

Spring Festival



Stratford
**Literary
Festival**

7th - 10th May 2026

Mark Gattiss
Sophie Raworth
Philippa Perry
Rev Richard Coles
Natalie Haynes
Gordon Buchanan
Mark Kermode
Antony Beevor
Dr Sian Williams

Prue Leith
Tim Spector
Matthew Rice
Marina Wheeler
Adam Rutherford
Ardal O'Hanlon
Samira Ahmed
Andrew Graham-Dixon
Larry Lamb

SJ Parris
Matt Chorley
Patrick Gale
Tony Juniper
James Holland
Nicholas Crane
Sajid Javid
Scummy Mummies
AND MUCH MORE



Fun for Families

Rob Biddulph, Laura Ellen Anderson, Winnie-the-Pooh,
Dungeons & Dragons and Warhammer workshops,
quizzes, creative writing, face-painting...



The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) logo, consisting of the letters 'RSC' in a bold, stylized, yellow font.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
17 APRIL - 30 MAY

A promotional image for the play 'Driftwood'. It features a woman in a red top and a long, flowing green skirt, captured in a dynamic pose as if dancing or twirling. She is wearing a pearl necklace and a bracelet. In the background, another woman in a blue dress is seated in a chair, looking towards the camera. The setting is a dimly lit room with large windows covered in sheer curtains, a floor lamp with a fringed shade, and a leather sofa. The overall atmosphere is warm and intimate.

DRIFTWOOD

BY MARTINA LAIRD

BOOK NOW

New Work at the RSC is generously supported by
Hawthornden Foundation and The Drue and H.J. Heinz II Charitable Trust

K THEATRE **L N**

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Welcome to the Spring Festival 2026

We bring you a programme that has ideas bursting out all over it. In a world of fast-paced and often confusing change, we're looking at AI, news censorship and what the future looks like to writers. And, as always, we're showcasing brilliant writers, thinkers and experts. We're delighted to be supporting the 2026 National Year of Reading and Stratford's River Hope project with some events around water and rivers. There's plenty to w(h)et your appetite.

Join us for everything from table top storytelling to wines to drink with the classics, and from leading classicists to Shakespeare continued relevance across the globe. We look forward to having you with us.

Annie Ashworth | Festival Director

10% off when you book 5 events or more!

Go to our website at stratlitfest.co.uk for the latest news and any programme changes or additions



Proud supporters
of the National Year
of Reading 2026

Cover Painting: Eternity by Jo Wade jowadeartist.co.uk

Follow us:  [stratfordlitfest](https://www.facebook.com/stratfordlitfest)  [stratfordlitfest](https://www.instagram.com/stratfordlitfest)

Stratford Literary Festival is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1164662

How to Book

By phone: **0333 666 3366** (Mon–Fri 9am–7pm, Sat 9am–5pm)

Online: stratlitfest.co.uk

In person during the Festival:

At the Box Office and Information Desk,
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Bridge Foot,
Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6YR
(during the Festival only)

Scan me to book



Ticket prices include a booking fee
to cover the costs of our external
box office.

NEW

Festival Team:

Annie Ashworth (Festival Director and Programming)

Jane Huntington (Festival Administrator)

Jo James (Operations Director and Programming)

Olivia Chapman (Programming)

Becci Smith (Family and School Events Programming)

Suzanne Worthington (Stewards Coordinator)

Alison Morris (Author Care)

Ella Ciotkowski (Front of House Box Office)

Isabelle Acred (Fundraising)

Liz Wise (Books with Friends Coordinator)

Truda Spruyt (Collective Wisdom PR)

Anna Menin (Copywriter)

Thursday 16th April

Festival General Knowledge Quiz

£18pp inc sharing platter | 7pm



Have you got what it takes to be Stratford's pub quiz champion? Gather a team of 6 and put your general knowledge to the test at our annual fundraising quiz night. Questions will be on general knowledge - no literary expertise required! Tickets include sharing platters and a donation to support the Festival's outreach work. Raffle. Bar available.

Thursday 7th May

Tiffany Murray WORKSHOP: Using Memoir for Fiction

£48.11 | 10am-12.30pm



Do you have the urge to write but no idea where to begin? Or the beginnings of a draft, but no clue how to finish it? Join writer Tiffany Murray as she shows you how to draw on lived experience to write memoir or fiction. Through practical writing exercises in a supportive and creative environment, you'll learn how to shape what might feel like messy, complicated truths into stories that make sense on the page. Tiffany's memoir, *My Family and Other Rock Stars*, was a *Sunday Times*, *Guardian* and *Independent* book of the year, and she has been an International Hay Festival Fiction fellow and a Fulbright scholar.

Thursday 7th May

Alix Almond WORKSHOP: Linocut - Water and Rivers

£48.11 | 10am-12.30pm



Our ever-popular linocut workshop is back! The artist and printmaker will guide you through the process of designing, carving and handprinting a single-colour image, either inspired by our water and rivers theme or by something entirely different - let your imagination run wild! Alix is a member of Warwickshire Open Studios and teaches linocut workshops across Warwickshire and Coventry. Her work is inspired by landscapes, wildlife and colour. Suitable for beginners and those with some experience of linocut. Including all materials

Thursday 7th May

Magdi Yacoub A Surgeon and a Maverick

£13.90 | 12.30pm



Magdi Yacoub is an outsider who succeeded against the odds. Born in Egypt in 1935, the pioneering cardiac surgeon climbed to the very top of the British medical profession but clashed with its establishment, too. From performing the first heart and lung transplant in Europe to transforming the treatment of children with congenital heart disease, Yacoub's career has pushed the boundaries of scientific understanding. Yacoub will discuss his fascinating life and experience of medical politics and ethics at the highest levels.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Thursday 7th May

Hannah French

The Rolling Year: Listening to the Seasons with Vivaldi

£13.90 | 12.30pm



The BBC Radio 3 presenter explores Antonio Vivaldi's evergreen and iconic work - the famous set of highly descriptive violin concertos. Though published 300 years ago, the themes it contains continue to reveal new truths to listeners today. Through the rich imagery of each concerto and its accompanying poetry, Dr Hannah French uncovers the detail of Vivaldi's personal and creative life, helping to bring a new perspective to the music through our shared experiences of the joys and fears of the ever-evolving seasons, the sounds of ancient festivals and the beauty and brutality of the natural world.

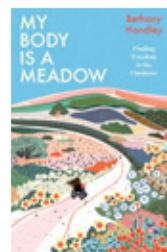
Talking to Deirdre Shields

Thursday 7th May

Bethany Handley

My Body is a Meadow

£10.69 | 2pm



The metal and rubber of a wheelchair can become just as much a part of your body as skin and bone, says Bethany Handley, who invites us to rethink how we live among nature and each other. Today public rights of way are blocked in 32,000 places across England and Wales. Her book explores the lessons nature can teach us about inclusion and interdependence, unearthing parallels between land ownership and private healthcare, loss of biodiversity and social marginalisation, and urging us to work together to keep nature accessible for all.

Talking to Deirdre Shields

Thursday 7th May

Marina Wheeler

A More Perfect Union - Our Relationship with Europe after Brexit

£16.04 | 2pm



Europe is home to Britain's allies and friends. We still trade more with the EU than any other area. China's rise and Russia's aggression have upended the global balance of power, while the US is proving to be an unstable partner. If Britain and Europe can't work together, what chance do democracy and the rule of law have, asks the human rights barrister and former wife of Boris Johnson. Join Wheeler as she makes the case that our relations with Europe must be transformed if our fundamental political liberties are to survive another generation.

Talking to
Rebecca Jones

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Thursday 7th May

Tim Spector

Ferment: The Life-Changing Power of Microbes

£16.04 | 2pm



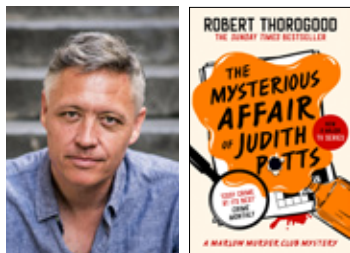
The epidemiologist, author and gut health expert is on a mission to bring fermenting into our lives and kitchens. Combining the latest scientific research with his own experiments, tips and recipes, Spector will show us how time and some basic equipment can transform the humblest of ingredients into nutritious foods that boost our gut health, immunity and mood via the ancient art of fermenting.

