing steadily old inside the cottage where he's always lived, listening to music and reflecting on the past until the rhythm of his life is profoundly disrupted. The book is uniquely accompanied by an album of evocative songs, 'written' by Jack. Tonight, those songs will be captivatingly performed by a full band (including Tallack). There'll also be the first ever performance of two brand new songs, commissioned as a coda to the album by the Book Festival. *Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown.*

AI

Neil Ansell: The Edge of Silence

20:15-21:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

For nature writer **Neil Ansell**, author of the Wainwright Prize and Highland Book Prize shortlisted *The Circling Sky*, progressive hearing loss was a spur to hunt down nature's rarest and most beautiful sounds while he still can, as documented in his new book *The Edge of Silence*. Today Ansell talks to us about becoming critically attuned to listening to the natural world and how he has learned to separate their sounds from commotion of everyday life.

AI

First Edition: Local News Direct

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

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, and trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is, so in our First Edition events you can join leading journalists from across the media (and the world) as they discuss the day's breaking news over a cup of coffee. Check our website for today's guests.

AI

Mona Arshi, Jackie Kay & Karen McCarthy Woolf: Nature Matters

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In an effort to decolonise the art of nature writing, Faber's *Nature Matters* anthology draws together work by nearly 80 different poets from the African, Asian, and Caribbean diaspora, on themes encompassing climate crisis, protest, Indigenous wisdom and alternative history. See the book's co-editors, **Karen McCarthy Woolf** and **Mona Arshi**, come together with contributor **Jackie Kay** to celebrate this landmark collection.

AI

Clare Hunter & Callum Robinson: With Our Hands

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

From wood to thread, **Callum Robinson** and **Clare Hunter** both explore the powerful stories held within crafted objects. Robinson is a woodworker whose book *Ingrained* blends memoir and nature writing. Hunter's *Making Matters* celebrates the potential of creative making, exploring craft traditions from across the centuries. Today, they discuss the cultural and personal significance of craft, and how it can enable us to see the world in new, inspiring ways.

AI

A L Kennedy: Small Kind Details

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

Spanning love and resilience in the face of a callous state, and abuses of patriarchal power by government, police, and those closer to home - **A L Kennedy's** latest novel, *Alive in the Merciful Country*, could hardly feel more timely. Kennedy (author, comedian, and longtime BBC radio writer and host) joins us to discuss the real heart of her novel: the nature of justice and mercy, and the power of hope and kindness.

AI

Open Book Shared Reading

11:00-12:00
Venue A
Free Ticketed

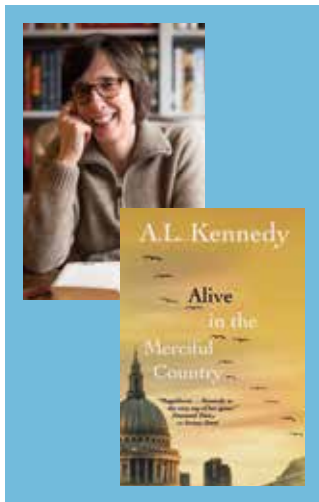
Join Open Book Lead Readers for an informal and relaxed shared reading session. Each session will explore a chapter from a debut book from this year's Festival programme. No experience necessary, all reading materials will be provided on the day.

Sarah Moss: Exits and Entrances

11:30-12:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The immaculate novels of **Sarah Moss** frequently investigate family dynamics and how people react when pushed to their limits. An expert at creating subtle tension with an extraordinary knack for telling the truth, the author of *Summerwater* and *Ghost Wall* joins the Festival with *Ripeness*: a decades-spanning story meditating on severed family ties and the decisions that define our lives. Explore themes of migration, belonging, new beginnings, and the idea of home.

AI



A L Kennedy, 11:00-12:00

Fresh Words: Jenny Brown Debut Writers Over 50

12:00-13:00
Spiegel tent
Pay What You Can

It's lunchtime, and (hallelujah!) there's no need to doomscroll over a sad desk salad. Be the first to discover the literary stars of the future, instead. In partnership with Scottish Book Trust and other leading talent spotters across the UK, this lively lunchtime event showcases electrifying new voices, so grab your seat before everyone else does. Today, we partner with the Jenny Brown Associates Debut Writers Over 50 Award. Check website for full line-up of readers.

AI

Anna Bogutskaya, Nicholas Jubber & Stuart McHardy: Monstrous Mythologies

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

Even in a world of apps, AI, and the metaverse, humans still are drawn to the dark underbelly of our collective imagination, through folklore, myth, and monsters. **Anna Bogutskaya** (*Feeding the Monster*), **Nicholas Jubber** (*Monsterland*), and **Stuart McHardy** (*Scotland's Sacred Goddess*) each mine their fields of film, folklore, and history to examine why. Join them as they unravel the stories, beliefs, and trends that shape our obsession with the uncanny and extraordinary.

AI

Programme key

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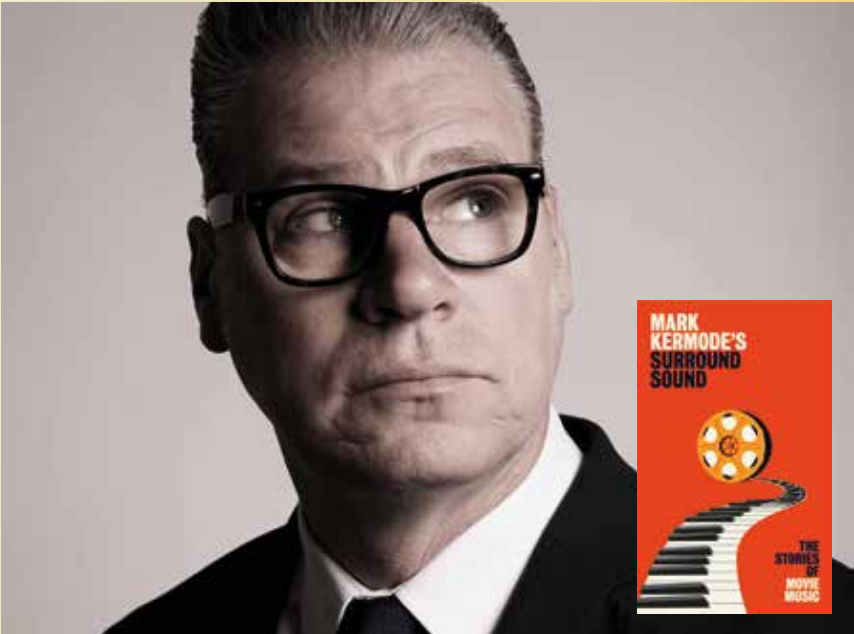
Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly **Formats:** Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

The Front List:
Mark Kermode MK3D

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 (£18.00/£14.00/£5.00)

Join the UK's favourite film critic, **Mark Kermode**, alongside very special guests - including Golden Globe-winning *Succession* patriarch **Brian Cox** - for a unique and energy-filled celebration of the silver screen. They'll explore and dissect current and upcoming releases, revel in the vintage age of cinema, and maybe admit to a few guilty pleasures... MK3D is produced in association with the BFI Southbank, where it sells out every month. We're delighted that this is the very first Mark Kermode Live in 3D presented in Scotland.



Nussaibah Younis:
Fundamentally Funny

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

Shortlisted for 2025's Women's Prize for Fiction, *Fundamentally* combines **Nussaibah Younis'** career in academia and Middle East peacekeeping with her recent training in stand-up comedy. In this darkly funny debut, set in an Iraqi internment camp for ISIS brides, Younis explores the grey areas that exist when faced with questions of identity, faith, and family. Younis talks with us today about navigating cultural divides and the intricacies of interweaving whip-smart humour and international crises.



Paula Hawkins:
An Unexpected Visitor

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

What do a swanky art gallery in London and a remote Scottish island - 12 hours from the mainland - have in common? A human bone as it turns out. Isolation, secrecy, adultery, fame, art, and a dead body - *The Blue Hour* is a rollercoaster ride of thrills. Author of the global phenomenon *Girl on a Train*, **Paula Hawkins** joins **Val McDermid** to talk about her latest page-turning thriller.

Alice Mah & Madeleine Watts:
Tragedies and Miracles

13:15-14:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Two writers grappling with our ties, commitments, and inheritance in the wake of environmental catastrophe come together to discuss their compelling new books. **Alice Mah's** memoir, *Red Pockets*, traces her own journey from South China to Scotland, and **Madeleine Watts's** novel, *Elegy, Southwest*, traces a young couple's journey through a blasted America. Hear both authors reflecting on what debts we owe - to our ancestors, our past relationships, even ourselves?



Writing as Grief Practice:
A Workshop with Halle O'Neal

13:30-15:00
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

What can we learn from how people of the past confronted grief? Writing as a grief practice has comforted people across time and cultures, including in Japan where Buddhist writing rituals were thought to positively influence the Karma of your ancestors, repairing karmic deficits while consoling the living. Practice this fascinating and ancient art yourself with Japanese Buddhist Art scholar, **Halle O'Neal**. Participants are welcome to bring cherished letters and objects to the workshop to weave into the practice. Material will also be provided.



Scottish Writing is Thriving:
A Sparkling Showcase

13:45-15:00
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Scotland's literary scene is in fine fettle. Here at the Book Festival, it's our joy and privilege to shout from the rafters about the talented poets, novelists, thinkers, and performers contributing their diverse voices and fresh ideas to Scottish writing today. Encounter familiar faces alongside new voices tonight as we celebrate our thriving literary landscape through conversation and readings. Featuring writers including **Eilidh Akilade**, **Cal Flynn**, **Katie Goh**, **Victoria Mackenzie**, and **Graeme Macrae Burnett**.



Olga Wojtas: Never
Underestimate a Librarian

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

Described in *The Scotsman* as having 'Jane Austen stylings and Stella Gibbons satirical wit', we're thrilled that **Olga Wojtas** is returning to the Festival. In this fifth instalment of her beloved Shona McMonagle series, *Miss Blaine's Prefect and the Uncharted Island*, our favourite librarian is spinning off to a remote island in the Baltic Sea during the 15th century. Join us for an adventurous event as Wojtas chats pirates, Krakens, and other magical monsters.



Sophie Elmhirst:
For Better or Worse

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

What is a marriage, if not being stuck on a raft with another, trying to survive? That's the question, both literally and figuratively, at the heart of **Sophie Elmhirst's** remarkable *Maurice and Maralyn*. The astonishing true story of a couple shipwrecked by a whale in the remote Pacific, it's both gripping, elegiac, and told as evocatively as any novel. **Sam Baker** joins its Orwell Prize-shortlisted author to uncover the deeper questions underpinning this tender portrait.



Anita Anand & William Dalrymple: Looting, Repatriation, and All Things Empire

15:00-16:00
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. Today they ask what reparations mean in the context of empire? Join them as they explore the fascinating stories of the items looted during the British Empire, their journeys, their fates, and their significance, including the tale of the world's most famous diamond, the Koh-i-Noor. *Supported by the Turtleton Charitable Trust.*





Barbara Demick: Separation and Reunion in China

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

Barbara Demick's international reporting has won the Robert F Kennedy Journalism Award and the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction, plus nominations for a National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize. Today, she joins us with *Daughters of the Bamboo Grove* which tells the heartrending story of identical twins - from the forced adoption of one of the girls to their reunion - and opens out to encompass an investigation into China's infamous former one-child policy.



Wendy Erskine & John Niven:
Darkly Humorous Fiction

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

Expect dark humour and keen insights into parenthood in this conversation with **John Niven** and **Wendy Erskine**. Erskine's *The Benefactors* examines the lengths privileged parents will go to protect their children. Meanwhile, in Niven's *The Fathers*, two very different men meet for the first time in a maternity ward. We talk with both about their unflinching portrayals of modern life, blended with a healthy dose of wit and empathy. *Supported by Culture Ireland.*



Mona Arshi, Rosa Beltrán & Sunny Singh: Giving Voice

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

Join us today for a powerful conversation delving into three urgent and gripping new books: **Mona Arshi's** *Mouth*, **Rosa Beltrán's** *Free Radicals*, and **Sunny Singh's** *Refuge: Stories of War (and Love)*. In distinct ways, each of the authors turns a lens on often overlooked and marginalised women. With insights from Arshi, Beltran and Singh, this event will explore the intersections of fiction, poetry, feminism, and survival. Chaired by **Marjorie Lotfi**.



Bolu Babalola & Beth O'Leary:
Meet Not-So-Cutes

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In **Bolu Babalola's** fiery new novel, *Sweet Heat*, ex-partners Kiki and Malakai are reunited at a friend's wedding, whether they like it or not. Meanwhile, bestselling author of *The Flat Share*, **Beth O'Leary** brings us a new punchy new romantic comedy with *Swept Away*, which sees Lexi and Zeke having a cringey one night stand, then ending up all at sea (literally) on a house boat. Babalola and O'Leary chat to **Nyla Ahmad** about the awkwardness of love.



Discover Jackie Kay's
Archive at the National Library of Scotland

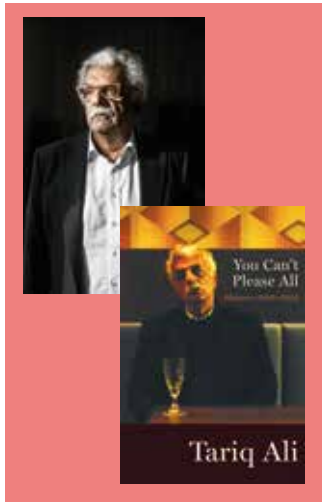
16:30-18:00
National Library of Scotland
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

The National Library of Scotland recently acquired the archive of beloved poet (and former Makar), playwright and novelist, **Jackie Kay**. Today audiences can enjoy the unique experience of being guided through a selection of material by the writer herself, in this exclusive first look into her archive. Kay will be joined by National Library of Scotland manuscripts curators **Dan Sheehy** and **Colin McIlroy** to discuss the joys and challenges of curation, how it feels to re-encounter work from an earlier version of yourself, and the power and potential offered by literary archives.

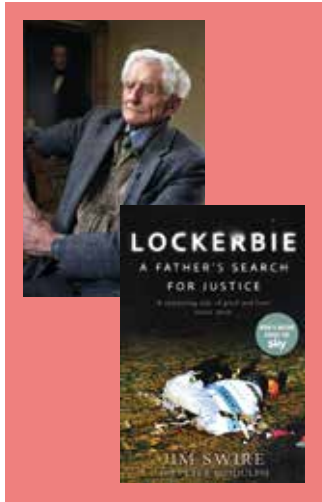


Programme key

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



Tariq Ali, 17:45-18:45



Jim Swire, 17:00-18:00

Helen Gordon & Kelly Weinersmith: Finding Home

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

This captivating event juxtaposes the intimately human with the wonders of outer space. Zach and **Kelly Weinersmith's** *A City on Mars* investigates whether colonising new planets will create a nightmare, both for settlers and those left behind. While **Helen Gordon's** *The Meteorites* traces the stories of fallen space objects and the human lives they've touched. They join us to reflect on mankind's relationship with the universe and the precious fragility of life on Earth. AI

Jim Swire & Peter Biddulph: Fighting for the Truth

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

The 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 has resurged in public consciousness following Sky's recent drama *Lockerbie: A Search for Truth*. **Dr Jim Swire's** daughter Flora was killed on the ground, and *The Lockerbie Bombing: A Father's Search for Justice*, co-authored with **Peter Biddulph**, details his moving fight for the truth of how the tragedy was able to happen, and who was ultimately responsible for the largest loss of lives in a single event in modern British history. He and Biddulph speak to **Allan Little**. AI

ReaderBank: Unlocking the Mind and Mental Health

17:30-18:30
Venue B
Pay What You Can

ReaderBank is an ambitious attempt to create the world's largest study of reading, imagination, and mental health. A collaboration between our Festival and researchers from Durham University, ReaderBank returns with new insights about what happens when we read. Join lead researcher **Ben Alderson-Day** for a workshop focused on the findings so far, what they tell us about the science of the imagination, and how reading unlocks new frontiers for mental health, psychological therapy, and neurodiversity. *Supported by the Institute for Medical Humanities at Durham University.* AI

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Tariq Ali: Fighting the Empire

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

At 81 years old, political activist, journalist, and filmmaker **Tariq Ali** has witnessed countless global conflicts and world-defining movements. Through a series of eyewitness accounts and reflections, Ali's memoir, *You Can't Please All*, recounts modern historical periods from the fall of the Soviet Union to the war on terror in the USA, while at the same time providing a poignant family history of his parents' early years in Pakistan. It's an honour to welcome him today. *Supported by the Centre for South Asian Studies.* AI

Writing Social and Political Satire: A Workshop with Nussaibah Younis

18:00-19:00
Venue A
£25.00 [£23.00/£18.00/£5.00]

A well-crafted work of satire can interrogate complex political or social issues, be accessible to non-specialist audiences, and also be tremendously fun (to read and write!). Bring your novel ideas to this workshop with **Dr Nussaibah Younis** (author of 2025 Women's Prize for Fiction-shortlisted *Fundamentally*) and explore the possibilities for improving their satirical power. Creator of a form that carefully balances humorous, character-driven plot with real world political insights, Younis will use her insights to offer practical creative advice.

David Keenan: Adventures in the Underground

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

Following the success of the Fringe First-winning show, *This is Memorial Device*, at our 2022 Book Festival, Gordon Burn Prize-winner **David Keenan** is back with new book, *Volcanic Tongue*. As a musician and former member of Telstar Ponies, Keenan has always interwoven music through his books. This collection brings together his influential writing about revolutionary late 20th century music makers. Keenan joins us tonight for a spirited, sharp conversation about *Volcanic Tongue* and the music that influences him. AI

Susan Choi & Youssef Rakha: Geopolitics and Family Life

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

Author of the acclaimed *Trust Exercise*, **Susan Choi's** *Flashlight* is a twisting, character-driven mystery about the tensions of family life, spanning the Korean diaspora, Japan, and ultimately the US. And **Youssef Rakha's** hallucinatory *The Dissenters* explores the unexpected history of a woman who shifted identities alongside the evolution of her homeland, Egypt, and her children's attempt to reconcile them. Together, they reflect on the liminal spaces - and conflicts - created and inhabited by the tangled roots of dispersed families. AI

Ilan Pappé & Avi Shlaim: The Long and the Short of Israel and Palestine

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

Ilan Pappé (*A Very Short History of the Israel-Palestine Conflict, Lobbying for Zionism*) and **Avi Shlaim** (*Genocide in Gaza: Israel, Hamas, and the Long War on Palestine*) have decades of experience in analysing Israel and Palestine, and their impact on individuals, the region, and the rest of the world. Expect a progressive and insightful discussion as these fellow 'New Historians' explore the long history of war and the possibility of peace. AI CC

Together We Repair

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

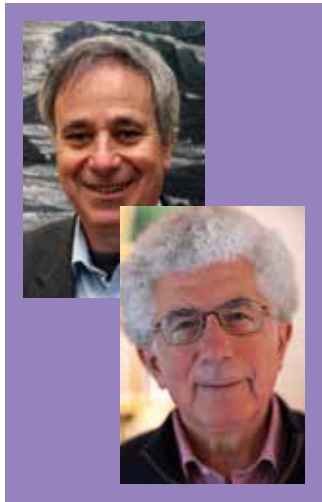
We believe that everyone has a story to tell and that stories help us make sense of our world. We've challenged local writers and poets, this year, to respond to 2025's Festival theme: Repair. Join us as we bring them together to perform their work: a patchwork of ideas on how to make the world a better place. Today featuring writing and performances from the **Book Festival's Citizen Writing Group**. AI

Repair

Michael Hutchinson: Understanding Endurance

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

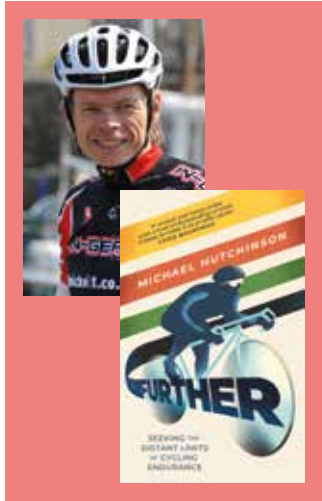
Few know what it takes to navigate the intense mental and physical demands of professional cycling quite like **Michael Hutchinson**. A writer and former champion professional cyclist, his latest book, *Further*, is a deep dive into the world of extreme endurance. Today he joins **Emily Chappell** to discuss the insights he gained from talking to the world's top endurance experts, as well as his own terrifying experiences going further than ever before.



Ilan Pappé & Avi Shlaim, 18:45-19:45



Susan Choi & Youssef Rakha, 18:30-19:30



Michael Hutchinson, 19:30-20:30

Access: AI Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: CC Remote Appearance U Outdoor U Active U Food & Drink

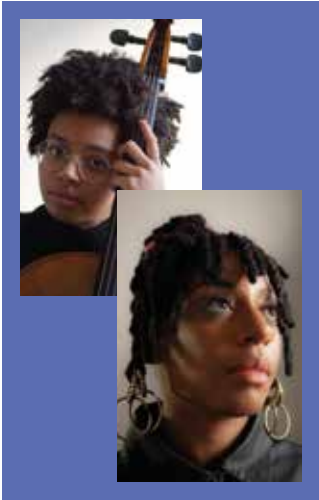
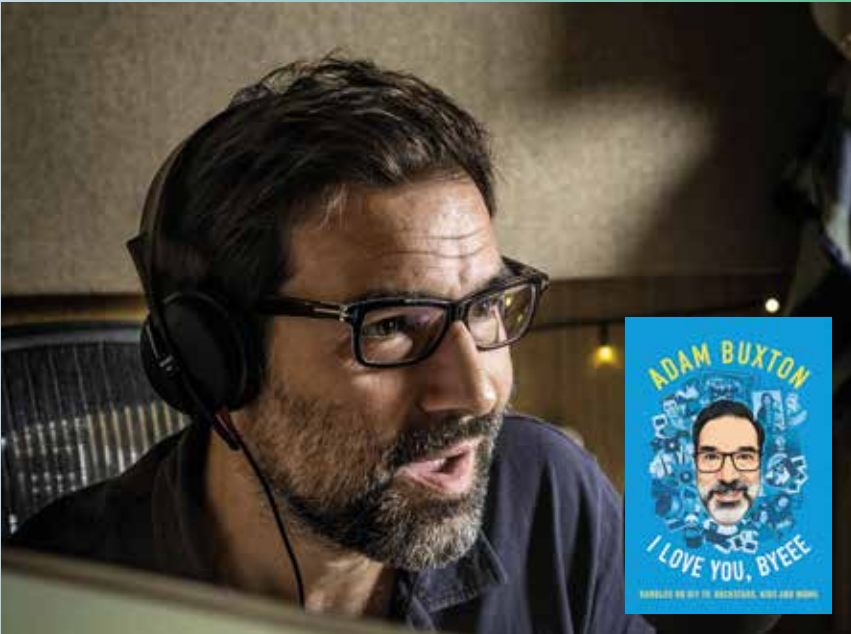
THE DIGBY BROWN EVENT

Adam Buxton: I Love You, Byeee

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

The ramblechats on **Adam Buxton's** smash-hit podcast are never predictable, but always charming and enlightening, and the same applies to the tales in his idiosyncratic new memoir, *I Love You, Byeee*. Grab your conversation coat and talking hat and join Buxton on a skip down memory lane as he shares equal-parts hilarious and moving stories of comedy, adulthood, grief, and parenting (and, of course, Rosie the dog). The path might not be direct, but the ramble will be delightful.

📺 (AI)



Simone Seales and Mele Broomes, 20:00-21:30

Simone Seales and Mele Broomes: Dearest

20:00-21:30
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Cellist **Simone Seales'** *Dearest* (a debut poetry and music album with an accompanying zine) is a reflection on the warmth and nostalgia of first love, drawing on Patricia Highsmith's classic romance, *Carol*. In this special performance, Seales' tender and insightful poetry is read by multi-disciplinary artist **Mele Broomes** while accompanied by Seales on the cello. *Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown.*

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Future Library

20:15-21:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Norway's Future Library is a powerful gesture of hope for a world beyond our lifetime. Every year, for 100 years, an author writes a new book to be placed inside its walls; every text remains unread until 2114. Join Future Library's **Anne Beate Hovind** as she leads a conversation on personal and collective memory, on past lives and legacies, exploring how individual and cultural heritage makes for a stronger society. Plus, find out the sensational writer contributing to the Future Library in 2026. *Supported by Edinburgh Futures Institute.*

(AI)

First Edition:
On Trusted Reporting

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

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, and trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is, so in our First Edition events you can 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 are **Joyce McMillan, Jen Stout, and Richard Walker.**

(AI)

Karen Downs-Barton:
What it Means to Belong

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Has anywhere sounded more ominous than the 'Home for Crying Children'? Join **Karen Downs-Barton**, whose playful new poetry collection *Minx* effortlessly blends forms in a lyrically vivid evocation of a childhood distinctly less ordinary. From a multi-racial Romani background, Downs-Barton explores growing up on the edges of society, and asks where one can really belong if caught between cultures whose traditions don't match.

(AI)

Philip Marsden & Vanessa Taylor: How We Use the Natural World

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

The natural world, and humanity's fraught relationship with it, slips into focus in this event. **Philip Marsden's** *Under a Metal Sky* investigates the history of humanity's extraction of minerals, from the Bronze Age and the Industrial Revolution to the present day. Meanwhile, environmental historian **Vanessa Taylor's** *Seven Rivers* delves into the histories, cultures, and ecosystems surrounding seven of the world's great rivers, asking what the future holds for them. Join their urgent discussion.

(AI)

Repair

Renga Poetry: A Nature Writing Workshop with Karen McCarthy Woolf

10:30-12:30
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

How do we write in collaboration with other humans and the more-than-human? Join poet **Karen McCarthy Woolf** (*Top Doll, Seasonal Disturbances*) for this exploratory workshop on renga poetry. Existing for centuries, renga is a form written collectively by a group of poets – like a lyrical version of the childhood game, Consequence. Today, immerse yourself in nature and gather material and inspiration from the local environment for use today and afterwards. Suitable for all levels of writing experience, including none.

📍 🍽️

John MacKay:
A Life in the News

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

One of Scotland's most recognisable broadcasters, **John MacKay** celebrated his 30th anniversary with STV in 2024. He joins us today, with his memoir *Scotland Today and Yesterday* – republished in an updated version to celebrate the occasion. Hear MacKay cast a definitive, first-hand eye over the changes and big news stories he's covered, and reflect on an illustrious career both in and beyond journalism.

📺 (AI)

Eva Björg Ægisdóttir & Jack Grimwood: Into the Unknown

11:30-12:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The bitter cold is harsh, testing, and unavoidable. It's no surprise it is a prominent setting for a psychological thriller. But what is it about this extreme weather condition that lends itself so well to a gripping novel? **Eva Björg Ægisdóttir's** *Home Before Dark* and **Jack Grimwood's** *Arctic Sun* explore the intensity of sub-zero temperatures and can be the hottest climate for intrigue.

(AI)



Karen Downs-Barton, 10:15-11:15



Karen McCarthy Woolf, 10:30-12:30



John MacKay, 11:00-12:00

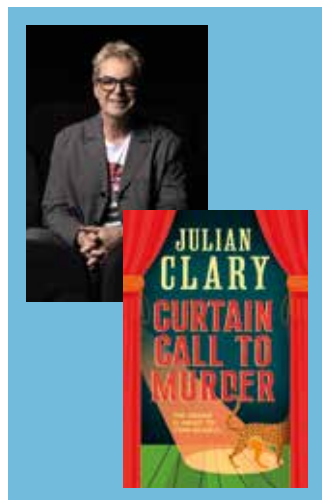
Programme key

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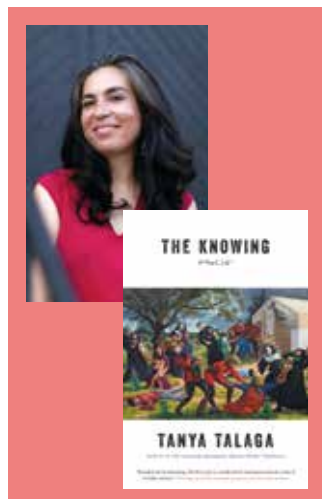
Access: 📺 Livestreamed 🇧🇸 British Sign Language 🗣️ Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned (LD) Learning Disability Friendly Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance 📍 Outdoor 🗣️ Active 🍽️ Food & Drink



Sabrina Ghayour, 12:00-13:30



Julian Clary, 12:45-13:45



Tanya Talaga, 13:15-14:15

Ben Alderson-Day & Adam Zeman: The Science of Imagination

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

Reading, reminiscing, planning, daydreaming - none of these activities is possible without the imagination. But how do our imaginations work? And how do our experiences differ? Join pioneering neuroscientist **Adam Zeman** (*The Shape of Things Unseen*) and lead researcher for Durham University's ReaderBank, **Ben Alderson-Day**, as they unpack the latest scientific discoveries relating to the brain's creative powers, from the phenomenon of 'aphantasia' to what happens in our minds as we imagine.

AI

Chris Barkley & Douglas Skelton: Intrigue on the Scottish Isles

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

The beautiful Scottish Isles are remote, picturesque and the perfect backdrop for a murder mystery. **Chris Barkley's** debut, *The Man on the Endless Stair*, and **Douglas Skelton's** latest in the Rebecca Connolly series, *The Other Side of Fear*, each feature writers with mysteries to solve. They chat today about their roots, whether their own lives are as thrilling as their wordsmith characters', and the power of landscape in a good mystery.

AI

Modern Middle Eastern Cooking: A Table Talk with Sabrina Ghayour

12:00-13:30
Elliott's Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

Smoked aubergine salad with pickled chilis and feta. Crispy za'atar salt and pepper prawns. White chocolate, pistachio, and lemon cookies. Just a few mouthwatering recipes in bestselling chef, food writer, and TV regular **Sabrina Ghayour's** *Persiana Easy*, the latest of her cookbooks celebrating modern, accessible Middle Eastern cooking. Today, hear Ghayour chatting to **Marjorie Lotfi** about the flavours that most excite her as she creates something spectacular for you to try. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

🍷

THE VALVONA & CROLLA EVENT

Alan Taylor: Edinburgh in its Own Words

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

Edinburgh and the literary tradition go together hand-in-glove, and with *Edinburgh: The Autobiography*, writer and editor **Alan Taylor** draws together the story of our 900-year-old capital as told by those who have written about it - writers including Walter Scott, Ian Rankin, Robert Louis Stevenson, Charles Dickens, and Muriel Spark (who called it 'the city of Calvinism, high teas, and loveless alliances'). Hear Taylor talking about this compelling urban portrait today.

AI

Julian Clary: Behind the Curtain

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

The inimitable **Julian Clary** is a bona fide British national treasure - an actor, comedian, presenter, and writer for adults and kids, he can truly do it all. Today he joins us with his latest mystery romp, *Curtain Call to Murder*, set during a show at the London Palladium. No stranger to theatre, hear how Clary channelled his dramatic experience into his writing alongside his fabulously vicious wit.

📺 AI

Tanya Talaga: Open Secrets

13:15-14:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Anishinaabe writer **Tanya Talaga's** *The Knowing* is a riveting exploration of her family's story, and a retelling of the country we now call Canada. One of Canada's most distinguished journalists, Talaga holds five honorary doctorates, and reported on the Catholic Church's shocking efforts to avoid responsibility regarding Indian Residential Schools. Today she explores how historical actions continue to impact families and communities, and how she came to bring these hidden histories to light.

AI

Repair



The Front List: Nicola Sturgeon

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Nicola Sturgeon's time as Scotland's first female - and longest serving - First Minister - saw her tackle some of the most challenging events in modern history. From the Scottish Independence Referendum, Brexit, Covid, and much more, there have been moments of unfathomable pressure - and sometimes, also joy. In this special event celebrating the launch of her warm and revealing new memoir, *Frankly*, Sturgeon talks to **Kirsty Wark**, pulling back the curtain on her personal evolution from a shy working-class child to one of Scotland's most significant political leaders.

📺 BSL CC

Plot as Repair: A Workshop with Eleanor Catton

13:30-15:30
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

A good plot feels neither over-determined nor arbitrary. Its job is to surprise not just the reader, but the characters as well; to create desires, and - eventually - to sate them. Under the guidance of Man Booker Prize-winning **Eleanor Catton** (*The Luminaries*, *Birnam Wood*), you'll consider the breaches of trust and expectation that are integral to plots of every kind and discuss the infinite ways they can be mended, denied, projected, repeated, forgotten, forgiven, and avenged.

Repair

Peter Godwin: Love, Loss, and Occasional Wars

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

As an author, journalist, and former PEN America president, **Peter Godwin** has faced conflict with courage throughout his 30-year career. Winning the Orwell Prize with his debut title, *Mukiwa*, his fourth book, *Exit Wounds*, sees Godwin face a more personal struggle following his divorce and the death of his mother. Today, he shares his journey of recovery - using a range of different, and sometimes hallucinogenic, strategies - alongside powerful reflections on the singular losses and grief felt by exiles and refugees.

AI

Repair



Eleanor Catton, 13:30-15:30

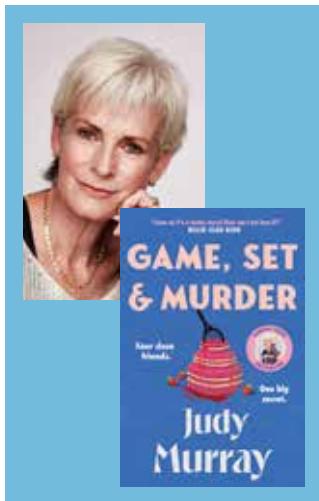
Programme key

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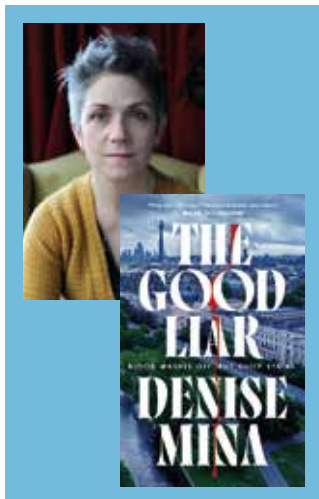
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Penny Johnson & Raja Shehadeh, 15:00-16:00



Judy Murray, 16:00-17:00



Denise Mina, 17:00-18:00

Harriet Baker & Philip Hoare: Creative Roots

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

Sunday Times Charlotte Aitken Young Writer of the Year, **Harriet Baker**, and Baillie Gifford Prize-winning **Philip Hoare** are paired for an extraordinary discussion delving intimately into creative influences. In *Rural Hours*, Baker focuses on Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Townsend Warner, and Rosamond Lehmann. Hoare's *William Blake and the Sea Monsters of Love* meanwhile connects a long line of modern creatives to the Romantic visionary. Together, they'll explore the transformative power of nature and of art.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Sigrid Rausing: An Intertwining of Minds

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

When celebrated Swedish author Johanna Ekström learned she was dying of cancer, she asked her friend **Sigrid Rausing** to distil 13 handwritten notebooks into one final published work. The result, *And the Walls Became the World All Around*, is a sublime, devastating 'memoir in duet' between deceased and survivor, a testament to friendship, and a haunting meditation on grief. Today, Rausing discusses her remarkable friend and this profound literary experiment.

AI

Ewan Morrison: Digital Immortality

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

Scottish Book of the Year-winner **Ewan Morrison** brings his latest high concept techno-thriller to this year's Festival. *For Emma* is a ghost in the machine tale of bereavement that dives headfirst into the complicated love between a daughter and her father. Morrison joins us to discuss this pacy new novel that asks readers to consider essential questions about the acceleration of technology, AI, resistance, and what it is to be human.

AI

Penny Johnson & Raja Shehadeh: What We Choose to Remember

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

What do the physical memorials of the past and how they are remembered tell us about the ongoing conflicts of today? Discussing *Forgotten: Searching for Palestine's Hidden Places* and *Lost Memorials*, lawyer, writer, and human rights activist **Raja Shehadeh** and writer and researcher **Penny Johnson** will explore the landscape of Israel and Palestine to show how monuments which have been created, maintained, or neglected map the political and cultural struggles which fragment the land today. Chaired by **Mahmoud Muna**.

AI

Best Root Forward: A Table Talk with Alissa Timoshkina

15:30-17:00
Elliott's Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

A love letter to the vegetables that define the most vibrant dishes in Eastern European cooking, **Alissa Timoshkina's** *Kapusta* shines light on little-known culinary cultures and histories - and will become your new favourite cookbook. Delight your senses today as Timoshkina recreates a recipe for you to try while she talks with **Caroline Eden**, sharing stories, chatting about her work for the global fundraising campaign #CookForUkraine, and likely waxing lyrical about her very favourite herb: dill. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

AI

Lara Pawson: Object Lessons

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

A timer, a toaster, a squirrel, a toenail - the reviews all agree: after reading **Lara Pawson's** electrifying Goldsmith's Prize-shortlisted *Spent Light*, you'll never look at ordinary objects the same way again. In the words of her narrator, 'Everything in this damned world calls for indignation.' Pawson talks with us about her startling, unconstrained novel and the web of violent and beautiful associations encoded in all things.

AI



Simon Armitage: The Lost Gardeners

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

Inspired by Cornwall's Lost Gardens of Heligan - an ambitious restoration project which reawakened a landscape of woods and meadows to offer a fertile realm for all sorts of creatures - *Dwell*, by Poet Laureate **Simon Armitage**, is a beautifully illustrated collection about the importance of restoring nature's balance. Join Armitage as he reflects on the fragility and power of nature, and what humans must do to repair and protect it.

AI

Repair

Judy Murray: See You in Court

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Judy Murray needs no introduction: former tennis professional and coach, and of course mother of Those Tennis Brothers, she's an icon of the game. Latterly, she's become a figurehead for women in sport and has also subjected herself to the rigours of *Strictly*. She now returns to the Festival with her second novel, tennis club whodunit *Game, Set & Murder*.

AI

Jenny Kleeman: Life and Worth

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

What's the true value of a human life? Journalist and documentary maker **Jenny Kleeman's** *The Price of Life* delves into the ethical and economic complexities of this profound question. In a world obsessed with data, Kleeman's voice and insights are an essential part of the conversation. Talking to global public health researcher and professor **Devi Sridhar**, hear Kleeman discuss the technologies and industries that are reshaping our understanding of mortality and worth.

