

Autumn Festival



Stratford
**Literary
Festival**

29th October to 1st November

Celia Imrie
Greg James
Sir Jeremy Hunt
Victoria Hislop
Greg Wise
Sir Nicholas Hytner
Matt Baker
Alexei Sayle
Dame Margaret Hodge
Gus Casely-Hayford

Harriet Tyce
Mary Portas
John Boyne
Bonnie Garmus
Sir Max Hastings
Sarah Moss
Dr Xand van Tulleken
Jim Al-Khalili
Joanne Harris
Nick Heyward

Louise Doughty
Matthew Rice
Sir Jonathan Bate
Bella Mackie
Lucy Porter
Andrew Davies
Sir Robin Niblett
Nick Harkaway
David Larbi
AND MANY MORE



Fun for Families

Neill Cameron, Myles McLeod and Evgenia Golubeva, Zak Simmonds-Hurn,
Playbox, Manga Workshop, Dungeons & Dragons and Warhammer Cafés

RSC

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1 OCTOBER - 16 JANUARY 2027



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MIDDLEMARCH

PARTS 1&2

BY NINA RAINE
FROM THE NOVEL BY GEORGE ELIOT

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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Welcome to the Autumn Festival 2026

We bring you our biggest Autumn programme yet – four days crammed with household names, writers, thinkers, politicians, those who question politicians, children’s authors, workshops – and all rounded off with a celebration of the genius lyricist Stephen Sondheim. Be prepared to be educated and entertained, instructed and amazed and, as the National Year of Reading rounds off, we hope to inspire you with books you won’t want to miss.

Our thanks to our legion of volunteer stewards, our Friends and Benefactors, and our sponsors and supporters for enabling the Festival to thrive – and to you our audience for coming along. We can’t wait to have 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



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of the National Year
of Reading 2026

All events (unless stated otherwise) take place at the
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Bridge Foot, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6YR

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Stratford Literary Festival is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1164662

This programme is printed on Forest Stewardship Council accredited paper.

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

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



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

Thursday 29th October

WORKSHOP
Jarred McGinnis
Memory and Story
£32.07 | 10am-12pm



We all remember events in a different way depending on our circumstances when they happened. For example, your sibling might have a different recollection because they were older or younger. How does that change our perception and recall? The author of the award-winning novel *The Coward* invites you to bring a parent, another family member, a close friend or come alone to this unique workshop based on shared memories and experiences. He'll show you how to remake or write those funny, profound, chaotic stories that shape your lives together and you will leave with techniques for drawing out memories – whether you're writing a family history or piece of fiction, or just want to share how you remember the past.

Thursday 29th October

WORKSHOP
Alix Almond
Linocut
£48.11* | 10am-12.30pm

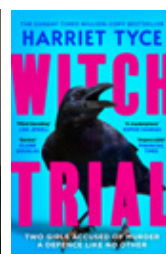


Join the popular artist and printmaker for our ever-popular linocut workshop! Bring along an idea that inspires you, and Alix will guide you through the process of designing, carving and handprinting your own single-colour image. Her own work is inspired by landscapes, wildlife and colour. She is a member of Warwickshire Open Studios and teaches her award-winning linocut workshops across Warwickshire and Coventry. Suitable for beginners and those with some experience of linocut, and all materials included. This event always sells out - so be quick if you want to join!

**Inc all materials*

Thursday 29th October

Harriet Tyce
Witch Trial
£16.04 | 12:30pm

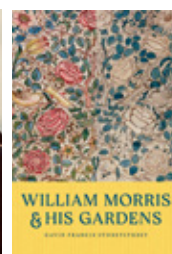
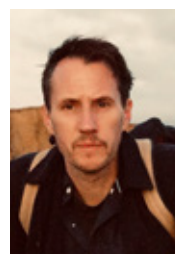


The million-copy bestselling novelist and star of *The Traitors* brings us her latest smash hit. When 18-year-old Christian Shaw is found dead in an Edinburgh park, the city is stunned. The shock deepens when Christian's best friends, Eliza Lawson and Isobel Smyth, are charged with her murder. As outrage swirls and the girls prepare to take the stand, rumours of bullying spiral into something darker: whispers of rituals, obsession, and a teenage pact gone wrong. Let the witch trial begin.