Talking to Clare Clark

Thursday 7th May

Robert Thorogood
The Mysterious Affair
of Judith Potts

£13.90 | 3.30pm



The Marlow Murder Club is back! Join the bestselling novelist for a discussion of the fifth instalment of his hit cosy crime series. The bodies are piling up in Marlow, with a footballer and a thriller writer found dead, while someone from Club member Judith's past has turned up and is stirring up trouble. Can they find the killer and help Judith in time, or could this be the end of the Marlow Murder Club?

Talking to Rebecca Jones

Thursday 7th May

Andrew Graham-Dixon
Vermeer in a New Light

£16.04 | 3.30pm



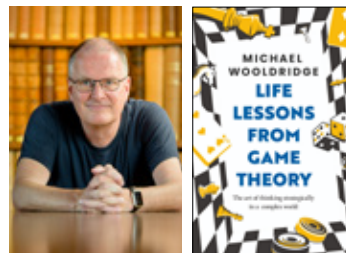
Why did Vermeer paint his pictures, and what do they mean? The art historian and BBC broadcaster answers these questions fully for the first time. For centuries, much of Vermeer's life was shrouded in mystery, but Graham-Dixon has drawn on new leads and a mass of historical evidence to paint a dramatically new picture of the artist and his works. From hitherto unknown friendships to a previously unreported allegiance to a radical movement driven underground by persecution, this is Vermeer as he's never been seen before.



Thursday 7th May

Prof Mike Wooldridge
Game Theory

£13.90 | 5pm



What do you think game theory is? A science of conflict and greed? In films or novels, it is mostly used as a shorthand for cut-throat competition or inevitable betrayal. But game theory actually has much to teach us about how to make a better world. From overfishing in the Atlantic to the Cuban Missile Crisis, join the University of Oxford computer science professor as he discusses the real-world examples of the value of game theory in our lives.

Thursday 7th May

Saul David and
Roger Moorhouse
War and Legacy

£14.97 | 5pm



Two historians explore very different aspects of WWII in new depth. Roger Moorhouse's *Wolfpack* is a landmark new history of the U-boat war, the only thing that 'really frightened' Churchill, told for the first time through the experiences of the crews that manned them. Saul David's *Tunisgrad* is the first comprehensive account of the 1943 fighting in Tunisia, which ended Axis seapower in the Mediterranean and changed the course of the War, but has since been mostly dismissed as a sideshow. Join the pair for an engaging discussion about researching overlooked histories, and writing them in new ways.

Talking to John Jefferies

Thursday 7th May

**Deborah Douglas
and Tracy King**
**The Cost of Trust:
The Ian Paterson Scandal**
£13.90 | 6.30pm

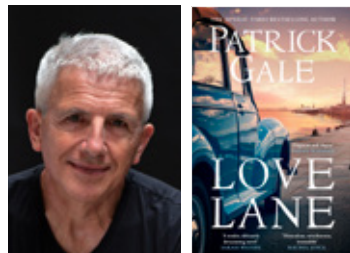


We trust doctors with our bodies. What happens when that trust is betrayed? In 2017, Midlands surgeon Ian Paterson was sentenced to 20 years in prison for wounding his patients through botched or unnecessary surgeries. But the case covered just a fraction of Paterson's victims. Deborah Douglas and Tracy King, both casualties of Paterson, have now uncovered the true extent of his atrocities, through a vital work of investigative journalism. Join them as they discuss their campaign to expose Paterson and the failure of the medical authorities overseeing his work.

Talking to Clare Clark

Thursday 7th May

Patrick Gale
Love Lane
£14.97 | 6.30pm

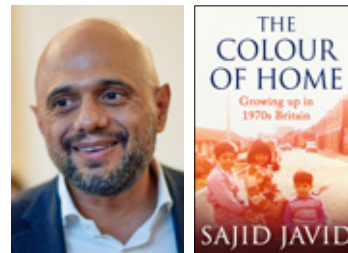


What happens when you return to a country - and a family - you left behind? In the acclaimed novelist's latest book, a sequel to *A Place Called Winter*, Canadian wheat farmer Harry Cane returns to find England transformed by two world wars and a family for whom he has become just a distant myth. Can he stay and make a new life back home, or will he find himself cast out again for having witnessed too much? Gale is the author of several novels including *Gentleman's Relish* and *Take Nothing with You*.

Talking to Tiffany Murray

Thursday 7th May

Sajiv Javid
The Colour of Home
£14.97 | 6.30pm



The former Health Secretary shares his critically-acclaimed memoir - a moving exploration of growing up in 1970s England, his experiences of racism and his beliefs which took him into the heart of British public life. He'll share experiences of the racist abuse that surrounded his family in Rochdale and a childhood marked by poverty and the tension and determination produced by trying to conform to two cultures - a tension that threatened estrangement from his family and a determination to refuse to accept the limits that seemed imposed by his background.

Talking to Fiona Joseph

Thursday 7th May

**Mark Kermode
and Jenny Nelson**
**Surround Sound - The Stories
of Movie Music**
£19.24 | 8pm



A film score can make you cheer, shiver, or punch the air. But how does a director communicate their vision to a composer? And what makes some soundtracks take on a life of their own? Through interviews with talents from Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood to Oscar-winning composer Howard Shore, veteran film critic and BBC broadcaster Mark Kermode and radio producer Jenny Nelson have uncovered the secrets of sound on the silver screen. Join the pair for a discussion of how what we hear has an impact on what we see.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Friday 8th May

Clare Clark
WORKSHOP:
How to Finish Your Novel
£48.11 | 9.30-11.30am



Are you stuck in the middle of your story? Is your plot running out of steam, or are you unsure what's next for your characters? Clare Clark, author of seven novels and twice longlisted for the Women's Prize, can help you tackle the functional, psychological and creative barriers that prevent books from getting finished. Let Clare introduce you to practical tools and creative strategies to regain your writing momentum and get your story over the finish line!

Friday 8th May

Gillian McAllister
and BA Paris
Caller Unknown
and When I Kill You
£13.90 | 11am

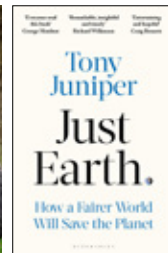


Two bestselling novelists bring us their latest propulsive psychological thrillers. In Gillian McAllister's *Caller Unknown*, Simone faces a parent's greatest nightmare when her teenage daughter, Lucy, is kidnapped on their holiday in Texas. The kidnapper leaves a phone - and rings it, demanding that Simone must commit a crime to get her daughter back. In *When I Kill You*, BA Paris' Nell Masters becomes convinced that the man she accused of murder 14 years earlier has discovered her new identity and is out to get her.

Talking to Olivia Chapman

Friday 8th May

Dr Tony Juniper
Just Earth: How a Fairer
World Will Save the Planet
£16.04 | 11am



The leading environmentalist and Chair of Natural England brings us his new book that identifies the real problem at the heart of the climate crisis: inequality. While billionaires build remote bunkers and plan for colonies on Mars, climate collapse hits the most vulnerable first and hardest. But inequality isn't just about who suffers the consequences. It's the main obstacle blocking action. Join us for a discussion about the system shifts needed to achieve real, lasting change.

Talking to Chris Power

Friday 8th May

David Challen
and Harriet Wistrich
The Sally Challen Case -
Domestic Violence and the
Criminal Justice System
£16.04 | 12.30pm



Our justice system is failing women who are abused by their partners. Sally Challen, who killed her husband after enduring 40 years of psychological abuse, was painted as a 'jealous lover' by the courts and convicted of his murder. David Challen, Sally's son, who successfully fought to overturn her conviction, and their lawyer Harriet Wistrich, the leading human rights activist, discuss what the legal system still gets wrong about domestic abuse and coercive control.

Talking to
Clare Clark

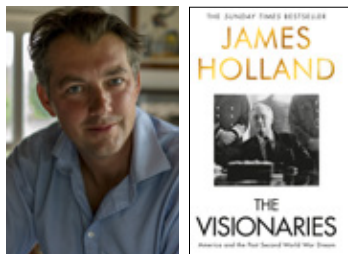
 **JACKSON WEST**
SOLICITORS

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Friday 8th May

James Holland
The Visionaries

£16.04 | 12.30pm



How do you rebuild the world after the catastrophe of world war? This is the question US President Franklin D. Roosevelt was grappling with before America even entered WWII. The leading modern historian charts how the policies of Roosevelt and his successor, Harry S. Truman, helped kickstart an 80-year period of economic stability and peace among western democracies. He'll discuss the stark contrast between these rebuilding efforts and the transactional approach to world affairs that prevails today.