AI

THE DIGBY BROWN EVENT

Denise Mina: Bloody Murder

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

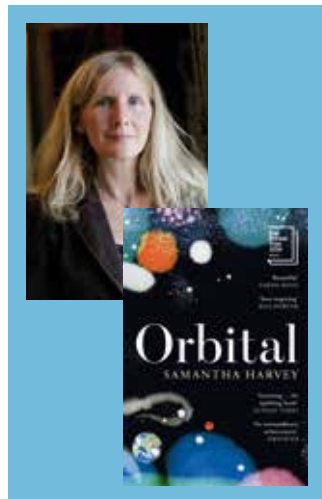
Deemed 'crime-writing royalty' by Ian Rankin, bestselling author **Denise Mina** returns to the Festival with her 20th novel, *The Good Liar*. This clever thriller sees blood-spatter expert, Dr Claudia O'Sheil, get entangled in a conspiracy which threatens her career, reputation, and maybe even her life. How far would you go to protect your loved ones? Would you even cover up a murder? Hear Mina chat morals and murders today with her signature verve and wit. Chaired by **Peggy Hughes**.

AI BSL CC

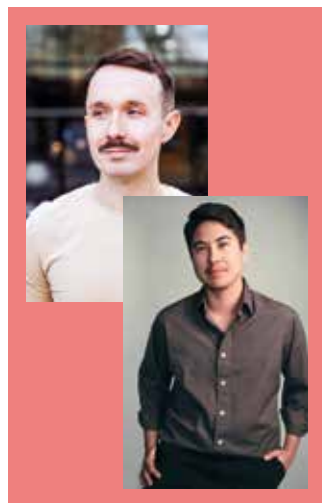
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Formats: AI Remote Appearance AI Outdoor AI Active AI Food & Drink



Samantha Harvey, 18:45-19:45



Kevin Guyan & Keio Yoshida, 17:45-18:45

Harriet Armstrong & Rosalind Brown: Lessons in Inner Life

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

Two razor-sharp debut novelists talk with **Sasha de Buyl** about the fitful, lurching paths we take on the coming-of-age journey. **Harriet Armstrong's** *To Rest Our Minds and Bodies* is a poignant, wry portrait of a young woman struggling to retain a sense of self in the final year of her undergrad, while **Rosalind Brown's** *Practice* exquisitely depicts the minutiae of a day in the life of a very fastidious student writing an essay on Shakespeare's sonnets.

AI

Kevin Guyan & Keio Yoshida: Queer Rights and Realities

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Writer-researcher **Kevin Guyan** and human rights lawyer **Keio Yoshida** both grapple with the complex realities - the challenges and triumphs - of queer existence in contemporary society. Guyan's *Rainbow Trap* delves into the societal pressures and expectations that can constrain queer identities, while Yoshida's *Pride and Prejudices* examines the flawed legal frameworks shaping LGBTQ+ experiences. Join them for a vital conversation about justice, visibility, and the ongoing fight for equality.

AI

Esa Aldegheri, Linda Cracknell, Alice Tarbuck & Amanda Thomson: The Road She Travelled

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

There She Goes is a special new anthology of travel writing, bringing together 17 women writers of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction to give life to the landscapes they travel through. For this celebratory event, we are joined by the anthology's editor, **Esa Aldegheri**, as well as contributors **Linda Cracknell**, **Alice Tarbuck**, and **Amanda Thomson**. Together, they will explore the profound liberation of travel, and share some of the insights they've gained along the way.

AI

Heather Parry & Nell Stevens: Between the Lines

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

Heather Parry and **Nell Stevens** bring darkly humorous, gothic narratives to the fore in their new books, *Carrion Crow* and *The Original*. Parry's spine-tingling and grotesque tale explores mother-daughter relationships, sexuality, and class, while Stevens examines authenticity, creativity, money, and belonging with wit and originality. They join us to explore the illusions we construct between what we keep hidden and what we choose to share. Chaired by **Eleanor Catton**.

AI

Samantha Harvey: Writing a Space Pastoral

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

Six astronauts, one day, sixteen revolutions around our planet. Evoking the surpassing beauty of a low earth orbit vantage point, **Samantha Harvey's** 2024 Booker Prize-winning *Orbital* juxtaposes the majestic with the intimate in an exquisite depiction of awe, fragility, and contemplative observation. Harvey returns to the Festival to reflect on her year since winning one of literature's highest honours and what it means to write life in space with the sensibility of a nature writer.

AI

Harry Josephine Giles & Malin Lewis: Future Traditions for Queer Scotland

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

Join us for a dazzling celebration of *Unco*, a new LGBTQ+ Scots lexicon. **Harry Josephine Giles** and **Malin Lewis** present a unique spoken word and music performance, blending old and new language and sounds to explore queer identities and histories. After the performance, a discussion with the artists delves further into their creative process and explores the *Unco* project's potential to connect Scottish tradition with ideas that boldly face the future.

CC



Torrey Peters Presents...

20:00-21:30
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In this exclusive Book Festival event, **Torrey Peters** - PEN/Hemingway Award-winning author of *Detransition, Baby* and the kaleidoscopic *Stag Dance* - co-curates performances from some of the most exciting trans writers and artists around. Peters came up as a writer attending similar nights of reading and community, so come along and discover another favourite writer in this celebratory event where you can say you saw (and heard) them first. Check website for line-up.

CC

THE FREDERICK HOOD MEMORIAL LECTURE

Partha Dasgupta: Valuing our World

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The *New York Times* called Cambridge economist **Partha Dasgupta** 'the most important person you've never heard of'. Responsible for the fundamental shift in how we now approach the economics of biodiversity, he's the author of a report commissioned by the UK Government setting out ways we must account for nature in economic decision-making. Today, he discusses his groundbreaking book *On Natural Capital*, advocating for why nature should be given the same economic value as the resources we extract from it.

AI

Doug Johnstone: Making Waves in Science Fiction

20:15-21:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Described by *The Scotsman* as 'a master of the page-turning, heart-gripping, plot-driven tale', **Doug Johnstone** is also remarkably prolific. Over the years, the McIlvanney Prize-shortlisted author's focus has shifted from crime to sci-fi, and now he joins us to chat about his 19th novel, *The Transcendent Tide*, which completes his science fiction *Enceladons* trilogy: a first contact epic which has taken its characters from Edinburgh's Portobello beach to the depths of the Arctic Ocean.

AI

Chris Brookmyre: Thirty, and Counting

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

Chris Brookmyre's offbeat brand of Scottish crime has been selling by the millions since his debut in 1996. He joins us now with his 30th novel, *The Cracked Mirror*, a deeply unusual detective caper that splices the tweedy with the hardboiled. Brookmyre will discuss his unquenchable desire to push the limits of genre, and look back over his life in writing - and perhaps even his occasional football punditry and noir-ish cover band! Chaired by **Denise Mina**.

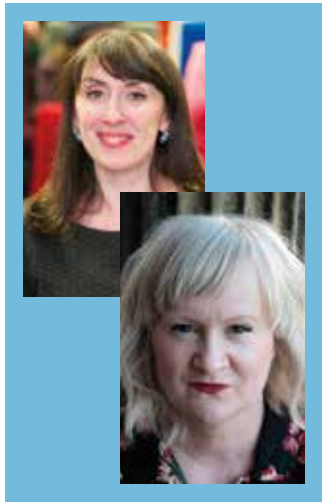
AI

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly **Formats:** Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

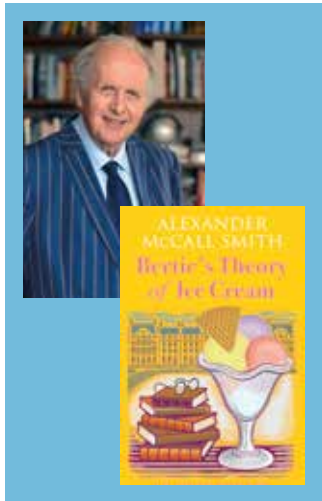




Mairi Kidd & Lesley McDowell, 10:00-11:00



Reeta Chakrabarti, 10:15-11:15



Alexander McCall Smith, 11:45-12:45

Mairi Kidd & Lesley McDowell: Reimagining History's (Anti) Heroines

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

Lesley McDowell's *Love and Other Poisons* features a scandalous affair, an unsolved murder, and the disappearance of the socialite who stands accused. Mairi Kidd's *The Specimens* reinvents the story of notorious serial killers Burke and Hare, told through the eyes of two very different women. Join the authors for a romp through 19th century Scotland as they discuss the craft of compelling character studies and inventing voices for women lost to time.

AI

Reeta Chakrabarti: Finding Belle

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

Reeta Chakrabarti will be familiar to anyone who has watched BBC news, but now she has made the leap from journalist and chief newsreader to novelist. Her sensitive, insightful debut, *Finding Belle*, takes us from the beaches of Mombasa to the suburbs of England. Mother-daughter relationships and weighty family secrets haunt its pages. Today, Chakrabarti joins us for a discussion of connection and forging new identities.

AI

First Edition: Behind Investigations

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

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, and trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is, so in our First Edition events you can join leading journalists from across the media (and the world) as they discuss the day's breaking news over a cup of coffee. Check our website for today's guests.

AI

Open Book Shared Reading

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, and all reading materials will be provided on the day.

THE NOBLE CALEDONIA EVENT

Alexander McCall Smith: Here's the Scoop

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

The mighty Alexander McCall Smith brings us all of his latest works including *Bertie's Theory of Ice Cream* (the latest in his beloved *44 Scotland Street* series) and *In the Time of Five Pumpkins* (in the perennially adored *No.1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series). He is, quite simply, Scottish literary royalty. Moreover, when not busy being a staggeringly prolific author, McCall Smith also manages to collaborate with fellow creatives - in screen, stage, music and more. Today, meet with this true modern-day polymath.

AI

Jen Calleja & Annelise Finegan: Life in Translation

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

Calling all language lovers and word nerds for this conversation on the art of translation and life as a literary translator. International Booker-nominated translators Jen Calleja (German-English) and Annelise Finegan (Chinese-English) will discuss the nuances of their craft, the realities of publishing, and individual works such as Finegan's translation of Can Xue's *Love in the New Millennium* and Calleja's inventive new translation memoir *Fair*.

AI

Danny Sriskandarajah: People Have the Power

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

This is an event for people who want to fight back against the unhappy narratives around them, with an author whose life and work emphasises taking action in difficult circumstances. Talking about *Power to the People*, New Economics Foundation CEO (and former Oxfam GB CEO) Danny Sriskandarajah discusses examples of and strategies for global citizen action, in order to deliver a society that works for the many and not for the few.

AI

Shani Akilah & Jeda Pearl: Celebrating Andrea Levy

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

Join writers Shani Akilah and Jeda Pearl as they celebrate the enduring legacy of Andrea Levy. Through her powerful novels - most famously the multi-award-winning *Small Island* - Levy illuminated the experiences of the Windrush generation and explored themes of identity, belonging, and historical injustice. This event, held in partnership with the Andrea Levy Scholarship, honours Levy's vital contribution to British literature and her continued influence and impact on a new generation of writers. Chaired by Lisa Williams.

AI

2025 International Booker Prize: Meet the Winners

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

The International Booker Prize is the annual award for the best work of fiction translated into English. Known for its sparkling longlists, the prize brings international attention to both the authors' and translators' work. With the prize shared equally between author and translator, it is the most influential award for translated fiction. Join 2025 judge Sana Goyal and the International Booker Prize's administrator Fiammetta Rocco as they speak to the winners of this year's prize about their work and the art of translation.

AI

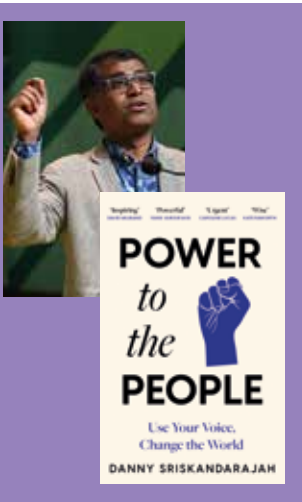
Surekha Davies, Omar El Akkad & Nicola Kelly: Who Counts as Human?

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

Three writers grappling with the toxic rhetoric humans apply to one another explore how the boundaries of humanity are set to exclude certain communities. Surekha Davies (*Humans: A Monstrous History*), Omar El Akkad (*One Day Everyone Will Always Have Been Against This*) and Nicola Kelly (*Anywhere But Here*) will provide their piercing insights in this must-see event for all who are interested in how we repair the polarisation of our fractured world. Chaired by Yassmin Abdel-Magied.

AI

Repair



Danny Sriskandarajah, 12:00-13:00



Jen Calleja & Annelise Finegan, 11:45-12:45

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND EVENT

The Front List: Maggie O'Farrell

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Bursting onto the literary scene with her skilful debut, *After You'd Gone*, **Maggie O'Farrell** has remained an inimitable creative force ever since. Today's event celebrates her 25th anniversary as a beloved writer of works encompassing her breathtaking memoir *I Am, I Am, I Am*; captivating *The Marriage Portrait*; and acclaimed *Hamnet* (soon to be a major new film starring Paul Mescal and Jessie Buckley). Join O'Farrell for a fascinating and lively reflection on her writing life and unforgettable stories. Chaired by Festival director **Jenny Niven**.

AI CC



Close Read: The Long Song by Andrea Levy

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

In our popular Close Read series, a leading 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, continuing our celebration of the remarkable author Andrea Levy, **Désa Osborne** (chancellor's fellow in English Literature at Edinburgh University) turns her appreciative eye on Levy's final novel, *The Long Song*. In partnership with the Andrea Levy Scholarship.

Ambrose Parry: In the Old Town

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

It's 1854, Edinburgh. Apprentice Sarah Fisher is secretly training as a medic under Dr Will Raven's expertise; soon, though, she'll discover the seedy underbelly to Victorian society. Historical Edinburgh is brought back to vivid life in *The Death of Shame*, Ambrose Parry's latest Raven and Fisher mystery. Join the bestselling writing duo **Chris Brookmyre** and **Dr Marisa Haetzman** (aka Ambrose Parry) as they unpack our city's dark past with **Peggy Hughes**.

BSL CC

Thought Exercise: Laurie Bristow

14:30-16:00
Venue B
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£5.00]

Dig deeper with our Thought Exercise series. Hear from experts on urgent issues of our time, then join in on the discussion during a wide-ranging, interactive exchange. Today's guest is **Laurie Bristow** (*Kabul: Final Call*), the last British ambassador to Afghanistan (2021) and former ambassador to Russia (2016-2020). Together, you'll take part in a fascinating conversation on geopolitics and deterrence, as you discuss the crucial role of diplomacy in times of global political unrest. Chaired by **Allan Little**.

Jenny Kleeman & Ben Alderson-Day: Mental Health in the Digital Age

14:45-15:45
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

As the world grapples with the ethics of digital technology, one area of medicine - mental health - is making fascinating strides in virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) treatments. With foundations like Wellcome researching the benefits of tech solutions for mental health conditions, what moral considerations and safeguards are needed to embed these treatments in the mainstream? Join this insightful conversation with specialists in the field including **Ben Alderson-Day** and journalist **Jenny Kleeman**.

AI

Tessa Hadley: The Cusp of Something

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

Master chronicler of the heart's hidden desires, **Tessa Hadley** (author of *Late in the Day* and *After the Funeral*) discusses her first novella. Following two sisters coming of age in post-war Bristol, *The Party* takes place over a weekend that bristles with yearning. Hear Hadley reflect on the way short-lived encounters can shock and release us into a new phase of life - how do we become who we are?

AI

Hanif Kureishi: Shattered but Unbroken

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

On Boxing Day in 2022, author **Hanif Kureishi** suffered a horrific fall that left him paralysed. Compelled to write, he dictated his thoughts to family in dispatches from his hospital bed. The result is *Shattered*, a profoundly moving reflection on the fragility of the human body and the resolute power of the human spirit. In this event, Kureishi will appear remotely, talking to **Chitra Ramaswamy** as he shares his insights into recovery, self-discovery, and the enduring nature of creativity.

AI

Repair

Madeleine Thien & Omar El Akkad: The Sanctity of Language

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Words matter. But how far can language take us - or lead us away from - where we want to be? 'Words can erase and distort so many things,' says **Madeleine Thien** (*The Book of Records*). 'Justice, reason, democracy, freedom, goodness, truth—we have used these words in the service of widely different intentions.' She's joined today by **Omar El Akkad** (*One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This*), a writer who masterfully uses concise language to illuminate the unspeakable.

AI

Esther Swift: The Heartstrings of Poetry

16:30-17:30
Spiegeltent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

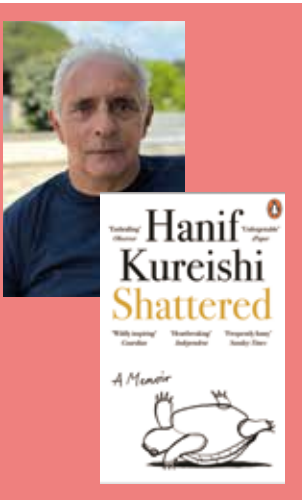
Someone once said that 'poetry is plucking at the heartstrings, and making music with them' - **Esther Swift** is, quite literally, the embodiment of this sentiment. A mesmerising harpist, she has set her eclectic, celestial music to the luminous poetry of the beloved **Jackie Kay**, Makar of Scotland from 2016 to 2021. Come and have your life heart-burstingly affirmed. *Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown*.

Utopia Lab: A Workshop with Jennifer Williams, Jo Balfour-Oatts, Jimmy Turner

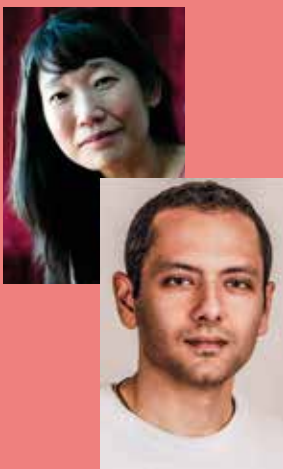
16:30-19:30
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

Presented by Edinburgh Futures Institute's creative projects team. Poet **Jennifer Williams**, visual artist **Jimmy Turner**, and academic **Jo Balfour-Oatts** invite you to consider impractical repairs of material objects. Exploring how we can repair objects with creative writing and sculpture, we'll investigate how artistic and embodied ideas and techniques can help us to imagine positive futures, affecting present change. Please bring along a broken object with personal significance that you'd like to repair in this way.

Repair



Hanif Kureishi, 15:15-16:15



Madeleine Thien & Omar El Akkad, 16:00-17:00



Esther Swift, 16:30-17:30

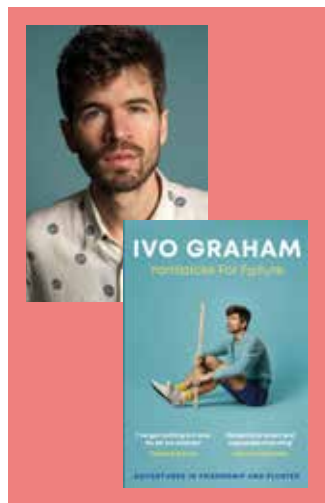
Programme key

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

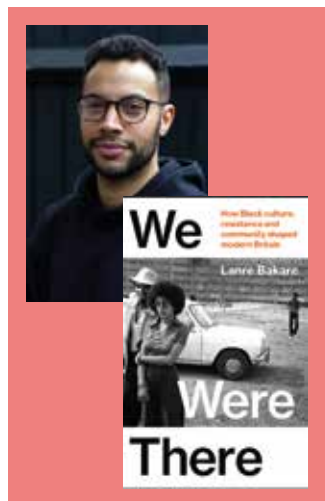
Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



Lindsey Hilsum, 17:00-18:00



Ivo Graham, 17:45-18:45



Lanre Bakare, 18:15-19:15

Polly Atkin & Joe Harkness: The Force of Nature

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

Many of us know that time in nature supports our wellbeing - but why does it? How does nature change the way we think? As **Polly Atkin** (*The Company of Owls*) watches a trio of owlets grow up, their antics inspire a bounty of branching reflections. After receiving an ADHD diagnosis in his 30s, **Joe Harkness** (*Neurodivergent by Nature*) begins to investigate the fascinating connections between nature and neurodiversity. Hear them discuss nature's influence together.

AI

Melissa Lucashenko & Tanya Talaga: Illuminating the Nations

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

Though **Melissa Lucashenko** and **Tanya Talaga** work across different genres, both explore the complexities of myth, history, and resilience from fascinating, unique perspectives. A Goorie author of Bundjalung and European heritage, Lucashenko is known in Australia for novels that quake with life and truth, while Anishinaabe-Canadian journalist Talaga examines the buried history of her country, and the fight to bring truths to light. Hear their vital conversation about unhealed wounds of the past and reclaiming narratives for a collective future. Assisted by *the Australian Government through Creative Australia*.

AI

Repair

Lindsey Hilsum: Poetry as an Act of Witness

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

Lindsey Hilsum has been a war correspondent for four decades. She's been a poetry lover for even longer. While in Ukraine, she began tweeting a poem a day, a practice which led to her compiling a collection of beloved poems alongside memories of her own work. In this moving event, Hilsum talks with us about *I Brought the War with Me* and why we turn to poetry in dark times. Chaired by Festival director **Jenny Niven**.

AI

Ivo Graham: The Glory and the Chaos

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Ivo Graham is a whirlwind of a man. A hugely popular comedian, club night DJ, podcast host, *TaskMaster* flop, and a father: he simply can't do things by halves. *Yardsticks for Failure* lays bare Graham's experience of living in chaos, and offers a gleeful glimpse behind the grubby curtain of stand-up into the bargain. There's joy and accomplishment to revel in - but also abject failure, perpetual exhaustion, and several missed trains. But hey, life is all about balance... right? Chaired by **Michael Pedersen**.

AI

Lanre Bakare, Jen Calleja & Ash Sarkar: Changing the Culture

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

Three vibrant voices shaking up assumptions on class, race, and culture join us for a perspective-shifting discussion. In *We Were There*, *Guardian* arts correspondent **Lanre Bakare** examines how Black culture and resistance from the 1970s on helped shape modern Britain. **Jen Calleja's** translation memoir *Fair* breaks down issues of class and background in the publishing industry. And in *Minority Rule*, writer and activist **Ash Sarkar** assesses how the culture wars have been weaponised to divide and rule.

AI

Repair

Titilayo Farukuoye, Michelle Lee Richardson & Ryan Vance: Fierce Salvage

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

Fierce Salvage: A Queer Words Anthology is an inspiring snapshot of current LGBTI+ Scottish writing, from memoir to poetry, edited by **Michelle Lee Richardson** and **Ryan Vance**. They are joined by **Titilayo Farukuoye**, poet and contributor, and writer **Shola von Reinhold**. Discover Scotland's rich tapestry of queer experiences through discussion and performances which celebrate the project, and explore the depths of resilience, identity, and community.

CC

Ita O'Brien: Unblurring the Lines

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

Actors place themselves in situations many would find uncomfortable - when performing sex, where's the line between simulation and reality? Intimacy co-ordinators such as the pioneering **Ita O'Brien** help not just performers but crews to create clear boundaries so everyone feels protected in such moments. In *Intimacy*, O'Brien uses her experiences on shows including *Normal People* and *Sex Education* to reflect on how we navigate sex and intimacy within ourselves, and with others.

AI

Laurie Bristow: The Ambassador's Final Dispatch

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

After a long career at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), including as director of national security, **Laurie Bristow** was British ambassador to Afghanistan in 2021 and one of the last civilians to leave when Kabul fell to the Taliban. His memoir, *Kabul: Final Call*, is a sobering account of the West's bad strategy and loss of will. Join us to hear first-hand about the harrowing human costs of applying military solutions to political problems.

AI

Ben Okri: Festival for the Broken-Hearted

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Winner of the Booker Prize, **Ben Okri** doubles the festival spirit on offer with *Madame Sosostris & the Festival for the Broken-Hearted*. Inspired by *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Wasteland*, it's written with Okri's unique and hypnotic blend of realism and magical realism, with language that conjures myth and slides into poetry. Today, he discusses bewitching fables, human connections, and the transformative power of festivals.

AI

Maggie Nelson & Oluwaseun Olayiwola: Embodied Interiority

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

Our relationships with our bodies can be both intimate and alien at once. How can we feel at home in them? Together, genre-defying writer **Maggie Nelson** (*Pathemata*) and poet and choreographer **Oluwaseun Olayiwola** (*Strange Beach*) explore how our bodies can be the sites of agony and unbridled pleasure. How might we cultivate the courage to open ourselves to new ideas of what our bodies can give and receive for the limited time that we inhabit them?

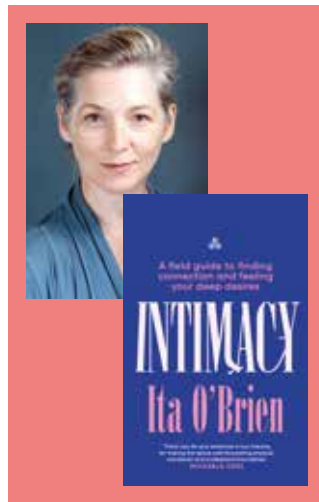
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Tim Key: L.A. Baby!

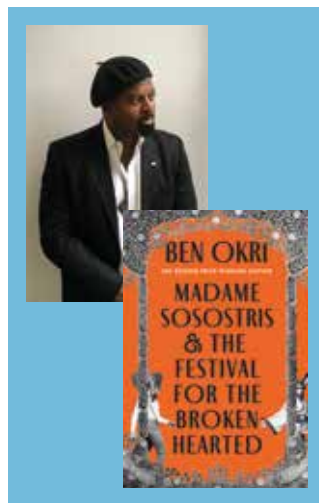
21:00-22:00
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Comedian, writer, actor, and *Taskmaster* task consultant **Tim Key** is a sell-out. But the good kind. Following a packed event with us in 2024, he returns to share *L.A. Baby!* - his new poetry collection. Created with his long-time (possibly masochistic) design collaborator, Emily Juniper, discover Key's crazy Hollywood adventures and moments of existential crisis against a backdrop of laundrettes, dive bars, and shoe-scuffed sidewalk stars, as he tries to keep himself sane amongst the unparalleled madness of Tinsel Town.

AI



Ita O'Brien, 18:45-19:45

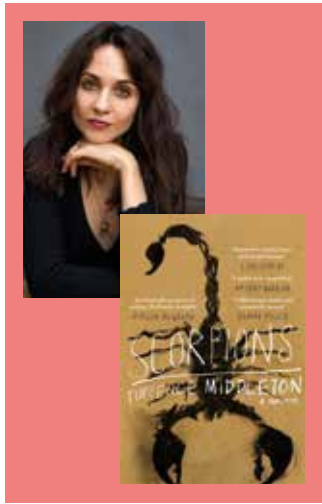


Ben Okri, 19:30-20:30

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed | British Sign Language | Live Captioned | AI Captioned | Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: Remote Appearance | Outdoor | Active | Food & Drink



Tuppence Middleton, 10:15-11:15



Ash Sarkar, 12:00-13:00



Rosie Kellett, 13:00-16:00

**Creative Repair:
Junk Journals Workshop**

10:00-12:00
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

Explore the Festival’s overarching theme of Repair through the art of junk journaling: transforming discarded ephemera into beautiful books. This hands-on workshop with bookbinder **Rachel Hazell** invites you to engage in mindful making through collage. Materials are provided, though you’re invited to bring your own ‘found handwriting’ (from crumpled shopping lists to old birthday cards) allowing you to uncover new personal stories from within their recycled fragments.

Repair

**Tuppence Middleton:
Living with Scorpions**

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

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is widely misunderstood and trivialised in daily conversation. But to **Tuppence Middleton**, the TV and film actor best known for her roles in *Downtown Abbey* and *Black Mirror*, it’s a deeply distressing condition which has shaped and impacted every facet of her life. Her new memoir, *Scorpions*, is a bleakly funny account of what it’s like to live with OCD. Join her for a candid conversation about vulnerability, courage and hope.

AI

**Anne Sebba: The Woman’s
Orchestra of Auschwitz**

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

In 1943, 50 women and girls were drafted into an orchestra within the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp by the same Nazi officers who were killing their families and friends. Though the musicians’ participation may have aided their survival, in *The Woman’s Orchestra of Auschwitz* historian **Anne Sebba** explores the deep moral complexity and personal impact of offering art to those perpetrating genocide. Hear Sebba talking to **James Naughtie** about this fascinating, troubling new book. *Supported by the AEB Charitable Trust.*

AI

**Ash Sarkar: Immigrants Aren’t
Eating Your Pets**

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

One of the left’s most prominent commentators, **Ash Sarkar** wades right into the middle of the culture wars in *Minority Rule* in hyper-intelligent, acid fashion. Join **Heather Parry** as Sarkar attempts to tear apart the modern morass of identity politics while also reckoning with some of her own long-held views. The goal? To expose the minority that’s really screwing us over.

AI

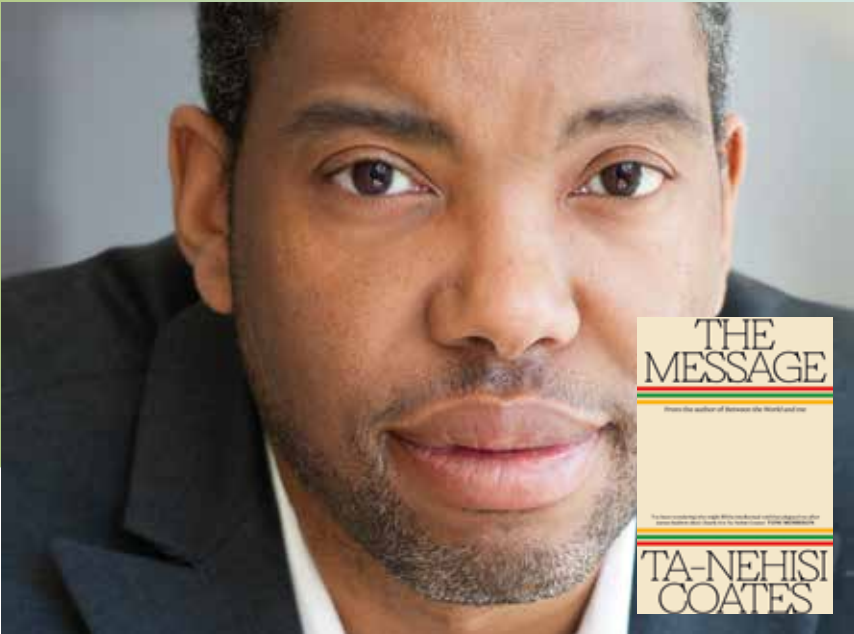
Repair

Have Lunch with Rosie Kellett

13:00-16:00
Elliott’s Studio
£100.00 [£90.00/£75.00]

You might recognise **Rosie Kellet** - chef, supper club host, and author of *In for Dinner* - from her iconic ‘Let’s make dinner for the warehouse’ Instagram reels. Today, she swaps her communal London kitchen for Elliott’s Studio, rustling up a nourishing, seasonal meal for you as she shares what it’s been like to live and cook in community for the last five years. Come away with top tips on how to eat abundantly on a budget. *Ticket includes: a welcome snack and drink, and a generous lunch with drinks on the table.*

AI



**Undo Me or Eat Me:
A Poetry Workshop with
Oluwaseun Olayiwola**

13:00-15:00
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

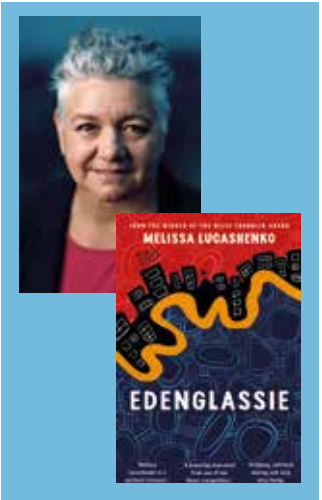
Lines are the building blocks of poems. How can these fleeting, patterned, often skimmable units of time contain worlds upon worlds in a matter of three, maybe four feet? Join poet and performer **Oluwaseun Olayiwola** to practise new methods of line generation and revision as we train our minds to sit with uncertainty and ambiguity, exploring different methods of undoing (rhythmically, syntactically, tonally, visually) and enacting compressive force when lines ‘eat’ other lines. This workshop is for poets of intermediate or advanced experience.

**Melissa Lucashenko: Torching
the Myths of Colonialism**

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

Meanjin, the traditional place name of modern-day Brisbane, was briefly known as Edenglassie, a portmanteau of Edinburgh and Glasgow. **Melissa Lucashenko**’s novel of the same name oscillates between 1800s Edenglassie and modern-day Brisbane, examining the lives of Indigenous people then and now. This is a rare opportunity to hear from one of Australia’s great contemporary authors. Hear Lucashenko unpacking this defiant, epic novel of past and present. Chaired by **Yassmin Abdel-Magied** *Assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia.*

AI



Melissa Lucashenko, 13:30-14:30

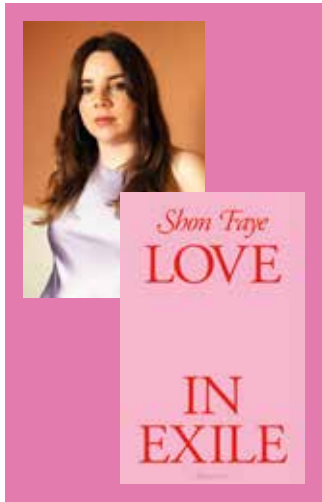
THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

**The Front List:
Ta-Nehisi Coates**

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Ta-Nehisi Coates is an award-winning, uncompromising commentator on race relations, truth, and justice, especially in America. Author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Between the World and Me*, his new book *The Message* unflinchingly explores race and conflict from South Carolina to Senegal to Gaza at a pivotal moment. He’ll discuss the urgent need for the West, and particularly America, to free itself from the myths it tells itself, and how pushing for truth is the only way to reckon with injustice.

CC



Shon Faye, 16:00-17:00



Caroline O'Donoghue, 15:00-16:00

Gurnaik Johal & Madeleine Thien: Places in Flux

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

Take imaginative flight with two international novelists whose work takes us to truly marvellous realms. **Gurnaik Johal** (Somerset Maugham Award-winner for story collection, *We Move*) presents his debut novel, *Saraswati*, where a mythical holy river flowing again causes personal and political turmoil. Meanwhile, **Madeleine Thien**'s philosophical *The Book of Records* sees a woman and her father arrive at the Sea: a fantastical place containing intellectual migrants and refugees from throughout history. In conversation with **Sana Goyal**.

AI

Caroline O'Donoghue: Sentimental Garbage – Live

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

Novelist **Caroline O'Donoghue**'s wildly popular *Sentimental Garbage* podcast is an emotionally-invested, quick-witted celebration of cultural and social topics which may seem frivolous, but hold huge meaning in our hearts, and live rent-free in our brains. From 2005's *Pride & Prejudice* film adaptation, through the works of Nora Ephron, to Taylor Swift's epic *Eras* tour, join O'Donoghue and a special guest (details online) for an open-hearted, laughter-filled evening discussing things we love (but won't always admit to).

AI

Tony Tulathimutte: Loser's Manifesto

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

Tony Tulathimutte's *Rejection* - a National Book Award-longlisted novel-in-stories - is so gratuitously of-the-moment it hurts. Garth Greenwell has called it 'a book of mad, madcap genius' - it's sex and relationships through a prism of identity, memes, and internet lore. In this boundary-pushing conversation, presented in partnership with the award-winning ESEA Lit Fest, hear **Maria Garbutt-Lucero** get to grips with Tulathimutte's audacious mind as he unpacks his hilariously grotesque work.

AI

Suzanne O'Sullivan: The Age of Diagnosis

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

With powerful search engines at our fingertips, it's never been easier to access medical advice - and potentially dangerous misinformation. In her gripping book, *The Age of Diagnosis*, leading neurologist **Suzanne O'Sullivan** explores the increasingly blurry boundaries between sickness and health. This will be a vital exploration of how to begin to navigate it all, in conversation with **Gavin Francis**.

BSL CC

Shon Faye: Love Without Bounds

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *Love in Exile*, **Shon Faye** (author of the acclaimed bestseller *The Transgender Issue*) explores what happens when we break the constraints of conventionality and embrace love in all its forms. Love, Faye argues, is as much a collective question as a personal one. This is a book of and for our times: for seeing and knowing love, in whatever form it takes. Join Faye today in what's sure to be an unmissable conversation with **Maggie Nelson**.

AI

Repair

Alayo Akinkugbe & Zarina Muhammad: Rewriting Art History

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

Can we trust art history as it's conventionally told? And who writes its story from now? With her 'A Black History of Art' Instagram, *A Shared Gaze* podcast, and book, *Reframing Blackness*, **Alayo Akinkugbe** chats about rewriting art history from an often-omitted Black perspective. And **Zarina Muhammad** from The White Pube unpacks her book *Poor Artists* (co-authored with Gabrielle de la Puente) and its wild ride through the contemporary art world via imaginative storytelling and anonymised interviews with big-name artists.

AI

An All Star Poetry Line-Up

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

Sometimes, only poetry will do. There's something in the concentrated way poets see the world that can open us up to new ways of seeing, thinking, and hoping too. We are joined by a dazzling cast of acclaimed poets performing their work side by side, featuring **Zena Agha**, **Anthony Joseph**, and **Oluwaseun Olayiwola**. A memorable event celebrating the breadth, depth and power of contemporary poetry awaits.

CC

Mike Berners-Lee: Climate Action and the Power of Truth

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

Global emissions are worse than ever. The 'polycrisis' we face reaches far beyond the climate. Why have we continued to fail when we have the means to succeed? Acclaimed researcher **Mike Berners-Lee** argues in *A Climate of Truth* that by focusing on the concept of honesty in our politics, media, and businesses, we can make a radical impact and have more efficiency than we thought possible. His conversation with us today will leave you energised for action. Chaired by **Yassmin Abdel-Magied**.

BSL CC

Michelle de Kretser: Beautiful, Radical Ideas

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

Michelle de Kretser's books smash through all preconceived notions about fiction, blending artful social observation with forms fizzing with brainy playfulness. Today, the Rathbones Folio Prize-winning author of *Scary Monsters* discusses *Theory & Practice*: her latest boundary-breaking work that's part novel, essay, and memoir. Talking with **Chitra Ramaswamy**, the celebrated Australian writer muses on the antics of critical theory, her creative process of 'questing, jesting, testing', and coming to acknowledge the shortcomings of Virginia Woolf.

AI

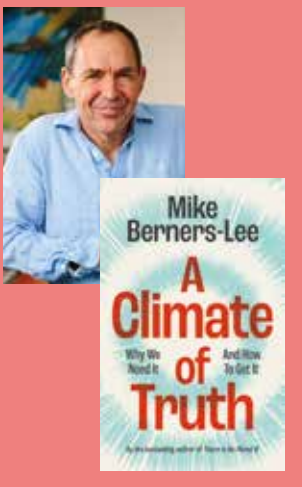
Objective Reality: a Kitchen Object Memoir Writing Workshop with Jenny Lau

17:30-19:00
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

In *An A-Z of Chinese Food (Recipes Not Included)*, writer and community organiser **Jenny Lau** observes families and cultural behaviours in Chinese life in a surprising way: from the perspective of dining and kitchen appliances. In this workshop, presented in partnership with the award-winning ESEA Lit Fest, delve into Lau's deliciously original book and start writing your own story into the memoir of an inanimate object that's lived in your kitchen for a long time. What might it know (and feel) about you?