Talking to John Jefferies

Friday 8th May

David Roche
and Gillian McAllister
AI and the Future
of Fiction

£13.90 | 2pm



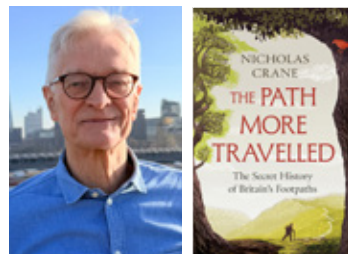
As AI reshapes how we read and write, how can original thought - and original voice - be protected? Many believe they can spot AI-generated writing, but what happens when that distinction disappears? Join David Roche, Chair of the London Book Fair, and bestselling thriller writer Gillian McAllister as they examine AI's growing influence on fiction. (This was written with AI!)

Talking to Madeleine F White

Friday 8th May

Nicholas Crane
The Path More Travelled

£16.04 | 2pm



Join the acclaimed geographer for a ramble along Britain's coast-to-coast web of paths, from prehistoric pathways walked by European migrants 12,000 years ago to city pavements. Learn how land-grabbing Norman Barons kickstarted the enclosure of the countryside, and how our national parks and walking routes emerged from the ashes of two world wars, and hear tales of Crane's most memorable walks along the way.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

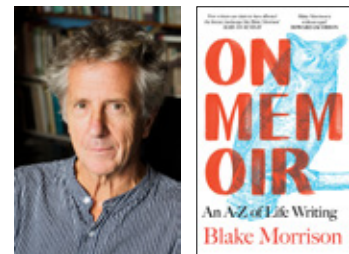
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Friday 8th May

Blake Morrison
On Memoir: An A-Z
of Life Writing

£13.90 | 3.30pm



The much-loved author of *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* brings us his musings on the art of life writing, from its challenges and ethics to its power to move and change us. Gleaned from a lifetime as a passionate reader of others' lives, and an unflinchingly honest chronicler of his own, Morrison's new A-Z has something for every reader and every writer.

Talking to Olivia Chapman

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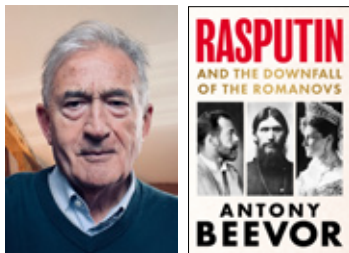
Warwickshire's only official **Silentnight Sleep Centre**

3 Maybrook Road, Stratford On Avon, CV37 0BT Tel: 01789 297111

Friday 8th May

Antony Beevor
**Rasputin and the
Downfall of the
Romanovs**

£19.24 | 3.30pm



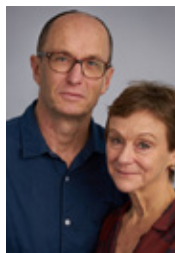
Everyone thinks they know the story of Rasputin, the 'mad monk' who bewitched Tsar Nicholas II and his wife, Alexandra, and changed the course of history. In fact his legend has bewitched historians ever since. Now the bestselling author of *Stalingrad* charts the riddle at the heart of Rasputin's relationship with the Romanovs, reevaluating the collapse of the greatest autocracy on earth. Was there any truth to the wild tales that brought down the empire, or is Rasputin's true legacy an unsettling lesson in the potency of myths?

Talking to John Jefferies

Friday 8th May

Nicci French
**What Happened
that Night**

£13.90 | 5pm



The bestselling husband and wife duo behind the Freida Klein series bring us their latest psychological thriller, and talk about how they write books together. After nearly 30 years in prison for the murder of his university friend Leo Bauer, Tyler Green is finally free. But after he meets up with the friends who were there the night Leo died, another of them ends up dead, putting Tyler's new-found freedom in jeopardy. Can detective Maud O'Connor crack the case, or will Tyler never be free?

Talking to Olivia Chapman



Friday 8th May

Arthur Snell
**Elemental: The New
Geography of Climate
Change**

£13.90 | 5pm



Within this century, a new era of extreme weather will threaten India's ability to grow rice, make it impossible for southern Europe's farms to supply the continent with fresh produce, and make building in Saudi Arabia near impossible. But an alternative future is still possible, the author and former diplomat shows, in this new indepth study of the turbulent future we face, and the choices we need to make to avert disaster.

Talking to Chris Power

Friday 8th May

Felicity Cloake
Cooking the Books

£13.90 | 5pm



The bestselling author and *Guardian How To Cook The Perfect...* columnist brings us her two latest books: a culinary cycle across the United States and her first foray into (foodie) fiction. In *The Underdog*, 36-year-old Katie has abandoned a solid, well-paid job to pursue her dream of becoming a chef, but has ended up stuck in a café job and an ill-advised situationship. *Peach Street to Lobster Lane* charts Cloake's coast-to-coast ride through US cuisine, from sauerkraut balls to Tex-Mex gyoza, during an unforgettable election year.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Friday 8th May

The Booklovers' Wine Club
What to Drink with the Classics
£39.55 | 6.30pm



A Spanish red with Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*? English sparkling wine with Jilly Cooper? Our ever-popular wine club is back with a twist. Be sure to book early for a night of excellent wines chosen by James Richards of Vin Neuf, matched with a series of classic novels old and new. Lynn Taylor will be reading snippets from our chosen classics, and James will match each of them with the perfect wine. Cheers! Over 18s only.

Including all tasting wines

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INDEPENDENT
WINE MERCHANTS

Friday 8th May

Matthew Cobb
Crick - A Mind in Motion
£13.90 | 6.30pm

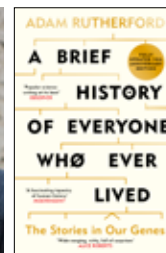


The academic, author and broadcaster charts the life of Francis Crick in the first major biography of the man who changed our view of life forever. He'll explain how Crick was a restless, relentless thinker, as fascinated by Beat poetry and psychedelics as he was by the genetic foundation of life and the inner workings of the brain. Yet for all his drive, it was collaborations - with Jim Watson on DNA and with artists from Cambridge to California - that really powered one of the twentieth century's most exciting minds.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

Friday 8th May

Adam Rutherford
The History of Everyone Who Ever Lived 10th anniversary
£16.04 | 6.30pm



Your genes tell the story of you, but also of each of the 100 billion modern humans who have ever lived. In each genome, we carry the history of our species - births, deaths, disease, war, famine, migration (and a lot of sex). To celebrate a new, updated 10th anniversary edition of his bestselling the book, author, geneticist and broadcaster (and Festival Ambassador) is joined by classicist, broadcaster and bestselling writer **Natalie Haynes**.

Friday 8th May

Ardal O'Hanlon
A Plot to Die For
£19.24 | 6.30pm



The first in a new mystery series by the much-loved writer and star of *Father Ted* and *Death in Paradise*. When celebrity gardener Finn O'Leary returns to his hometown in Ireland to care for his ageing mother, he is soon roped into the local Tidy Towns Committee. But when a member of his mother's choir drops dead, Finn soon finds himself juggling committee meetings with trying to solve a murder - or two.

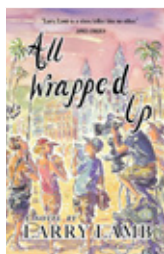
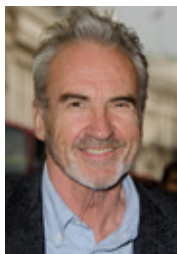
Talking to Clare Clark

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Friday 8th May

Larry Lamb
All Wrapped Up
£19.24 | 8pm



With leading roles in *Gavin and Stacey* and *Eastenders*, Lamb is a very familiar face on our screens. He'll be taking about life from Walford to Billericay and his foray into writing. His new novel stars the unsung heroes of filmmaking and is informed by his decades in the industry. Its backdrop is a film set on a Caribbean island. There's impossible lead actors, on and off power struggles, and a vanishing crew member that threatens to wreck the production.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

Friday 8th May

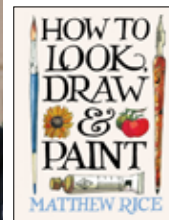
Natalie Haynes
No Friend to This House
£19.24 | 8pm



The celebrated BBC broadcaster and acclaimed author of *A Thousand Ships* returns with a fresh retelling of the myth of Medea. Jason is on his danger-filled quest to find the golden fleece, facing almost certain death in the distant land he seeks. Medea - priestess, witch, and daughter of a brutal king - has the power to save the life of a stranger and betray her family. But with a love rooted in vengeance from the beginning, no one - not even those closest to the pair - will be safe.

Saturday 9th May

Matthew Rice
How to Look, Draw and Paint
£14.97 | 11am



Recording all that surrounds him, from heritage apples to Venetian rooftops, Matthew Rice has documented a lifetime of memories and moments in pen and watercolour. He has designed and illustrated Emma Bridgewater pottery for three decades, and has created illustrations for magazines such as *Country Life*, as well as for his own books on architecture, including the bestselling *Rice's Architectural Primer*. In an exclusive demonstration, he'll share his inspiration.

Saturday 9th May

Dame Vikki Heywood
Miss Veal and Miss Ham
£13.90 | 11.30am



The debut novel by the National Theatre board member and former RSC executive director is an intimate, moving and witty story about a love that cannot be spoken. It's 1951. Miss Dora Ham and Miss Beatrix Veal work in a rural Buckinghamshire post office, careful to maintain their facade as respected local spinsters. But theirs is a love story that began at a suffrage rally in the 1900s, and took them to London's secret gay clubs between the wars. Now, over the course of one pivotal day, their carefully constructed world begins to fall apart.

Talking to RSC Co-Artistic
Director Daniel Evans

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Enjoy 10% off food and drink! Simply show your valid literary festival ticket at the bar.

T&Cs apply.

Saturday 9th May

**Ellie Levenson,
Jo Callaghan
and Grace Murray**
Edge of the Seat Thrillers
£13.90 | 1pm



Three writers discuss their thrilling new novels, and how they create suspense-filled stories that also explore fundamental questions about human relationships, the nature of truth, and what it is to trust someone. Jo Callaghan, author of the bestselling *Blink of an Eye* and new novel *Body of Lies* is joined by debut novelists Ellie Levenson (*Room 706*) and Grace Murray (*Blank Canvas*).

Talking to
bestselling novelist
Joanna Cannon



Saturday 9th May

Oliver Sweet
The Rules that Make Us
£13.90 | 1pm



Why do we do what we do? The leading business anthropologist uncovers the secrets behind our decision making in his new book, subtitled *How Culture Shapes the Way We Act, Think, Believe and Buy*. Drawing on his trailblazing work as head of ethnography at Ipsos, where he has worked with governments and global brands from Coca-Cola to Google, Sweet will discuss how culture's hidden rules govern our behaviour - and can even predict the future.

Talking to Clare Clark

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FINANCIAL

Saturday 9th May

Prue Leith
**Being Old and
Learning to Love it**
£21.38 | 1pm



Getting older isn't for the faint-hearted - but it can be a lot of fun. The cook, businesswoman and (former) *Bake Off* judge shares her candid, uplifting, and funny experiences, exploring the trials, taboos and pleasure of growing older. Part memoir and part reflection, she takes a spirited canter through the triumphs, challenges and surprises of ageing well. And nothing is off limits: from beauty, staying active and finding fame on *The Great British Bake Off*, to friendship, family and the occasional regret. She tackles the big questions we all have about getting older.

Talking to
Tim Hubbard

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Saturday 9th May

**Becky Holmes
and Kaf Okpattah**
The Future of Online Fraud
£13.90 | 2.30pm



Over 45% of crime in the UK is now fraud and the online scams are getting more and more clever. This is an important conversation about the world of cyber crime, the next generation of scams - and how to avoid them. Becky Holmes, who investigated romance fraud in *Keanu Reeves is Not in Love With You*, is back with *The Future of Fraud*, revealing how the technology we depend upon is perfectly poised to exploit us. In *Scam Nation*, Kaf Okpattah exposes the sleazy underworld of the online fraud industry, from the criminals recruiting money mules on social media to how scammers avoid detection.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Saturday 9th May

**Zohra Nabi, Alex Preston
and Mark Richards**
**Sensitivity and Writing:
Where Do We Draw the Line?**
£13.90 | 2.30pm



Authenticity and cultural sensitivity in publishing have been the subject of fierce debate in recent years. Do writers write differently now, or has what publishers are willing to print shifted? And how do we view books written in the past? Mark Richards, co-founder and publisher of Swift Press, joins author Alex Preston and children's author, Zohra Nabi, for a nuanced discussion of publishing today, the role of sensitivity readers, and what novelists can write going forward.

Talking to author and BBC *Front Row* presenter Samira Ahmed

Saturday 9th May

Catherine Clarke
**A History of England
in 25 Poems**
£13.90 | 3pm



The writer and academic brings us her new history of England, as glimpsed through 25 poems written between the eighth century and the present day. From battlefields to royal courts, and from coal mines to below stairs in great houses, each poem is a portal to a bygone England. These poems connect us to our country's past, as seen through the experiences, emotions and imaginations of those who lived it.

Talking to Deirdre Shields

Saturday 9th May

Map Men
**When Maps Go Wrong
(and Why it Matters)**
£16.04 | 4pm



Join YouTube stars the Map Men (AKA Jay Foreman and Mark Cooper-Jones) for an irreverent look at the world's worst maps. *This Way Up* is an exploration of cartographic travesties old and new, from world maps to colonial maps and corporate maps to news maps. Ditch the compass (or disable location services), venture out into a world of mappy mishaps, and learn how the worst maps are sometimes the best.

Saturday 9th May

SJ Parris
Traitor's Legacy
£13.90 | 4pm



The bestselling author of the Giordano Bruno books returns with the first instalment of her historical series that pitches Tudor secret agent Sophia de Wolfe into a dangerous game with the royal court. England, 1598. Queen Elizabeth's successor remains unnamed. The country teeters on a knife edge. When a young heiress is found murdered at the theatre, the Queen's spymaster, Robert Cecil, calls upon former agent Sophia de Wolfe to investigate. She must uncover the truth before a past secret threatens to destroy her.

Talking to Clare Clark

Saturday 9th May

Samira Ahmed
Hard Day's Night

£13.90 | 4.30pm



The bestselling writer and acclaimed broadcaster joins us to discuss how the Beatles' first film changed both the band members themselves and pop music's relationship with the screen. Through her own experience of discovering the film as a child and going on to work in the entertainment industry, as well as insights from the cast and crew, Ahmed explores how a documentary-style film documenting a pop culture phenomenon became a cinematic classic that still endures today.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Saturday 9th May

Alex Preston
and Piers Blofeld
I Spy...

£13.90 | 5.30pm



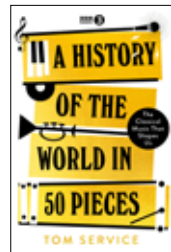
Two authors bring us tales of espionage - one a biography and one a reimagining of a real, hidden slice of history. A picturesque retirement colony for spies is the setting of Alex Preston's novel, *A Stranger in Corfu*. For years, these exiles, either too damaged or too compromised to be allowed to live freely, have tried to make the best of their fate, but then one of their own washes up dead. In *Master of Lies*, Piers Blofeld reveals the untold story of real-life spy and 'Cambridge Five' member Anthony Blunt - whom he dubs 'the most dangerous spy of the twentieth century' - and the cover-up that kept the extent of his treachery under wraps for decades.

Talking to Clare Clark

Saturday 9th May

Tom Service
A History of the World
in 50 Pieces

£13.90 | 6pm



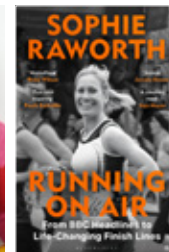
Music transports and defines us, and is passed down through oral tradition, notation and recordings. The BBC Radio 3 presenter joins us for a journey through pieces of classical, folk and world music that have shaped our history. From Bach to Beethoven, Hildegard of Bingen to 'Happy Birthday', Service expands the canon and tests the boundaries of what we understand to be classical music - or even music at all.

Talking to Catherine Clark

Saturday 9th May

Sophie Raworth
Running on Air

£18.17 | 6.30pm



The BBC newsreader brings us a story about the transformative power of putting one foot in front of the other. When she first attempted the London Marathon, Sophie collapsed two miles from the finish line. Undeterred, she has now run all six World Marathon Majors, run 15 marathons, and three ultra-marathons. She will talk about the inner confidence and strength she discovered along the way, the community she found, and how running has helped her through personal and professional challenges.