Alayo Akinkugbe & Zarina Muhammad, 16:45-17:45



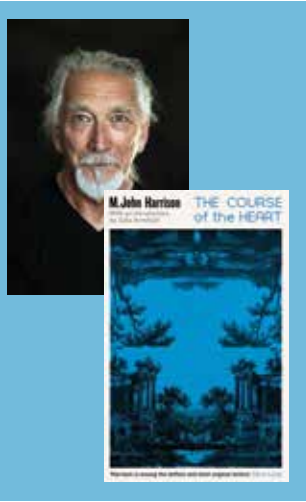
Mike Berners-Lee, 17:00-18:00

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink





M John Harrison, 18:45-19:45



Lamorna Ash & Niamh Ní Mhaoileoin, 20:00-21:00

Torrey Peters:
Dancing with Gender

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Torrey Peters' bestselling novel *Detransition, Baby* burst onto shelves in 2021. Her follow-up, the vibrant and ambitious *Stag Dance*, waltzes across four breathtaking tales that explore the space between male and female, binary and non-binary, and delight in skipping between genres. By turns gruesome, romantic, unsettling, surprising, and always inventive, join Peters as she discusses her vivid celebration of queer and trans lives across place and time with **Harry Josephine Giles**.

AI

Samuel Fisher & Will Rees:
Illness – Real and Imagined

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

Some of the most gripping Book Festival conversations are those blending fiction and non-fiction. Here, we bring together two writers whose work addresses illness. **Will Rees'** essay *Hypochondria* grapples with the phantom malady that preoccupied Kafka, Didion, Sontag, and Melville. Meanwhile, **Samuel Fisher's** novel, *Migraine*, sees London decimated by an epidemic of weather-induced migraines. What would society look like if it were organised around chronic pain?

AI

M John Harrison:
The Course of His Art

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

Titan of modern literary science fiction, **M John Harrison** has never shied away from bending genre and reimagining the form of fantasy novels. In this frank conversation, he joins **Camilla Grudova** on the rerelease of his 1990s classic *The Course of the Heart*. They reflect on why the book gained a cult-like following and Harrison will share intriguing memories of a trailblazing 50-year career that has seen his work endure across decades.

AI

Omar El Akkad & Fady Joudah:
Not Looking Away

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Egyptian-Canadian novelist and journalist **Omar El Akkad's** first non-fiction book, *One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This*, and Palestinian-American poet **Fady Joudah's** new collection, *[...]*, both respond to the genocide in Gaza with starkness, vulnerability, and immense power. This discussion will be essential for anyone seeking to understand the true human cost of the ongoing catastrophe, and the full extent of the West's complicity.

AI

Lamorna Ash & Niamh Ní Mhaoileoin:
Millennial Saints

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

Two exciting writers take on faith and religion, wielding fiction and non-fiction respectively. **Niamh Ní Mhaoileoin's** debut, *Ordinary Saints*, is a heartfelt and nuanced exploration of the Catholic church in modern Ireland, queer identity, and family. **Lamorna Ash's** *Don't Forget We're Here Forever* combines interviews and personal reflections to investigate why young people in Britain today are embracing Christianity. This will be a thought-provoking discussion on being and belonging in our modern world. Chaired by **Sasha de Buyl**.

AI



V E Schwab:
A Hunger for the Ages

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

Death's usually thought of as the end of life, but according to **V E Schwab**, author of international sensation *The Invisible Life of Addie LaRue*, it's just the beginning of something beyond our imagining. One of Waterstones' Books You Need to Read in 2025, *Bury Our Bones in the Midnight Soil* is a genre-defying story that spans centuries. Join her as she speaks to us today about her uncanny and ravenous new work.

LD AI

Hamish Hawk: Life in a
Scotch Sitting Room, Vol. 0

21:00-22:30
Spiegeltent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Join local indie songwriter **Hamish Hawk** in a rare, lyrical homage to Scotland's pre-eminent poet-eccentric: Ivor Cutler. A celebration of Cutler's dreich spoken-word masterpiece, *Life in a Scotch Sitting Room*, Hawk presents new stories and songs inspired by his own childhood home in Edinburgh, alongside unique reworkings of Cutler's original works. Joined by friends and armed with Cutler's original harmonium, this performance - a special Book Festival commission - promises an evening of wit, warmth, and words, sure to make fans of the uninitiated. Introduced by **Nicola Meighan**. This performance is repeated on Sunday 17 August at 21:00. *Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown.*

Colin Greenwood:
How to Disappear

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

Legendary alt-rock band Radiohead are worshipped by many but truly understood by few. In his intimate photographic portrait of the band, *How to Disappear* - alongside a warm, reflective essay - bassist **Colin Greenwood** reveals the candid stories behind some of the most iconic songs and scenes in modern music history in a way that only one of its own members could. Music fans won't want to miss this must-attend conversation!

AI



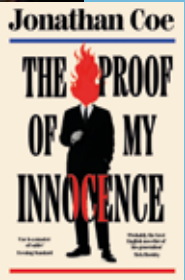
V E Schwab, 20:30-21:30



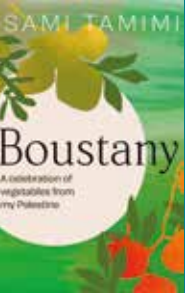
Programme key

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

Access: LD Livestreamed | BSL British Sign Language | CC Live Captioned | AI AI Captioned | LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: AI Remote Appearance | Outdoor | Active | Food & Drink



Jonathan Coe, 12:00-13:00



Sami Tamimi, 13:00-16:00

Wild Encounters: A Walking Workshop with Glen Cousquer

10:00-12:00
Meeting point: The Salisbury Centre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Writer, photographer, and academic **Glen Cousquer** passionately advocates for the emotional and spiritual power of walking, especially off the beaten trail. In this gentle walking workshop, we'll explore one of Edinburgh's wild places and learn how we can meet nature in any given moment, whether that be the wind dancing across our faces, or the changing colours of leaves. Together, we'll practice ecological pilgrimage to slow down and be more present in our lives, and with nature. Meeting point: outside The Salisbury Centre. Full details online.

📍📍

Jenny Lau, Chitra Ramaswamy & Sami Tamimi: Food and Home

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

Food profoundly shapes our sense of home and belonging, no matter which country or cuisine we identify most closely with. **Jenny Lau** (*An A-Z of Chinese Food (Recipes Not Included)*), **Sami Tamimi** (*Boustany*), and *Times* food critic **Chitra Ramaswamy** come together to discuss the kaleidoscope of stories and connections that come alive through the simple acts of cooking, eating, and sharing recipes. Nourishing conversation awaits!

AI

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Halle O'Neal: The Buddhist Approach to Healing

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

Healing practices - physical, emotional, or spiritual - are part of what make us human; they're also key tenets of Buddhism. They come in a wide range of inventive options, including interacting with relics, repairing broken objects, even eating slips of scripture! Join **Dr Halle O'Neal**, co-director of the Edinburgh Centre for Buddhist Studies, for this special discussion on the myriad forms of repair and healing offered by Buddhism across history and cultures, including for everyday challenges like illness, childbirth, and life after death. *Supported by Edinburgh Futures Institute.*

AI

Repair

Creative Repair: Junk Journals Workshop

11:00-13:00
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

Explore the Festival's overarching theme of Repair through the art of junk journaling: transforming discarded ephemera into beautiful books. This hands-on workshop with bookbinder **Rachel Hazell** invites you to engage in mindful making through collage. Materials are provided, though you're invited to bring your own 'found handwriting' (from crumpled shopping lists to old birthday cards) allowing you to uncover new personal stories from within their recycled fragments.

Repair

Claire Mitchell & Zoe Venditozzi: Women, Not Witches

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

Campaign group Witches of Scotland are on a mission to illuminate the unjust killings of nearly 4,000 Scottish women in the 1500s. They want an official pardon, an apology, and appropriate memorialisation of those who were killed. Human rights lawyer **Claire Mitchell** and novelist **Zoe Venditozzi** are here to expose this dark side of Scottish history with their illuminating book *How to Kill A Witch: A Guide for the Patriarchy*.

📺 AI

Jonathan Coe: Cosy Crime Meets Political Thriller

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

The *Independent* called **Jonathan Coe** the 'funniest serious novelist' in Britain. In *The Proof of My Innocence*, a blistering political critique of a chaotic post-Brexit Britain gets wrapped up in a murder mystery featuring a trepidatious reporter, a sinister rightwing thinktank, and a literary enigma. The bestselling author of *Middle England* talks with **Samuel Fisher** about this riotous blend of satire, suspense, and crime caper.

AI



Have Lunch with Sami Tamimi

13:00-16:00
Elliott's Studio
£100.00 [£90.00/£75.00]

In his first solo cookbook, *Boustany*, **Sami Tamimi** draws inspiration from growing up in Palestine, eating produce from his grandfather's luscious, lovingly tended garden: vegetables and herbs that transformed into dishes bringing family and community together. Today, the award-winning chef, restaurateur, and co-author of *Falastin* prepares a delicious meal for you, reflecting on these roots and sharing the emotions and memories with which his food is infused. Join us for this love letter to fresh, vibrant ingredients - and to Palestine. *Ticket includes: a welcome snack and drink, and a generous lunch with drinks on the table.*

📺



Michelle de Kretser & Linn Ullmann: Creativity in the Messy Gaps

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

'I no longer wanted to write novels that read like novels,' wrote *Theory & Practice* author **Michelle de Kretser**. '...I wanted a form that allowed for formlessness and mess. It occurred to me that one way to find that form might be to tell the truth.' This search for truth using unconventional forms is shared by **Linn Ullmann**, whose *Girl*, 1983 is a genre-defying quest through the past. Join these inventive writers discussing their category-defying works that so searingly explore power, womanhood, and memory.

AI

The Front List: Anne Applebaum & Edward Wong

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

It's hard to overstate the extent to which the Trump administration has disrupted the past 70 years' world order. Journalists **Anne Applebaum** (*Atlantic* columnist and author of the award-winning *Twilight of Democracy*, and *Autocracy Inc*) and **Edward Wong** (Diplomatic Correspondent for the *New York Times* and author of *At the Edge of Empire*) are here to report on the seismic shifts in the rules of engagement, and whether democracy can ever truly be safeguarded. Chaired by **James West**. *Supported by the Turtleton Charitable Trust.*

CC

Who Will be Remembered Here

14:45-15:45
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

2025 marks 30 years since the first major Pride event in Scotland, yet queer histories have existed for as long as Scotland has. *who will be remembered here* enlivens these histories through performances, films, and an anthology. Project curators **Lewis Hetherington** and **C J Mahony** join contributors **Mae Diansangu** and **Harry Josephine Giles** for a discussion of how we reconsider the stories of the past, and what it means to 'remember into the future'.

BSL CC

Robert Crawford: New Words for an Old World

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

Poet, critic and literary historian **Robert Crawford** nimbly traverses the globe in his new poetry collection, *Old World*, in this special launch event. Crawford is one of Scotland's most esteemed poets and thinkers, deftly weaving between different poetic forms, from haiku to riddle. Join us for an enlivening discussion on the issues afflicting an ailing planet - from climate change to AI - and poetry's role in our fragile modern society.

AI

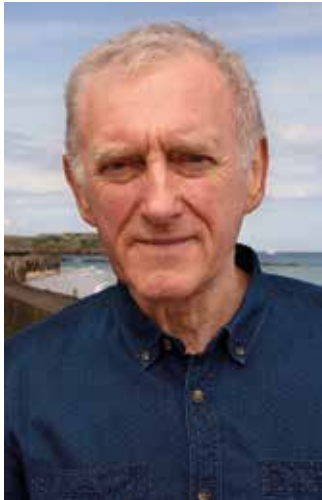
Programme key

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

Access: 📺 Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance 📍 Outdoor 📺 Active 📺 Food & Drink



Halle O'Neal, 16:30-18:00



James Kelman, 17:00-18:00



Hannah Lavery, 17:00-18:00

Lucy Mercer, Nina Mingya Powles & Stephanie Sy-Quia: Making Matters

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

Meet three creatives whose artistic practice incorporates writing and artmaking - from glass poetry and candle pouring to zine making, sewing, and linocut printing. **Lucy Mercer, Nina Mingya Powles**, and **Stephanie Sy-Quia** join us for this special event in partnership with *Wasafiri*, an international literary magazine showcasing the very best of contemporary writing. With *Wasafiri*'s editor, **Sana Goyal**, hear them discuss creativity, repair, and how they draw on their personal and cultural landscapes to make, and find, meaning with their hands and words.

AI

Repair

Madeleine Thien & Priya Basil: Objects Talk Back

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The Humboldt Forum's 'Objects Talk Back' project invited authors to select an object from the museum's collection and write about it however they wished. Novelist **Madeleine Thien** chose the painting, 'Three Uyghur Princes'. She talks with project curator **Priya Basil** about her approach to this unusual brief, how encounters with objects can remake us, and how the project intersects with one of the thorniest parts of our Repair theme - reparations - by engaging with gaps, erasures, and (un)truths in colonial histories.

AI

Repair

Kintsugi as Repair: A Workshop with Halle O'Neal

16:30-18:00
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

In Japanese culture, there's a philosophy that imperfections should be embraced, and this is embodied in the centuries-old art of kintsugi, in which gold lacquer is used to repair ceramics. Rather than hiding the cracks, this visible act of mending illuminates them, creating something beautiful out of what was once broken. Capturing imaginations across the world, this is your chance to absorb the history of kintsugi and its modern evolution with artist and academic **Halle O'Neal** as you enact the practice yourself. Kintsugi kits provided.

Repair

Louise Kenward: Redefining Nature Writing

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

Moving Mountains is a new and compelling anthology of nature writing, from the perspective of disabled and chronically ill authors. Through 25 pieces, deftly edited by **Louise Kenward**, this is not a chronicle of overcoming and conquering, but rather of living with and connecting. Join Kenward and contributors for a mind-opening conversation on how bringing diverse experiences to the fore will change the world of nature writing for good.

AI

James Kelman: Your Stories are Your Own

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

Join lifelong literary radical **James Kelman**, whose commitment to the power and truth of 'ordinary' life - sometimes tragic, but always inspiringly tender and human - remains undimmed. Talking with us about his new collections of short fiction (*The Story of the Stone*) and selected interviews (*All We Have is the Story*), the Booker Prize-winner asks us to remember that language and the freedom to create belongs to us all - so, how might we use it?

AI



Rachel Charlton-Dailey: The Ongoing Fight for Disability Rights

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

This year marks 30 years since the Disability Discrimination Act. At the time, this milestone in legislation made it illegal to discriminate against someone because of their disability. To mark this significant anniversary, activist **Rachel Charlton-Dailey** joins **Caro Clarke** to discuss *Ramping Up Rights* which brings together inspiring stories of over 100 years of disability activism.

AI

Disrupting the Narrative – A Performance

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

Do you think you know Edinburgh? What about the parts of its story it prefers to conceal? This theatrical poetry performance from Edinburgh's former Makar **Hannah Lavery** alongside fellow poets **Jeda Pearl**, **Shasta Hanif Ali**, **Niall Moorjani**, and **Alycia Pirmohamed**, illuminates the hidden history of the city, its institutions, and its people. Set to music by composer **Niroshini Thambar**, and featuring evocative images from photographer **Kat Gollock**, your understanding of Edinburgh will be changed forever by this special event. *Originally commissioned by Push the Boat Out, with support from Edinburgh 900.*

AI

Ali Smith: Brave New Words

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

Nimble, playful, canny, subversive - four-time Booker Prize-shortlisted **Ali Smith** returns to the Festival with *Gliff*. Written with her singular blend of whimsy and gravitas, the novel is a near-future dystopia, meditating on themes of resistance, the making of meaning, and how we can confront dark times with hope. Hear one of fiction's finest voices talking about a novel that, according to *The Bee Sting* author Paul Murray, is both 'pitch-black' and 'tender, hilarious, and ultimately uplifting'.

AI

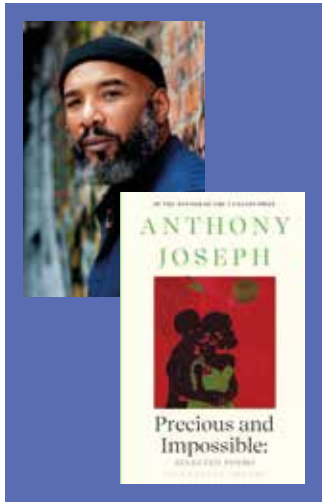


Rachel Charlton-Dailey, 17:00-18:00

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



Anthony Joseph, 18:30-19:30

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Maggie Nelson: How Does a Body Connect with Itself?

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Maggie Nelson’s intellectually nimble works of non-fiction (including *The Argonauts*) have earned her both Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships along with a reputation as one her generation’s most versatile thinkers. Her latest work, *Pathemata: Or, The Story of My Mouth*, is a characteristically experimental reckoning with her own chronic pain, twisted through dreams and her restless imagination, the pandemic pulsing insistently in the background. Join **Harry Josephine Giles** for a fascinating conversation with one of America’s most innovative writers. *Supported by the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.*



Anthony Joseph: Precious and Impossible

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

What a delight to welcome **Anthony Joseph** - one of our greatest living poets - back to the Festival for 2025. Sharing his lyrical, incisive new collection, *Precious and Impossible: Selected Poems*, the T.S. Elliot Award-winning poet (and novelist, musician, academic, and more besides) chats about his three-decade-long career and how he believes that poets have become the ‘historians and biographers of people’.



Bella Mackie: Killing Your Darling Family

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

Following the runaway success of her debut novel, *How to Kill Your Family*, bestselling author **Bella Mackie** joins us at the Festival. Her new hilarious murder mystery, *What a Way to Go*, centres on the thoroughly repugnant Anthony Wistern and his equally dislikeable wife and adult children, as they all (including Anthony’s ghost) grapple the fallout of his death. Mackie chats to us about the fun of writing characters readers love to hate. Chaired by **Nyla Ahmad**.



THE EDWIN MORGAN TRUST EVENT

Edwin Morgan: A Legacy from Translation to Liberation

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

Edwin Morgan was many things: the first Makar of Scotland, a prolific writer (with over 60 published works), a passionate translation advocate, and a person with a kaleidoscopic range of interests. Although sensationally generous with his words and spirit, he did not publicly come out as a gay man until he was 70, bringing new meaning to his previous work and a sense of liberation to what came after. Today, writers including **Colin Bramwell** and **Gregory Woods** talk about poetry, queerness, translation, and freedom.



Kintsugi as Repair: A Workshop with Halle O’Neal

19:00-20:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

In Japanese culture, there’s a philosophy that imperfections should be embraced, and this is embodied in the centuries-old art of kintsugi, in which gold lacquer is used to repair ceramics. Rather than hiding the cracks, this visible act of mending illuminates them, creating something beautiful out of what was once broken. Capturing imaginations across the world, this is your chance to absorb the history of kintsugi and its modern evolution with artist and academic **Halle O’Neal** as you enact the practice yourself. Kintsugi kits provided.



Fady Joudah: The Hearts of a Catastrophe

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In his new poetry collection, *[...]*, Palestinian-American poet, translator, physician, and winner of the 2024 Jackson Poetry Prize **Fady Joudah** responds to the annihilation of Gaza in real-time. Offering multiple views of the world through a Palestinian lens across centuries and continents, his work also reflects moments of love and joy, while forcing us not to turn away from the continuing horror. Moving, eloquent, and essential, Joudah explores the role of poets and poetry in making the impact of inhumane actions understood. Chaired by **Zena Agha**.



Dylin Hardcastle & Seán Hewitt: Closed and Open Hearts

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

Meet the authors of two poetic novels where young queer characters come of age. In **Dylin Hardcastle**’s *A Language of Limbs*, the aftermath of one summer night ripples across decades as two teenage girls decide whether to act on their desires. In *Open, Heaven*, poet **Seán Hewitt** follows his acclaimed memoir, *All Down Darkness Wide*, with a debut about a teenage boy who falls for his charismatic neighbour in their small village. *Supported by Culture Ireland.*



Adrian Tchaikovsky: The Darkness Looked Back

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

Science fiction has always had a unique capacity to address the big philosophical questions, especially those asking us to extend our purview beyond a human-centric view. In *Bee Speaker* and *Shroud*, Arthur C Clarke Award-winning writer **Adrian Tchaikovsky** gives us two novels doing just that. Back after a knockout event with us last year, don’t miss Tchaikovsky chatting with **Doug Johnstone** about everything from bioethics and insects to how we might communicate the incommunicable.



Hamish Hawk: Life in a Scotch Sitting Room, Vol. 0

21:00-22:30
Spiegeltent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Join local indie songwriter **Hamish Hawk** in a rare, lyrical homage to Scotland’s pre-eminent poet-eccentric: Ivor Cutler. A celebration of Cutler’s dreich spoken-word masterpiece, *Life in a Scotch Sitting Room*, Hawk presents new stories and songs inspired by his own childhood home in Edinburgh, alongside unique reworkings of Cutler’s original works. Joined by friends and armed with Cutler’s original harmonium, this performance - a special Book Festival commission - promises an evening of wit, warmth, and words, sure to make fans of the uninitiated. Introduced by **Nicola Meighan**. This performance is repeated on Saturday 16 August at 21:00. *Supported by Sir Ewan and Lady Brown.*



Bella Mackie, 18:45-19:45



Fady Joudah, 19:30-20:30



Hamish Hawk, 21:00-22:30

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink





Kate Foster, 12:15-13:15

First Edition: The Critics

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

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, and trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is, so in our First Edition events you can 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 *Guardian* theatre critic **Arifa Akbar** and *Times* restaurant critic **Chitra Ramaswamy**.

AI

Kerri Andrews & Roger Clough: Walking for Life

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Who do you picture when you imagine hikers? Perhaps not those nearing the final chapters of life, or those in the maelstrom of motherhood. Yet writers **Roger Clough** and **Kerri Andrews** are both walkers and both at a crossroad. Clough’s *Oldenland* interrogates how we learn to be old, while Andrews’ *Pathfinding* brings mothers in the outdoors to the fore. A fascinating discussion awaits: of how walking and writing can inform a way forward for life.

AI

Marianne Brown & Joni Buchanan: No Woman is an Island

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

Dive into history, the environment, and the Scottish Isles in this conversation with environmental journalist **Marianne Brown** and Gaelic Literature Awards-shortlisted **Joni Buchanan**. In *The Shetland Way*, Brown arrives on Shetland for her father’s funeral then can’t leave due to lockdown; there, a new windfarm’s development causes tension as islanders fear for their fragile local environment. Meanwhile, in *Women of the Hebrides*, Buchanan tells of women’s historic contribution to these islands in English and Gaelic.

AI

Anna Groundwater: Finding Scotland’s Place in World History

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

Though small in landmass, Scotland and her people have had a mighty impact on the world over many centuries. In *Connecting Scotland’s History*, **Anna Groundwater** (National Museum of Scotland’s principal curator of Renaissance and Early Modern History) demonstrates the richness, depth, and diversity of Scotland’s story. Hear her talking about the immersive timeline which charts 2,000 years of Scots history alongside its British and world equivalents.

AI

Open Book Shared Reading

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.

Adam Alexander, Andy Hamilton & Mo Wilde: Wild Solutions

11:30-12:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From foraging to seed saving, and the joy of rediscovering nature, **Adam Alexander**, **Andy Hamilton**, and **Mo Wilde** offer practical wisdom and philosophical insights. Alexander’s *The Accidental Seed Heroes*, Hamilton’s *New Wild Order* and Wilde’s *Free Food*, each offer a unique perspective on our relationship with the natural world. Join them for a wide-ranging discussion about how cultivating a deeper connection with nature might be the key to saving us all.

AI

Repair

Alexis Okeowo: Deep in the Heart of America

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

America has two powerfully competing stories: the home of Liberty which welcomes all, and the isolationist nation which fears difference. Join *New Yorker* staff writer, PEN Award-winner, and daughter of Nigerian immigrants, **Alexis Okeowo**, to discuss *Blessings and Disasters*: a surprising personal journey through the auto plants and Amazon warehouses of her home state, Alabama, where we might better understand both sides of an unseen America which has global importance.

AI

AI Copyrights and Wrongs

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

As more writers discover their work has been ‘scraped’, can AI ever be harnessed positively, or is it destined to damage both storytellers and the art of writing itself? After a year of public consultations and pushback on issues around copyright and livelihoods, what does it mean to work creatively, or collaboratively, with AI? Join **Ewa Luger**, co-programme director of AHRC’s Bridging Responsible AI Divides (BRAID) programme, talking with author **Heather Parry** and artist-researcher **Pip Thornton** about our futures with AI.

AI



THE DIGBY BROWN EVENT

The Front List: Ally McCoist

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Known to many simply as ‘Super Ally’, **Ally McCoist** is one of Scotland’s best-known sportspeople - but aside from being a former star of our national football team, he’s also one of its biggest fans. In his new autobiography, *Dear Scotland: On the Road with the Tartan Army*, and in today’s special event, he’ll take audiences on an unforgettable journey through his sporting career, reflect on the highs (and lows) of following Scotland, and share some of his most side-splitting stories.

CC

Kate Foster: Echoes of Edinburgh’s Past

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

The remarkable, dramatic story of Maggie Dickson (‘Half Hangit Maggie’) has intrigued and horrified Grassmarket drinkers for decades. In *The Mourning Necklace*, **Kate Foster** breathes new life into the story of Maggie’s forbidden affair, secret pregnancy, and botched execution, using her captivating writing to shed light on women of the past, as she did in Women’s Prize-shortlisted novel *The Maiden*. Be whisked back to 1720s Edinburgh via Foster’s superlative storytelling today.

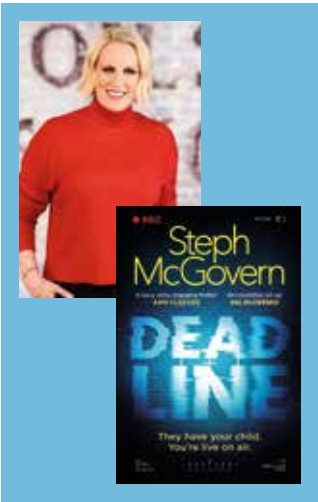
AI

Steph McGovern: Lights, Camera, Kidnap

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

Steph McGovern is no stranger to television; as an award-winning broadcaster, podcaster, and host of her own live daily show, she has seen her fair share of sets. But none as terrifying as the backdrop to her debut novel *Deadline*: live on air, TV reporter Rose’s children go missing and she’s the only one who can save them. Join Steph and go behind the scenes of this enticing thriller as she talks to **Nicola Sturgeon**.

AI



Steph McGovern, 12:45-13:45

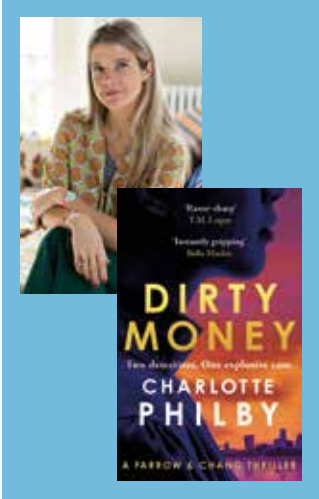
Programme key

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Richard Lloyd Parry & Andrey Kurkov, 13:15-14:15



Charlotte Philby, 13:45-14:45



Colum McCann, 15:00-16:00

Richard Lloyd Parry & Andrey Kurkov: How to Resist

13:15-14:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Political fiction helps us to make sense of, interrogate, and criticise the realities of enforced political systems on our daily lives. The venerable *Times* foreign correspondent **Richard Lloyd Parry** brings us the Conrad-esque *In the Green Heart*; and with *The Stolen Heart*, one of Ukraine's greatest living writers, **Andrey Kurkov**, embodies his country's irrepressible spirit of improvisational anarchy. Today, we meet these two eminent authors to question - resistance at what cost?

AI

Charlotte Philby: Dirty Money

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

As the granddaughter of notorious Russian double agent Kim Philby, **Charlotte Philby** knows a thing or two about mysteries. But her detective-duo novel, *Dirty Money*, isn't like other crime-solving fiction: there are two women at the helm. Philby joins us at this thrilling event to discuss writing strong female protagonists, her writing influences, and how her family ties drew her to the detective genre.

AI

Beyond the Archives with Jo Clifford & Jen Hadfield

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

Now in its centenary year, the National Library of Scotland is a treasure trove of Scotland's literary past - but did you know it also cares for the archives of our nation's contemporary writers? Today, we explore the idea of a 'living archive' with playwright **Jo Clifford** and poet **Jen Hadfield**. Join them for a conversation about building an archive, the creative and curatorial choices involved, and discover the personal objects that fuel each writer's creative life.

AI

Helen Carr & Lorna Hutson: Eras of Change

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

Join two authors unpicking the grand narratives that have birthed the image of the British Isles. **Helen Carr** uncovers the untold stories of the 14th-century Plantagenet era, through revolution, plague, and social change, in *Sceptred Isle*, while **Lorna Hutson's** *England's Insular Imagining: The Elizabethan Erasure of Scotland* uses the idea of a 'sceptred isle' as a jumping off point to examine the inconvenient reality of Scotland for Elizabethan England. Hear both authors in conversation today.

AI

Colum McCann: Heart of Darkness at the Bottom of the Sea

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

Has the ultra-connected nature of modern life left humanity more lonely? Are some connections better severed? In **Colum McCann's** *Twist*, a journalist is sent to report on the repair of the undersea cables that make modern communication possible when the vessel's captain vanishes. Today, the National Book Award-winning author of *Let the Great World Spin* talks with Festival director **Jenny Niven** about his dark new Conrad-esque novel and the power of stories to repair a broken world. *Supported by Culture Ireland.*

AI

Repair

Nicholas P Money & Siôn Parkinson: The Possibilities of Mushrooms

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

Mushrooms can be misunderstood, even feared, so when Margaret Atwood said at last year's Festival, 'mushrooms are going to be big in the future', we knew we needed to go deeper. They're used as food, building material, positive environmental disrupters, and have therapeutic use too; their spores may even affect local weather patterns and promote rainfall. Today, visual artist, composer, and author **Siôn Parkinson** (*Stinkhorn*) talks with mycologist **Nicholas P Money** (*Molds, Mushrooms and Medicines*) about the hidden role of fungi inside and all around us.

BSL CC

Repair

Lucy Inglis: Where We Began

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

Whatever our journey since, we were all born into this world. But have we ever considered the ancient nature of birth, and how it connects us? In *Born: A History of Childbirth*, cultural historian **Lucy Inglis** charts the battle for control over reproduction, birth, and women's bodies, exploring the myriad experiences of birth across time. Expect a fascinating discussion, chaired by **Devi Sridhar**, on the medical, scientific, political, and social changes that have influenced childbirth - and will impact all those who come next.

AI

Kristin Anderson & Lady Unchained: Unlocking the Arts

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

Cultural experiences are a proven springboard for positive change and rehabilitation in the criminal justice system. Yet, despite numerous interventions over the last 50 years, arts provision in UK prisons remains inconsistent. In *The Barlinnie Special Unit: Art, Punishment and Innovation* **Dr Kirstin Anderson** digs into the history of the radical HMP Barlinnie Special unit. While in *Behind Bars*, poet **Lady Unchained** advocates for creative life in and after prison. They join our director of Communities and Equalities **Noëlle Cobden** for a thought-provoking discussion.

AI

Henry McLeish & James Mitchell: Scottish Devolution - How's It Going?

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Henry McLeish (former Scottish first minister and leader of the Labour Party in Scotland) and **James Mitchell** (director of the Academy of Government at the University of Edinburgh): two authors with heavyweight viewpoints on Scottish politics and devolution. Their new book, *Unfinished Business*, looks back on the achievements, challenges, and possibilities presented by the creation of the modern Scottish Parliament in 1998. An essential event for anyone intrigued by Scottish politics' workings. Chaired by **Brian Taylor**.

AI

Repair



Kirstin Anderson, 15:45-16:45



Henry McLeish & James Mitchell, 16:00-17:00

Programme key

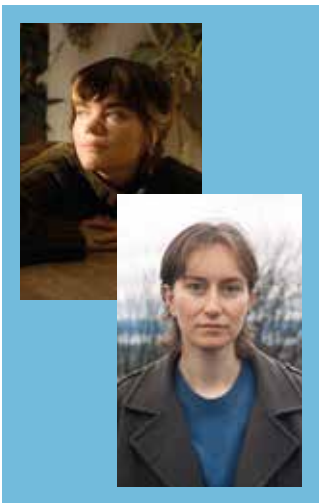
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Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

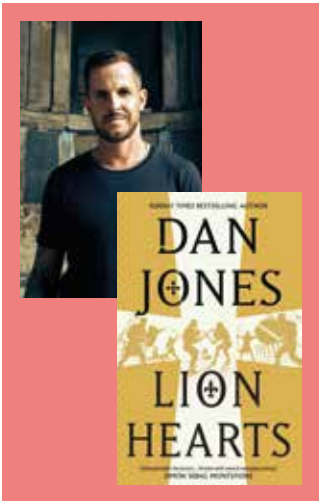




Derek Thompson, 17:00-18:00



Saba Sams & Alessandra Thom, 17:30-18:30



Dan Jones, 17:45-18:45

Poets on Film

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

Witness the fusion of poetry and film, through a collaboration between WritersMosaic and the Adrian Brinkerhoff Poetry Foundation. This live event features readings and screenings, showcasing the power of spoken word through a cinematic lens, where poets including **Anthony Anaxagorou**, **Jo Clement**, and **Marjorie Lotfi** encounter the work of filmmakers Rob Akin and Savannah Acquah. Prepare to have your creative fires stoked by this glorious call-and-response between literary and visual cultures. Chaired by **Colin Grant**.

AI

Derek Thompson: More to Go Around

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

Leading US commentator **Derek Thompson** is an author, podcaster, and journalist at the *Atlantic*, and a self-described progressive. His first book, *Hit Makers: How to Succeed in an Age of Distraction* was a bestseller, and in *Abundance* - co-authored with *New York Times* columnist Ezra Klein - he argues that the current method of governance in the US is broken. Today he explains his belief that bolder, more dynamic government can counter the fear-driven politics driven by perceptions of scarcity, and ensure there's plenty to go around.

AI

Saba Sams & Alessandra Thom: Exciting New Forms

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

Winner of the BBC National Short Story Award, **Saba Sams** joins us with *Gunk*, her pacey debut novel about love, family, and messily complex relationships. Joining her is **Alessandra Thom**, winner of 2023's Scottish Book Trust New Writers Award. Thom's Edinburgh-set debut, *Summer Hours*, is a sizzling story of what happens when the lines of friendship are blurred. Sams and Thom sit down to discuss their sparky new novels.

AI

Dan Jones: A Heart-Pounding Finale

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

We all have characters that stay with us long after we stop reading. So how does it feel when you've spent a decade writing characters, and the time comes to put that last full stop on the page? **Dan Jones** is finding out. Join the bestselling historian and novelist as he discusses *Lion Hearts*: the thrilling final instalment of *Essex Dogs*, his epic trilogy set during the Hundred Years War. Chaired by **Alice Winn**.

AI

Angus Peter Campbell: Rhymes and Reels

18:00-19:00
Spiegeltent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

The worlds of words and music coalesce in this special family affair featuring award-winning poet and novelist **Angus Peter Campbell** and his daughters, **Brighde**, **Ciorstaidh**, and **Steaphanaidh Chaimbeul**, all professional musicians. Join Campbell as he presents readings from his works, in both English and Gaelic, interspersed with musical accompaniment from the small pipes, clàrsach, accordion, piano, and more. Expect tales drawn from Hebridean mythology and folklore, Scottish history, and magic realism, alongside the sounds of contemporary trad and folk music.

AI

David Szalay: What Makes a Life?

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

Ranging from communist Hungary to the London of the super-rich, **David Szalay's** *Flesh* unravels a man via a story collection hiding inside a novel. Today, meet an already garlanded writer; one blessed with rare authority when dealing with the most compelling of subjects: life in glorious technicolour. And it's all there to be discussed: masculinity, sex, desire, attainment, money, success, and prosperity equating to success - and the fallacy of it all.

AI

Mark Haddon: Curious, Different, Human

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

Mark Haddon, who gave us the genre-defying *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, has always thought outside the box. That's especially true of his latest collection of stories, *Dogs and Monsters*: eclectic retellings of Greek myths wherein the ancient speaks to the contemporary. Today, in conversation with **Chris Power**, Haddon asks what it is that makes some stories, myths, and parables persevere (and adapt) across millennia.

BSL CC

Together We Repair

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

We believe that everyone has a story to tell and that stories help us make sense of our world. We've challenged local writers and poets, this year, to respond to 2025's Festival theme: Repair. Join us as we bring them together to perform their work: a patchwork of ideas on how to make the world a better place. Today featuring writing and performances from the **Ecas Reading and Creative Writing Group**.

AI

Repair

Anne Applebaum: The New Autocracy

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

An expert in Soviet history and a writer for the *Economist*, the *Spectator* and the *Atlantic*, **Anne Applebaum** is a hugely respected voice in global current affairs, not to mention a Pulitzer Prize-winner for *Gulag: A History*. Following her recent books *Twilight of Democracy* and *Autocracy Inc*, this is an essential hour with a writer who has turned an urgently-needed spotlight on a new kind of 21st century dictatorship - and how to resist it.

AI

Arifa Akbar & Dan Richards: Because the Night Belongs to Us

20:15-21:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Take a journey into the darkness with two authors whose latest books explore the way the nocturnal hours shape us. In *Wolf Moon*, by *Guardian* theatre critic and *Consumed* author **Arifa Akbar**, and *Overnight*, by **Dan Richards**, this hinterland of nightmares and possibility is revealed with a personal touch. Join them as they discuss the hidden working, creative, and personal lives which carry on while the world sleeps.

AI

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND EVENT

Will Hutton: National Remedies

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

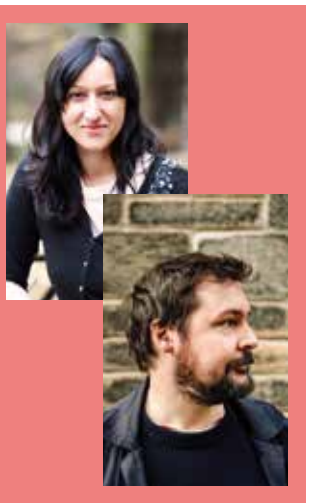
How Britain has gone wrong is a frequent conversational gambit, but it's seldom followed up with concrete solutions. These are just what political economist and former *Observer* editor-in-chief, **Will Hutton**, offers in *This Time No Mistakes*. Discussing with **Yuan Yang** the failures of both Left and Right over the last 50 years, Hutton outlines a radical (but achievable) future where capitalism is repurposed and democracy reformed, to create a society that supports us all.