Talking to Jill Douglas

Saturday 9th May

**Dungeons and Dragons
Games Café**
A Seafaring Adventure (18+)
£10.69 | 7-9pm



Do you like the idea of telling epic and hilarious stories with your friends? Come and try Dungeons & Dragons with our talented team of Dungeon Masters! Borrow some dice and a ready-made character from us and get stuck in. No experience necessary - we'll help you all the way.

Saturday 9th May

**Warhammer Games
Café (12+)***
£10.69 | 7-9pm



Whether you already know your Orks from your Orruks, or you've never dabbled in 'the hobby', this event will give you a chance to build, paint and play with Warhammer figures under the guidance of local tabletop gaming experts. Across four stations: one for building models, one for painting them, and two tables for experienced and inexperienced players - you'll be able to take part in all the key parts of the Warhammer hobby. Starter model kits and paints for old and new players will be provided by Games Workshop, the company behind Warhammer, and experienced players are also welcome to bring their own models.

*Young people under 14 years can attend alone but a contact number for a responsible adult must be left.
The Festival cannot be responsible for their care.

Saturday 9th May

Local Author Showcase
Speaker & Guest FREE | 7.45pm
Audience £5.34



This is your chance to share your work - whether it's non-fiction or memoir, fiction or poetry. Come along and share your work - however far it's developed - in a friendly and supportive environment - and bring family and friends! Each author has just two minutes to speak about their work, making this a fast-paced, fun and fascinating evening. There is a bar open before this event, during the interval halfway through, and at the end while authors and audience mingle, buy books and get them signed. If you'd like to be considered for a two-minute slot, please email info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk.

Compèred by Jo James

Saturday 9th May

**Scummy Mummies
Live Comedy Show**
£26.73 | 8-9.15pm



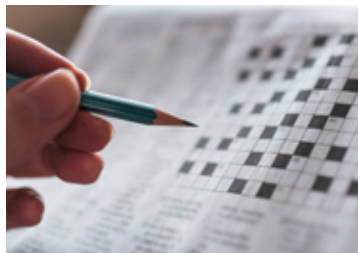
Join the duo behind the award-winning parenting podcast for a live comedy show which promises to have you laughing 'until you wee' - consider yourself warned! From menopause to mansplaining, teenagers to Tinder, no subject is off limits for Helen Thorn and Ellie Gibson as they celebrate the wild and wonderful world of parenthood. Expect songs, sketches, stand-up, and, of course, sparkly catsuits. 18+

Sunday 10th May

Clare Clark

WORKSHOP: How to Crack the Crossword

£13.90 | 9.30am



Does the cryptic crossword leave you scratching your head in bewilderment? Or even tearing your hair out? If so, this is the workshop for you! Join Clare Clark, our very own Festival chair, novelist, and also, crossword aficionado. She will teach you how to dissect clues and arm you with a puzzle-solving toolkit that will have you storming through questions in no time. Crosswords will be supplied. Tea and coffee will be available to buy.

Sunday 10th May

Maz Evans

WORKSHOP: How to Write Your Story (Without Losing the Plot)

£32.07 | 10am-12pm



Do you want to write, but your plots always end up in a tangle? Stories are an art - but plotting is a science. Join the bestselling author for a fun and interactive workshop where she will demystify the writing process and teach you invaluable tools for plotting your novel. Come and learn some tricks of the trade to help your story flow, and have fun with your fellow writers while doing it.

Sunday 10th May

Matt Chorley, Jeremy Griffin, Ayala Panievsky and Andy Veale
Review of the Sunday Papers

£13.90 | 10am



The news cycle these days is fast and furious as world events unfold. Join Radio 5 Live and *Newsnight* presenter Matt Chorley as he talks to Jeremy Griffin Executive Editor of *The Times*, former journalist Ayala Panievsky, and Andy Veale, Editor of the *Stratford Herald* as they pick stories from the Sunday papers that have caught their eye and have international, national and local importance. Tea and coffee will be available to purchase in the Festival Café.

Sunday 10th May

Stephen Rutt and Rose George
Watery Tales: From the Sky to the Sea Bed

£10.69 | 11.30am



Continuing our water and rivers theme, join us for a fascinating discussion about the secret lives of water and fish. Writer and naturalist Stephen Rutt's *The Waterlands* traces the journey of a raindrop through different waterscapes to reveal the natural rhythms of the most miraculous substance on earth: water. Rose George, a journalist and author, ventures below the surface to expose the vast industries – legal and illegal – that feed our endless appetite for seafood, and explore what we really know about these strange, slippery creatures.

Talking to Catherine Clark



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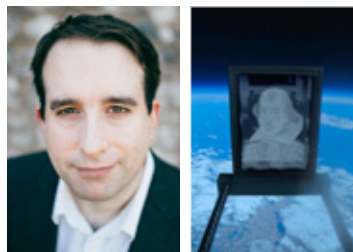
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Sunday 10th May

Jack Jewers
inVerse: Lovers and Madmen

£13.90 | 1pm



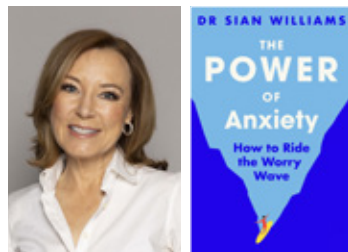
A filmmaker and visual artist, Jewers is passionate about telling stories. His films have been shown at major festivals around the world, including Cannes, New York, and London. He'll show and talk about his series of short films, *inVerse*, which were created to mark the 400th anniversary of the first publication of Shakespeare's plays. His stories are based entirely on extracts from Shakespeare's work, voiced by an all-star cast and filmed in places as diverse as the Ukrainian war zone and the edge of space.

Talking to Emma Smith

Sunday 10th May

Dr Sian Williams
The Power of Anxiety

£16.04 | 1pm



Anxiety can have immense power, sending us into a sea of worry that threatens to overwhelm us. But what if we stopped trying to fight the waves and, instead, learned to ride them? Join the psychologist and host of BBC Radio 4's *Life Changing* as she talks about a new way to look at anxiety. Learn how to listen to what your anxiety is saying and to celebrate this unique sensitivity that makes us feel deeply and intensely.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Sunday 10th May

Sian Hughes
and Will Maclean
Secrets and Lies

£10.69 | 2.30pm



Two exciting writers bring us novels exploring lives lived on the fringes of society - and secrets that refuse to remain in the past. In Sian Hughes' *No Such Thing as Monday*, Steffie is haunted by recollections of what happened to her sister when they were children, until the death of her violent father sparks a reckoning that cracks the past wide open. In *Solace House*, by Will Maclean, broke student Alex is helping to clear out a vast house left to his university by a reclusive hoarder when he and his friends become obsessed with the secrets of its former occupants.

Talking to Clare Clark

Sunday 10th May

Jeremy Griffin
and Ayala Panievsky
Who Owns the News?

£13.90 | 2.30pm



Verifiable news and balanced reporting are being challenged by powerful 'press barons', world leaders and AI. Join an important conversation about a free, strong press in the age of disinformation - and the forces threatening it - with academic and former journalist Ayala Panievsky whose *The New Censorship* uncovers how the media has inadvertently amplified the anti-democratic movements. She is joined by Jeremy Griffin, the Executive Editor of *The Times* and *Times Radio*.

Talking to journalist
and broadcaster Matt Chorley



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Sunday 10th May

Jo Hamilton
Why Are You Here
Mrs Hamilton?
The Post Office Scandal
£16.04 | 4pm

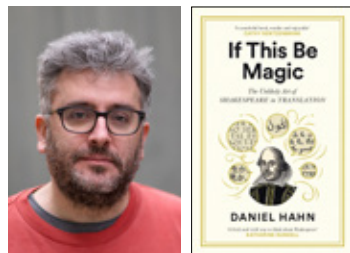


One of more than 700 sub-postmasters and mistresses prosecuted based on information from the Post Office's faulty Horizon software, Jo Hamilton was caught up in one of Britain's biggest miscarriages of justice. She brings us her first-hand account of the human struggle behind the headlines, as immortalised in ITV's smash hit *Mr Bates vs The Post Office* (she is played by Monica Dolan), from going into debt to repay money to taking the case to the corridors of the High Court.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Sunday 10th May

Daniel Hahn
If This Be Magic
(Shakespeare in Translation)
£13.90 | 4pm

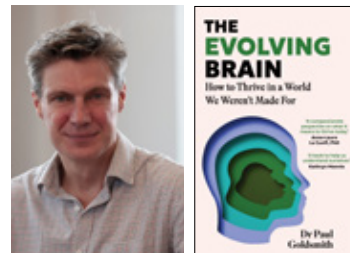


Why might *Hamlet* be even longer in Italian? How does *Romeo and Juliet* begin - in Thai? The seasoned translator and Shakespeare fanatic brings us his book asking what it is to translate the Bard. If you change all the poetry, all the wordplay, all the words, is it still Shakespeare? And is it still good? Hahn will discuss why we choose the words we do, and change the way you think about language along the way.