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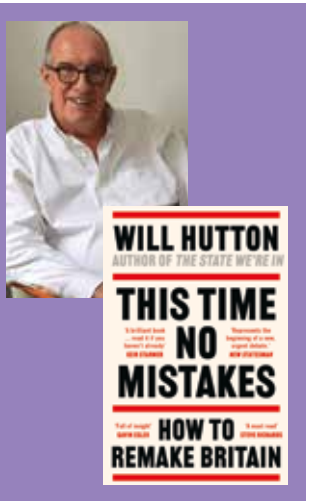
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Mark Haddon, 18:45-19:45



Arifa Akbar & Dan Richards, 20:15-21:15

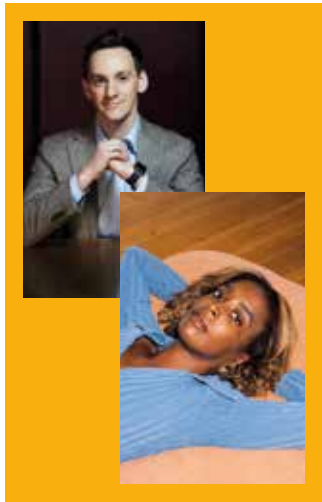


Will Hutton, 20:30-21:30

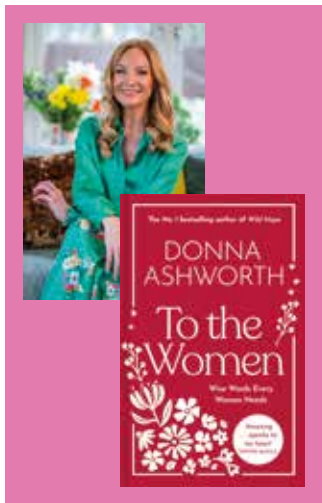
Programme key

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

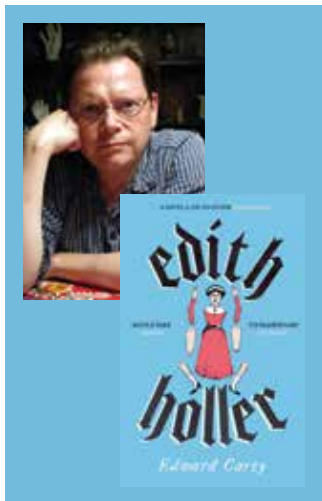
Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



Derek Thompson & Alexis Okeowo, 10:00-11:00



Donna Ashworth, 11:00-12:00



Edward Carey, 12:15-13:15

First Edition:
Reporting on America

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

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, and trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is, so in our First Edition events you can 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 **Derek Thompson** (*Atlantic*) and **Alexis Okeowo** (*New Yorker*).

AI

Donna Ashworth:
An Ode to Women

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

Daughters, lovers, sisters, friends – relationships take many forms, but perhaps most important are the ones women have with themselves. *To the Women* is the latest inspirational poetry collection from **Donna Ashworth**, a writer who took the internet by storm back in 2020 when her poem 'History Will Remember When the World Stopped' went viral. She joins **Sam Baker**, talking about her project to celebrate the power, strength, and passion of women.

AI

Abigail Dean & Polly Clark:
Love, Loss, and the Aftermath

11:30-12:30
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

This event brings together two powerful writers, **Abigail Dean** (whose *Girl A* was a *New York Times* bestseller) and T.S. Eliot Prize winner **Polly Clark**: both masters of taut, thrillingly emotive writing. *The Death of Us* and *Ocean* examine characters who are caught up in events and forces beyond their control, and the tragic consequences that ricochet in the aftermath. They join us today for a thought-provoking discussion of love, tragedy, healing, and forgiveness.

AI

Fresh Words: A Writing Chance

12:00-13:00
Spiegeltent
Pay What You Can

It's lunchtime, and (hallelujah!) there's no need to doomscroll over a sad desk salad. Be the first to discover the literary stars of the future, instead. In partnership with Scottish Book Trust and other leading talent spotters across the UK, this lively lunchtime event showcases electrifying new voices, so grab your seat before everyone else does. Today, we partner with New Writing North's A Writing Chance, hearing readings from writers including **Debora Maité** and **Sophie Underwood**.

AI

Edward Carey:
Theatre of the Absurd

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

The multifaceted **Edward Carey** is a novelist, playwright, and illustrator whose creations have a Gothic sensibility, at once enchanting and unsettling. His eccentric new work, *Edith Holler*, tells the story of a young woman trapped in a theatre she believes will crumble should she ever leave. Today Carey speaks to us about his characteristically unconventional love letter to the stage and those who write for it, and his multidisciplinary approach to writing.

AI

Alistair Moffat:
Scotland in a Lifetime

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

Prolific social historian and Edinburgh favourite, **Alistair Moffat** returns to discuss *To See Ourselves: A Personal History of Scotland Since 1950*. Through this latest work, Moffat chronicles the radical changes seen in every aspect of Scottish life over the last 75 years: from politics and society to the arts and environment. In this fascinating conversation, Moffat shares recollections of events and eyewitness accounts. Expect poignant reminiscence and insightful opinions.

AI



HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

The Front List:
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (*Half of a Yellow Sun*, *Americanah*)'s feverishly anticipated new novel, *Dream Count*, has been a decade in the making, and follows the interconnected lives of four immigrant women between Nigeria and the US wrangling with the direction their lives have, and haven't, taken. A powerful exploration of sisterhood, solidarity, and fulfilment, Adichie offers an insight into her transcendent, powerful work, and how the choices we make – or which are made for us – can cast a longer shadow than we might ever expect.

BSL CC

Javier Cercas:
The Weight of the Past,
the Weight of the Future

13:15-14:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Since the 90s, **Javier Cercas** has written regularly for Spain's leading newspaper, *El País*, bringing a novelist's depth to current affairs. Bridging past and present, Cercas' weekly column blends personal reflection with historical and moral exploration, offering a window into modern Spain. Today hear this iconic writer in conversation with **Alexis Grohmann**, Cervantes Chair at The University of Edinburgh, as they reflect on the past, present, and role of the author in shaping public debate.

AI

Jean-Baptiste Andrea:
Love Lost and Found

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

Recipient of France's most prestigious literary award, **Jean-Baptiste Andrea**'s *Watching Over Her* is one of the best selling Prix Goncourt winners in the prize's 121-year history and is now being adapted for film. This sweeping novel charts a tumultuous love story between an impoverished sculptor and wealthy heiress set against the rise of fascism in Italy. Today, he'll discuss the inspiration for this engrossing yet profound 'story of love, friendship, and revenge' with **Nicole Abadee**.

AI

Tue 19 – Sun 24 August
Spark Exhibition

All day
The Gallery
Free Non-Ticketed

Young people from the Alternative School at Spartans Community Foundation are back at the festival for the third year, with their brand-new exhibition, *Spark*. Our writer in residence Owen Sutcliffe has been working with the young people to spark their imaginations, ask big questions and get their creative juices flowing. Join us to see their funny, provocative and sparky creative work.

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



Jenny Colgan, 14:15-15:15



Laurent Binet, 15:00-16:00

Kate Kennedy:
The Sound of Four Strings

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

The cello is regarded as the warmest of string instruments and for those who play it, the instrument is like a character in their lives. In *Cello*, **Kate Kennedy** illuminates that deep companionship between musician and instrument via a biography of four remarkable cellists: through persecution, injury, and misfortune, through death camps and shipwrecks, into her own present and future. Join her to explore how the very soul of music, without language, speaks to us all.

AI

Jenny Colgan:
Coming Back Home

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

Home may be where the heart is - but what happens when that home is invaded by your unemployed (and very grumpy) 30-year-old kid? **Jenny Colgan's** *Meet Me at the Seaside Cottages* explores the ever-evolving relationship between a mother and her adult daughter as they're forced to live together after years apart. Reflecting on love, acceptance, and new beginnings, get swept up in this conversation with the bestselling author today.

AI

HAWTHORNDEN FOUNDATION EVENT

Laurent Binet:
A Chisel to the Heart

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

One of the most successful French writers of his generation (winning the Prix Goncourt du Premier Roman for his debut, *HHhH*), **Laurent Binet** is also an academic, and a musician. His latest work, *Perspectives*, is a bold, thrilling whodunit that's also an experiment in counter-factual history. Today the ever-intriguing experimentalist is joined by **Chris Power** for a wide-ranging conversation on the ambition in his work to date and what's next.

AI

James Birch:
Adventures in the Art Trade

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

Daring international art promoter **James Birch** has played a pivotal role in the careers of artists as varied as Grayson Perry, Francis Bacon, and the eccentric duo Gilbert & George. Today, discussing his new book, *Gilbert & George and the Communists*, Birch shares his lively (at times absolutely wild) experience of introducing the duo to a Soviet Union in decline and a China on the rise, with neither country knowing quite was about to hit them, artistically or politically.

AI

Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien
& Mark Taylor: Is Culture Bad
For You?

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

The benefits of culture to health, education and community are championed, but can culture ever do wrong? First published in 2020, academics and creative industry experts **Orian Brook, Dave O'Brien and Mark Taylor's** *Culture is Bad for You* breaks down the heated debate around arts work in Britain, its systems of precarity, and the exclusion of women, people of colour, and working-class people. Freshly updated for the post-Covid era, its concerns have only grown more urgent.

AI

Beyond the Archives with Doug
Johnstone & Ewan Morrison

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

Now in its centenary year, the National Library of Scotland is a treasure trove of Scotland's literary past - but did you know it also cares for the archives of our nation's contemporary writers? Today, we explore the idea of a 'living archive' with authors **Doug Johnstone** and **Ewan Morrison**. Join them for a conversation about building an archive, the creative and curatorial choices involved, and discover the personal objects that fuel each writer's creative life.

AI

Frances Wilson & Francesca
Wade: Rediscovering Muriel
Spark and Gertrude Stein

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *Electric Spark*, **Frances Wilson** digs into Muriel Spark's young life, uncovering untold experiences and strange encounters that ultimately shaped Spark as a person and writer. Meanwhile, in *Gertrude Stein: An Afterlife*, **Francesca Wade** shares unseen writing from Stein's personal archive, revealing her radical nature and why Stein wanted to be remembered for her work, not her personality. They join us today, discussing how much of the mythology that surrounds these authors is actually true. Chaired by **Lennie Goodings**.

AI

Close Read: An Introduction
to Gaelic Literature

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

In our popular Close Read series, a leading 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 knowledge to pick out and share some true gems. Expect a fun, enthusiastic workshop to please the eye - and ear. No prior experience of Gaelic needed.

Andrey Kurkov: Our Daily War

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

One of Ukraine's most celebrated post-Soviet novelists, **Andrey Kurkov** is renowned for his surreal, satirical fiction, including *Death and the Penguin* and political thriller series, the Kyiv Mysteries (the first instalment of which is 2024 International Booker-longlisted, *The Silver Bone*). Former President of PEN Ukraine, Kurkov also writes with incredible passion and insight on the invasion of his home country. Today, hear Kurkov unpacking his vivid and defiant memoir, *Our Daily War*, with *Guardian* journalist, **Charlotte Higgins**.

AI



Frances Wilson & Francesca Wade, 16:00-17:00



Andrey Kurkov, 17:00-18:00



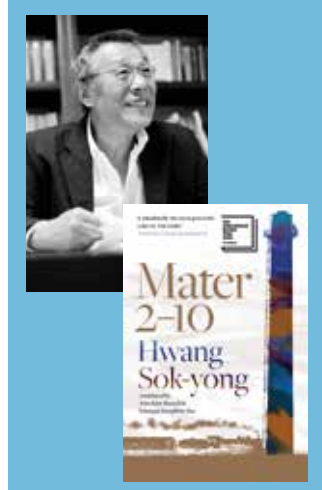
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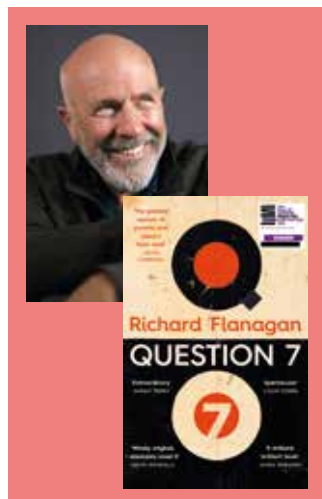
Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



James Yorkston & Callum McSorley, 17:30-18:30



Hwang Sok-yong, 18:30-19:30



Richard Flanagan, 18:45-19:45

James Yorkston & Callum McSorley: Headbangers & Eejits

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

Headbangers and shredders, deeply unpopular coppers, grotty hotels in the armpit of Perthshire, scammers and eejits - these are the very Scottish, very noir-ish backdrops to two vivid crime novels: *Paperboy* by McIlvanney Prize-winner **Callum McSorley** and *Tommy the Bruce* by singer-songwriter **James Yorkston**. Both authors - every bit as funny, complex, and full of heart as their books - join us today for a good blether.

AI

Tony Juniper & Friederike Otto: Fighting Climate Injustice

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

The climate crisis isn't just about the environment; it's about the way global inequality means the world's most vulnerable people are being hit first and hardest. So argues physicist and climate researcher **Friederike Otto**, whose *Climate Injustice* looks at global case studies, from floods in Pakistan to Australian wildfires, and environmentalist **Tony Juniper**, whose book, *Just Earth*, posits necessary system changes. Today they talk about how fighting inequality is fighting climate change.

AI

Repair

Hwang Sok-yong: The Voice of a Divided Nation

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

With a five-decade-long writing career and Korea's most prestigious literary prizes under his belt, **Hwang Sok-yong** is unmatched in depicting the social and political realities of his ruptured homeland. A staunch promoter of the arts, he spent years in exile and prison. It's a rare honour to welcome him to the Festival, discussing his remarkable life and International Booker Prize-shortlisted *Mater 2-10*: a magical-realist epic traversing a century of Korean history.

AI

Richard Flanagan: A Question of Consequence

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

'That it is a masterpiece is without question' is how the *Observer* described *Question 7*: **Richard Flanagan's** 12th book, winner of 2024's Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction. Today the multitalented author shares with **Chris Power** how he brought together seemingly disparate events - including the atomic bomb, H G Wells' affair with Rebecca West, and his own near-death experience, to create a hypnotic blend of memoir and auto-fiction exploring the chain reactions that occur when we make a choice about love.

CC

Together We Repair

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

We believe that everyone has a story to tell and that stories help us make sense of our world. We've challenged local writers and poets, this year, to respond to 2025's Festival theme: Repair. Join us as we bring them together to perform their work: a patchwork of ideas on how to make the world a better place. Today featuring writing and performances from **Intercultural Youth Scotland**.

AI

Repair

Close Read: Tender Buttons by Gertrude Stein

19:30-20:30
Venue A
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In our popular Close Read series, a leading 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, **Francesca Wade**, a true authority on the life and works of the mighty Gertrude Stein, excavates fresh new meaning from Stein's collection of experimental poetry, *Tender Buttons*. Expect meaningful discussion and a deeper understanding of this legendary writer's craft.

Richard Lloyd Parry, Edward Wong & Yuan Yang: On East Asia

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

From East China's geopolitical ambitions to South Korea's huge cultural influence and recent political turmoil, East Asia looms larger than ever in global news cycles. Yet beyond the headlines, how much do we understand these major international powers' cultural and political contexts? This revelatory panel event features the *Times*' Asia editor, **Richard Lloyd Parry**; *New York Times* journalist and *At the Edge of Empire* author, **Edward Wong**; and author of 2025 Women's Prize for Non-Fiction-shortlisted *Private Revolutions*, **Yuan Yang**.

AI

And Midnight Never Come - A Performance

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

Queen of Crime, the iconic **Val McDermid**, is bringing her forensic gaze to bear on one of the theatre's most enduring mysteries - the death of Christopher Marlowe in Deptford in 1593. A forbidden love story, a double-crossing spy story, or Shakespeare's inspiration? This special reading of McDermid's playscript is directed by Philip Howard and is presented in partnership with Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

AI

Emma Healey & Charlotte Runcie: The Sweet Taste of Revenge

20:15-21:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

They say revenge is a dish best served cold, but does it really make us feel better? Is getting our own back on the person who scorned us the best way to get even? Obsession, toxic-love, and power dynamics are at the core of both *Sweat* by **Emma Healey** (also author of modern classic *Elizabeth is Missing*), and **Charlotte Runcie's** debut novel, *Bring the House Down*. Join them today for this thrilling event.

AI

Only After Dark: A Night Walk with Dan Richards

20:30-21:30
Meeting point:
Collective, City Observatory
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Drawing on the adventures of his recent book *Overnight* and acclaimed Radio 4 series, *Only After Dark*, **Dan Richards** tonight shares small hour stories from North Sea ferry crossings, the night mail, search and rescue helicopter missions, the service of the NHS and St Mungo's outreach workers, and Edinburgh's vespertine wildlife... among other twilight wonders. Feel free to bring a hot drink as you walk. Meeting point: Collective, City Observatory. Full details online.

AI

Javier Cercas: Violence, Lies, and Just Causes

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

How do we live among a population capable of both the worst atrocities and the profoundest kindness? In *Fortress of Evil*, former police inspector Melchor Marín's search for his missing daughter sees him enter a labyrinth of characters, both sinister and luminous. **Daniel Hahn** joins one of Spain's most lauded writers, **Javier Cercas**, author of the million selling *Soldiers of Salamis*, to discuss the latest in his ambitious *Terra Alta* series.

AI



Yuan Yang, 19:30-20:30



Emma Healey & Charlotte Runcie, 20:15-21:15

Programme key

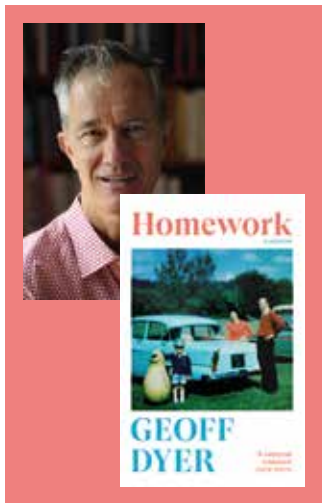
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Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly **Formats:** Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink





Ixta Belfrage, 12:30-13:30



Geoff Dyer, 13:15-14:15

Chantal Lyons, Sophie Pavelle & Peter Cairns: Landscape, and Beavers, and Boars (Oh, My!)

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

Chantal Lyons' Wainwright Prize-shortlisted *Groundbreakers* investigates the wild boar's dramatic re-emergence in Britain after seven centuries, while in *To Have or to Hold*, **Sophie Pavelle** examines eight symbiotic relationships in nature to demonstrate the critical interconnections between ecosystems. They're joined by photographer and rewilding thought leader, **Peter Cairns**, to share their deep understanding of what we're lucky to have in nature and how to repair the damage done.

AI

Repair

Shared Reading with Open Book

11:00-12:30
Venue A
Free Ticketed

Join Lead Readers from Open Book, a charity organising shared reading and creative writing groups, for an informal, relaxed reading session. Explore a chapter from a debut book from this year's Festival programme - no preparation or experience necessary, all reading materials will be provided on the day.

Delicious Magic: A Table Talk with Ixta Belfrage

12:00-13:30
Elliott's Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

Growing up in a family with Italian, Brazilian, and Mexican influences, **Ixta Belfrage** has always had a fluid approach to flavour. Her latest cookbook, *Fusão* ('fusion' in Portuguese), celebrates the playfulness at the heart of Brazilian cuisine. Today, join Belfrage - Ottolenghi Test Kitchen alum, and author of the celebrated *Mezcla* - as she chats about the bold flavours of her mother's homeland, bringing them to life in a cookery demonstration that will both inspire and embolden you in the kitchen. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*

🍷

Thought Exercise: Danny Dorling

12:00-13:30
Venue B
£30 [£27.00/£20.00/£5.00]

Dig deeper with our Thought Exercise series. Hear from experts on urgent issues of our time, then join in on the discussion during a wide-ranging, interactive exchange. Today's guest is **Danny Dorling**, professor of Human Geography and author of *Seven Children*, an eye-opening investigation into childhood inequality in post-pandemic Britain, and *The Next Crisis*, unpacking polling data to reveal our global crises are often very different from what's in the headlines. Together, discuss how we might reverse the trends that so concern us all. Chaired by **Susan Murray**.

Kate Anderson, Rosemary Goring & Jade Scott: The Captive Queen and Her Son

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

Rosemary Goring's *Exile: The Captive Years of Mary, Queen of Scots* and **Jade Scott's** *Captive Queen* shed remarkable new light on the duplicitous years of Mary's English imprisonment. Meanwhile, **Kate Anderson's** *Art & Court of James VI & I* reconsiders Mary's only child, a figure often overshadowed by his mother. Join them for a fascinating discussion on the enduring allure of the House of Stuart.

📺 AI

Geoff Dyer: Stories from a Vanished Time

13:15-14:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Post-war Britain can seem increasingly distant, yet **Geoff Dyer's** delightful new memoir, *Homework*, brings it back to life with verve and wit. Recalling his working-class Cheltenham childhood of the 50s and 60s, Dyer (a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, known for his prize-winning range) joins **Charlotte Higgins** to discuss coming of age, the floods of change, and how the pivotal influence of grammar school altered his life's trajectory.

AI

Introduction to Graphic Novels: A Workshop with Lizzy Stewart

13:30-15:30
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

Illustrator **Lizzy Stewart** (author of the breathtaking graphic novel *Alison* and genre-evading *Walking Distance*) introduces you today to the world of graphic storytelling. During this workshop, you'll look at character, finding inspiration, and the way that time bends and stretches within a graphic novel or comic-book. All of this will come together in a short-form comic strip which might form the basis of your own future full-length masterpiece.

Irene Revell, Sarah Shin & Alice Vincent: Hearing and Listening, Profoundly

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

Join us for a fascinating event exploring the art and politics of listening. *Bodies of Sound*, an anthology edited by **Irene Revell** and **Sarah Shin**, brings together poets, musicians, and writers to offer new insights into how we listen and hear. **Alice Vincent's** *Hark: How Women Listen* will open readers' minds to how sound and self interconnect. Together, they'll delve into feminist perspectives on how we perceive, interpret, and understand sound in our noisy world.

AI

Beyond Borders: Women in Conflict

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

The Women in Conflict 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 peace-making 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.

AI

Repair

Dan Gunn & Frances Wilson: The Legacy of Muriel Spark

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

With access to over 3,000 letters penned by Muriel Spark, distinguished professor **Dan Gunn** has spent five years decoding the enigmatic author while compiling *The Letters of Muriel Spark*. Meanwhile, journalist **Frances Wilson's** fascination with Spark led her to delve into the formative years of Edinburgh's daughter to write *Electric Spark*. Join them today as they discuss Spark's legacy and how they reframed her personal letters and archive for a public audience. *Supported by the Dr David Summers Charitable Trust.*

AI

Marcus du Sautoy: Creativity by Numbers

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

Some brains are creative while others are more inclined towards mathematics and logic, and the two shall never overlap - right? Wrong, according to mathematician, broadcaster, and prolific author **Marcus du Sautoy**, whose new book, *Blueprints*, investigates the mathematical concepts underpinning everything from painting and poetry to the music of Mozart and the defining contemporary architecture of Zaha Hadid. Join him today as he discusses new ways of understanding creativity.

AI

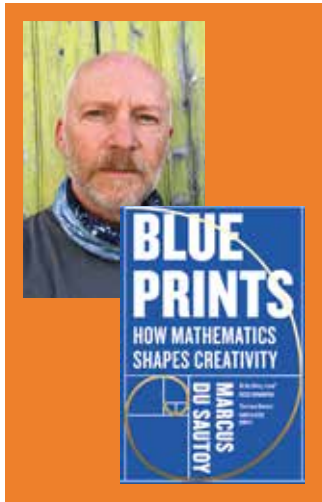
Andy Wightman: Who Owns Scotland?

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

Ten years ago **Andy Wightman** - a former Member of the Scottish Parliament with the Scottish Greens and a tireless campaigner over issues around land ownership and reform in Scotland - published *The Poor Had No Lawyers*, a definitive investigation into just who owns the country's urban and rural land, and how they came to acquire it. Now, with an updated edition just published, he joins us to discuss a topic no less urgent today.

📺 AI

Repair



Marcus du Sautoy, 15:00-16:00

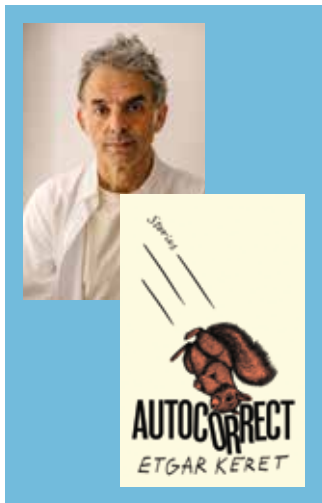
Programme key

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

Access: 📺 Livestreamed 🗣️ British Sign Language 🎧 Live Captioned AI AI Captioned 🗿 Learning Disability Friendly Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance 🌳 Outdoor 🗣️ Active 🍷 Food & Drink



Vigdis Hjorth, 15:45-16:45



Etgar Keret, 16:45-17:45

Dinner for One: A Table
Talk with Michèle Roberts

15:30-17:00
Elliott’s Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

Booker-shortlisted author of *Daughters of the House*, **Michèle Roberts**’ career has spanned fiction, poetry, and memoir. The constant through line, though, is food, so it’s almost surprising that *French Cooking for One* is her first work wholly dedicated to the subject. Today, Roberts demonstrates a dish from this charmingly quirky book, sharing tales with **Simon Preston** from her literary life and inspiring you to offer yourself the same generosity and creativity in the kitchen as you’d give to friends. *Ticket includes: a welcome drink and a delicious food taster.*



Paul French: Wallis Simpson’s
Lost Years in China

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

For her unimpeachable fashion sense, her role in the abdication of her husband, and her shameful connection with Adolf Hitler – fascination with Wallis Simpson continues unabated nearly 40 years after her death. Now, discussing *Wallis Simpson: Her Lotus Year in 1920s China*, award-winning historian **Paul French** talks about the thrilling experiences which made her in a fractious foreign land among the hustle of 1920s Shanghai and the high chinoiserie of that intriguing era.



Vigdis Hjorth:
Love Will Tear Us Apart

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

Leading Norwegian author **Vigdis Hjorth** writes novels that are ‘like major fires: destructive and difficult to contain’, according to *Literary Review*. In her latest, *If Only*, she explores how an impulsive affair at an unremarkable conference descends into an inferno of jealousy, obsession, and an addiction that can never be sated. Today she joins us to discuss the destructive potential of love when it binds the wrong people.



Elly Griffiths:
Cold Cases Stuck in Time

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Number one *Sunday Times* bestselling author of the Dr Ruth Galloway Mysteries, **Elly Griffiths**, returns with a brand new crime series. With 26 novels under her belt, how does Griffiths continue to keep her characters fresh, plot lines exciting, and twists unexpected? Join us for this tantalising event as she sits down with us to discuss *The Frozen People*, the first in a series where cold cases take centuries to solve.



Etgar Keret: In Short

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

One of the most original and entertaining storytellers at work today, **Etgar Keret** is known for his dark humour, off-the-wall imagination, and deceptively whimsical short fiction. The internationally acclaimed Israeli author of books including *Suddenly a Knock on the Door* and *Fly Already* discusses his latest collection, *Autocorrect*, and his sense that the dark picture it paints of the world is ‘just right’ for our times. In conversation with **Daniel Hahn**.



Discover Muriel Spark’s
Archive at the National
Library of Scotland

17:00-18:30
The National Library of Scotland
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

This is an exciting opportunity to explore Muriel Spark’s archive with the people who care for it. Led by National Library of Scotland manuscripts curators **Colin McIlroy** and **Chris Cassells**, along with Spark scholars **Dan Gunn** and **Frances Wilson**, this will be a fascinating chance to gain new insights on one of Scotland’s literary legends, and for budding writers and researchers to join the discussion on the meaning and making of archives.



Mark Watson: Serendipity
and Sushi Rolls

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

Whether it’s texting Greg Davies (almost) every day for a year for *Taskmaster*, podcasting, touring, or popping up in panel shows, comedian and writer **Mark Watson** goes at life full-pelt – just like delivery rider Damir in his new novel, *One Minute Away*. When Damir’s daily race through the city is stopped short by romantic serendipity, edamame beans are spilled and lives are changed. Join Watson today as he discusses love, connection... and sushi.

Lucía Lijtmaer & Monika
Radojevic: Fuelled by Rage

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

Sharp writing and incisive perspectives are the hallmarks of **Lucía Lijtmaer** and **Monika Radojevic**. In Lijtmaer’s *Cautery*, we meet two women, 400 years apart, both of whom share a fantasy: burning it all down and beginning again. Radojevic’s *A Beautiful Lack of Consequences* is a fierce, funny short story collection about female desire and the weight of societal expectations. Join them for a vital conversation about the pressures and the possibilities of female experiences.



Shaun Walker:
The Spies Next Door

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Thought the deep cover Russian spies masquerading as an all-American family in the TV series *The Americans* were fiction? Not according to *Guardian* central and eastern Europe correspondent **Shaun Walker**, who joins us in conversation with **Charlotte Higgins**. In his secret history, *The Illegals*, Walker puts a decade reporting from Moscow to good use, revealing, with the pace and intrigue of a spy thriller, Russia’s century-long placing of international agents in extreme, long-term deep cover.



Rock the Boat:
Open Mic Poetry

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 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.



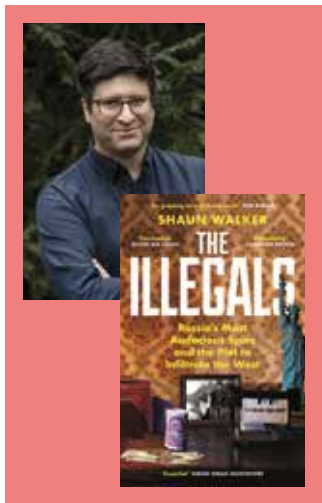
Anthony Delaney & Alice
Loxton: Cobwebs Not Included

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

Ah, history... musty, stuffy, cobwebby stuff, right? Wrong – with **Anthony Delaney**’s *Queer Georgians* and **Alice Loxton**’s *Eighteen*, you’re getting history that’s as fizzing with verve and wit as its authors. Join two of the brightest young historians to uncover the hidden, unwritten lives of the pioneers of queer culture, and an eclectic cast of eighteen historically significant 18-year-olds. This is without question history at its most original, relevant, and contemporary.



Lucía Lijtmaer & Monika Radojevic, 17:30-18:30



Shaun Walker, 17:45-18:45

Programme key

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

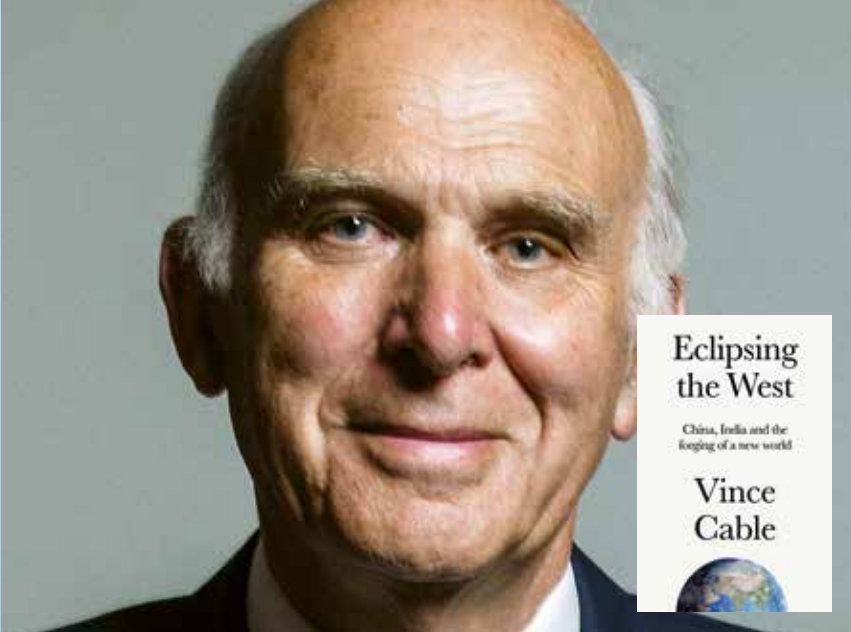
Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned [LD] Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: [C] Remote Appearance [O] Outdoor [A] Active [FD] Food & Drink

Vince Cable:
Twilight of the West?

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

Former Secretary of State for Business and leader of the Liberal Democrats, the astute economist **Vince Cable** has settled into life after frontline politics as a prolific author on global affairs and the world economy. Today, he talks to us about *Eclipsing the West: China, India and the Forging of a New World*, in which he turns his formidable expertise on the superstates mapping out a new economic order.

Ⓛ Ⓜ AI



Natsuo Kirino, 19:30-20:30

Together We Repair

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

We believe that everyone has a story to tell and that stories help us make sense of our world. We've challenged local writers and poets, this year, to respond to 2025's Festival theme: Repair. Join us as we bring them together to perform their work: a patchwork of ideas on how to make the world a better place. Today featuring writing and performances from the **Access to Industry Creative Writing Group**.

Ⓜ AI

Repair

Natsuo Kirino: Bodies for Hire

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Natsuo Kirino's complex feminist noir crime novels, most notably *Out*, have awarded her cult status in both Japan and abroad. *Swallows*, her latest, follows a woman led by economic desperation to become a surrogate mother, and an infertile couple desperate to pass on their 'elite' genes. Expect an 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'. Chaired by **Kirsty Logan**.

Ⓜ AI

Programme key

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

The Essentials of Fiction:
A Workshop with Sarah Shin

19:30-21:00
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

'An awareness of what your own writing sounds like is an essential skill for a writer,' commented the legendary Ursula K Le Guin's in *Steering the Craft: A 21st Century Guide to Sailing the Sea of Story*. Today's workshop uses this title as a guide for practicing your writing, focussing on the sound of language. Join writer, editor and researcher **Sarah Shin** for a relaxed session, using Le Guin's favourite examples of lively, well-paced, beautiful prose as a springboard for your own creative work.

The Unserious Wine Club:
A Table Talk with
Hannah Crosbie

19:30-21:00
Elliott's Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

Saunter over to Elliott's for a highly unserious wine-tasting with *Guardian* wine critic, broadcaster, and Edinburgh's own **Hannah Crosbie**. One of the most exciting young voices in wine today, *Corker* is Crosbie's guide to the often-baffling world of wine, penned with her signature tongue-in-cheek wit. Taste some new favourites tonight as Crosbie shares stories and sage advice on what wine to pick for all life's important (and unimportant) occasions. *Ticket includes: a selection of wine tasters and a snack.*

Ⓛ

GUBSMACKED presents
Flyte Nyte 2025

20:00-22:00
Spiegeltent
£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 presents the dazzlingly rude and boisterous Flyte Nyte 2025! **Colin Bramwell, Iona Lee, and Leyla Josephine** host poets, rappers, and spoken word artists all fighting to become the first Flying Champion using nothing but wit, verse, extravagant verbal abuse, and name-calling - highbrow it isnae!

Ece Temelkuran: Coming
Together to Fight Dictatorship

20:15-21:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How did things get so bad, and how can we begin to try and make them better? Turkish political commentator, novelist, poet, and winner of the El Mundo International Journalism Award, **Ece Temelkuran** joins us to unpack two books attempting to answer both sides of this question. In *How to Lose a Country*, she outlines the slide from democracy to dictatorship, while *Together* emphasises community as a means of instigating positive change. Chaired by **Allan Little**.

Ⓜ AI

Chris Bryant:
A Life Less Ordinary

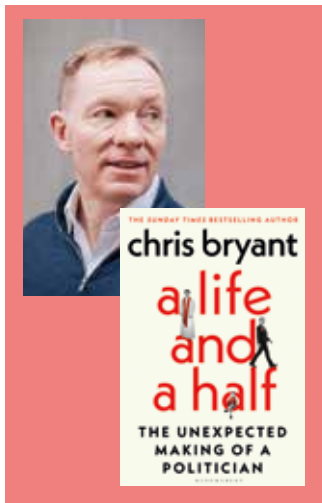
20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Winner of the 2020 Parliamentary Book Award for Best Non-Fiction and the first MP to celebrate his civil partnership in the Palace of Westminster, **Chris Bryant** brings his candid new memoir, *A Life and a Half*, to this year's Festival. From his years as an Anglican priest to his upbringing with an alcoholic mother, Bryant doesn't shy away from the challenges of his life. He joins us to discuss the darkness, joy, and headiness of his formative years.

Ⓛ Ⓜ BSL Ⓜ CC



Hannah Crosbie, 19:30-21:00



Chris Bryant, 20:30-21:30

Access: Ⓛ Livestreamed Ⓜ BSL British Sign Language Ⓜ CC Live Captioned Ⓜ AI AI Captioned Ⓜ LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: Ⓜ Remote Appearance Ⓜ Outdoor Ⓜ Active Ⓜ Food & Drink



Alexis Wright, 10:15-11:15



David Farrier & Alex Riley, 13:15-14:15

First Edition:
Once Upon a Time in Holyrood

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

Start your day with the facts. High quality, thorough, and trustworthy journalism has never been more important in helping us understand the world as it really is, so in our First Edition events you can join leading journalists from across the media (and the world) as they discuss the day's breaking news over a cup of coffee. Check our website for today's guests.

AI

The Work of Translation:
A Workshop with Daniel Hahn

10:00-12:00
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

Award-winning literary translator, editor, and critic, **Daniel Hahn** returns to the Festival with his popular translation workshop, taking you through the process of translating a piece of fiction and the painstaking, exhilarating work it takes to find the right words. This two-hour session is for enthusiastic novices who want to improve their practice - and anyone who is fascinated by the nuances of language.

Alexis Wright:
All Time is Important

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

One of Australia's most fearless writers, **Alexis Wright** (appearing remotely) is the only person to win both of Australia's most prestigious prizes (the Miles Franklin Award and Stella Prize) twice. Her panoramic new work, *Praiseworthy*, takes inspiration from the oral storytelling traditions of Waanyi people from the Gulf of Carpentaria as much as international writers, including Carlos Fuentes. Hear this giant of Australian letters, joining us remotely from Queensland, discussing her astounding work and being a 'massive antidote' to short attention spans. Chaired by **Deidre Osborne**.

AI

Aja Barber, Alena Ivanova
& Anna Freemantle-Zee:
Wear and Repair

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

We all know to shop second-hand, avoid microplastic fibres, and celebrate re-wearing - but is this enough to make fashion sustainable? How much power do we really have as consumers? Today **Aja Barber** (author of *Consumed*), **Anna Freemantle-Zee** (founder of Edinburgh International Fashion Festival and Regenerative Textiles Scotland), and **Alena Ivanova** (campaigns and activism lead at Labour Behind the Label) gather for a hopeful but frank discussion on the global fast fashion and overproduction crises, exploring a range of possible solutions.

AI

Repair

David Farrier & Alex Riley:
Life Unstoppable

13:15-14:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Our planet teems with life - across four billion years of evolution, organisms have adapted to thrive in even the most inhospitable environments. This fascinating conversation will take you from the highest peaks to the ocean's depths as **David Farrier** (*Nature's Genius*) and **Alex Riley** (*Super Natural*) discuss the astonishing tenacity of life in all its forms and find hope for humanity's future in the most unexpected places.

AI

Repair

Children's Perspective:
A Workshop with
Catherine Chidgey

13:30-15:30
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

Many of **Catherine Chidgey**'s novels feature child narrators, from *The Wish Child* and *Pet* to *The Book of Guilt* (and, arguably, Tama Magpie in *The Axeman's Carnival*). In this workshop, Chidgey will discuss how she created these characters and their voices, guiding you through a series of exercises to help you to practise writing your own child narrators as three-dimensional figures who ring true without ever sounding twee. *Supported by British Council New Zealand and the Pacific.*

Esther Freud:
Excavating the Intimate

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

More than 30 years after her indelible debut, *Hideous Kinky*, **Esther Freud** brings us her 10th novel, *My Sister and Other Lovers*: a scalpel-sharp exploration of intrafamilial intimacies, concerning a mother and two daughters. We all live these kinds of stories, day in, day out: love, family, fear, longing, secrets, mistrust. We talk today to a novelist at the peak of her powers about how she captures the universal with such compassion. Chaired by **Lennie Goodings**.

AI

Mary Costello & Elaine Garvey:
Push and Pull

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

The disquiet of modern life, a feeling of the past living alongside the present, the push and pull of rural places calling you home - each are overlapping preoccupations of award-winning author **Mary Costello**'s new story collection, *Barcelona*, and **Elaine Garvey**'s *The Wardrobe Department* (picked as best a debut of the year by the *Financial Times*). In this mesmerising event, hear the authors of these haunting new Irish works in conversation today. *Supported by Culture Ireland.*

AI

Sami Timimi:
Searching for Normal

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

The approach to both mental health and neurodivergence in clinical settings has changed enormously in the 30 years that **Dr Sami Timimi** has been a practicing psychiatrist. His view is that this has not necessarily led to improved outcomes, but to an overall pathologisation of human emotion and behaviour. His new book *Searching for Normal* explores his perspective on the influence of, and at times unintended harms created by, the pharmaceutical industry, media, and psychiatric establishment. As overall societal attitudes and approaches to mental health change, Dr Timimi gives his radical view on these challenging and vital topics 'from the field'.

AI

Lucy Mangan & Sam Leith:
Why Reading Matters

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

Could literature have the power to heal us? Journalist **Lucy Mangan** follows up her 2018 memoir, *Bookworm*, with *Bookish*: a funny, poignant love letter to reading. Meanwhile, in *The Haunted Wood*, *The Spectator*'s literary editor **Sam Leith** looks back at children's literature, considering the stories that have shaped generations. In an event that provides a testament to why books matter, the authors chat with **Daniel Hahn** about the power of reading on young lives.

AI



Esther Freud, 13:45-14:45



Mary Costello & Elaine Garvey, 14:00-15:00

Programme key

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

Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned [LD] Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: [O] Remote Appearance [U] Outdoor [A] Active [F] Food & Drink

Diane Abbott: A Lifetime of Making a Difference

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

Diane Abbott’s journey to Westminster as the UK’s first Black female MP is borne of sheer determination. The child of Windrush generation Jamaican parents, raised in working class North London, and studying at Cambridge, Abbott has faced ridicule and ire on account of her race and gender, but has remained a committed activist for social change, and outspoken member of the Labour party. She speaks about her inspirational memoir, *A Woman Like Me*.

AI



Gerda Stevenson, 15:45-16:45

The Women’s Prize for Fiction at 30

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

Over three decades the Women’s Prize for Fiction has established itself as one of the world’s greatest celebrations of female creativity in the world. Scan your bookshelves and you are guaranteed to spot a former winner, from Barbara Kingsolver to Zadie Smith. Join this year’s chair of judges **Kit de Waal**, author and judge **Diana Evans**, and two-time longlisted author **Laila Lalami** as they talk to **Sam Baker**, and look back on the prize’s pioneering origins, and consider its lasting legacy.

AI

Gerda Stevenson: Tales o’ Nine Lives

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

Today, we’re joined by the luminous **Gerda Stevenson**: award-winning Scottish filmmaker and poet, theatre director and singer, songwriter and actress, author of plays and stories. *Cat Wumman* is her vibrant new collection of short stories, penned in Scots, breathing fresh life into traditional songs and tales from Scotland and beyond. Hear Stevenson chatting with **Mairi Kidd** about how a love of folktales and songs has been a constant throughout her work and life - and why.

AI

Anshel Pfeffer, Ece Temelkuran & Shaun Walker: No Kings Here

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

How do we survive the era of the authoritarian strongman leader? Why do these men hold a monopoly on political power? And what are the alternatives to their rule? Journalists **Anshel Pfeffer** (*Haaretz*, *Economist*), **Ece Temelkuran** (*Der Spiegel*, *Guardian*), and **Shaun Walker** (*Guardian*) have written extensively about Benjamin Netanyahu, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Vladimir Putin, respectively, and they arrive equipped to illuminate what lasting impact all three will have on Europe and the world.

AI

Eimear McBride: Ingredients for Intensity

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

Eimear McBride (Women’s Prize-winning author of *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* and *The Lesser Bohemians*) often dwells in dark, confronting subject matter, yet her writing style is infused with playfulness. Nouns become verbs, sentences fragment, time jumps around. We’re thrilled to welcome her back, today in conversation about *The City Changes Its Face* - a novel of boiling emotions set in 90s Camden right when a love affair faces its first major test.

AI

James Runcie & Fenella Humphreys: Life After Love, Love After Love

17:00-18:00
Venue T
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

After his wife - theatre director and radio producer, Marilyn Imrie - died, author **James Runcie** wrote the intensely moving memoir, *Tell Me Good Things*. In this singular and incredibly special event to mark the fifth anniversary of her passing, Runcie offers his poignant reflections on loss, bereavement, memory, and what it means to love again. He’s joined by dazzling violinist **Fenella Humphreys**, one of Britain’s most versatile musicians, playing an array of Scots, classical, and contemporary music.

AI

Sarah Shin, Rebecca Tamas & Fiona Benson: Casting Spells

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

Poetry can be bewitching: the words on the page enchant your mind and rearrange the way you think. Never has this been more true than in three-time T.S. Eliot Prize-shortlisted poet **Fiona Benson**’s *Midden Witch*, and **Sarah Shin** and **Rebecca Tamas**’ anthology of occult poetry, *Spells*. But how closely linked are spells and poetry? Join the writers today as they explore poetry’s magical grip on all of us.

AI

Deborah Frances-White: A Little More Conversation

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Podcaster, comedian, and bestselling author of *The Guilty Feminist*, **Deborah Frances-White** wants to know when we stopped talking and, more importantly, listening to each other. In *Six Conversations We’re Scared to Have*, she considers the art of conversation and suggests it’s time we agree to disagree. Join Frances-White for this funny, illuminating event that takes a deep-dive into topics such as freedom of speech, and explores ways to discuss the trickiest matters.

AI

Elaine Feeney: Writing What You Know

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

Booker Prize-longlisted **Elaine Feeney** is steeped in poetry and storytelling, and echoes of her west of Ireland origins resonate throughout her work. This remains true of her latest novel, *Let Me Go Mad in My Own Way*, a clear-eyed and deep-hearted family tale centred around a woman whose past returns to disrupt her present. Today hear an author whose characters create shadow histories that stand as a corrective to received narratives. *Supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart and Culture Ireland*.

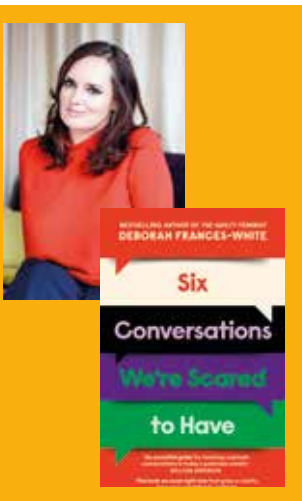
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Eimear McBride, 16:45-17:45



James Runcie, 17:00-18:00

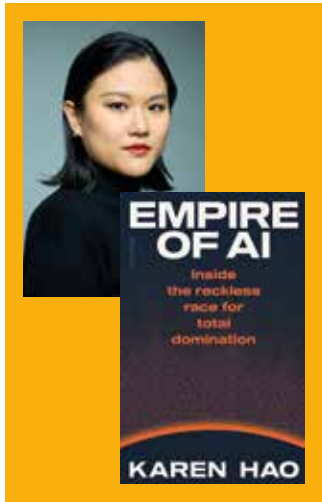


Deborah Frances-White, 17:45-18:45

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Karen Hao, 18:45-19:45



Lizzy Hadfield, 19:00-22:00

Karen Hao: Dispatches from the AI Arms Race

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

Where did the AI arms race begin, and where will it take us next? Few writers are better placed to explain the former and speculate on the latter than the *Atlantic's* **Karen Hao**, who has covered OpenAI and its founder, Sam Altman, since 2019. Using deep sourcing within the company to research *Empire of AI*, she talks today about the backdrop of recklessness, data sweatshops, and environmental impact behind the world's most unpredictable new industry.

AI

Buffy's Book Club

19:00-22:00
Elliott's Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]

Buffy's Book Club is an international book club, with monthly in-person events taking place in stunning locations in London and New York, as well as digitally. Hosted by founder **Lizzy Hadfield**, this is the very first edition of Buffy's Book Club in Scotland. Expect in-depth discussion of the group's chosen book (look out for your chance to vote by Instagram poll ahead of the event), followed by general chatter and friend-making over a glass of delicious, expertly-selected wine at Elliott's.

FD

Abigail Bergstrom & Niamh Ní Mhaoileoin: Family Dynasties

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

Abigail Bergstrom's claustrophobic family drama *Selfish Girls* thoroughly encapsulates the lovingly caustic relationships between four sisters thrown back together in their Welsh hometown. While **Niamh Ní Mhaoileoin's** novel, *Ordinary Saints* (was shortlisted for the Women's Prize Discoveries Award), takes a nuanced look at family dynamics, queer identity, and what happens when your brother is literally being considered for sainthood. Join this lively event about sharp, awkward, and heart-felt familial stories.

AI

First Person Singular: A Workshop with Xiaolu Guo

19:30-21:00
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

Join writer **Xiaolu Guo** (*Call Me Ishmaelle, My Battle of Hastings*) in this workshop exploring how to work with first-person narrative to bring a distinctive voice onto the page. Together you'll explore different perspectives on how to construct fiction and non-fiction pieces through the first-person, and explore the borders between fact and fiction, history and everyday events. You'll also dive into masterworks by Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf, Annie Ernaux, asking: how can they inspire us?

From Aotearoa to Alba: A Literary Exchange

20:00-21:30
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

As the aeroplane flies, Scotland and New Zealand are separated by 11,113.48 miles. Yet in a cultural and literary sense, the distance isn't quite so great. Join us for a vibrant celebration of the poetic connections between the two nations, based on a shared love of performance and music. Featuring special guests including **Dominic Hoey**, **Jackie Kay**, **Becky Manawatu**, **Hollie McNish**, and **Michael Pedersen**, and a rich exchange of culture and creativity awaits. Supported by British Council New Zealand and the Pacific.

AI

Anna Sulan Masing: Chinese and Any Other Asian

20:15-21:15
Venue NW
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Identity is not a tick box, but so often it's reduced to one. Join **Anna Sulan Masing** for an exploration of selfhood, representation, and the diverse lived realities of East and South East Asian people in modern Britain. Her book, *Chinese and Any Other Asian* deftly weaves between personal narrative and critical analysis, challenging stereotypes and unpacking the nuances of belonging. This will be a vital and insightful conversation about race, inclusion, and multiculturalism.

AI

Laura Bates: Misogyny Reinvented

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

Deepfakes, cyber brothels, AI girlfriends, sex robots - thanks to the new wave of AI-powered technologies, misogyny is getting a chilling modern makeover. **Laura Bates**, founder of the Everyday Sexism Project and present-day icon of women's rights, exposes the frightening dimensions of this trend in *The New Age of Sexism*. She's joined by **Heather Parry** to discuss the roles we can all play on these emergent battlegrounds for gender equality.

AI



Anna Sulan Masing, 20:15-21:15



Laura Bates, 20:30-21:30

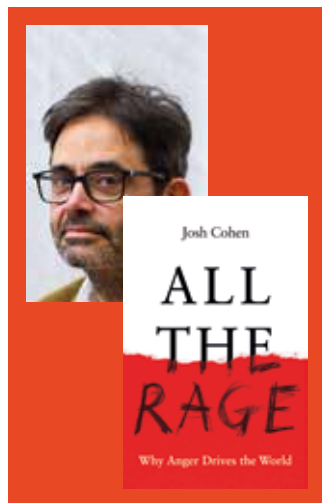
Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly **Formats:** Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



Becky Manawatu, 11:45-12:45



Josh Cohen, 12:00-13:30

Grace Spence Green: Recovery and Radical Acceptance

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

When a freak accident irreversibly changed **Grace Spence Green**'s life at just 22 years old, she developed a resilience she never thought possible. In her extraordinary, life-affirming new work of non-fiction, *To Exist as I Am*, Spence Green shares her journey from a dedicated young medical student to a patient with a serious spinal injury, and what led her to become a vocal disability activist. Join Spence Green, in conversation with **Gavin Francis**, to challenge the way we think about disability.

AI

Open Book Shared Reading

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.

Becky Manawatu: Family Drama

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

In 2022, Aotearoa-New Zealand author **Becky Manawatu** broke through with her international bestselling debut novel, *Auē*, a multi-perspective exploration of a family's relationship with violence and grief. Having won the Jann Medlicott Acorn Prize for Fiction, Manawatu continues the story in her powerful sequel *Kataraina*, and speaks to us today about moving through a past of familial trauma towards the hope presented by a new generation. Supported by British Council New Zealand and the Pacific.

AI

Gabriel Weston: An Alternative Anatomy

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

Aged 20, surgeon **Gabriel Weston** enrolled in a pioneering degree programme encouraging arts students to become doctors. She quickly realised that by presenting organs in isolation, separate from the bodies they exist in, anatomical textbooks were missing a holistic view of illness. In her insightful new book, *Alive*, Weston delves into the role our organs play on our emotions, highlighting the importance of treating the whole patient. She joins us to discuss our fragile, frightening, miraculous bodies. Chaired by **Kirsty Lang**.

AI

Alisha Fernandez Miranda, Emma Gannon & Jessica Stanley: Love Undone

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

Most romance novels are all about the happily ever after. But what happens when ever after doesn't end up looking so... happy? Today, **Alisha Fernandez Miranda** (*Someone's Gotta Give*), **Emma Gannon** (*Table for One*), and **Jessica Stanley** (*Consider Yourself Kissed*) discuss how their new novels all focus on something far more beautiful: the messy relationship we have with ourselves.

AI

Thought Exercise: Josh Cohen

12:00-13:30
Venue B
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£5.00]

Dig deeper with our Thought Exercise series. Hear from experts on urgent issues of our time, then join in on the discussion during a wide-ranging, interactive exchange. Today's guest is acclaimed author and psychoanalyst **Josh Cohen** who - in *All the Rage* - examines how anger has come to define so much of our social and political lives. Together, discuss how anger shapes our world, what we should do with it, and whether it can ever be put to good use.



Writing Fantasy: A Workshop with Catherine Prasifka

14:00-15:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

When you write fantasy, you open yourself up to the idea that anything could happen. More than a genre, it's a way of approaching storytelling by asking, 'what if?' - it has the power to take the reader to places they never could have imagined. This workshop with author **Catherine Prasifka** (*This Is How You Remember It*) will outline different approaches to fantasy writing, covering plot structure, world building, and what happens when things start to get weird. Supported by Culture Ireland.

Fresh Words: Women's Prize Trust Discoveries

12:15-13:15
Spiegeltent
Pay What You Can

It's lunchtime, and (hallelujah!) there's no need to doomscroll over a sad desk salad. Be the first to discover the literary stars of the future, instead. In partnership with Scottish Book Trust and other leading talent spotters across the UK, this lively lunchtime 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 writers including **Lorna Elcock**, **Rukky Brume**, and **Rue Baldry**.

AI

Gabriela Cabezón Cámara & Xiaolu Guo: Revisionist Reinventions

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

Acclaimed author and filmmaker **Xiaolu Guo** joins International Booker Prize-shortlisted **Gabriela Cabezón Cámara** for an entrancing event exploring gender-blending historical narratives. Guo's *Call Me Ishmaelle* reimagines Moby Dick narrated by a cross-dressing female sailor, while Cabezón Cámara's *We Are Green and Trembling* fictionalises the life of Antonio de Erauso, a trans man associated with the Spanish conquest of South America. They'll discuss identity, transformation, and subverting stories to shift perspectives with **Sasha de Buyl**.

AI



Gabriel Weston, 11:45-12:45

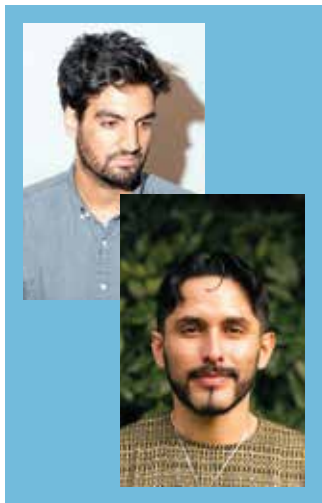
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Diana Evans, 14:45-15:45



Vijay Khurana & Andrés N Ordorica, 15:00-16:00



Catherine Chidgey, 15:15-16:15

The Front List: Yulia Navalnaya

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Until his death in a Russian prison last year, Alexei Navalny offered the only meaningful opposition to Vladimir Putin's leadership. Written by Navalny following a near-fatal poisoning attempt, *Patriot* is a brave memoir, telling his personal and political story, and emphasising his commitment to the principles of individual freedom, even while risking his own life. Today, Navalny's widow, **Yulia Navalnaya**, speaks about her late husband's powerful book, the uniquely courageous man she loved, and her determination to keep his campaigning and story alive.

CC

Diana Evans: Talk to Me

14:45-15:45
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

While she is renowned as a novelist, **Diana Evans** has also spent more than 25 years as a journalist. *I Want to Talk to You* brings together some of her most brilliant interviews, from her time with Maya Angelou to sitting down with Viola Davis, alongside a selection of essays and criticism. Join the Women's Prize-shortlisted author of *Ordinary People* for an equally special conversation, this time with **Sam Baker**, as they celebrate the art of the interview.

AI

Vijay Khurana & Andrés N Ordorica: Boys to Men

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

Masculinity and vulnerability are examined through the twin lenses of poetry and fiction as poet **Andrés N Ordorica**'s latest collection, *Holy Boys*, probes the fragile edges of the transition from boyhood to manhood with characteristic tenderness and in **Vijay Khurana**'s debut novel, *The Passenger Seat*, a teenage roadtrip is haunted by the spectre of violence and the inescapable past. This will be a fascinating conversation on the search for identity and connection.

AI

Catherine Chidgey: Conscious Tissue

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

Take your medicine, record your dreams, report your sins in *The Book of Guilt*. The triplet boys at the centre of celebrated Kiwi writer **Catherine Chidgey**'s ninth novel live a sheltered, closely monitored life. But questions about them, and their future, abound. The twice Women's Prize-longlisted author of *Pet* talks with us about her thrillingly unnerving dystopian vision, her magpie mind, and living in a world where some lives are valued less than others. *Supported by British Council New Zealand and the Pacific.*

AI

Anshel Pfeffer: Behind the Curtain of Israeli Politics

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

Anshel Pfeffer has covered Israeli politics for more than two decades, including producing the rigorously reported biography *Bibi: The Turbulent Life and Times of Benjamin Netanyahu*. As Israel correspondent for the *Economist* and formerly of *Ha'aretz*, few writers are better placed than Pfeffer to offer a critical understanding of the political psyche of Israel and the on-the-ground situation for Israelis and Palestinians at this calamitous moment. Hear him in conversation with *Guardian* and BBC journalist **Jonathan Freedland**.

AI

Josephine Quinn: The World that Made the West

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Historian and archaeologist **Josephine Quinn** is an expert in ancient history, from Greece and Rome to Phoenicia. Today, she shares lessons from her new book, *How the World Made the West*, showing how the West's history was not one of isolation, but characterised by exchange, mingling, and encounters with other cultures. Join Quinn for a fascinating discussion which puts a whole new understanding of Western civilisation in the frame.

AI

Joe Boyd: Bringing It All Back Home

16:30-17:30
Spiegel tent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Responsible for the sound on the night Bob Dylan went electric, and producer of Nick Drake, Pink Floyd, Jimi Hendrix, and R.E.M, few know the 20th century's most popular music better than the legendary **Joe Boyd** - or are more familiar with the global influences behind it. Join him to discuss *And the Roots of Rhythm Remain*, his deeply personal history of music from Africa, India, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe, and its impact on Western music. Chaired by **Nicola Meighan**.

AI

Elisa Levi & Sara Mesa: Spain's New Literary Horizons

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

Discover two bold new voices from Spain, recently published in English for the first time. Writing in the tradition of the Spanish literary greats, **Elisa Levi** and **Sara Mesa**'s fiction blend themes of belonging, coming of age, power dynamics, and rural isolation. This fascinating discussion will explore Levi's *That's All I Know*, and Mesa's *Un Amor* and *Four by Four*, three novels of sensational talent and unapologetic vitality.

AI

Elaine Castillo, Chris McQueer & Catherine Prasifka: Virtually Reality

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

An exploration of humanity at its most uncharted frontier. Today, we talk to **Chris McQueer** (*Hermit*), **Catherine Prasifka** (*This Is How You Remember It*), and **Elaine Castillo** (*Moderation*), who have each written compelling novels set in the parallel country of the internet, many of whose inhabitants (including young men, children, anonymous moderators) are profoundly affected by its very different laws and norms.

CC

THE PARTNERS& EVENT

A C Grayling: Disagreeing Agreeably?

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

Sometimes it feels like we can't talk about anything without further polarising opinions. Join author and philosopher **A C Grayling** as he seeks the middle-ground in an incendiary debate. Drawing from his new book, *Discriminations: Making Peace in the Culture Wars*, Grayling shares a fresh take on how we might navigate the messy politics of cultural conflict by recognising the nuance between competing rights and interests.

BSL CC

Repair

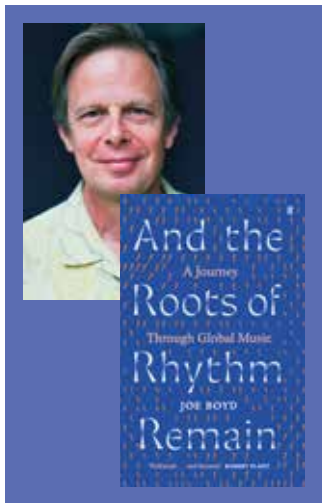
Tracy Borman: The Royal Lie That Started a War

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Succession meets the 17th century English monarchy in historian and novelist **Tracy Borman**'s revealing new book *The Stolen Crown*, which puts forward that Queen Elizabeth I didn't, in fact, name King James VI of Scotland as her deathbed successor - a lie which led to England's descent into civil war within half a century under the Stuart's rule. In this launch event, enjoy an hour of historical intrigue, deception, and chaos with the author of *Anne Boleyn & Elizabeth I*.



A C Grayling, 17:00-18:00



Joe Boyd, 16:30-17:30

Programme key

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Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND EVENT

Irvine Welsh:
The Second Summer of Love

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

In 1993, **Irvine Welsh** wrote *Trainspotting* - a novel that became a cultural moment, giving us the era-defining Renton, Spud, Sick Boy, and Begbie. With its long-anticipated sequel, *Men in Love*, the gang ‘come up’ again during the anarchic, decadent peak of late 80s/early 90s rave culture. But this time, they’re getting their kicks elsewhere. Edinburgh icon Welsh joins us to pose the timely question: is love really the drug all men crave?



Xiaolu Guo, 18:30-19:30

Something Gorey

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

From Maurice Sendak to *Edward Scissorhands*, the late Edward Gorey’s surreal and gothic fingers are all over a particular corner of 20th century art. We celebrate the iconic American illustrator and writer’s centenary with **Gregory Hischak**, the director of the Edward Gorey House in Massachusetts and author of the forthcoming *E is for Edward*, who will share insights into Gorey. Chaired by **Hannah McGill** with New Media Scotland.



Xiaolu Guo:
A Whale of a Retelling

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

Writer, artist, and filmmaker **Xiaolu Guo** is critically acclaimed in every medium she touches. Her novel *Call Me Ishmaelle* is the most recent incarnation of her astonishingly varied vision and talent - a bold, playful, gender-swapping retelling of *Moby Dick* that reinvigorates Melville’s classic. She chats today about challenging conventions, our relationship to the natural world, and trying to fit the whole world on a whaling ship.



Kirsty Logan: Love Over Time

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

Festival favourite **Kirsty Logan** is back with another beautiful collection of short stories, *No & Other Love Stories*, exploring the intricacies and complexities of female desire against a backdrop that spans centuries. From a medieval convent to a 1990s high school, has the way women love and the relationships they find themselves in really changed?



Kit de Waal: When You’re Busy
Making Other Plans

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Few people understand the vagueries of the human heart such as *My Name Is Leon* author **Kit de Waal**, who returns to the Festival to discuss her latest novel, *The Best of Everything*. A book bursting with joy and tenderness about how love changes our lives, it follows meticulous organiser, Paulette, who finds her perfect life plans waylaid when she unexpectedly ends up caring for two children. In conversation with **Damian Barr**.



Catherine Chidgey & Laila Lalami:
Dreaming Dangerously

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

Master storytellers **Catherine Chidgey** and **Laila Lalami** have created two chilling new dystopian tales in which dreams are monitored for control and surveillance. Chidgey’s Ishiguro-esque *The Book of Guilt* centres around triplet boys in a strange children’s home, while Lalami’s Women’s Prize-longlisted *The Dream Hotel* follows a woman detained at a border crossing because she has been deemed a ‘dangerous dreamer’. The authors chat privacy, freedom, and speculative visions. *Supported by British Council New Zealand and the Pacific*.



THE KIMPTON CHARLOTTE SQUARE EVENT

Chris Chibnall: From
Broadchurch to the White Hart

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

What do you do when you hand over the reins as showrunner of *Doctor Who*, one of the most high-profile jobs in British TV? In **Chris Chibnall**’s case, you write your debut crime thriller, *Death at The White Hart*, a mystery about a big city detective moving back to Dorset to investigate a pub landlord’s savage murder. As the creator of the similarly rural hit series, *Broadchurch*, it’s a genre Chibnall knows a thing or two about. Chaired by **Denise Mina**.



Kit de Waal, 19:30-20:30



Kirsty Logan, 18:45-19:45



Laila Lalami, 20:00-21:00

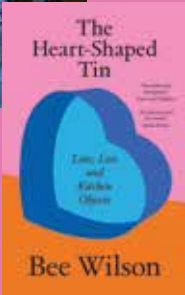
Programme key

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Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



José Pizarro, 13:00-16:00



Bee Wilson, 13:30-14:30

Christopher de Bellaigue: Power and Politics in the Ottoman Empire

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

A foreign correspondent for the *Economist* and *New Yorker* in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran, **Christopher de Bellaigue**’s books showcase his expertise in Middle Eastern politics, past and present. The *Telegraph* called his book *The Lion House* ‘Wolf Hall for the Ottoman Empire’, and his latest, *The Golden Throne*, returns to that era. He joins us today, discussing the life of the feared 16th century Sultan, Suleyman the Magnificent, and his relevance to today’s Middle East.

AI

Writing Sex: A Workshop with Jeremy Atherton Lin

11:00-12:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

Join author **Jeremy Atherton Lin** (described in *The New York Times* as having ‘a five-octave, Mariah Carey-esque range for discussing gay sex’) to explore how we can express authentic intimacy on the page. How can we depict sex as meaningful, even political – and sometimes pretty funny? Can we honour, not exploit, our lovers? Atherton Lin will share novels and memoirs that have inspired his own work, and hone in on the craft of the close encounter. Participants of all gender identities and sexual orientations welcome.

Jonathan Freedland: Defying a Dictator

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

Author, journalist, and host of both BBC Radio 4’s *The Long View* series and the *Guardian*’s *Politics Weekly America* podcast, **Jonathan Freedland** has won both the Orwell Prize for Journalism and the Somerset Maugham Award for Non-Fiction. An insightful and authoritative voice on modern history, today he speaks about his varied career, and the current resonance of his book *The Traitors Circle*, a true story of rebellion against the Nazis.

AI

Stuart Murdoch: Late Developer

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

Taking time away from his prolific band Belle and Sebastian, singer **Stuart Murdoch** has penned a stunning debut novel which fictionalises his own experience with ME (a chronic fatigue illness). *Nobody’s Empire* is set against the backdrop of a group of friends in early 1990s Glasgow and California. Hear Murdoch talking about his decision to write a novel rather than a memoir, and hope that the book will be an inspiration to other people with chronic illness.

AI

Have Lunch with José Pizarro

13:00-16:00
Elliott’s Studio
£100.00 [£90.00/£75.00]

Enjoy a little bit of the Mediterranean in Edinburgh this afternoon as iconic award-winning chef **José Pizarro** serves up a flavour-punch of a meal, inspired by his latest cookbook, *The Spanish Pantry*. Discover the staple ingredients he believes encapsulate Spanish cooking – tomatoes, lemons, saffron, and Manchego, to name just a few – and hear (and taste for yourself) why Pizarro believes you don’t need much to create mouthwatering, authentic Spanish cuisine at home. *Ticket includes: a welcome snack and drink, and a generous lunch with drinks on the table.*

Food & Drink

Bee Wilson: The Stories in Our Kitchen

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

Why does a chipped old mug or plate passed on to us by a loved one hold such special appeal? In her latest book *The Heart-Shaped Tin*, food writer, historian, and *Wall Street Journal* columnist **Bee Wilson** draws on her own and others’ experiences of divorce, dementia, trauma, and loss of home to examine why we find such an emotional connection with our favourite kitchen objects. Join her for a heartwarming and inspiring conversation today, central to our Repair theme.

AI

Repair



The Front List: Asako Yuzuki

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£8.00/£5.00]

Since *Butter* appeared in print, bookshops have been scrambling to keep **Asako Suzuki**’s word-of-mouth sensation in stock. About a serial killer chef who poisons her lovers deliciously, this strange, thrilling, incisive novel won Waterstones Book of the Year 2024. Author of over 20 novels (though *Butter* is her first English translation), Yuzuki talks today about consumption, sexism, skewed beauty standards, and her mission to elevate the status of Japan’s women through powerful storytelling. Chaired by **Zing Tsjeng**. *Supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart.*

AI CC

Learn to Write Good: A Workshop with Dominic Hoey

14:00-16:00
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

Bestselling New Zealand novelist **Dominic Hoey** (*Poor People with Money*, 1985) leads an accessible introduction to the craft of storytelling. Through practical exercises and real-world examples, Hoey guides you through the building blocks of writing compelling prose. This workshop is open to everyone – no previous writing experience needed. Whether you’re just starting out or coming back to the page after a break, you’ll gain new tools, fresh ideas, and a better understanding of how to shape your stories. *Supported by British Council New Zealand and the Pacific.*

Dylan Jones, Miranda Sawyer & Arusa Qureshi: Music Across the Decades

14:45-15:45
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

It’s been said that writing about music is like dancing about architecture – it needs to be experienced to be understood. Yet there are writers who manage to capture something of the feeling of listening, the way it moves and shapes us. Today, **Dylan Jones** (1975), **Miranda Sawyer** (*Uncommon People*), and DJ, programmer, and writer **Arusa Qureshi** (*Flip the Script*) chat about era-defining artists and songs of the 70s, 90s, and 2000s, and how we might express what music does to us.

AI

Candice Chung & Katie Goh: Food is Life

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

In **Candice Chung** and **Katie Goh**’s memoirs, food is a love language, a commodity, and a way of saying the unsayable. Chung’s *Chinese Parents Don’t Say I Love You* unpicks family dynamics and the rituals of dining together, while Goh’s *Foreign Fruit* uses the complex history of the orange as a framework for her personal story. They chat with us about how food informs our understanding of the world, and our place in it.

AI

Programme key

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Formats: Remote Appearance | Outdoor | Active | Food & Drink



Damian Barr, 15:15-16:15

Damian Barr: Forgotten Love

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

Bestselling author of *Maggie and Me* and host of the Big Scottish Book Club, the ebullient **Damien Barr** takes us back in time to 1930s Scotland with his intoxicating new novel. *The Two Roberts* is about real artists, Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde, who met at Glasgow School of Art, and whose passionate romance Barr now stunningly reimagines. Join him today as he sheds deserved light on the love story of two pioneering Scottish artists. *Supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart.*

📺 AI

Ekow Eshun & Imaobong Umoren: New Empires

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In *Black Earth Rising* - a compelling anthology of African, Latin American, and Native American artists - writer and broadcaster **Ekow Eshun** interweaves colonialism, climate crisis, and contemporary art. Meanwhile, London School of Economics associate professor **Imaobong Umoren's** *Empire Without End* is an astute study of Britain's involvement in the Caribbean, presenting her latest research on colonialism and empire. Join both authors for this timely, fascinating discussion about the continuing hold of colonialism on contemporary life.

AI

Pratyusha, Alycia Pirmohamed, Jessica J Lee & Nina Mingya Powles: Beautiful Experiments

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

Described as a prose poem, a nature diary, and a poetic inquiry, *this too is a glistening* is the creation of four brilliant poets and writers. **Pratyusha, Alycia Pirmohamed, Jessica J. Lee, and Nina Mingya Powles** - otherwise known as 'fieldnotes collective' - wrote their pamphlet over the course of one weekend, and what they created is a tender reflection on nature, poetry, and collaboration. Today, the contributors discuss their genre-defying experiment.

AI

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Naga Munchetty: It's (Not) All In Your Head

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

Women's healthcare is in need of a revolution, and BBC broadcaster **Naga Munchetty** is ready to fight. In *It's Probably Nothing*, she explores the difficulties women still face in getting diagnosed and treated, and provides actionable lessons to help women advocate for themselves in medical settings. She talks with **Devi Sridhar** about the fundamental flaws in our healthcare system and the provocative conversations that inspired her book. *Supported by the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities.*

📺 BSL CC

Repair

Lucy Rose & Emma van Straaten: Beneath the Surface

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

Obsession. Desire. Rage. Emotions women are expected to swallow and hide from the world. But rather than disappearing, they instead bubble away under the surface until they inevitably explode out with dangerous force. This struggle between society's rules and the reality of feeling is prevalent in both **Lucy Rose's** twisting horror, *The Lamb*, and **Emma van Straaten's** disquieting *This Immaculate Body*. Join them for a tantalising discussion about obsession, deception, and primal emotion.

AI



Pankaj Mishra: After Gaza, What Next?

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

In the concise and pointed *The World After Gaza*, essayist and novelist **Pankaj Mishra** uses the war in the Middle East as a starting point to examine the competing histories of the last century and how they've shaped differing political and moral imaginations. From much of the of the world's experience of slavery, colonialism, and decolonisation, to the West's narratives of the triumphant defeat of 20th century totalitarianism and the spread of liberal capitalism, Mishra offers an unwavering analysis on how these memories are shaping the current moment, and how the balance of power is shifting. Join Mishra as he speaks with **Gavin Francis** about how new histories can orient us.

AI



Close Read: Dear Senthuran by Akwaeke Emezi

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

In our popular Close Read series, a leading 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, join Edwin Morgan Poetry Award-winning poet **Titilayo Farukuoye**, co-director of the Scottish BPOC Writers Network, as they share their passion for the work of writer and artist Akwaeke Emezi, discussing today *Dear Senthuran: A Black Spirit Memoir*.

Sam Heughan: On the Rocks

18:15-19:15
Spiegeltent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Nothing marks a special occasion better than a stunning cocktail, and this event is a special one indeed as *Outlander* actor, founder of Sassenach Spirits, and local lad **Sam Heughan** launches his new book, *The Cocktail Diaries*. Journey around the world with Heughan as he shares his favourite cocktails, the stories behind them, and the memories they made. Join us for a truly spirited and intimate evening (and there might even be a wee tippie). Sláinte!

AI 40

Juano Diaz & Dominic Hoey: For the Dreamers and the Underdogs

18:30-19:30
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

This event brings two authors of heartfelt, electric works about coming of age when you have so much stacked against you. *Slum Boy* details author **Juano Diaz's** life from a difficult childhood in Glasgow to discovering his sexuality and forging a successful creative path, while New Zealander **Dominic Hoey's** third novel, *1985*, illuminates poverty, crime, and dysfunctional family in Auckland with the author's characteristic humour and style. *Supported by British Council New Zealand and the Pacific.*

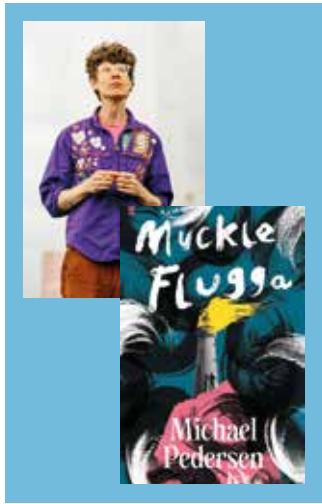
AI



Programme key

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

Access: 📺 Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance 🌳 Outdoor 🗣️ Active 🍷 Food & Drink



Michael Pedersen, 20:30-21:30



Jenni Fagan, 21:00-22:30

Jeremy Atherton Lin & Charlie Porter: Trying to Make it Home

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

Jeremy Atherton Lin's *Deep House* combines a kaleidoscopic history of the battle for marriage equality with a radically intimate memoir. **Charlie Porter's** debut novel *Nova Scotia House* celebrates the joy and creativity of the queer community before the AIDS pandemic. Juxtaposing past and present, ecstasy and heartache, both books use homes as a structure to explore and illuminate queer histories. The authors discuss capturing queer truths in their discussion today.

AI

Miriam Toews: Remaking the World

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

In *A Truce That Is Not Peace*, **Miriam Toews** invents an astonishing new non-fiction form to excavate her grief and guilt over her sister's death by suicide. The result is searing, yet also joyful, hilarious, sly, and wildly inventive. The author of international phenomenon, *Women Talking*, joins us to discuss making a pact with traumatic memory and filling silences we wish weren't there.