Talking to Emma Smith, Professor of Shakespeare Studies at Oxford University

Sunday 10th May

Dr Paul Goldsmith
The Evolving Brain: How to Thrive in a World We Weren't Made For
£13.90 | 4pm



It's easy to blame ourselves when we struggle with modern life, from burnout to loneliness, but the human brain wasn't made for the world we live in now. Processes that evolved to ensure our survival now leave us overloaded, restless, and unhappy. But it doesn't have to be this way. The neurologist and neuroscientist - visiting professor at Imperial College London - brings us insights from cutting-edge studies and his clinical practice that can help us live happier, healthier, and more connected lives.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

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STRATFORD ON AVON
BEDCOMPANY

Sunday 10th May

Philippa Perry
and Richard Coles
Church and the Couch
to Cosy Crime
£21.38 | 5.30pm



Two well-known personalities have turned to crime, each inspired by their career origins. In *Shrink Solves Murder*, psychotherapist Patricia Philippus turns detective after one of her patients turns up dead. The police chalk it up to suicide, but Pat suspects foul play, so swaps the therapy room for the crime scene and attempts to catch a killer hiding in plain sight. A glamorous movie production has taken over Champton in the latest Rev Richard Coles' Canon Clement novel, but an ingenious murder on location forces everyone's favourite crime-solving vicar to go sleuthing again.

Talking to Clare Clark

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Sunday 10th May

Gordon Buchanan
In the Hide

£18.17 | 5.30pm



The acclaimed BBC cameraman has spent 30 years capturing some of the most astounding scenes in the natural world, sometimes spending weeks in a cramped camera hide in pursuit of the perfect shot. But dangerous animals weren't the only thing he was hiding from. Join us as he discusses his honest and raw account of his challenging childhood in Scotland, and the sanctuary he found - and still finds - in nature.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Sunday 10th May

Mark Gatiss
A Life in Stage and Screen

£21.38 | 7:15pm



Currently appearing at the RSC Theatre in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, we have an exclusive opportunity to hear about the astonishing life of this celebrated polymath: writer, director and producer behind the camera, as well as critically-acclaimed actor and published author. He'll be chatting about a career that has taken him from *The League of Gentlemen* to *Sherlock*. His screen roles include *Mission Impossible*, *Wolf Hall* and *Game of Thrones*, and stage and TV appearances including *The Motive* and the *Cue* for which he won Best Actor at the 2024 Olivier Awards and his detective series *Bookish*. And so much more.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

In partnership with



Friday 22nd May

Greg Doran
with Daniel Evans
Walking Shadow: Love, Loss and Shakespeare

£25 | 4pm



Join Greg Doran (Former Artistic Director, RSC) and Daniel Evans (current Co-Artistic Director, RSC) for a warm and generous conversation inspired by Greg Doran's new book *Walking Shadow: Love, Loss Shakespeare*. This event brings to life the book's compelling blend of memoir, travelogue and investigation, discussing Greg's life, work, and 400th anniversary First Folio roadshow. A meeting of eras not to be missed! Promoted in partnership with the RSC. On sale from 18th March

Event at the Swan Theatre

In partnership with



Friday 12th June

Maggie O'Farrell
Land

SOLD OUT
2pm



In a special one-off Festival event, we welcome our Patron - the bestselling author of the global phenomenon *Hamnet* - as she introduces her latest book: a richly evocative novel about upheaval and loss set in mid-nineteenth century Ireland around the great Ordnance Survey project to map the whole country. Centred around one family, *Land* is a deeply moving novel about separation and reunion, tragedy and recovery and colonisation and rebellion, and written in O'Farrell's inimitable style.

Event at Rother Street Arts House

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Workshops

Thursday 7th May

Tiffany Murray
WORKSHOP: Using Memoir for Fiction

£48.11 | 10am-12.30pm



Do you have the urge to write but no idea where to begin? Or the beginnings of a draft, but no clue how to finish it? Join writer Tiffany Murray as she shows you how to draw on lived experience to write memoir or fiction. Through practical writing exercises in a supportive and creative environment, you'll learn how to shape what might feel like messy, complicated truths into stories that make sense on the page. Tiffany's memoir, *My Family and Other Rock Stars*, was a *Sunday Times*, *Guardian* and *Independent* book of the year, and she has been an International Hay Festival fellow and a Fulbright scholar.

Thursday 7th May

Alix Almond
WORKSHOP: Linocut - Water and Rivers

£48.11 | 10am-12.30pm



Our ever-popular linocut workshop is back! The artist and printmaker will guide you through the process of designing, carving and handprinting a single-colour image, either inspired by our water and rivers theme or by something entirely different - let your imagination run wild! Alix is a member of Warwickshire Open Studios and teaches linocut workshops across Warwickshire and Coventry. Her work is inspired by landscapes, wildlife and colour. Suitable for beginners and those with some experience of linocut.

Including all materials

Friday 8th May

Clare Clark
WORKSHOP: How to Finish Your Novel

£48.11 | 9.30-11.30am



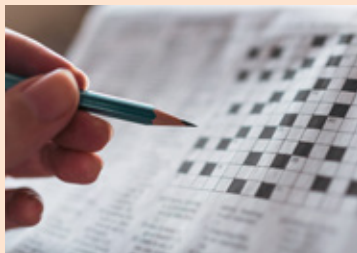
Are you stuck in the middle of your story? Is your plot running out of steam, or are you unsure what's next for your characters? Clare Clark, author of seven novels and twice longlisted for the Women's Prize, can help you tackle the functional, psychological and creative barriers that prevent books from getting finished. Let Clare introduce you to practical tools and creative strategies to regain your writing momentum and get your story over the finish line!

Sunday 10th May

Clare Clark

WORKSHOP: How to Crack the Crossword

£13.90 | 9.30am



Does the cryptic crossword leave you scratching your head in bewilderment? Or even tearing your hair out? If so, this is the workshop for you! Join Clare Clark, our very own Festival chair, novelist, and also, crossword aficionado. She will teach you how to dissect clues and arm you with a puzzle-solving toolkit that will have you storming through questions in no time. Crosswords will be supplied. Tea and coffee will be available to buy.

Sunday 10th May

Maz Evans

WORKSHOP: How To Write Your Story (Without Losing the Plot)

£32.07 | 10am-12pm



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Numbers are limited so book early!



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a Friend

We rely on your support for our extensive education and outreach programme and, by becoming a Festival Friend or Benefactor, you will be supporting our literacy and reading projects.

Membership Benefits:

- Priority booking
- News and offers from the Festival

Friends Membership:

£35 - priority booking

Benefactor Membership:

£100 or £500 - complimentary tickets and priority booking

Please go to stratlitfest.co.uk/friend for more information.



Events for Families



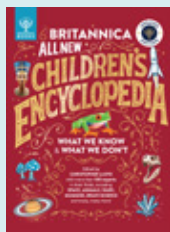
Adults GO FREE unless
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▲Young people under 14 years can attend alone but a contact number for a responsible adult must be left. The Festival cannot be responsible for their care.

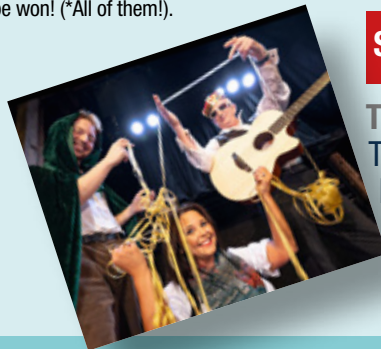
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Saturday 9th May

Andrew Pettie
The 'What on Earth!'
Family Quiz 6 -106 yrs
£8.55 | 10am



How many planets in our solar system would fit between Earth and the Moon? * How many cups of snot does your body make in a day? All of these questions and more will be answered during this fun and fascinating family quiz hosted by Andrew Pettie, the editor of award-winning What on Earth! Magazine fantastic prizes to be won! (*All of them!).



Saturday 9th May

Jane Riordan
Winnie-the-Pooh: Once
there was a Bear 4+ yrs
£8.55 | 10am



Celebrate 100 years of Winnie-the-Pooh and friends, hear a special storytime, and discover how to draw the 'bear of very little brain'. Cosy up with Jane Riordan as she takes you on an adventure through the Hundred Acre Wood. You'll also have a chance to buy the gorgeous new editions of *Winnie-the-Pooh: Once There Was a Bear* and *Winnie-the-Pooh: Tales from the Forest* and get them signed by Jane.*

Saturday 9th May

Tall and Small Tales
Tall Tales presents
Rumpelstiltskin 4+ yrs
£8.55 | 11.30am

Where the sound of spinning wheels meets the shimmer of magic, Bonnie's adventure begins! Join the Tall and Small Tales theatre company for a vibrant retelling of Rumpelstiltskin, blending captivating storytelling with original live music to bring a beloved fairy tale to life.

Saturday 9th May

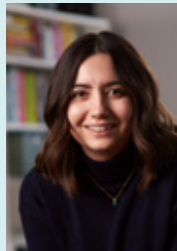
Drop In and Do
River and Water 4-11 yrs
FREE | 10am-11.30am

Drop in for free craft and family fun and an otter-ly great time as we celebrate water, rivers, plants and wildlife inspired by the River Avon. There'll be face-painting, frog puppets and maybe even a giant fish portrait...!



Saturday 9th May

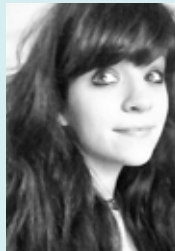
Zohra Nabi
CREATIVE WRITING:
Witch Light 8+ yrs
£8.55 | 11.30am



Do you love writing? The award-winning author will guide you through creating your own eerie tale or illustrated scene inspired by history in this hands-on workshop. She'll share techniques for crafting atmosphere, building suspense, and weaving real historical detail into spooky stories, just as she drew on the folklore of the Pendle witches for her new book, *Witch Light*.

Saturday 9th May

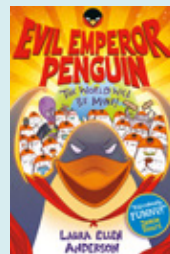
Laura Ellen Anderson
Star Kitties 6+ yrs
£8.55 | 11.30am



Join the award-winning creator for a journey to the magical world of Whiskery Paw in her brand new series! Meet an extraordinary cast of new characters including Tabitha Flair and her feline friends, discover how Laura creates magical new worlds, create an exciting new Star Kitty and learn how to draw one of Tabitha's adorable friends!

Saturday 9th May

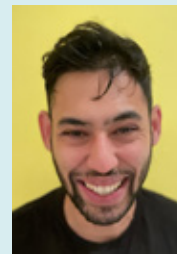
Laura Ellen Anderson
COMIC WORKSHOPS:
Evil Emperor Penguin 7+ yrs
£11.77 | 1.15pm OR 2.30pm



Jump into the world of Laura Ellen Anderson, *Phoenix Comic* artist and creator of *Evil Emperor Penguin*, for a high-energy comic workshop packed with creativity and fun. Create bold characters, build your own comic strip and bring your ideas to life on the page.

Saturday 9th May

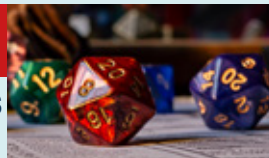
Nathaneal Lessore
Like a Brother 12+ yrs [▲]
£8.55 | 2.30pm



Let the multi-award-winning author teach you the tricks to make your stories shine in this fun, interactive masterclass. Learn the formulas behind creativity and explore narrative structure. You'll leave confident, inspired, and ready to turn everyday moments into bold, brilliant, creative pieces that truly stand out!

Saturday 9th May

Games Café Dungeons and Dragons
11-17 yrs [▲] £10.69 | 4-5.30pm



Do you like the idea of telling epic and hilarious stories with your friends? Come and try Dungeons & Dragons with our talented team of Dungeon Masters! Borrow some dice and a ready-made character from us and get stuck in. No experience necessary - we'll help you all the way.

See **page 18** for details of our Warhammer Games Café!

Sunday 10th May 12pm

Rob Biddulph The Last Wolf 6+ yrs | £10.69
Mystery. Full moons. Werewolves! Set out on a thrilling adventure with bestselling author and illustrator Rob Biddulph, who has reimagined the legend of the werewolf in his spine-tingling new book. Have your pencils at the ready for a live version of one of his famous 'Draw with Rob' episodes. A fun-filled howfest that the whole pack can sink their claws into.



Box Office: **0333 666 3366** or online at stratlitfest.co.uk

Festival in the Community

The Festival is a charity and committed to changing lives, improving well-being and life opportunities, and bringing people together through books and storytelling.



Books with Friends

We run three free sessions on the last Thursday of the month in the centre of Stratford at which over a cup of coffee members share their thoughts on a book they've all read. We especially welcome people who find themselves a bit isolated for whatever reason. If you would like to join the group, please email us at info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk



Bedtime Story Workshops in Prisons

We are the only organisation in the country teaching prisoners to write a bedtime story to help lessen the trauma of separation for their children. We then professionally produce the stories so they can share them with their children or record them through the Storybook Dads/Mums initiative. Since 2017 we have delivered over 60 workshops across the UK in male and female prisons with the writers, Hollie Hughes, Smriti Prasad-Halls and Patrick Kincaid.

Please support our work by becoming a Friend or Benefactor!

Details on our website at stratlitfest.co.uk



Our outreach programme is supported by:

The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
The Seccombe Trust, Stratford Town Trust
STRADFAS and The Allen Lane Trust
Victoria Wood Foundation
World of Books
Friends of the Festival and private benefactors

Festival in Schools

Throughout the year we take authors into primary and secondary schools to inspire young people to have a lifelong love of books. Our events are designed to respond to National Literacy Trust research on the drop in young people's reading for enjoyment. We're working with the following authors already in 2026:

Emma Carroll
Frank Cottrell Boyce
Christopher Edge
Devon Glover
Sophy Henn
Patrice Lawrence
Smriti Prasadam-Halls

Jane Riordan
Philip Reeve and
Sarah McIntyre
Sam Sedgman
Davina Tijani
Michael Wooldridge

If you'd like us to bring an author to your school,
email jane@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk



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Your Visit

We want to make it as enjoyable as possible



WATERSTONES POP-UP BOOKSHOP

You'll find the bookshop behind the Festival Information Desk and you can buy signed copies of books by all the authors appearing at the Festival. Signings will take place there or in the venue where the author is speaking.

FESTIVAL INFORMATION DESK AND BOX OFFICE

We'll be there from before the first event of the day until after the last to answer your questions and guide you to venues. You can buy tickets here too (subject to availability) and pay by cash or card.



LOCAL AUTHORS' POP-UP

We're celebrating independently published local writers once again. Meet them for a chat and buy copies of their books.



FESTIVAL CAFÉ

This year the Festival has its own hub café in the Seymour Room for cold drinks and coffee or tea. A place to rest between events, meet up with friends and talk about what you've seen or are planning to see.

FESTIVALGOERS' SPECIAL DISCOUNT

Show your ticket for an event that day and you'll receive **10% off food and drinks** at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.



PARKING

There is free parking at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, but **you must register your car at Reception or you will incur a fine**. The Festival cannot be responsible for any fines incurred.

N.B. Roads around Stratford can get busy. Please allow enough time for your journey.



ACCESSIBILITY

All venues have step-free access, and toilets that are accessible to wheelchair users and those with mobility challenges.

Tickets are available for those attendees who are disabled and/or use a wheelchair and include a companion ticket.

If you have sight or hearing impairment, please email us at info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk and we will endeavour to seat you close to the stage.

We use microphones at all events except workshops.

YOUR TICKETS

When you book by phone, tickets will be posted or emailed to you as eTickets. When you book online you will be emailed eTickets. These will come from TicketSource, not from the Festival, so please check your spam.

You can either print out your tickets to show our Stewards or show us on your phone.