AI

Repair

Foday Mannah: The Search for Othella Savage

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

When a young woman dies after being found unconscious in the boot of her own car, then another disappears, a lethal struggle begins between corrupt political and religious institutions, personal faith, and the power of friendship. Set within Scotland's Sierra Leonean community, **Foday Mannah's** Mo Siewcharran Prize-winning debut, *The Search for Othella Savage*, is a vibrant mystery. Today Mannah asks - can loyalty always prevail over power?

AI

Michael Pedersen: Charged by Starlight

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

Edinburgh's Makar, **Michael Pedersen**, is an effervescent poet, poignant memoirist, anarchic event host... and now a debut novelist. He joins **Russell Tovey** to discuss the offbeat *Muckle Flugga*, which recounts the unsettling arrival of a stranger on a windswept island, setting asunder the lives of its lighthouse keeper and his dreamer son, Ouse. In the ensuing tug of war for Ouse's affections, Pedersen asks what might happen when dreams are dragged to earth?

AI

Frankenstein Cabaret: It's Alive!

21:00-22:30
Spiegeltent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

Frankenstein is having its biggest year since 1818, with a reissue with a new introduction by **Jenni Fagan**, and two Hollywood films reawakening Shelley's gothic classic and its deeply Scottish roots. Tonight, Fagan has stitched together a very-much-alive line-up of writers, musicians, and artists to celebrate, pull apart, and reanimate the ideas, invention, and sheer gothicness of the indelible tale that spawned a thousand other creations.

Writing Queer Fiction: A Workshop with Charlie Porter

10:00-11:30
Venue A
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00/£8.00]

What does it mean to write queer fiction? It's more than just the subject matter, the politics, or the social environment within which characters are placed. It's the structure of the novel itself, and the framework into which the story is written. Join author **Charlie Porter** (*Nova Scotia House*) to consider how we can break from heteronormative assumptions of 'emotional journey' and avoid the exploitation of characters for the sake of plot, so we can elevate fiction and push somewhere new with words.

Lucy Easthope: Roadmaps for Resilience

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

Explore the practical and philosophical dimensions of crisis response with **Lucy Easthope**, emergency planner and international advisor on disaster recovery. Her essential new book, *Come What May*, offers a framework for how we can respond when hit by life's unexpected twists, turns, and troubles. Join this thought-provoking conversation between Easthope and **Devi Sridhar** about resilience, preparedness, and the human response to adversity. An important conversation under our Festival theme, Repair.

AI

Repair

José Pizarro: Redefining Spanish Cooking

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

Legendary chef **José Pizarro** is an icon of Spanish cuisine in the UK. As the man who turned Brindisa into a gastronomic sensation before opening his own beloved eateries, there are few that are better placed to showcase the incredible culinary variety of his homeland. Today he chats to us about his newest title, *The Spanish Pantry*, and his passion for fresh, quality produce prepared with simplicity and lashings of enthusiasm. Supported by *Claire & Mark Urquhart*.

CC

Chloe Dalton: Raising Hare

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

Suffering from burnout, political adviser **Chloe Dalton** retreated from the big city to the English countryside. There she found a seemingly abandoned leveret, or baby hare, and took it home. Longlisted for 2025's Women's Prize for Non-Fiction, *Raising Hare* is the heartwarming story of how this tiny creature changed Dalton's life, and how care can transcend the boundaries between humans and animals. Dalton joins us to discuss her magical encounter and our Festival theme of Repair.

AI

Repair

Elodie Harper: History's Child

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

In the aftermath of defeat, what kind of legacy did Boudicca, warrior queen and mastermind of one of history's greatest revolts, leave her child? **Elodie Harper**, bestselling author of the *Wolf Den* trilogy, launches her latest standalone novel, *Boudicca's Daughter*, and talks about her rapid rise to becoming one of Britain's bestselling historical novelists.

AI

Malcolm X at 100

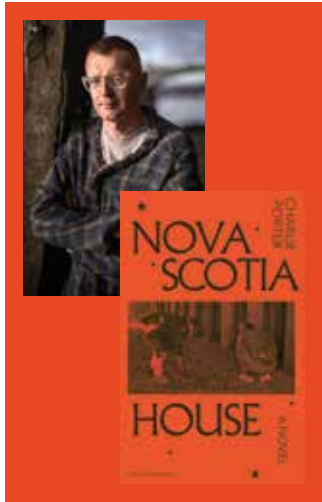
12:15-13:15
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Malcolm X was born 100 years ago this year. Yet his legacy of resistance 'by any means necessary' continues to resonate globally. From the Civil Rights movement to post-colonial struggles, his words and life ignite and inspire change. This event, in partnership with WritersMosaic, delves into Malcolm X's enduring role as a revolutionary and a symbol of defiance. With special guests **Bonnie Greer**, **Vayu Naidu**, and **Ekow Eshun**. Chaired by **Colin Grant**.

AI



Lucy Easthope, 10:15-11:15



Charlie Porter, 10:00-11:30



Programme key

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

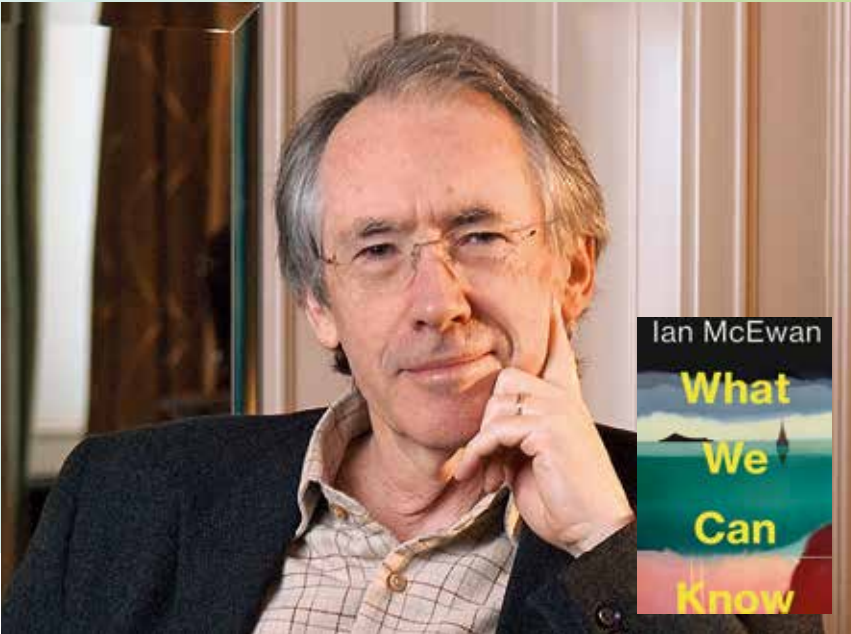
Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

The Front List: Ian McEwan

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

The masterful **Ian McEwan** is one of our greatest living writers, creating modern classics including *Atonement*, *Enduring Love*, *On Chesil Beach*, *Amsterdam*, *The Children Act*, and *Saturday*. Ahead of the highly anticipated publication of his new novel, *What We Can Know*, McEwan reflects on a truly remarkable career which has produced so many works which are at once timeless and yet always remain in close conversation with current affairs, and looks towards to the stories he has yet to tell.

📺 📺



Julie Lin, 13:00-16:00

Have Lunch with Julie Lin

13:00-16:00
Elliott's Studio
£100.00 [£90.00/£75.00]

In her debut cookbook, *Sama Sama*, Malaysian-Scottish chef **Julie Lin** explores how food can nourish our very souls, acting as a bridge that connects us to our roots. In this immersive event, join Lin - *Saturday Kitchen* favourite and founder of Michelin-recommended Glasgow restaurant, Ga Ga Kitchen - as she teases out the vibrant ingredients that define her, sharing stories from the heart as she whips you up a delicious, comforting lunch. *Ticket includes: a welcome snack and drink, and a generous lunch with drinks on the table.*

🍴

Mark Billingham & Clare Mackintosh: Murder Series Uncovered

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

What does it take to write a thrilling murder mystery series? No one knows better than **Clare Mackintosh**, author of the bestselling DC Morgan series and *Sunday Times* bestselling author **Mark Billingham**. Join us as they sit down together to dissect how to create multi-faceted characters who live in the minds of readers across multiple books and labyrinthine plots.

AI

Multisolving: A Workshop with Alex Pearson

14:00-16:00
Venue A
£35.00 [£32.00/£25.00/£10.00]

Multisolving is a growing movement around the world, encouraging people to work together across sectors to address multiple problems with a single policy or investment. It's a way to look at the whole picture and help everyone, but it isn't always easy or simple. Join **Alex Pearson**, author of *Curious, Creative, Connected*, to explore the radical potential of multisolving across a range of issues, investments, and policies; benefit from research, tools, and stories; and understand how to approach multisolving in our own lives.

Repair

Ekow Eshun: Meet the Strangers

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

In *The Strangers*, journalist, broadcaster, and curator **Ekow Eshun** challenges the public preconception of 'the Black male as outsider' with tender, insightful profiles of five fascinating men: 19th century playwright and Shakespearean actor Ira Aldridge, Arctic explorer Matthew Henson, psychiatrist and political philosopher Frantz Fanon, the great activist Malcolm X, and Justin Fashanu - the first openly gay professional footballer. Today, hear Eshun unpacking how their lives reveal unseen perspectives on Black art, culture, and history.

AI

Samanta Schweblin: Beauty and the Sinister

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

Unnerving, strange, and skin-prickling are words frequently used to describe leading Argentinian writer **Samanta Schweblin**'s short stories, which expertly balance literary elegance with emotional depth. Her new collection, *Good and Evil and Other Stories*, unleashes six new tales of the uncanny, and today she speaks to us about her startling imagination, and how embracing the eerie can reveal unnameable human emotions.

AI

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH EVENT

Richard Susskind: Navigating the AI Revolution

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

For **Richard Susskind**, balancing the benefits and threats of artificial intelligence is the defining challenge of our age. Drawing on 40 years' experience in the field, his multidisciplinary book *How to Think about AI: A Guide for the Perplexed* demystifies AI's ethical, economic, and social implications. Hear Susskind today, cutting through the still-unfolding maze of uncertainty to show us how to think responsibly about our technological future. *Supported by Edinburgh Futures Institute.*

📺 BSL 📺

Chris Whitaker: Darkness Uncovered

16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

Chris Whitaker's *All the Colours of the Dark* became a word-of-mouth sensation last year, and shows no signs of slowing down. Folding a love story, a coming-of-age tale, and a fist-bitingly tense thriller into one, John Marrs has called this mesmerising novel 'a truly exceptional masterclass in storytelling'. The international bestselling author chats with us about this story of love, death, truth, and the spaces in between.

AI

Raymond Antrobus: The Quiet Ear

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

As the first ever poet to win the Rathbones Folio Prize (for *The Perseverance*), **Raymond Antrobus** provided a compelling insight into the d/Deaf experience. We're delighted to have Antrobus back with us to launch his debut work of non-fiction, *The Quiet Ear*, at this year's Festival. Part memoir, part call to action, it tells of his experience growing up as deaf child to Jamaican and English parents, searching for acceptance, and ultimately finding his people.

BSL 📺



Raymond Antrobus, 16:30-17:30



Ekow Eshun, 15:00-16:00

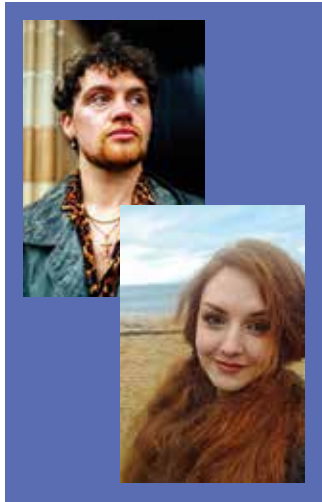
Programme key

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Access: 📺 Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language 📺 Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance 📺 Outdoor 📺 Active 🍴 Food & Drink



Viggo Mortensen, 17:00-18:00



Michael Mullen & Len Pennie, 18:45-19:45



Richard Holloway, 18:45-19:45

Susan Barker & Daisy Johnson: What We Fear, Who We Are

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

Reading gothic horror can be heart-racing, hair-raising, and borderline hyperventilation-inducing. But how do you write a novel that grips the reader from start to finish? Lauded creators of beguiling page turners, horror authors **Susan Barker** (*Old Soul*) and **Daisy Johnson** (*The Hotel*), join us to discuss how they go about writing thrilling reads that make readers keep coming back for more.

AI

Jessica J Lee & Jason Allen-Paisant: Taking Root

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

Join two writers who have turned their pens towards nature and belonging. In Jhalak Prize-longlisted *Dispersals*, **Jessica J Lee** examines how plants and people come to belong in a place, considering how tightly we're entwined with Earth's flora. And T.S. Eliot Prize-winner **Jason Allen-Paisant's** *The Possibility of Tenderness* is a lyrical personal history of migration, exploring how the plants and people of home offer different ways of living in a new country.

AI

The People Speak

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

Join a host of acclaimed writers and actors, including the one and only **Viggo Mortensen** (*The Lord of the Rings*, *Captain Fantastic*) and the iconic **Vanessa Redgrave** (*The Devils*, *Atonement*, *Mrs Dalloway*), for powerful performances of stories, speeches, and songs of protest and rebellion from around the world, and across history. Inspired by the work of people's historian Howard Zinn and directed by Anthony Arnone (co-editor with Colin Firth of *The People Speak*), their words shimmer with strength, inspiration, and a vision for a better future. Hosted by **Anthony Arnone**. See our website for full cast details.

CC

Miriam Toews: Can Words Repair?

17:45-18:45
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£14.50/£10.50/£5.00]

A Truce That Is Not Peace is the first time **Miriam Toews** has published a non-fiction work about her own life. The work remakes her world through literary form and proposes the question: how far can words reach? Today, a starry cast including Toews discuss the potential of language - as a salve, an answer, and a way to help us through. Check website for full line-up.

AI

Repair

Sarah Hall & Elizabeth O'Connor: Fantastic Folklore

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

Master storyteller **Sarah Hall's** *Helm* follows a mischievous wind through the stories of the humans who experienced it. Meanwhile, **Elizabeth O'Connor's** devastating debut *Whale Fall* tells of a woman longing for escape from island life and discovering a way out. Join them as they discuss the folklore at the core of these compelling novels and the importance of passing stories down the generations.

AI

Alex Howard: A Cat's-Eye View of Edinburgh Life

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

In *Library Cat*, bestselling author **Alex Howard** tugged on readers' heart strings with his witty collection of observations about the University of Edinburgh's most famous feline denizen. In his latest century-spanning novel, *The Ghost Cat*, Howard's be-whiskered protagonist is a ghost residing in Edinburgh's leafy Marchmont. Howard joins the Festival to chat about inhabiting the moggie mind and how he found inspiration from an Edinburgh tenement.

AI



The Front List: R F Kuang

19:30-20:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£8.00/£5.00]

Yellowface author and international sensation **R F Kuang** isn't one to rest on her laurels, constantly evolving her style and skill across genres and ages. Join **Heather Parry** today as she chats with Kuang about her highly anticipated page-turning thriller, *Katabasis*, which tackles the ultimate rescue mission as two rival Cambridge academics unite to save the soul of their advisor from the underworld. Surviving Hell is one thing, but surviving each other is quite another...

AI CC

Michael Mullen & Len Pennie: Sparkling Scottish Poetry

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

Two effervescent new voices in Scots poetry have burst onto the scene in recent years with joyous impact: *Sunday Times* bestseller **Len Pennie** and Edwin Morgan Award-winning **Michael Mullen**. Pennie's *Poyums Annaw* and Mullen's *Goonie* demonstrate the fun, versatility, and depth possible in contemporary Scots. Join us for a special event exploring two clever new collections and the rude health of the Scottish poetry scene.

Richard Holloway: The Grace in Uncertainty

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

Richard Holloway - the archetypal 'turbulent priest' turned writer, broadcaster, and public intellectual - is a true Scottish national treasure. Tonight, with characteristic wit and wisdom, he shares his new memoir, *Last Words*, which he says will be his final book. In this unmissable event, Holloway shares the texts and music that have shaped him, reflects on a long life defined by great faith and grave doubt, and relates how he's found a gentle path between the two.

AI CC

Fun Lovin' Crime Writers

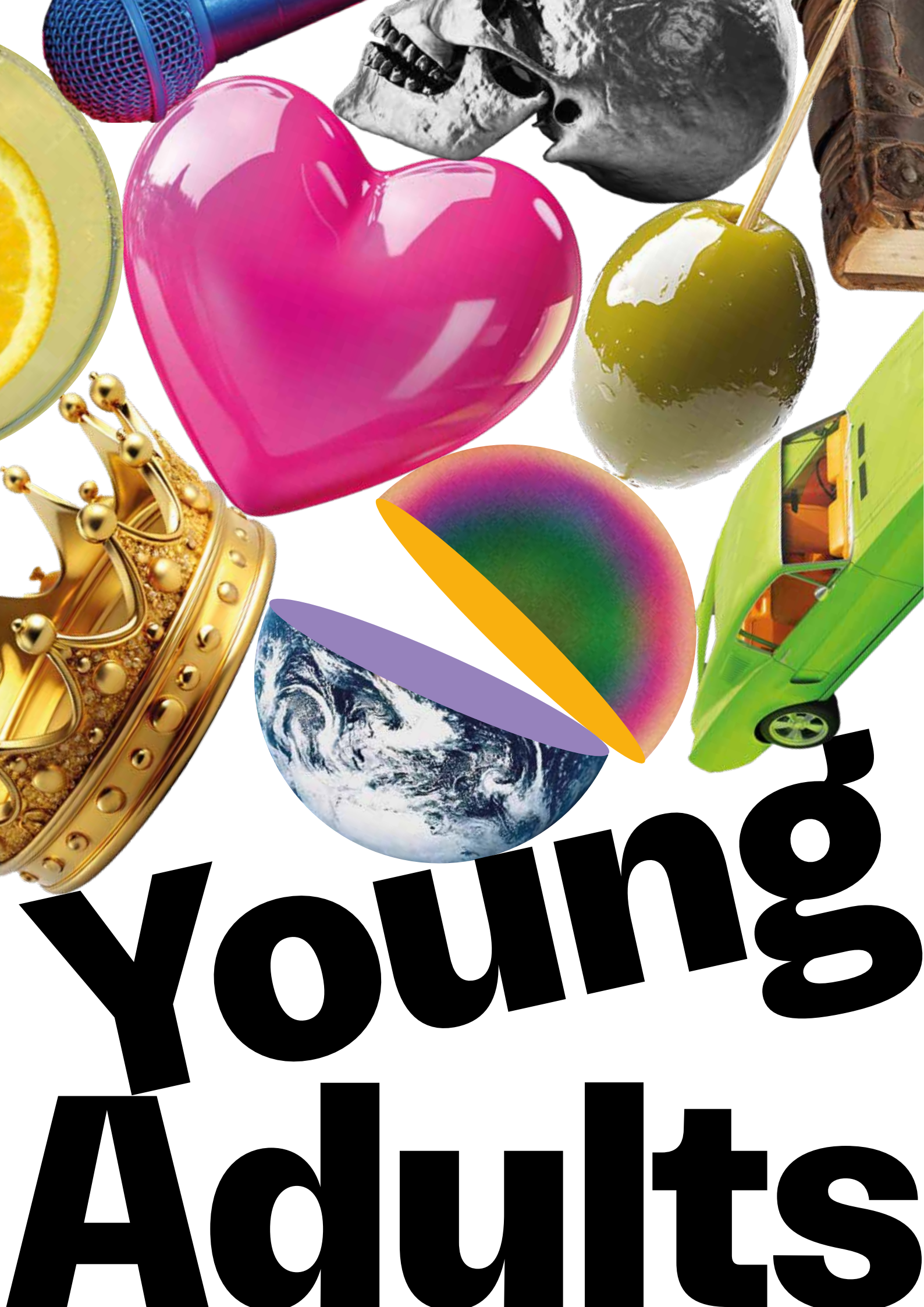
21:15-22:15
Spiegeltent
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£5.00]

'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: the Spiegeltent, 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.

Programme key

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

Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink



**As fresh
as it gets.**

Our brand-new and sparkling Young Adults programme has been curated with a focus on audiences aged 30 and under, but is for anyone who's young at heart!

Expect to chat with fantastic authors, get the first listen to the hottest new talent in poetry, peer into the inner workings of the publishing world, and enjoy loads of chances to get involved. Know what you're into? Use our genre labels to find the events that suit your tastes. Or bask in the programme in its full glory - it's completely up to you. A few events might not be suitable for under 18s - keep an eye out for our guidance notes.

You can see all our current Young Adults events using the filters on our website, including some so fresh they might not have made it into the brochure.

A-grade YA fiction

Join the incredible **R F Kuang** in McEwan Hall as she unveils her latest novel, *Katabasis*, **Caroline O'Donoghue** brings us multi-dimensional romantasy *Skipshock*, **Molly X Chang** thrills with her epic *The Nightblood Prince*, and **Elodie Harper** launches her first stand-alone novel *Boudicca's Daughter*. We're also thrilled to welcome back smash-hit *Heartstopper* creator, **Alice Oseman**, alongside **Beth O'Leary**, **Bolu Babalola**, **Juno Dawson**, **Saara El-Arifi**, **Imani Erriu**, **Samantha Shannon**, and more. You can even join us for the announcement of this year's YA Book Prize winner.

House of YA x Edinburgh International Book Festival Spiegeltent Takeover

On Monday 11 August, we are hyped to bring you our first ever collab with House of YA. Together we'll present two brilliant panels, a huge host of exciting free activities, including Meet Cute bookish speed-dating, a YA trivia quiz, and a special liar-detecting game hosted by thriller author **Cynthia Murphy**, alongside loads of giveaways and freebies - check out the full day's activities at edbookfest.co.uk/houseofya.

Workshops and wellbeing

Lize Meddings, creator of the *Sad Ghost Club*, hosts a special cosy zine making workshop, **Ashley Hickson-Lovence** shares how to write with flair and no fear, **Jan Van Der Veken** discusses how there's no right career path into books, icon **Munroe Bergdorf** guides us on speaking our truths, and you can grab a cure for whatever ails you in **Deborah Alma's** Poetry Pharmacy.

Industry tips

Got a story you want to share with the world? Lime New Storytelling 2023 Award-winner **Asli Jensen** and literary agent **Louise Lamont** share their tips on getting published.

Spoken word

Earn the right to brag about how you saw them first as poetry's Next Big Things take the to the stage at the Loud Poets Grand Slam Final, Rock the Boat's Open Mic night, and GUBSMACKED's Flyte Nyte.

Out and about

Come and join Bookshop Crawl UK for a special tour around just a few of the city's incredible bookshops, and enjoy the sights along the way.

Space to chill

Our Courtyard has been designed for you to chill, chat, and (hopefully) bask in some sun, with tasty food trucks, a banging bar, and plenty of space to spread out with a book.

Book signings

Most events will be followed by a signing with the author at our Festival Bookshop, run by our retail partners Waterstones, where you can also go wild in the aisles.

Over at Elliott's Studio

Sample the most interesting wines around with *Guardian* wine critic **Hannah Crosbie** in the relaxed Elliott's Studio, where we'll also host the first Scottish edition of the Insta-popular Buffy's Book Club.

Even more in our Adults programme

As well as the events in our Young Adults programme, there are almost 400 more in our Adults programme - so why not give that a flick and see what else catches your eye?

Saturday 09

The Monsters Inside Our Head with Josh Silver & Andy Darcy Theo

15:00-16:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Some of the scariest monsters are the ones inside our heads. Hear BookTok star, **Andy Darcy Theo** (author of the bestselling series *The Light That Blinds Us*) and YA Book Prize-shortlisted **Josh Silver** (mental health nurse and author of *Traumaland*) discuss how fantasy writing can help us better understand our mental health. Join them to fight the monsters at this uplifting event.

AI

Loud Poets Grand Slam Final 2025

16:00-18:00
Courtyard Theatre
£10.00 [£5.00]

Returning for a third year, the highly anticipated Loud Poets Grand Slam Final promises to be a Festival highlight, combining music with fist-thumping, side-tickling poetry. Having qualified through a series of nationwide Slams, 12 poets compete for a £3,000 prize and the coveted title of Slam Champion. Hosted by **Kevin Mclean** with musical accompaniment from **Jack Hinks**, plus a special performance from last year's winner and this year's sacrificial poet, **EmmaClaire Brightlyn**.

AI

Monday 11

House of YA x Edinburgh International Book Festival Spiegeltent Takeover

10:30-17:00

This fun-filled festival takeover offers YA fans the chance to hear from and meet and all-star line-up of YA authors.

Empowered Voices with Bea Fitzgerald & Manjeet Mann

10:30-11:30
Spiegeltent
£8.00 [£5.00]

What does it mean to be a feminist storyteller? Join **Manjeet Mann**, the award-winning author of *The Crossing*, and **Bea Fitzgerald**, the *Sunday Times* bestselling author of *Girl, Goddess, Queen*, in conversation with **Cynthia Murphy** as they discuss their new novels *Roar* and *A Beautiful Evil*. Celebrating female narratives and the triumphs of women, be prepared to feel empowered and inspired by women's voices in this special panel event with the House of YA.

AI

Wear the Crown with Lauryn Hamilton Murray & A B Poranek

15:30-16:30
Spiegeltent
£8.00 [£5.00]

Prepare to be enchanted with debut author **Lauryn Hamilton Murray** and the bestselling author of *Where the Dark Stands Still*, **A B Poranek**, as they share their dazzling new YA novels, *Heir of Storms* and *A Treachery of Swans* in conversation with **Katja Kaine**. Bound to be your new romantasy obsession, featuring slow burn sapphic pining to elemental magic and brought to you specially by the House of YA - it's going to be electrifying!

AI

All ticket bookers for panel events will receive a free House of YA tote bag (while stocks last).

Free Activities

As well as brilliant panel events at 10:30 and 15:30, you can drop in and enjoy a series of completely free activities between 12:00 and 15:00. Enter exclusive giveaways, pick up an icebreaker card, snap a selfie with some fun photo opps, chat to the House of YA team, and snag some free swag (maybe even a sneaky proof copy of a yet-to-be-published title...) - all for free!

Activities include:

Meet Cute

12:00-12:45
Free, drop-in

A bookish (and platonic!) speed-dating game where you can matchmake a new pal every two minutes by asking them your most pressing questions.

Find the Liar

13:00-13:45
Free, drop-in

Get your best poker face on, and don your *Traitors*-style cloak, to sniff out the liar amongst you in this uproarious game, led by thriller author **Cynthia Murphy**.

Get YA Quiz On

14:00-14:45
Free, drop-in

Put your literary knowledge to the test to win a host of exciting prizes.

It's going to be an epic day - check out the full event and activity line-up at **edbookfest.co.uk/houseofya**

Creating the Sad Ghost Club with Lize Meddings

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

It all started with an idea - an idea to create a place where anyone feeling sad or lonely could come to feel less alone. Now, it's a community of nearly 600,000 people, a graphic novel series, and a way of thinking that helps repair old wounds and spark joy. Join author-illustrator **Lize Meddings** as she chats about her *Sad Ghost Club* journey and shows you how to draw your own sad ghost too.

Sad Ghost Zine Workshop with Lize Meddings

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

The world can be a lonely place sometimes, and author-illustrator **Lize Meddings** is on a mission to make it less so with her *Sad Ghost Club* comic book community. In this cosy zine-making workshop, Lize will help you draw original characters to express your feelings, including your very own Sad Ghost.

Poetry Pharmacy with Deborah Alma

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

The *Poetry Prescription* series, compiled by **Deborah Alma**, is the perfect antidote to life's ailments. Hear Deborah today as she reflects on the ways poetry can inspire, comfort, and heal us - it's a much-needed balm for our busy lives. After the event, you'll have the chance to receive your very own 'poetry pill', because there really is a poem for everything!

Rewrite a Career in Books: Jan Van Der Veken

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

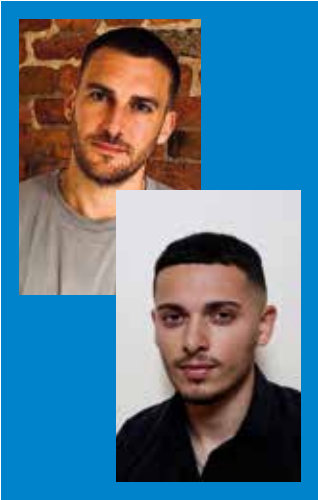
After studying graphic design and training as a pilot, **Jan Van Der Veken** is now recognised as one of the most distinctive Belgian illustrators. His retro-futurist style has graced covers for the *New Yorker* and most recently, illustrated titles for older children. Jan will discuss his career to date, his passion for art and illustration, and how there is no one path to getting into books. You can also try your hand at your own creative making!

Bolu Babalola & Beth O'Leary: Meet Not-So-Cutes

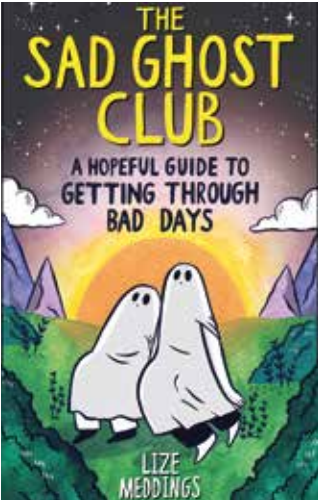
16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

In **Bolu Babalola**'s fiery new novel, *Sweet Heat*, ex-partners Kiki and Malakai are reunited at a friend's wedding, whether they like it or not. Meanwhile, bestselling author of *The Flat Share*, **Beth O'Leary** brings us a new punchy new romantic comedy with *Swept Away*, which sees Lexi and Zeke having a cringey one night stand, then ending up all at sea (literally) on a house boat. Babalola and O'Leary chat to **Nyla Ahmad** about the awkwardness of love.

AI



Josh Silver & Andy Darcy Theo, Sat 9, 15:00-16:00



Lize Meddings, Mon 11, 11:15-12:15



Programme key

- Genres: Activism Comics/Graphic Novels Food, Lifestyle & Wellness LGBTQ+ Music, Poetry & Performance Romance & Romantasy Workshops Buzzy Fiction Fantasy, Sci Fi & Horror

- Access: Livestreamed British Sign Language Live Captioned AI Captioned Learning Disability Friendly
- Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

Thursday 14

The Price of Power with Alwyn Hamilton & S F Williamson

18:15-19:15
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Power connects the new heart-pounding dark fantasy thrillers from **Alwyn Hamilton** and **S F Williamson**. *A Language of Dragons* follows Viv, a codebreaker recruited to decipher the secret language of dragons in an ongoing war. And *The Notorious Virtues* finds main character Nora in the middle of a deadly inheritance battle where there can only be one winner. Hear from these extraordinary voices on the YA scene as they share their unputdownable new stories.

Friday 15

Defying Destiny with Molly X Chang

16:00-17:00
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Two kingdoms on the brink of battle. One prophesied empress to unite them. Inspired by Chinese myth and history, YA superstar **Molly X Chang**’s epic romantasy, *The Nightblood Prince*, sees a reckless princess form a close bond with a runaway prince from a rival kingdom who commands an army of vampires. Join Molly as she chats about her newest title which Xiran Jay Zhao has called ‘beautifully written and brimming with defiance’.

The Art of Fantasy with Imani Erriui & Samantha Shannon

20:30-21:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

New York Times bestselling author **Samantha Shannon** returns with the fifth instalment in her epic *Bone Season* series, *The Dark Mirror*. In this richly penned fantasy, Paige Mahoney makes a discovery that changes the war between humans and immortal forever. While in **Imani Erriui**’s cosmic romantasy, *Heavenly Bodies*, Elara finds herself caught between warring gods playing dangerous games. Join these talented authors as they reveal to **Alwyn Hamilton** how they create their remarkable fantasy worlds.

AI

Saturday 16

Old Town Bookshop Tour: Meander and Mingle with the Bookshop Crawl UK

11:00-13:30
14:00-16:30
Meeting Point: The Book Nook
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£8.00/£5.00]

Amid the crowds and chaos of Edinburgh in August, does calmly exploring the city’s Old Town and quaint bookshops with likeminded people sound more like your cup of tea? If so, we’ve got the perfect tour for you. Join our partners the Bookshop Crawl UK on a specially curated walking tour, where you’ll meander through cobbled streets, browse a range of local bookshops, and mingle with fellow readers - with some special treats along the way!

Thriller Night with Benjamin Dean, Ravena Guron & Busayo Matuluko

18:15-19:15
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

What do a sleepy hometown, a student party house, and a wedding have in common? They’re all the perfect setting for twisted murder mysteries! Join bestselling authors **Benjamin Dean** (*Bury Your Friends*), **Ravena Guron** (*Mondays Are Murder*), and **Busayo Matuluko** (*’Til Death*) as they discuss their deadly new YA thrillers today. How do they come up with their twisty tales (and how do they sleep at night)?

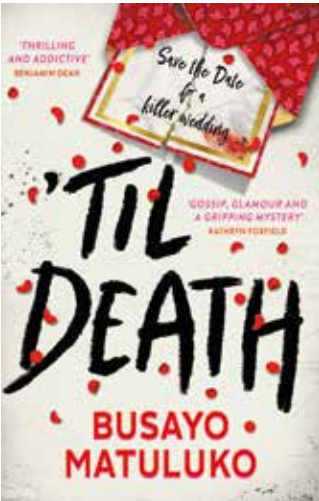
AI



S F Williamson, Thur 14, 18:15-19:15



Molly X Chang, Fri 16, 16:00-17:00



Busayo Matuluko, Sat 16, 18:15-19:15

Sunday 17



A Heart-Stopping Beginning with Alice Oseman

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Did you know that years before **Alice Oseman** started writing, drawing, or even planning the smash-hit graphic novel series, *Heartstopper*, she released a novella about its two main characters: Nick and Charlie? These beloved schoolboy sweethearts now have a loyal fanbase and an acclaimed Netflix spin off - but come along today to hear Alice chat about where it all started, with the release of the 10th anniversary edition of *Nick and Charlie*.

AI

Time is Power with Caroline O’Donoghue

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Bestselling author **Caroline O’Donoghue**’s *Skipshock* - her dazzlingly inventive new YA sci-fi romantasy - is set in a universe where time is a resource; coveted and exploited, it’s the key to power and privilege. Hear Caroline chatting today about the story’s time-twisting setting and how fantasy has the power to transform real-world issues, from discrimination to corruption, to reflect our own world back at us.

AI

Monday 18

Start your Writing Journey with Scottish Book Trust

18:15-19:15
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

It’s an exciting time for Children’s and YA publishing in Scotland and, luckily, there’s a wealth of opportunities to help writers navigate the ever-changing industry landscape. Join authors from **Scottish Book Trust’s New Writers Awards** as they share insights into their writing journey - from award, to agent, to publication... and beyond!



Caroline O’Donoghue, Sun 17, 12:00-13:00

Programme key

- Genres: Activism Comics/Graphic Novels Food, Lifestyle & Wellness LGBTQ+ Music, Poetry & Performance Romance & Romantasy Workshops Buzzy Fiction Fantasy, Sci Fi & Horror

- Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

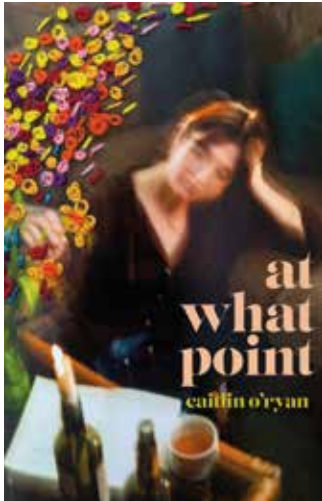
Tuesday 19

At What Point with Caitlin O’Ryan

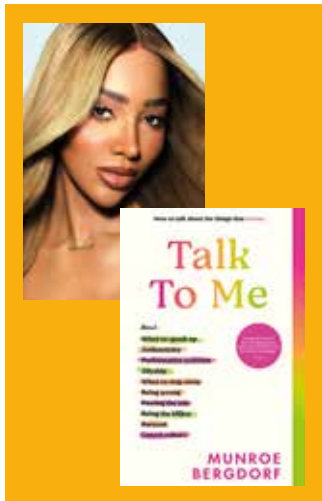
18:00-19:00
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£10.50/£5.00]
Age guidance: 18+

Last year, **Caitlin O’Ryan**’s poem about walking home alone, ‘At What Point’, went viral - her poems have since been shared by the likes of Jameela Jamil, Natasha Bedingfield, and Sarah Cox. Now, her new collection of the same title arrives onto the poetry scene, focusing on the female experience and society’s expectations. Join Caitlin as she shares her shattering insights with fellow poet, **Hollie McNish**, and they both try putting the world to rights.

AI



Caitlin O’Ryan,
Tues 19, 18:00-19:00



Munroe Bergdorf,
Thur 21, 19:30-20:30

Wednesday 20

Rock the Boat: Open Mic Poetry

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 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 edbookfest.co.uk to find out how you can get involved.

AI

The Unserious Wine Club: A Table Talk with Hannah Crosbie

19:30-21:00
Elliott’s Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]
Age limit: 18+

Saunter over to Elliott’s for a highly unserious wine-tasting with *Guardian* wine critic, broadcaster, and Edinburgh’s own **Hannah Crosbie**. One of the most exciting young voices in wine today, *Corker* is Hannah’s guide to the often-baffling world of wine, penned with her signature tongue-in-cheek wit. Taste some new favourites tonight as Hannah shares stories and sage advice on what wine to pick for all life’s important (and unimportant) occasions. *Ticket includes: a selection of wine tasters and a snack.*

UQ

GUBSMACKED presents Flyte Nyte 2025

20:00-22:00
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 presents the dazzlingly rude and boisterous Flyte Nyte 2025! **Colin Bramwell**, **Iona Lee**, and **Leyla Josephine** host poets, rappers, and spoken word artists all fighting to become the first Flying Champion using nothing but wit, verse, extravagant verbal abuse, and name-calling - highbrow it isnae!

Thursday 21

YA Book Prize 2025: Award Ceremony

17:30-19:00
Spiegeltent
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Exciting news! We’re collaborating with magazine *The Bookseller* again to host 2025’s YA Book Prize award ceremony. Come along to discover the best Young Adult fiction coming from the UK and Ireland right now. Previous winners include Lex Croucher with *Gwen* and *Art Are Not in Love* (2024), Danielle Jawando with *When Our Worlds Collided* (2023), and Alice Oseman with *Loveless* (2021). Hear this year’s shortlisted authors read from their books before one of them is crowned winner. Hosted by **Laura Bates**.

AI

Buffy’s Book Club

19:00-22:00
Elliott’s Studio
£30.00 [£27.00/£20.00]
Age limit: 18+

Buffy’s Book Club is an international book club, with monthly in-person events taking place in stunning locations in London and New York, as well as digitally. Hosted by founder **Lizzy Hadfield**, this is the very first edition of Buffy’s Book Club in Scotland. Expect in-depth discussion of the group’s chosen book (look out for your chance to vote by Instagram poll ahead of the event), followed by general chatter and friend-making over a glass of delicious, expertly-selected wine at Elliott’s.