Can't find your ticket? eTickets (print at home) can be re-sent to you by our ticketing agent, TicketSource, by going to ticketSource.co.uk/help#contact-eo and completing the form under the heading Lost your eTicket?

For lost mobile or postal tickets, please email support@ticketsource.co.uk with your details. TicketSource will re-send the tickets.

During the Festival week in May, please go to the Information Desk in the Foyer of the Crowne Plaza Hotel and we will be pleased to assist.

Tickets for events that still have availability can be bought from our Box Office desk in the Foyer of the Crowne Plaza Hotel up to 10 minutes prior to an event starting. We can accept card or cash.



Stratford
**Literary
Festival**

stratlitfest.co.uk



Saturday 9th May

POP-UP POETRY WITH EMILY HOLTOM

Share a word or a memory and watch a poem come to life. Throughout the day, poet Emily Holtom will be creating bespoke poems live on a vintage typewriter, inspired by conversations with festival-goers. Visitors are invited to sit for a moment, share a word, a memory or a thought, and watch as a poem is typed in real time - each one a unique keepsake to take home and treasure. Suitable for all ages, this drop-in experience welcomes anyone curious about poetry, creativity, or simply taking a moment to be present.

Pay what you can.

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Terms and Conditions

Most events take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel,
but please check your ticket and our website before you travel.

- » All events take place at the venue printed on your ticket. You will be contacted by email in advance of an event if the venue or any details change.
- » Tickets are sold through an external box office. Tickets are non-refundable and cannot be exchanged. All tickets booked by phone or online include a booking fee. This booking fee is charged by our external box office. Postal ticket delivery is an additional £2.50. Should a ticket be refunded because of an unavoidable cancellation or circumstances beyond the Festival's control, the booking fee will not be returned.
- » Tickets will be on sale at the Festival Information Desk during the Festival, unless an event is sold out. The booking number and online booking link can be found on each page of our programme and on our website.
- » All seats are unreserved. Some events may have staggered pricing based on where you will be seated in the auditorium.
- » No animals are permitted into the Crowne Plaza Hotel except assistance dogs.
- » Accessibility: all venues can accommodate wheelchairs and those with mobility issues, and there is an accessible toilet. All venues have step-free access. Please contact us on info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk if you have particular needs or require a seat close to the stage due to hearing or sight challenges. All speakers use a microphone except in workshops.
- » Children under 14 years must be accompanied by a responsible adult (over 18 years of age). We cannot accept responsibility for unaccompanied children. Children over 14 may attend alone but must be delivered and collected by a responsible adult and are not the responsibility of the Festival. Adults attending children's events go free unless otherwise stated. Children under 2 and babes in arms who do not require a seat do not need a ticket.
- » We reserve the right to alter the programme or substitute performers if circumstances dictate and we will do our very best to replace like with like. Please check our website or follow us on Instagram for programme change alerts. Ticketholders will also be emailed about any programme changes.
- » All events are an hour long unless otherwise stated. Books are available to buy at each event if applicable and authors will sign copies of their books after each event. Books featured at the Festival and those signed at earlier events will be on sale at Waterstones, 8 High Street. We request that you do not bring copies of books for signature not purchased at the event.
- » Some events may be filmed or recorded. By buying a ticket you are giving your consent to be filmed or recorded as a member of the audience. Please let one of the Festival team know if you do not wish to be in a photograph.
- » All details and prices are correct at time of going to press.

Making the Festival Happen

We would like to thank the following for their help and support:

All the wonderful authors, illustrators and artists who come to the Festival; the publishers who have worked with us; all who steward and volunteer at the Festival; all the staff at Waterstones Stratford, the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Rother Street Arts House; our interviewers; and of course our Friends and Benefactors, audiences, sponsors and advertisers who make the Festival possible.

Festival Patron: Maggie O'Farrell

Festival Outreach Patron: Julia Donaldson

Festival Trustees: Neil Davis, Dr Diana Owen OBE (Acting Chair), Madeleine Parker, Professor Emma Smith, Fiona Stark and Julia Wheeler

Graphic Design: Mike Nicholas at Shock the Senses

Festival Photographer and Film: Rupert Barnes

Festival Faces Photographer: Lorentz Gullachsen

Production: ProSound & Light

Set design: Reiltin Hart

Our Interviewers:

Samira Ahmed	Natalie Haynes	Chris Power
Olivia Chapman	Tim Hubbard	Deirdre Shields
Matt Chorley	John Jefferies	Tiffany Murray
Clare Clark	Rebecca Jones	Emma Smith
Catherine Clark	Fiona Joseph	Madeleine F White
Jill Douglas	Fiona Lindsay	

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At a Glance

Date	Time	Event	Booked
Thurs 16th April	7pm	Festival General Knowledge Quiz	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	10am-12.30pm	Workshop: Tiffany Murray	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	10am-12.30pm	Workshop: Alix Almond	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	12.30pm	Magdi Yacoub	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	12.30pm	Hannah French	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	2pm	Bethany Handley	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	2pm	Marina Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	2pm	Tim Spector	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	3.30pm	Robert Thorogood	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	3.30pm	Andrew Graham-Dixon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	5pm	Prof Michael Wooldrige	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	5pm	Saul David and Roger Moorhouse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	6.30pm	Deborah Douglas and Tracy King	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	6.30pm	Patrick Gale	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	6.30pm	Sajid Javid	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 7th May	8pm	Mark Kermode and Jenny Nelson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	9.30-11.30am	Workshop: Clare Clark	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	11am	Gillian McAllister and BA Paris	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	11am	Dr Tony Juniper	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	12.30pm	David Challen and Harriet Wistrich	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	12.30pm	James Holland	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	2pm	David Roche and Gillian McAllister	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	2pm	Nicholas Crane	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	3.30pm	Blake Morrison	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	3.30pm	Antony Beevor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	5pm	Nicci French	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	5pm	Arthur Snell	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date	Time	Event	Booked
Fri 8th May	5pm	Felicity Cloake	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	6.30pm	The Booklovers' Wine Club	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	6.30pm	Matthew Cobb	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	6.30pm	Adam Rutherford and Natalie Haynes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	6.30pm	Ardal O'Hanlon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	8pm	Larry Lamb	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 8th May	8pm	Natalie Haynes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	11am	Matthew Rice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	11.30am	Dame Vikki Heywood	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	1pm	Ellie Levenson, Jo Callaghan and Grace Murray	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	1pm	Oliver Sweet	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	1pm	Prue Leith	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	2.30pm	Becky Holmes and Kaf Okpattah	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	2.30pm	Mark Richards, Alex Preston and Zohra Nabi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	3pm	Catherine Clarke	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	4pm	Map Men	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	4pm	SJ Parris	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	4.30pm	Samira Ahmed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	5.30pm	Alex Preston and Piers Blofeld	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	6pm	Tom Service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	6.30pm	Sophie Raworth	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	7-9pm	Dungeons and Dragons Games Café (18+)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	7-9pm	Warhammer Games Café	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	7.45pm	Local Author Showcase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	8-9.15pm	Scummy Mummies	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	9.30am	Crossword Workshop: Clare Clark	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date	Time	Event	Booked
Sun 10th May	10am-12pm	Workshop: Maz Evans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	10am	Review of the Sun Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	11.30am	Stephen Rutt and Rose George	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	1pm	Jack Jewers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	1pm	Dr Sian Williams	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	2.30pm	Sian Hughes and Will Maclean	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	2.30pm	Jeremy Griffin and Ayala Panievsky	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	4pm	Jo Hamilton	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	4pm	Daniel Hahn	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	4pm	Dr Paul Goldsmith	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	5.30pm	Philippa Perry and Richard Coles	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	5.30pm	Gordon Buchanan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	7.15pm	Mark Gatiss	<input type="checkbox"/>

Events for Families

Sat 9th May	10am	Andrew Pettie	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	10am	Jane Riordan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	10.30am-12.30pm	Drop in and Do	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	11.30am	Zohra Nabi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	11.30am	Tall and Small Tales	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	11.30am	Laura Ellen Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	1.15pm	Comic Workshop: Laura Ellen Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	2.30pm	Comic Workshop: Laura Ellen Anderson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	2.30pm	Nathanael Lessore	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 9th May	4-5.30pm	Dungeons and Dragons Games Café 11-17yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 10th May	12pm	Rob Biddulph	<input type="checkbox"/>





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