UQ

Talking About the Things That Matter with Munroe Bergdorf

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

How do we talk about the really tough stuff? Luckily for us, **Munroe Bergdorf** is an expert in communicating across divides. The writer, activist, model, and contributing editor of British *Vogue* returns with her new book *Talk to Me*. Covering everything from beauty standards to cancel culture, Bergdorf is here to guide us towards speaking our truths. Hear her reflect on the power of confident communication.

AI

Friday 22



Breaking Boundaries: A Creative Writing Workshop with Ashley Hickson-Lovence

14:00-15:00
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Let loose your inner writer in this innovative workshop, led by Carnegie Medal for Writing-nominated performance poet and writer, **Ashley Hickson-Lovence**. Ashley draws on key themes from his YA verse-novel, *Wild East*, to help you write stories, poems, and even song lyrics with flair and no fear. Wake up your creativity, discover how to use words for maximum impact, and create something boundary-breaking on the page.

Fresh Fiction with Dean Atta, Ashley Hickson-Lovence & Asli Jensen

17:30-18:30
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Join Carnegie Medal for Writing-nominated verse novelists, **Dean Atta** (*I Can’t Even Think Straight*) and **Ashley Hickson-Lovence** (*Wild East*), and outstanding debut author, **Asli Jensen** (*Love on Sight*) as they share how they each found their own fresh, authentic style to create narrative voices that resonate with their readers. Immerse yourself in the best of contemporary YA fiction in this inspiring panel discussion exploring stories of family, culture, friendship, and love.

AI

Kirsty Logan: Love Over Time

18:45-19:45
Venue NW
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]
Age guidance: 18+

Festival favourite **Kirsty Logan** is back with another beautiful collection of short stories, *No & Other Love Stories*, exploring the intricacies and complexities of female desire against a backdrop that spans centuries. From a medieval convent to a 1990s high school, has the way women love and the relationships they find themselves in really changed?

AI



Asli Jensen, Fri 22, 17:30-18:30

Programme key

- Genres: **Activism** **Comics/Graphic Novels** **Food, Lifestyle & Wellness** **LGBTQ+** **Music, Poetry & Performance** **Romance & Romantasy** **Workshops** **Buzzy Fiction** **Fantasy, Sci Fi & Horror**

- Access: **DL** Livestreamed **BSL** British Sign Language **CC** Live Captioned **AI** AI Captioned **LD** Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: **RA** Remote Appearance **U** Outdoor **UQ** Active **UQ** Food & Drink



Saturday 23

The Front List: Asako Yuzuki

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£8.00/£5.00]

Since *Butter* appeared in print, bookshops have been scrambling to keep **Asako Yuzuki**'s word-of-mouth sensation in stock. About a serial killer chef who poisons her lovers deliciously, this strange, thrilling, incisive novel won Waterstones Book of the Year 2024. Author of over 20 novels (though *Butter* is her first English translation), Asako talks today about consumption, sexism, skewed beauty standards, and her mission to elevate the status of Japan's women through powerful storytelling. Chaired by **Zing Tsjeng**. *Supported by Claire & Mark Urquhart.*

📺 Ⓒ



Sunday 24

Romantically Yours with Elle McNicoll & Harry Trevaldwyn

14:15-15:15
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Romance is in the air in this YA rom-com event that will explore how to boldly be yourself, no matter who's watching. In **Elle McNicoll**'s *Wish You Were Her*, autistic actress Allegera wants to enjoy a normal teenage summer at a book festival but misunderstandings arise and (romantic) drama unfolds, whilst in **Harry Trevaldwyn**'s *The Romantic Tragedies of a Drama King*, Patch's mission is to find himself his first boyfriend.

Ⓐ



Being Your True Self with Dean Atta

15:00-16:00
Venue B
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Shortlisted for the Waterstones Children's Book Prize for his first novel, *Black Flamingo*, **Dean Atta** is back at this year's Festival with his new coming-of-age tale, *I Can't Even Think Straight*. Written in Dean's whip-smart style, this verse novel centres on Kai, his decision to come out, and his relationship with his best friend who doesn't feel ready to do the same. Join us today as we chat to Dean about navigating the world as a queer teenager.

Ⓐ

Getting Published with Asli Jensen, Louise Lamont & Eilidh Akilade

18:15-19:15
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

The journey to getting published can feel daunting when you're on the outside. So, we're here to bring you an insider's guide. Join literary agent **Louise Lamont** as she chats with **Asli Jensen** (Lime Pictures New Storyteller Award-winning debut author of *Love on Sight*) and **Eilidh Akilade** (Scottish Book Trust) in an inspiring conversation that seeks to demystify the industry, provide practical tips, and inspire you to take the plunge towards getting published.

Dark Magic with Saara El-Arifi & Juno Dawson

19:30-20:30
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Bestselling authors **Saara El-Arifi** and **Juno Dawson** join us for an enthralling conversation about all things dark fantasy. In *Human Rites*, Dawson's hotly anticipated finale to the *Her Majesty's Coven* series, we find a reunited but broken coven heading into a final battle between good and evil. In *Cursebound*, El-Arifi's fantastical follow-up to *Faebound*, Queen of the Fae is declaring all-out war on the realm. Come along to delve into these otherworldly tales.

Ⓐ

Elodie Harper: History's Child

12:00-13:00
Courtyard Theatre
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

In the aftermath of defeat, what kind of legacy did Boudicca, warrior queen and mastermind of one of history's greatest revolts, leave her child? **Elodie Harper**, bestselling author of the *Wolf Den* trilogy, launches her latest standalone novel, *Boudicca's Daughter*, and talks about her rapid rise to becoming one of Britain's bestselling historical novelists.

Ⓐ

Songs for Ghosts with Clara Kumagai

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£15.50 [£10.50/£8.00/£5.00]

Clara Kumagai made her mark on the YA scene last year with the popular *Catfish Rolling*, a Yoto Carnegie Medal nominee. Now she's back, with a beautiful tale of identity, heritage, and memory, *Songs for Ghosts*, inspired by Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*. A hundred years separate Japanese-American teenager Adam and a young Japanese woman who are caught between cultures, relationships, and heartbreak. Clara will share this contemporary ghost story today. *Supported by Culture Ireland.*

Ⓐ

The Front List: R F Kuang

19:30-20:30
McEwan Hall
£21.00 [£18.00/£14.00/£8.00/£5.00]

Yellowface author and international sensation **R F Kuang** isn't one to rest on her laurels, constantly evolving her style and skill across genres and ages. Join **Heather Parry** today as she chats with Kuang about her highly anticipated page-turning thriller, *Katabasis*, which tackles the ultimate rescue mission as two rival Cambridge academics unite to save the soul of their advisor from the underworld. Surviving Hell is one thing, but surviving each other is quite another...

📺 Ⓒ



R F Kuang, Sun 24, 19:30-20:30

Programme key

Genres: **Activism** **Comics/Graphic Novels** **Food, Lifestyle & Wellness** **LGBTQ+** **Music, Poetry & Performance**
Romance & Romantasy **Workshops** **Buzzy Fiction** **Fantasy, Sci Fi & Horror**

Access: 📺 Livestreamed 🇧🇸 British Sign Language Ⓒ Live Captioned Ⓐ AI Captioned Ⓓ Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance 🌳 Outdoor 🗣️ Active 🍽️ Food & Drink



Children and Families

**A magical place
for young minds.**

We know just how long the summer holidays can feel by the time August rolls around, but don't worry – we're here to fill the final days of the break with more than 100 exciting events designed especially for children and families.

From babes-in-arms to teenagers and in-between, there's something for every passion (or even passing interest), and heaps of chances to meet your favourite author or illustrator – and maybe even character! Most events are £6 for kids (or free), and £8 for adults.

To help you find the right events for little readers, each is flagged with a recommended age range from 0-14 years. These are decided in collaboration with publishers, but are intended to give you guidance only – you know your child and their appetites 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.

New Kids Zone

Our new Kids Zone, including the Children's Tent, is in EFI's north west corner on Level 1 (see the site map on p149 for details). Here you'll find indoor space for kids to read and relax, or have a go at writing themselves, as well as an eating area with kid-height tables.

There's no such thing as too many books

There's a great selection of books for little ones in the main Festival Bookshop, brought to you by our retail partners, Waterstones, and you can get your book signed by your favourite author.

I'm hungry!

Us too! We've spaces for you to eat your own packed lunches, as well as catering trucks with tasty food and drink options, and ice cream to enjoy whatever the weather (is there anything more Scottish than licking an ice cream cone in the rain?).

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

Each day at 10am a brilliant author or illustrator will tell a special story for 3-6-year-olds, absolutely free. Check website listings for who's appearing each day, and to book.

Help! We've lost Mr. Men and Little Miss!

We love Mr. Men and Little Miss – and now they need our help, because some of them have got lost around the Festival site! Can you find them all? If you do, there might be a special treat in store... Pick up your free activity sheet from the Box Office, or Kids Zone, every day of the Festival.

Meet your favourites

There's nothing more special than seeing a child's eyes light up when they see their favourite character in glorious 4D in front of them – so check our event listings to see when you can say hello to Pikachu, the Gruffalo, and Supertato, give them a cuddle, and snap a selfie (they love photos). We'll see you there!

Free activities daily

There are free activities every day of the Festival! Whether enjoying a storytelling session, getting hands on with making and creating, or exploring nature in the local area, there's lots to see and do without spending a penny.

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.



Enjoy the Mr. Men Little Miss Character Trail

A delightful adventure for children and parents. Explore, solve clues, and meet your storybook friends.

Programme key

Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climature Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

Saturday 09

Mini Dragon Mayhem with George Webster

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

When George wishes for a pet dragon, the last thing he expects is for one to appear at the end of the garden. Now he must conceal its antics at school and to his parents - but Lava has other ideas! From much-loved CBeebies star, **George Webster**, comes a rip-snorting series in *George and the Mini Dragon*, full of fun, adventure and dragon mayhem! This event is delivered in partnership with PAMIS.

(AI) (LD)

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Appearing today: **Alastair Chisholm**.

Let's Write a Song with Be Charlotte

10:00-11:00
Children's Tent
Free Ticketed
Age 6-9

Join Scottish singer-songwriter **Be Charlotte** for a fun, inclusive songwriting workshop! Explore the basics of music and songwriting, collaboratively write an original song, and learn the tools to create your own stories, songs, and masterpieces. No experience needed - just bring your imagination!

⬆

Can you find the Mr. Men and Little Miss characters who have got lost around the Festival site? Pick up your free activity sheet from the Box Office in the Courtyard every day of the Festival and start spotting - and if you manage to spy them all, there's a special treat in store!

Enter the Escape with Christopher Edge

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-12

Welcome to The Escape - an epic new world full of puzzles and peril to beat before time runs out. Join author **Christopher Edge** on a heart-racing journey as he brings the levels of the game to life with his mind-bendingly brilliant novel, *Escape Room: Game Zero*. Anything is possible and nothing is as it seems; can you uncover the secrets of The Escape and save the world, before it's too late?

(AI)

How the Earth Works with Dr Lucia Perez-Diaz

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Are you a budding scientist, keen to learn more about Planet Earth? Unlock the clues about Earth's history with writer, illustrator, and scientist **Dr Lucia Perez-Diaz**, author of *How the Earth Works*. You'll learn what our planet was like long ago, how humans are affecting the Earth, and ways we can repair the planet to ensure a bright future.

Changing Worlds with Robert Macfarlane & Emily Sutton

10:30-11:30
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Take a lyrical journey through ever-changing landscape and discover *The World to Come* with nature writer **Robert Macfarlane** and acclaimed illustrator, **Emily Sutton**. Learn how to bring nature drawings to life as Emily guides you through her astonishing artwork while Robert shares how the magic of nature can give us hope for the future and how we can all celebrate and protect the natural world.

Big Feelings with Debi Gliori

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Much loved foxes, Large and Small, are back in **Debi Gliori's** latest picture book *No Matter What*. With a special picnic planned, Small can't help but be disappointed when a raincloud spoils their day. What makes you happy when you are feeling big, sad emotions? Can you help Large cheer up Small when the rain comes? Join Debi to think about what might help and learn that love is one feeling that never changes.

Meet Bunny and Monkey

11:30-12:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All ages

Get ready to meet everyone's favourite chaotic comic duo! Bunny and Monkey have crash landed at the Book Festival and they're ready to cause mayhem. Join them for high-fives, fist bumps, and hilarious hijinks - you'll even be able to grab a selfie.

⬆

How to Write a Comic with Neill Cameron

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Get your creativity flowing as you learn how to make your stories come alive in this event by author of the *Mega Robo Bros* series, **Neill Cameron**. With a little help from Neill you'll turn your amazing ideas into even more amazing comics. There will also be a draw-along inspired by his latest book *Donut Squad Take Over the World* where you can recreate some of the hilarious characters or design some of your own.

(AI)

Access: [L] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned (LD) Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: [R] Remote Appearance ⬆ Outdoor ⚡ Active 🍽 Food & Drink

Saturday 09

Friends, Fortune-tellers and Ferocious Beasts with Radhika Sanghani & RAMZEE

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Authors **Radhika Sanghani** and **RAMZEE** know a thing or two about solving life's daily worries. In Radhika's latest book *How to Get Magically Popular*, Sabina is desperate to fit in but her magical powers keep making her stand out. While RAMZEE's *The Cheat Book (Vol.2)*, is packed full of life-hacks for literally any occasion... even escaping wild animals. Hear them chat all things popularity and friendships, with some fortune-telling and hunting for beasts thrown in!

AI

Ride the Storm with Polly Ho-Yen

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Join award-winning author **Polly Ho-Yen** as she shares her hopeful new story, *When the Storm Comes*, which follows four unlikely friends battling a wild storm outside as well as their own personal weather within. With themes of resilience, the power of not giving up, and the real-life consequences of climate change, this is the perfect event for children who are ready to stand up for what they believe in.

AI

Go Wild with National Museums Scotland

13:00-14:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All ages

Get ready to rewild and discover the amazing animals and minibeasts which make our planet so unique, with National Museums Scotland and Maths Week Scotland. Join their Learning Team to discover fascinating facts about creatures large and small, and how we're all connected to the world around us. Then, get arty with an animal shaped craft or head over to their handling table to get up close with some amazing animal objects. This event is repeated on Sunday 10 August at 13:00.

Q

Programme key

- Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climate Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

Preposterous Plots with Pamela Butchart

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

In **Pamela Butchart**'s new book, *Diary of a Future Billionaire*, Ben tries to become the world's richest ten-year-old. From creating a dog-walking business that (literally) goes foul, to a takeaway that leaves a bad taste in the mouth, Ben will do anything to make money and save his family. Expect lots of fun audience interaction in this hilarious event as Pamela shares stories that will have you laughing out loud.

AI

Storytelling Yoga with Radhika Sanghani

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
All ages

Take a moment for some calm with author **Radhika Sanghani** in a playful storytelling movement session that will get you stretching, breathing, and using your imagination! Yogis big and small are invited to connect with their body, release tension, be active, and have some fun. This is all about moving creatively on your yoga mat, being imaginative with your movements and allowing time to express yourself. Please bring your own mat.

Think, See, and Draw with Candice Purwin

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Your brain is full of wild, strange, and brilliant things, and we're going to draw them out. Get ready to rip up the rule book and learn to fold, write, and draw a short comic book all your own in this comics workshop with graphic novelist **Candice Purwin**. All abilities welcome and materials will be provided.



Radhika Sanghani, 12:00-13:00 & 14:45-15:45



Pamela Butchart, 13:30-14:30



RAMZEE, 12:00-13:00

Sunday 10

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle with Polly Faber

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Have you ever wondered where rubbish goes after you put it in the recycling bin? Well **Polly Faber**, author of *Recycling Day*, has the answers! In this event for curious and climate-conscious minds, learn why recycling is important, what happens after we recycle, and the impact this all has on our planet. There'll be fun and games, and brilliant ideas for how we can reuse stuff to make totally not-rubbish things!

AI

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Make and Create with Boxbuilders

10:00-11:00
Children's Tent
All Ages

From castles and ships to planes and treehouses, you can build anything with cardboard boxes and your imagination. Inspired by Kim Smith's beautifully illustrated picture book *Boxitects*, join Noëlle and Jodie from the Book Festival's Communities team to hear the story and get hands-on in this creative box-building session. We'll bring the boxes, tape, and colouring pens, you bring your fantastical ideas - and let's see what we can make!

Q



Happy Birthday Supertato! with Sue Hendra

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Hap-pea birthday to you, Supertato! There's a party and everyone is invited to an all-singing, all-dancing event with **Sue Hendra** to celebrate *Supertato: Happy Birthday Nitwit!* Expect lots of laughs, silliness and remember to bring along a veggie of your choice to turn into your very own superhero. But keep your carrots peeled, as Evil Pea has dastardly plans to ruin the big day!

Q AI

Blast to the Past with Maisie Chan

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

What do you get when you combine flying roast chickens, Chinese New Year, and... karaoke? **Maisie Chan**'s newest book, *Nate Yu's Blast from the Past*, that's what! When Nate gets hold of an artefact from the First World War, it sparks a friendship he doesn't see coming - because his new friend is a ghost. Come hear Maisie chat about this period of history and the real-life inspiration behind her writing.

AI

Choosing a Name with Yasmin Hanif

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Abdullah has been given a new teddy for Eid, and he needs your help to figure out its name! Join author **Yasmin Hanif** for interactive storytelling and games based on her debut picture book *Abdullah's Bear Needs a Name!* Come and learn how important names are, and that while there are thousands of names across different cultures and languages all over the world, each one is very special.

Meet Supertato

11:30-12:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All ages

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No it's a... potato? Meet everyone's favourite veggie superhero and join in with some songs, rhymes, and games. Supertato will also be hap-pea to share high fives, cuddles and pose for photos. See you there!

Q

There's a Bear on My Chair with Ross Collins

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

A bear has settled in Mouse's favourite chair, and that chair isn't big enough for both of them to share. Come along to this hilarious event hosted by **Ross Collins**, author-illustrator of *There's a Bear in My Chair* and find out all the ways Mouse tries to get the big bear to move. A laugh-out-loud event celebrating the 10th anniversary of this wonderful book.

AI



- Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: Remote Appearance Q Outdoor Q Active Q Food & Drink

Sunday 10

Have You Seen a Jellyfish? with Justin Davies

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

It's time for Stormcliff's annual jellyfish festival but there's a problem... the jellies haven't arrived. Voyage with award-winning author **Justin Davies** through the pages of his new book *Firebloom*, and discover how Tally Smuck seeks out the missing jellyfish. On the way, learn some jelly-tastic jellyfish facts and try your hand at telling fortunes the Stormcliff way. What future will you see in the shells?

War of the Worlds with Chris Mould

12:15-13:15
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12-14

Award-winning author and illustrator **Chris Mould** brings his latest graphic novel *The War of the Worlds* to this year's festival. Based on the H G Wells original classic this is an intriguing re-telling for a brand-new audience. When an alien-filled meteor lands on Earth, protagonist Leon must search for the answers and understand the science of these extraterrestrial creatures. Join Chris for a fascinating talk about how he illustrated, updated and adapted this incredible sci-fi story that's over 100 years old.

AI

Hidden Depths with Chloe Savage

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Dive in with author **Chloe Savage** as she takes you on a journey to discover what's lurking in the deepest, darkest, depths of the ocean. Inspired by her latest book, *The Search for Carmella* - about a marine biologist who goes looking for a giant sea creature called Carmella - Chloe will encourage curiosity as you explore the incredible creatures that live at the bottom of the sea.

Go Wild with National Museums Scotland

13:00-14:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All ages

Get ready to rewild and discover the amazing animals and minibeasts which make our planet so unique, with National Museums Scotland and Maths Week Scotland. Join their Learning Team to discover fascinating facts about creatures, large and small, and how we're all connected to the world around us. Then, get arty with an animal shapes craft or head over to their handling table to get up close with some amazing animal objects. This event is repeated on Saturday 9 August at 13:00.

LD

Fantastical Feelings with Harriet Muncaster

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Harriet Muncaster, author of the bestselling *Isadora Moon* series joins us for this exciting, interactive event with readings, draw-a-longs, and much, much more. She'll share her latest in the series, *Isadora Moon Makes a Wish*, which sees our favourite half-fairy, half-vampire explore good and bad feelings, and ultimately find that experiencing all feelings is part of what makes you human (or half-vampire, half-fairy, as the case may be!).

LD AI

Join the Merry Bear Band with David Litchfield

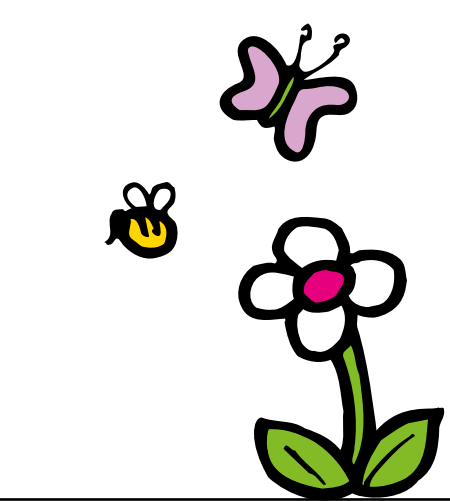
14:15-15:15
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Get ready to go on a musical adventure! Acclaimed author-illustrator **David Litchfield** and his Bear Band are on a 10th anniversary concert tour! David will share a special edition of his bestselling *The Bear and the Piano* accompanied by live music from his Merry Band of Bears. After this special storytime, stick around and create your own animal themed artwork. We can bear-ly contain our excitement!

You're Joking! with the Listies

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Ever wanted a box of cereal made entirely of toenails? A deodorant for your feelings? Tickets to a zoo of interestingly shaped rocks? Join comedians **The Listies** for a high-speed comedy-writing workshop based on *This Book Is a Joke*, all about making absurd adverts for completely made-up things. You'll become a junior LOL-vertising executive, imagining ridiculous products, writing hilarious slogans, and pitching your creations in the silliest ad breaks ever made.



Monday 11

Find your Smile with Catherine Rayner

10:00-10:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Augustus the tiger has lost his smile. Can you help him find it? Celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Augustus and his Smile* - the first book that now bestselling author-illustrator **Catherine Rayner** ever published, way back in 2005. Grab your party hats and get ready to celebrate all the things that make you smile in this fun, interactive event featuring lots of live-drawing from Catherine in her beautiful style.

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Appearing today: **David Litchfield**.

Bookbinding and Ex Libris Printing with Edinburgh Printmakers

10:00-11:00
Children's Tent
Free Ticketed
Age 12-14

Learn three different bookbinding stitches and make your own sketchbook! Join **Namhara Byron Low** from Edinburgh Printmakers in a bookbinding and printing session on how to reuse old lithography plates to make your own bespoke name stamp. You'll get the chance to take home your own sketchbook and personalised stamp which can be reprinted on any book!

LD

Zinemaking with Katie Quinn

13:00-16:00
Children's Tent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12-14

Try your hand at creating your very own zine with illustrator **Katie Quinn**. Drop in and discover how to turn your thoughts, ideas, and feelings into unique zines of self-expression. Whether you're an experienced creator or you're completely new to the game, join us for an afternoon of DIY creativity.

LD

Break the Curse with A F Steadman

13:30-14:30
McEwan Hall
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Epic adventures, a terrible curse, and bloodthirsty unicorns... It can only mean one thing: internationally bestselling author **A F Steadman** is back with a new magical story in the blockbuster hit series, *Skandar and the Skeleton Curse*. Get ready for a thrilling event with unlikely heroes, sky battles, ancient secrets, and of course, ferocious unicorns, as Steadman shares the latest from the world of Skandar. You don't want to miss this!

AI

Conjure Up Magical Stories with Abi Elphinstone

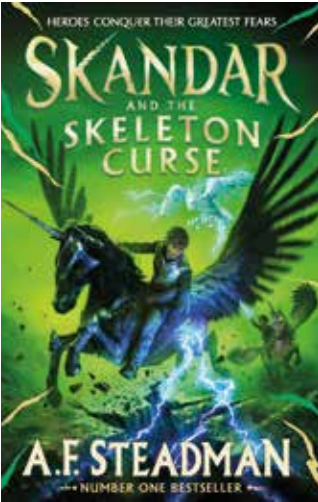
16:00-17:00
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Rusty Fizzbang, vet to magical beasts, needs an apprentice. Ember Spark, looking for adventure, is his newest recruit. But keeping magical beasts a secret isn't an easy task! Join bestselling author **Abi Elphinstone** with her new book, *Ember Spark and the Unicorn's Secret*, as she reveals where she finds her ideas - from shower gel bottles and street signposts to adventures in Mongolia - as well as tips for how to dream up your own stories.

AI



Catherine Rayner, 10:00-10:45



A F Steadman, 13:30-14:30



Programme key

- Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climate Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

- Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
- Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

Tuesday 12

One Button Benny with Alan Windram

10:00-11:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

It's party time in Robot Town! But what happens when One Button Benny accidentally wakes up a large angry dinosaur while practising his cool robotic dance moves? Join **Alan Windram**, author of the beloved *Keven the Orange* book series, as he introduces *One Button Benny* in this all-singing, all-dancing event - there might even be a special song you can learn.

Unleash Your Imagination with Craigmillar Literacy Trust

10:00-11:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 6-9

Katie Swann from Craigmillar Literacy Trust invites you to reimagine the world and repair what's broken - are you in? We'll share some of our favourite picture books featuring inventors and take part in a colourful activity bringing your creations to life. This fun, hands-on event is for children and their grown-ups to explore, learn, and be creative together.

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue NW
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Sustainable Textile Workshop

13:00-16:00
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 6-9

Textile designer of the future? Join Remode Collective for a drop-in sustainable textile session reimagining recycled and donated fabric into bookmarks, keyholder charms, and mini fabric artworks. Explore the world of textiles, get crafty, and learn about the impact of textile waste.

Build a Graphic Novel with Edward Ross

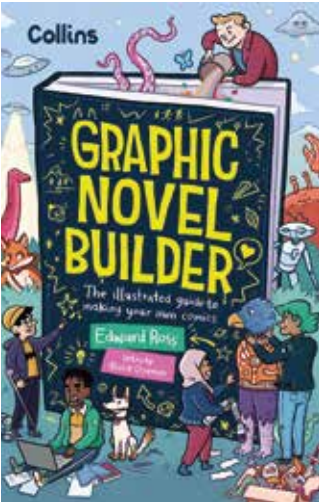
13:30-14:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12-14

The perfect workshop for budding artists and aspiring storytellers. Join comic artist **Edward Ross** as he dives into the building blocks of the creative process, based on his book *Graphic Novel Builder*, which guides readers on how to make their own comic. Learn how to plot out a story, create characters, build worlds, and level up your drawing skills in this fun, interactive workshop.

If I Were Prime Minister with Ella Okstad & Trygve Skaug

15:15-16:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

If you were in charge of the UK, what would you do first? Maybe you'd make all the grown-ups come to nursery. Maybe you'd make cars run on giant legs instead of petrol. Sharing their new book, *If I Were Prime Minister*, author **Trygve Skaug** and illustrator **Ella Okstad** will encourage you to dream big - and there'll be some singing, dancing, and drawing too. Bring your pencils (and your imaginations).



Edward Ross, 13:30-14:30



Ella Okstad and Trygve Skaug, 15:15-16:15



Wednesday 13

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Appearing today: **Ailie Finlay**.

Gaelic Bookbug

10:00-10:30
11:00-11:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 0-2

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!

Little Pufflings with Frances Stickley & Jo Weaver

10:00-10:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Little Puffling's going on an adventure! Grab your pencils as wonderful illustrator **Jo Weaver** takes you through a special draw-along where you'll learn how to draw puffins and other Scottish seabirds. Bestselling children's author **Frances Stickley** will join remotely and together they'll introduce you to the adorable star of their new book, *Fly High, Little Puffling*.

Singing and Stories with Mr. Men Little Miss

11:00-11:30 / 12:00-12:30
13:00-13:30 / 14:00-14:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Join storyteller George in a gentle *Mr. Men Little Miss* story journey. Perfect for young children, you'll find lots of live music, nursery rhymes, sensory participation, action, and movement - and classic characters from the much-loved *Mr. Men Little Miss* universe. Get ready to dance, play, and join in with the fun.

Sensory Storytelling with Ailie Finlay

12:00-13:00
Children's Tent
Free Ticketed
All ages

Join storyteller **Ailie Finlay** for an inclusive session with sensory stories, art, activities, and games. This is a fun and engaging session for everyone but particularly suitable for children with additional needs and their families and friends.

Blast Off! A Creative Workshop with Jan Van Der Veken

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Delve into the wonderful world of boats and space with Belgian illustrator **Jan Van Der Veken**, author of *Boats, Steamers, Icebreakers, and Ghost Ships* (translated by Kristen Gehrman). Explore the history and science of water and space travel, experiment with the science behind some of the rockets and boats by making your own versions, and get inspired to draw based on Jan's signature retro-futurist style. Three - two - one - lift off!!



Jan Van Der Veken, 16:30-17:30



Programme key

- Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climature Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

- Access: [D] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned [LD] Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: [C] Remote Appearance [O] Outdoor [A] Active [F] Food & Drink

Thursday 14

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue NW
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today’s author.

Baby and Toddler Rhymetime with Craigmillar Books for Babies

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 0-2

Join Craigmillar Books for Babies for a special Baby and Toddler Rhymetime. Enjoy bouncy songs, tickly rhymes, and lots of cuddles and fun to help build attachment and bonding with your little ones.

Pop in and Play with Cròileagan Dhùn Èideann

10.30-12.00
Children’s Tent
Free Non-ticketed
Age 0-5

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.

Scots Rhymetime with Craigmillar Books for Babies

11:00-11:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 0-2

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.

Sensory Sessions for Wee Ones

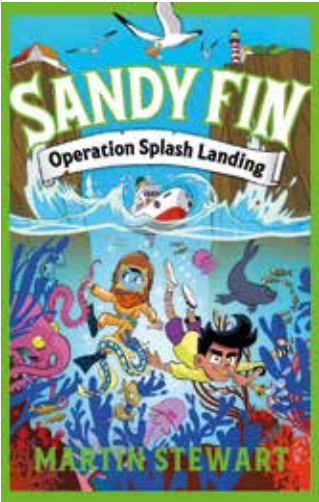
13:00-13:50 / 14:30-15:20
Children’s Tent
Free Ticketed
Age 0-1

Join The Sensory Sessions for a book-inspired sensory adventure. Your baby will explore textures, props, and activities inspired by popular children’s books in our Children’s Tent. It’s the perfect way to encourage early learning and enjoy magical moments together. These sessions are designed for babies from birth up to 12 months old.

Dive into an Ocean Adventure with Martin Stewart

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Ocean explorer Sandy Fin: diver of the deep and puzzler of puzzles. Can he save the Museum of Seaside Stories and its collection of treasures? Dive into hilarious coastal adventure with award-winning author **Martin Stewart** and help restore the museum to its former glory as he shares his new book *Sandy Fin: Operation Splash Landing* with you. Full of laughs, this event will celebrate the great outdoors and our connection to nature.



Martin Stewart, 16:30-17:30

Friday 15

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue NW
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today’s author.

Scots Bookbug

10:00-10:30
11:00-11:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 0-2

Bring yer wee yins along fir a Scots Bookbug wi sangs, rhymes, an stories. Abody’s welcome, whither ye’re a gallus Scots speaker or a wee feartie!

Under the Sea with The Sensory Sessions

10:00-10:50
11:10-12:00
Children’s Tent
Free Ticketed
Age 0-1

The Sensory Sessions will be heading under the sea in these beautiful, baby-led sessions designed to support your little one’s development through gentle, engaging sensory play. You can expect both led and exploratory play as well as heaps of beautiful resources. These sessions are designed for babies from birth up to 12 months old.

Starry Feelings with Niall Moorjani

12:30-13:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

We all have feelings and Rajiv is no different. He can feel confident, happy, silly. But today he feels angry, and he doesn’t know why. Take a journey through the stars with award-winning storyteller **Niall Moorjani** and their new book, *Rajiv’s Starry Feelings*, to explore the rollercoaster of emotions we all experience and celebrate the power of our imaginations.

Adventuremice Draw Along with Sarah McIntyre & Phillip Reeve

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Storytelling superstars **Sarah McIntyre** and **Philip Reeve** return to the Festival to introduce you to a tiny mouse named Pedro. Join Pedro as he searches for big adventures around the world: diving under the sea, skating across ice and even rocketing to the moon! Based on their latest book, *Adventuremice: Mice, Camera, Action!* expect an event full of fun, art and adventure. And a draw-along!

Can Dogs Speak Scots? with the Scots Language Centre

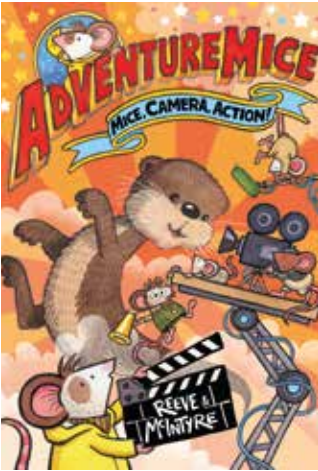
14:00-15:00
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 6-9

Is your family pet a Scots speaker? Let’s find out! Join the Scots Language Centre’s **Laura Green** for a fun family session, as we teach our dogs Scots. Bairns are encouraged to bring along a soft toy to practise with, and there will be songs, stories, arts, and crafts. It’s gan tae be braw!

Playful Homes with Cara Rooney

14:00-15:00
Children’s Tent
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join author-illustrator **Cara Rooney** for a playful drop-in workshop inspired by her book *A Little World of Ants*. After exploring the Festival site and looking for tiny beasties, you’ll get the chance to play with collage, drawing, and words to make an interactive creature home, and the first page of your own bug story!



Sarah McIntyre and Phillip Reeve, 13:30-14:30



Cara Rooney, 14:00-15:00



Programme key

- Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climature Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

- Access: [Live] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned [LD] Learning Disability Friendly
- Formats: [Remote] Remote Appearance [Outdoor] Outdoor [Active] Active [Food & Drink] Food & Drink

Saturday 16

Dream Big with Rob Biddulph

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

What do you want to be when you grow up? Explore all the things you can be with amazing author and illustrator **Rob Biddulph** in his newest book, *When I Grow Up I'd Like to Be...* Get prepared to dream big - the only limit is your imagination. And of course, there will be a chance to draw with Rob. Pencils at the ready!

📺 (AI)

Coorie Doon with Jackie Kay & Jill Calder

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Coorie in for an empowering event celebrating the melodies we carry with us throughout our lives. Acclaimed poet and former Makar of Scotland, **Jackie Kay**, and renowned Scottish artist, **Jill Calder**, share their beautiful book, *Coorie Doon*. Wee and big bairns alike will be invited to draw their memories and hopes for the future and share some songs together. Dinna fash - it's sure to be braw!

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Appearing today: **Lindsey Hirst**.



Meet Pikachu

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

Pikachu, I choose YOU! Come along and meet everyone's favourite electric-type Pokémon for a special appearance at the Book Festival. Don't miss the opportunity to give Pikachu a wave or pose like a Pokémon trainer for a photo! 📷

Sprog Rock

10:00-10:30
11:15-11:45
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Returning to rock the Book Festival for the fifth year, it's Sprog Rock! Dust off your dancing shoes and get ready for a rocking and (nursery) rhyming extravaganza, as the group bring their unique, catchy songs back to our Spiegeltent. Fun for under-fives, their grown-ups, friends, and families.

Being Brave with Anu Adebogun

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12-14

Learn to be brave, bold, and audacious as author **Anu Adebogun** gives you the tools to live your best life. Taking extracts from her latest book *It's a Brave Young World*: a guide for teenagers on everything from crushes to mental health. Anu will provide valuable life lessons to help repair confidence and promote well-being for everyone navigating the depths of teenagedom.

The Secret Life of Ants with Cara Rooney

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Let's all go marching two-by-two to **Cara Rooney's** event, where kids can dig into the wonderful lives of ants. Cara's picture book, *A Little World of Ants*, encourages connection to these tiny creatures who live right in our back gardens, and explores how we can best look after both them and all the other fascinating bugs that are so important to our planet.

Pia's Pet Club with Serena Patel

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Have you ever had to train a troublesome puppy? If so, Pia needs your help! Desperate for a dog of her own, she offers to train her friend Hari's very naughty puppy. Then her parents will finally realise she can be trusted with a pet and let her have one of her own. All animal lovers are invited to join *Pia's Pet Club* at this paw-some event with author **Serena Patel**. (AI)

Gaelic Daleks with Shelagh Campbell

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

If you had to dress up as a Gaelic speaking character for Halloween, which would you pick? 8-year-old Ailig chooses a Dalek from *Dr Who*. Only... Daleks can't speak Gaelic, so he goes on a hunt to find the Gaelic word for 'exterminate' - will he find one? Find out with award-winning Gaelic writer **Shelagh Campbell**, author of *Ailig agus an Dalek Gàidhlig*, in this lively event celebrating the magic of the Gaelic language.

Draw New Worlds with Beth Suzanna

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Are you fascinated by the night sky? Or are you more interested in what lurks at the bottom of the ocean? Get ready to make a splash in a colour-filled, joyful drawing workshop with illustrator **Beth Suzanna**, inspired by her newest book, *See For Yourself*. It follows Harry and his dad who are from a family of amazing inventors. Explore worlds that we're yet to discover and dare to try something different!

The Big Draw-Off with Chanté Timothy & Jim Smith

13:15-14:15
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

On your marks, get set, draw! Brace yourself for a Draw-Off with author-illustrators **Chanté Timothy** and **Jim Smith** as they head-to-head in this epic interactive event. Hear about Chanté's new novel *Supa Nova*, featuring the adventures of genius kid Nova and Jim Smith's latest book about all kinds of viruses in *Genuis Kid Goes Viral*. Then sit back and enjoy the drawing battle of a lifetime, one genius against another - who will reign victorious?

How It All Works with Maddie Moate

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Ever wondered what happens behind a dishwasher door, why a duvet keeps you warm, or how x-rays take pictures of our bones? To celebrate the release of her new book, *How Does It Work?*, BAFTA-winning children's TV presenter, YouTuber, and author **Maddie Moate** invites you to explore the workings of everyday objects in an event that will leave you itching to find out more about how the things around you actually work. 📺 (AI)

Comic Chaos with Tom Percival

14:15-15:15
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Squirrel and Duck might seem strange housemates, but they are drawn together by their secret - they are the only talking animals in the world. Get ready for a wonderfully zany event with **Tom Percival** as he introduces *Squirrel and Duck: Mission Improbable*. Hear all about how they outwit bungling art thieves with only the help of a pet cactus! Tom will share his tips and tricks for off-the-wall stories and illustrations - and laugh-out-loud moments along the way! (AI)

Scots Fairytale with Ashley Douglas & Kate Osmond

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

The Lass and The Quine is a fairytale for the modern day, a story that challenges the tales you already know - and it's all in Scots! Flex your imagination and writing skills in this fun, creative workshop with author **Ashley Douglas** and illustrator **Kate Osmond**. Hear them share the inspiration behind the story, then get ready to write your own Scots poem. Whit ever will ye come up wae?

Drawing Elmer with Marysia Milewski

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Colouring-in pencils at the ready as **Marysia Milewski** takes you through an illustration workshop based on everyone's favourite patchwork elephant: Elmer. Marysia is the illustrator of the new book, *Elmer and the White Bear*, written by her friend, the late David McKee. In it, Elmer meets a mysterious bear whose home has started to melt. Come and create, draw, and explore how we can protect the planet in this interactive event.



Beth Suzanna, 13:00-14:00



Programme key

Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climature Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

Access: 📺 Livestreamed 🗣️ British Sign Language 🎧 Live Captioned (AI) AI Captioned (LD) Learning Disability Friendly Formats: 📺 Remote Appearance 📍 Outdoor 🗣️ Active 🍽️ Food & Drink

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Appearing today: **Tom Percival**.

Lottie Brooks vs The Ultra Mean Girls with Katie Kirby

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Just when Lottie thought life might be going back to normal, everything goes wrong again! Now she must battle the Ultra Mean Girl Gang, survive school, and navigate even more extremely embarrassing moments. Join hilarious bestselling author **Katie Kirby** in conversation with **Yassmin Abdel-Magied** for a fun-filled event on *Lottie Brooks vs The Ultra Mean Girls*, the brand-new story from the phenomenal Lottie Brooks series.

A Bedtime Adventure with Catherine Rayner

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Molly the hare, Dexter the fox, and Olive the owl love to play games and go on adventures together. But when night falls, strange shapes and sounds start to appear in their beloved oak tree. Can they conquer their fear of the dark? Come along to hear beloved author-illustrator **Catherine Rayner** share the new stories of *Molly*, *Olive*, and *Dexter*, and learn how to draw these beautiful characters in Catherine's playful style.

Make Your Own Bookmark with Edinburgh Printmakers Family Print Club

10:00-11:00
Children's Tent
Free Ticketed
Age 7-11

Make your own personalised bookmark today so you don't lose your place while reading all your new books! Get creative with **Fiona Maher** from Edinburgh Printmakers Family Print Club using tetra pack and other materials from the recycling bin. You'll have a chance to use a professional relief press and get creative with shapes, textures and layers and take home your own original handmade bookmark.



Under the London Sky with Anna Woltz & Michele Hutchison

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12-14

London, September 1940. Deep in the tunnels of the Underground, hidden from the bombs, four teenagers meet. Brought together by the Blitz and telling their story of strength and survival comes the exclusive launch of *Under the London Sky*: a thrilling new historical adventure from bestselling author **Anna Woltz** and translator **Michele Hutchison**. Prepare to be moved by the unwavering bond of friends navigating a key moment in our history as Anna and Michele take you on a journey back in time.

Food, Friendship, and Fun with Selina Brown

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

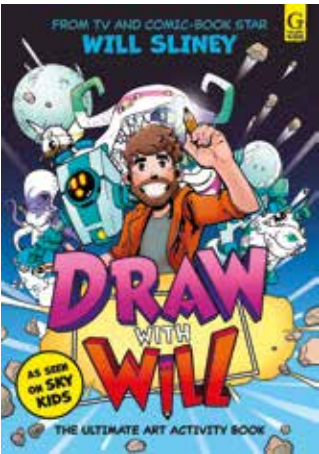
The world is full of wonderful rice recipes but how do we know which one reigns supreme? Join **Selina Brown** as she helps answer this question with a fun interactive event that celebrates friendship, food, and different cultures through her funny new book, *My Rice is Best*. Share your ultimate favourite dishes and hear about new cuisines as Selina takes you on a mesme-ricing food journey.



Selina Brown, 11:15-12:15



Katie Kirby, 10:00-11:00



Will Sliney, 16:30-17:30

Brilliant Little Beasties with Yussef Rafik

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

They may be small, but you'd be surprised how useful bugs and minibeasts are to our planet. They're just so amazing too - did you know some bugs can lift over 1,000 times their weight? Hear **Yussef Rafik** share loads of fun bug facts with his latest book, *Don't Squish a Slug*, and learn why it's time we change how we think about beasties - and why we definitely shouldn't squish them!



Elmer with Mama G & Marysia Milewski

12:15-13:15
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

When ice starts to melt at the North Pole, a polar bear sets off on an adventure that takes him all the way to Elmer's jungle! But how will the polar bear get home? Pantomime dame **Mama G** and illustrator **Marysia Milewski** share songs, drawings, and a brand-new Elmer story, *Elmer and the White Bear*, in an inclusive storytime that will inspire the next generation of climate activists.

Saving the Day with Science with Chanté Timothy

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Look out! A new graphic novel series is exploding its way onto our bookshelves. Meet Nova, a young super scientist with a thirst for knowledge, experiments, and adventures. Just like a supernova in the sky, she's blazing with energy and excitement! Join **Chanté Timothy** as she shares her vibrant, colourful new series *Supa Nova* with a spectacular heroine.

Design the Future with Remode Collective

13:00-16:00
Children's Tent
Free Drop-in
Age 6-9

Textile designer of the future? Join Remode Collective for a drop-in sustainable textile session reimagining recycled and donated fabric into bookmarks, keyholder charms, and mini fabric artworks. Explore the world of textiles, get crafty, and learn about the impact of textile waste.



Scribbles and Smells with Jim Smith

14:15-15:15
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Draw along with global bestselling author and comics creator **Jim Smith** celebrating his full-colour graphic novel series, *My Big Fat Smelly Poo Diary*. Join Jim as he introduces the hilarious and lovable characters, best friends Pedro, Olga, and Ozzy (AKA the Poopies) and follow them on a series of madcap, episodic adventures. This highly interactive event will feature readings, draw-along, tips and tricks on crafting comics. Pencils at the ready, laughter guaranteed!

A Year of Pride and Joy with Simon James Green & Mama G

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Discover beloved contemporary LGBTQ+ figures and their remarkable achievements with award-winning author **Simon James Green** and pantomime dame **Mama G** in this joyous event spotlighting *A Year of Pride and Joy*. There are loads of reasons to feel hopeful for the future and Simon and Mama G invite you to share laughter, power, and joy in this uplifting event where we'll celebrate our life passions and bring together our own voices.

Bring Your Imagination to Life with Will Sliney

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Join Marvel comic book artist and SkyKids TV star **Will Sliney** for an out-of-this-world interactive event! Get ready for Will to take you through a step-by-step droid draw-along and share some artistic tips and tricks. Inspired by his book, *Draw with Will*, which will see you fighting aliens, creating spaceships, and inventing your very own creatures, this event will prove that anyone can draw - you just need imagination.

Programme key

- Genres: **Adventure** **Character Appearance** **Comics/Graphic Novels** **Creative Writing** **Funny** **History** **Illustration** **Nature/Climate** **Picture Books** **Politics** **Science** **Sci-Fi** **Storytime, Music & Games** **Wellbeing**

- Access:  Livestreamed  British Sign Language  Live Captioned  AI Captioned  Learning Disability Friendly
- Formats:  Remote Appearance  Outdoor  Active  Food & Drink

Monday 18

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today's author.

Teddy Bear Picnic with Simon Radcliffe

10:00-10:30
11:00-11:30
Children's Tent
Free Non-Ticketed
Age 3-5

Roll out your picnic blankets and bring along your furry friends, for a special storytime featuring some well-known and loved bears! Storyteller **Simon Radcliffe** will share stories, rhymes, and songs in this bear-y fun event, perfect for all the family.

📍

Oi Dinosaurs! with Kes Gray

10:00-10:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

So... Velociraptors didn't sit on plug adaptors? And Triceratops didn't sit on lollipops? Well, what did dinosaurs sit on then? Join bestselling (and hilarious!) author **Kes Gray** for the ultimate dino-packed event with *Oi Dinosaurs!* in the next instalment of the brilliant Frog and Friends series. Frog, Cat, and Dog are ready for oodles of prehistoric rhyming fun packed with dinosaurs, mammoths and - of course - frogs!

AI

That's Not My Zoo with Vanessa Woolf

11:00-11:30 / 12:00-12:30
13:00-13:30 / 14:00-14:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0-2

Join Dog, T-Rex, Mermaid, Penguin, and lots of *That's Not My...* friends for this sensory storytelling adventure for little ones. Led by Usborne's incredible professional storyteller, **Vanessa Woolf**, with great songs, bubbles, and more - it will be SO MUCH fun!

LD

Pop In and Play with Dads Rock

13:00-14:00
Children's Tent
Free Drop-in
All ages

In the Children's Tent today you'll find **Dads Rock** with activities to keep your wee ones busy, just drop in between 13:00 and 14:00 to see what's going on!

📍

Boro Inspired Slow Stitching Workshop

15:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 12-14

Learn about the ancient Japanese craft of Boro and try it for yourself with textile artist and teacher, **Sue Crawley**. In this workshop, you'll have the opportunity to patch clothes and household textiles, repairing the damages to create something new and beautiful, before finding out how you can use your finished piece. All materials provided.

Tuesday 19

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Appearing today: **Morag Hood**.

Pop In and Play with Edinburgh for Under Fives

10:00-11:00
Children's Tent
Free Drop-in
All ages

The team from Edinburgh for Under Fives is back to entertain little ones with a story and art activity to take home. Drop in any time and all are welcome!

📍

Pop In and Play

13:00-16:00
Children's Tent
Free Drop-in
All ages

In the Children's Tent today, you'll find one of our Book Festival facilitators with arts and crafts activities to keep your kids busy. Just drop in to see what's going on!

📍

Words Can Fly with Donna Ashworth

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Join poet **Donna Ashworth** for an enchanting exploration of her new poetry book, *Words Can Fly*. Each of Donna's poems explores what is most important in our lives - family, friendships, school, and the world around us. This fun-filled event will inspire you to celebrate your uniqueness, embrace curiosity, and discover the transformative power of kindness, compassion, and beautiful poetry.

Circus Shenanigans with Tweedy the Clown

16:45-17:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

The circus is sold out, the big top is packed, the ringmaster is about to introduce the first act but... oh no! **Tweedy the Clown** has lost something very important! Get your clown shoes on and join Tweedy in this laugh-out-loud event based on the book, *Tweedy the Clown Who Lost His Nose!* Sure to be a laughter-filled extravaganza where the magic of the circus will be brought to the Book Festival.

AI



Programme key

Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climature Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

Access: [L] Livestreamed [BSL] British Sign Language [CC] Live Captioned [AI] AI Captioned [LD] Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: [R] Remote Appearance [O] Outdoor [A] Active [F&D] Food & Drink



Wednesday 20

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today’s author.

Thursday 21

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today’s author.

Become a Brainiac with Prof. Dr. Larissa Suzuki

16:00-17:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

We use the internet every day to connect with friends, share information, and (let’s be honest) watch funny cat videos... but what exactly is it? And how does it work? Take a journey into the World Wide Web with computer scientist and inventor **Prof. Dr. Larissa Suzuki**, author of *The Brainiac’s Book of the Internet*. Explore what the future might hold for this fast-developing technology - and you might even meet a robot!

Friday 22

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today’s author.

Bookbug with Edinburgh Libraries

10:00-10:30
11:00-11:30
Children’s Tent
Free Non-Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join Edinburgh Libraries for songs, stories, and rhymes in this fun, interactive Bookbug event, part of Scottish Book Trust’s Early Years Programme. Then meet Bookbug for cuddles, high-fives, and photos.

You’re Invited to Acorn Wood!

11:00-11:30
12:00-12:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 0-2

It’s time for a dance in Acorn Wood! Join Hare and all her friends for a party to remember as we celebrate 25 years of the beloved interactive board book series by iconic duo, author Julia Donaldson and illustrator Axel Scheffler. There will be fun with stories, rhymes, and songs - and maybe even a visit from Postman Bear.

Scribble & Scrawl with Jill Calder & Justin Davies

13:00-14:30
Children’s Tent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Get inspired by the sights and sounds in and around the Edinburgh Futures Institute and flex your creative muscles with children’s author **Justin Davies** and illustrator **Jill Calder**. Join them on a journey around the Book Festival with lots of writing and drawing fun. Meet at the Children’s Tent (and please dress for the weather). What will you discover?

Dragon Training with Cressida Cowell

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Join **Cressida Cowell** for the launch of *How to Train Your Dragon School*, the latest novel in her Dragon World series! Hear all about Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third and his dragons and learn some epic writing and drawing tips from Cressida as she chats about what inspires her and reveals some exclusive behind the scenes stories from the new live action film based on the smash-hit book series.

Brilliant Bugs with Simon Mole & Gecko

14:15-15:15
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Did you know there is a whole world right beneath our feet? Down in the ground below, there are worms and scorpions, beetles and caterpillars. Musician **Gecko** joins **Simon Mole** for this bugtastic event as they celebrate the fantastic world of bugs. Join them for a spectacular performance where the worm dance is encouraged as they spotlight Mole’s collection of poems, *A First Book of Bugs*.

Bust a Move with FATOWL

14:30-15:30
Children’s Tent
Free Drop-in
Age 0-5

Bond, connect, and play with your little one through music and movement with **FATOWL**. Dancing shoes and shakers at the ready for what is sure to be a bouncing afternoon session.

Discover the Secrets of Bees with Ben Hoare

15:45-16:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Become a pollinator pro in this fabulouzzzzzz event with bee-fanatic and author of *The Secrets of Bees*, **Ben Hoare**. With his bee-rillicant science facts, Ben will get you to THINK BIG about these small but incredible creatures. Bee prepared to get buzzing, bust some bee myths, and take part in amazzzzzing games as you learn all about why our planet would be in a sticky situation without bees. (Hive you had enough of our bee puns yet?)

Saturday 23

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Check website for today’s author.

Become a Real-Life Superhero with Dr Punam Krishan

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 7-11

It’s true that not all heroes wear capes. Discover how you can become a hero in any accident or emergency with **Dr Punam Krishan**, author and resident GP on BBC Morning Live. Dr Krishan will use lessons from her latest book, *The Superhero’s First Aid Manual*, to teach you how to stay calm and help in a crisis. Remember, you’re never too young to save the day.

Join the Paper Chase with Julia Donaldson & Friends

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Join the incredible **Julia Donaldson** and friends for a show filled with stories, poems, and songs. Get ready for the premiere of Julia’s new picture book, *Paper Chase*, and family favourites such as *Zog*, *Superworm*, and *The Gruffalo*. Prepare your singing voices and get out your dancing shoes - it’s going to be great!

Invent a Story with Niall Moorjani

10:00-11:00
Children’s Tent
Free, Non-ticketed
All Ages

Award winning storyteller **Niall Moorjani** invites you to hear an array of traditional and invented tales, told with joy, kindness, and a huge amount of joining in. Expect dragons, kelpies, heroes, adventures, and much more. Perfect for families.

Amazing Animal Teamwork Dreamwork with Ben Hoare

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Did you know some animals team up together? Like the sea turtles whose shells get cleaned by algae-eating surgeonfish, or the dolphins and birds who hunt and eat dinner together. **Ben Hoare**, author of *Animal Partnerships*, is here to tell you all the cool ways animals and plants work together to survive and how humans have developed their own partnerships with animals all across the world. Prepare to be amazed!



Julia Donaldson, 10:00-11:00

Programme key

- Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climature Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

- Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: Remote Appearance Outdoor Active Food & Drink

Solve Mysteries with Robin Stevens

10:30-11:30
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Dust off your trench coat and look out your magnifying glass! Whether you are part of the Detective Society, a Ministry member or just want to join the party, hear from brilliant author, **Robin Stevens** as she shares her new book, *The Most Unladylike Puzzle Book*. Crack the code to Robin’s top tips for mystery-solving and take a look forward to what’s next in the Ministry of Unladylike Activity.

AI

Find Your Super Power with Tracey Baptiste & Dapo Adeola

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

It’s hard to fit in when you’re the new kid at superhero school! After all, what kind of superhero doesn’t have a fancy costume or funky cape? Fly into an empowering event with bestselling author **Tracey Baptiste** and award-winning illustrator **Dapo Adeola** as they introduce *Super Goat Girl*. Find out what makes you super in this funny, heartwarming event full of drawing and finding joy in who you are.

Meet the Gruffalo

11:30-12:00
Children’s Tent
Free Non-ticketed
All ages

Oh help! Oh no! It’s a Gruffalo! Meet Julia Donaldson’s most famous creation and join in with songs, dancing, and games. Don’t miss the opportunity to give the Gruffalo a cuddle, a high five or take a selfie.

⬆

How Does Your Garden Grow? with Frances Tophill

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Calling all those green of thumb! This is a special conversation all about gardens, being kind to nature, and discovering what we can do to help plants grow. Hear **Frances Tophill**, author of *How to Grow a Garden*, sharing all about the wonderful plants and creatures that call your back garden their home and discover all different types of gardens: from vegetable ones to tropical glass houses.

Adam Kay & Henry Paker: Dexter Proctor Will See You Now

11:45-12:45
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Meet the only doctor in the world who must be in bed by 8pm. From former doctor and author **Adam Kay** comes a new side-splitting series about the world’s youngest doctor, *Dexter Proctor: The 10-Year-Old Doctor*, brilliantly illustrated by **Henry Paker**. Prepare to have your funny bone tickled as Dexter must contend with mortal enemies (and disgusting medical marvels!) while trying to fit in. You’ll be left in stitches!

AI

Spellbinding Stories with Nadine Aisha Jassat & Dominique Valente

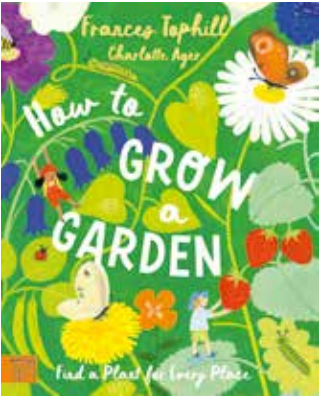
12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Prepare to be enchanted as **Nadine Aisha Jassat** and **Dominique Valente** share their latest magical mysteries. *The House at the Edge of the World* follows Amal and her family who unexpectedly inherit an enchanted clifftop home. *Witchspark*, meanwhile, is an electrifying new fantasy series featuring two witches, one unusual teacher, and ever-increasing magical problems. Hear Nadine and Dominique chat about their brilliant books in an event that will leave you spellbound!

AI



Michael Rosen, 13:30-14:30



Frances Tophill, 11:45-12:45

Get Drawing with Adeola Sokunbi

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Get your pencils and sketchbooks at the ready for this INKTASTIC event! **Adeola Sokunbi**, author-illustrator of *Destiny Ink: Birthday Secret* (and more), introduces the wonderful world of Destiny – a girl who uses creativity to overcome her worries and heal friendships through artistic expression. Expect a colourful drawing session where you can unleash your own imagination to draw your very own friendly (or even scary) monsters.

Strike a Chord with the Instrument Library

13:00-13:50
14:00-14:50
Children’s Tent
Free Ticketed
Age 5-12

Songwriting is the magical place where poetry and music meet. Join Hannah to learn some chords on the ukulele and write a song together. Instruments will be provided from Edinburgh Libraries – where you can borrow an instrument, just like borrowing a book!

⬆

Pocket Shakespeare with Chris Riddell & Michael Rosen

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Two powerhouses of children’s literature captivate in this magical event that brings William Shakespeare’s work to life. Poet **Michael Rosen** and illustrator **Chris Riddell**, both former Children’s Laureates, share *Pocket Shakespeare: A Beginner’s Guide to the Best Bits of the Bard*, and explore love, heartbreak, magic, superstition, and more (with the help of some special guests). Expect jokes, classic insults, and drawings of epic proportions!

⬆ AI

Happy Hills with Sophy Henn

14:15-15:15
Courtyard Theatre
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Meet the happy and not-so-happy residents of Happy Hills – a place where anything can happen (and always does). Join the colourful, fun world of award-winning author-illustrator **Sophy Henn** as she shares *Happy Hills: Mr Big Fluff Rules*. She’ll help you create characters that you can turn into your very own comic strips. Expect lots of giggles and crazy creations along the way!

A Memorable Storytime with Mike Nicholson

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Enjoy a fun-packed event of singing, guessing, suggesting, and remembering, as author **Mike Nicholson** reads from his latest book based on the popular memory game, *My Granny Went to Scotland and She Brought Back...* Come join in on the chaos as you help Mike finish the story and remember all the things Granny brought (from hairy highland cows to sugary shortbread).

In the Spotlight with Elle McNicoll

16:30-17:30
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

From Festival favourite and author of the beloved award-winning *A Kind of Spark*, *Keedie*, and *Like a Charm*, comes a brand-new story, featuring an authentic neurodivergent voice, about being thrust into the spotlight. Hear from the brilliant **Elle McNicoll** as she exclusively launches her latest title *Role Model*, in a special in-conversation event with us today. Get a sneak peek before anyone else!

AI



Sophy Henn, 14:15-15:15



Elle McNicoll, 16:30-17:30



Programme key

- Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climature Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

- Access: ⬆ Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
Formats: ⬆ Remote Appearance ⬆ Outdoor ⬆ Active ⬆ Food & Drink

Are You Sitting Comfortably?

10:00-10:30
Venue C
Free Ticketed
Age 3-5

Join us for a relaxed morning story especially for your littlest readers. Appearing today: **Sophy Henn**.

The Wonderful World of Jacqueline Wilson

10:00-11:00
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

Can you imagine writing 100 books? **Jacqueline Wilson** doesn't have to imagine: she's done just that! In fact, *The Seaside Sleepover* is book number one-hundred-and-thirty-something. From Tracey Beaker, Hetty Feather, and now to Daisy, Lily, and Scruff, how does Jacqueline create the characters that fill her many stories? Find out from the beloved author herself as she chats about her remarkable books and life as a writer.

AI

Island Hopping with Yuval Zommer

10:00-11:00
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Calling all young explorers and budding environmentalists! Join incredible author-illustrator **Yuval Zommer** and come face-to-face with awesome creatures from giant tortoises to leaping lemurs. Through Yuval's newest book, *Our Islands*, you'll visit wonders of the world - both natural and man-made - and take a breathtaking tour of our planet's most remarkable islands. There will be the opportunity to flex your creative skills and learn lots along the way.

AI

Seedlings and Sprouts

10:00-11:00
Children's Tent
Free Ticketed
Age 0-2

How does your child grow? Like a seedling! Join Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh for a baby-led play session exploring natural resources. Dive into a treasure basket full of sensory objects and watch your baby blossom as they connect with nature. This calm and relaxed session is perfect for babies who can sit up confidently!

Q

We Love Gardens with Joseph Coelho and Fiona Lumbers

10:15-11:15
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Join beloved author **Joseph Coelho** (who was Waterstones Children's Laureate 2022-2024) and amazing illustrator **Fiona Lumbers** to celebrate the joy of gardening. They'll share their beautiful new book, *Luna Loves Gardening* - the fifth in the *Luna Loves* series - and show how plants and nature connect us to the world and our communities.

Let's Rock with Robert Tregoning

11:15-12:15
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Get up and dance as author, choreographer, and former West End performer **Robert Tregoning** shares his latest book, *The Rock Family Band*. The story follows Sam, a quiet flute player who feels he doesn't fit in with his rock star family. Come and learn how our differences can be exactly what brings us together in this fun, interactive event that will get you on your feet.



Jacqueline Wilson, 10:00-11:00



Joseph Coelho & Fiona Lumbers, 10:15-11:15



MC Grammar, 13:30-14:30

Meet Zog

11:30-12:00
Children's Tent
Free, drop in
All ages

Everyone's favourite accident-prone dragon is at the Book Festival for one day only for a very special storytime. Join Zog for stories and a dance before grabbing a selfie - what a good idea!

Q

Pretty Painted Pebbles with Jarvis

11:45-12:45
Venue NW
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Pebbles, pebbles everywhere! Award-winning author-illustrator **Jarvis** shares his beautiful story, *Our Pebbles*, all about a boy, his Grandad, and the pebbles they collect and paint together. See Jarvis create beautiful drawings on stage and learn all about how the objects we collect with our loved ones can hold memories that last a lifetime.

Thinking Differently with Greg Stobbs

12:00-13:00
Venue B
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Think quickly and imagine wildly in author-illustrator **Gregg Stobb's** event about celebrating differences and embracing what makes you unique! Based on Gregg's imaginative book *Cloud Boy*, which is inspired by his own experience with ADHD, enjoy an uplifting blend of interactive reading and activities which explore and emphasise the value of neurodivergence.

History's Most Epic Fails with Athena Kugblenu

13:00-14:00
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 9-11

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 history.

The Wholesome Rapper, It's MC Grammar

13:30-14:30
Venue T
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Viral for spittin' school lessons and stories as beats and bars, **MC Grammar** is in the Book Festival hood with his debut book, *The Adventures of Rap Kid*. Roll on in to find out how the power of words turns one schoolboy into the G.O.A.T, and leave inspired to find a flow of your own. No cap this is really gonna slap!

AI

Where Magic Happens with Unicorn Academy

14:45-15:45
Spiegeltent
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 6-9

Get ready for a sparkly *Unicorn Academy* adventure based on the hit TV show in this special unicorn extravaganza. It's going to be a summer to remember on Unicorn Island as Layla works in the library, trying to make a name for herself. Come along for a special screening of the new episode, and take part in unicorn arts, crafts, and activities. It's going to be magical!

Oliver's Vegetables Workshop with Vivian French

14:45-15:45
Venue C
£6.00 [£8.00]
Age 3-5

Eating vegetables isn't always a happy occasion, and no one understands this better than Oliver. He only likes eating chips. Until his grandpa says he has to eat every vegetable that comes out of the ground each day - and Oliver soon discovers they are un-beet-able! Join bestselling author-illustrator **Vivian French** as she celebrates the anniversary of *Oliver's Vegetables* at this delicious (and nutritious) illustration workshop.

Letters Fae the Locals with Refuweegee

15:00-16:00
Children's Tent
Free Drop-in
All ages

Pop by and lend your creative brain to writing a welcoming message (or drawing!) to refugees arriving in Scotland. The team from Refuweegee will guide you in creating these heartwarming messages which will then be distributed within their community-built, personal welcome packs to help people feel more at home here.

Q

Programme key

- Genres: Adventure Character Appearance Comics/Graphic Novels Creative Writing Funny History Illustration Nature/Climature Picture Books Politics Science Sci-Fi Storytime, Music & Games Wellbeing

- Access: Livestreamed BSL British Sign Language CC Live Captioned AI AI Captioned LD Learning Disability Friendly
- Formats: Remote Appearance Q Outdoor QD Active QD Food & Drink

How to book

Book tickets on our website:
edbookfest.co.uk
Bookings open at 10:00 on
Saturday 21 June.

We recommend creating an account on our website before booking opens on Saturday 21 June to avoid disappointment, and signing up to our e-bulletins 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. You don't have to wait in front of your screen - you will get a notification to let you know you have joined the queue.
4. Watch our 'How to Book' video on our YouTube channel (youtube.com/edbookfest) 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 21 June: **10:00-17:00, Monday to Friday**. During the Festival, from 9 August: **09:30-20:45**, daily.

Your tickets

All tickets are e-tickets, so please bring along the email to show your ticket to our Front of House team. If you anticipate this being difficult for you to do, please email us at boxoffice@edbookfest.co.uk. If you have bought multiple tickets, they are all stored in the same place.

Please read your ticket information carefully, to ensure that you are the correct venue.

Booking tickets in-person

Our Box Office counter is located next to the Festival entrance and open daily from **Saturday 9 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). This year we're also offering 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. If you've booked a ticket to watch an event in-person, you'll be able to watch the event online for free if you find you can't attend (if the event is being livestreamed). 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 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/visiting-the-festival/venues

Latecomers

Please allow yourself plenty of time to get to the 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/visiting-the-festival/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 2025. Please visit the individual event page to see how long a specific event may be available on demand as this can vary. 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 Mr. Men and Little Miss, 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 we 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 p149, and see any updates at edbookfest.co.uk/visiting-the-festival/find/us

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 would not be complete without plentiful food, drink, and space to kick back, so you'll find food trucks from a range of independent suppliers in The Courtyard, and there's the Canopy Kitchen & Courtyard in the EFI building featuring 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 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 the 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 Officer 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 People's 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 can be purchased with each Access ticket bought. For more details, see How to Book on p143.

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 1 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/the-festival/events

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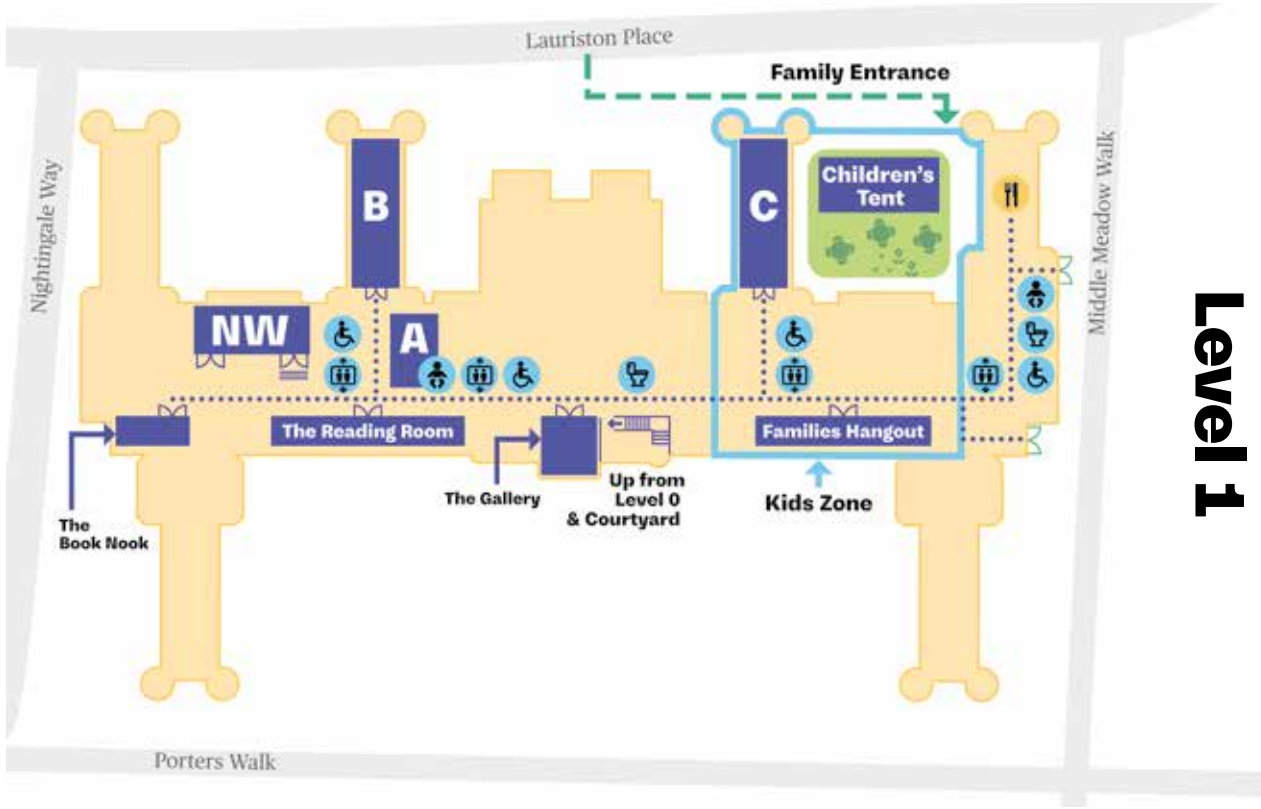
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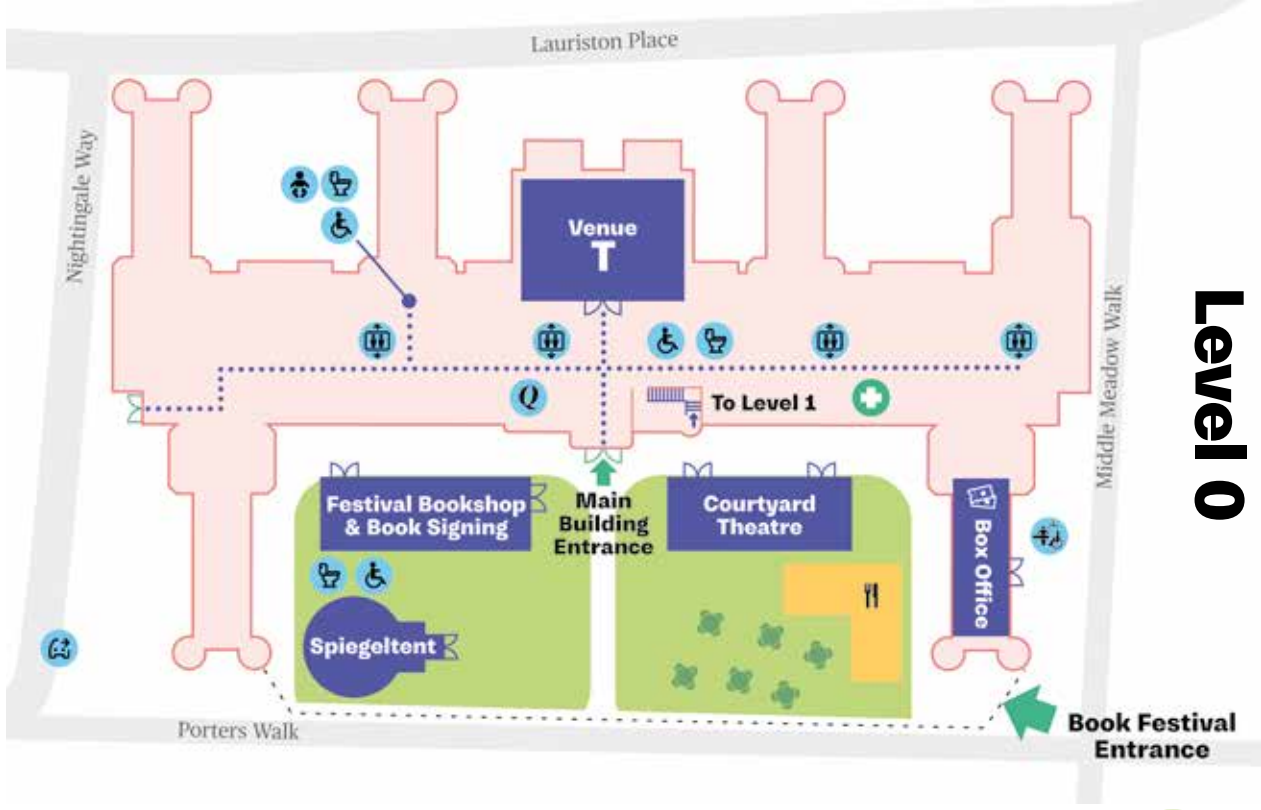
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Site Map

Festival opening hours:
09:30-23:00 daily



Level 1



Level 0

Key

- Level entrance
- Accessible entrance
- Food & Drink
- Toilets
- Accessible toilet
- Mobiloo
- Baby changing
- Lift
- Quiet Zone



For all photo credits, please see our website.

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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

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 the Edinburgh Futures Institute you'll find McEwan Hall on Teviot Place, EH8 9AG, by Bristo Square. This iconic circular building is hard to miss - keep your eye out for the purple signs.

Elliott's Studio

Elliott's Studio is on the other side of the Meadows from the Edinburgh Futures Institute, at 21 Sciennes Road, EH9 1NX - about an 18-min walk away from our main site. Look out for a green-fronted tenement.

And we'll be popping up at the National Library of Scotland and Dynamic Earth for special events too.

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

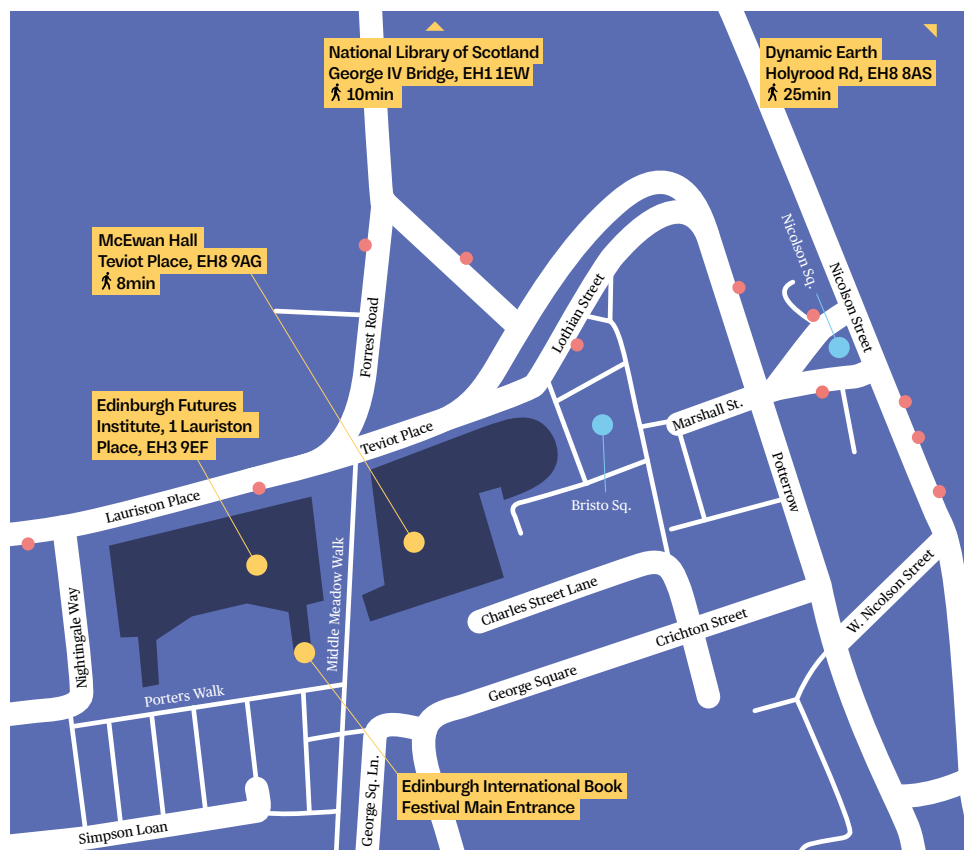
The closest car park is Q-Park Quartermile, Simpson Loan, EH3 9AU, with 374 parking spaces and 10 accessible spaces.

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 9-24 August from 09:30-23:00.



- Book Festival venues
- Bus stops
- Landmarks
- 🚶 Walking distances from Edinburgh Futures Institute