Talking to Rebecca Jones

Thursday 29th October

Gavin Stoneystreet
William Morris
and His Gardens
£16.04 | 1.30pm



William Morris's patterns have become part of our national consciousness, but less attention has been given to the gardens that inspired his designs and influenced his wider craft and writing. Explore the many Morris gardens and the central role they played in his life, patterns and work with the cultural botanist who will lead us through the gardens to bring Morris' patterns to life and reveal him as we've never seen him before.

Talking to Tim Hubbard.



Thursday 29th October

Victoria Hislop
The Wine-Dark Sea
£16.04 | 2pm



The much-loved author, whose books have sold over 10 million copies worldwide, brings us a riveting tale of families flung across continents amid the Greek civil war, and a determined mother who refuses to let war destroy hers. When Government soldiers come to Kalopetra, Fotini is nursing her newborn second child. She urges her daughter to hide with the older children as she and the other women are herded onto trucks. Will they ever meet again?

Talking to Julia Wheeler

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Thursday 29th October

WORKSHOP
Alix Almond
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Join the popular artist and printmaker for our ever-popular linocut workshop! Bring along an idea that inspires you, and Alix will guide you through the process of designing, carving and handprinting your own single-colour image. Her own work is inspired by landscapes, wildlife and colour. She is a member of Warwickshire Open Studios and teaches her award-winning linocut workshops across Warwickshire and Coventry. Suitable for beginners and those with some experience of linocut, and all materials included. This event always sells out - so be quick if you want to join!

**Inc all materials*

Thursday 29th October

Nigel Biggar
and Brian Harrison
This Sceptred Isle?
£13.90 | 2pm



It's become fashionable to have a certain narrative about Britain. In decline, both economically and on the world stage. Intolerant and increasingly right wing. But are we being too harsh on ourselves? What story should Britain tell about itself, a decade on from Brexit? Join theologian and ethicist Nigel Biggar, and historian Brian Harrison, as the pair look at the narrative Britain has about itself, how it reflects the reality, and how others see us.

Talking to John Jefferies



Thursday 29th October

Dennis Sewell
Turncoat - Roundhead
to Royalist
£13.90 | 3.30pm



Who was George Downing? He was one of the English Civil War's most cunning spies and Oliver Cromwell's head of military intelligence, before spectacularly defecting to the Royalist camp. He had a hand in founding New York, and built the street where our Prime Minister lives. But he has remained an elusive figure in history. Historian Dennis Sewell tells the full story of Downing's life for the first time, following the elusive man from Puritan New England, through battlefields, courts and parliaments, to the heart of Restoration London.

Talking to Tiffany Murray

Thursday 29th October

**Sir Max Hastings
Plunder**

£16.04 | 4.30pm

The Philip Ladbury Heath Memorial Talk



In the final weeks of the Second World War, the Western Front witnessed extraordinary scenes of heroism and horror. Some people distinguished themselves through courageous deeds, others through the basest crimes. From Montgomery's daring crossing of the Rhine to the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, the historian and former newspaper editor blends tales of 'big picture' events and the people – warlords, soldiers, prisoners, victims – who shaped and witnessed the last European act of history's most terrible war.

Talking to
John Jefferies



Thursday 29th October

**Amy Jeffs
Arthur: A New Life**

£13.90 | 5pm



The bestselling author of *Storyland* brings us her sparkling retelling of the story we all think we know: the legend of King Arthur. Tracing an epic story from Merlin's conception and the building of the round-table to the abduction of Guinevere and Arthur's ambitious quest for Empire, Jeffs brings these dark and beautiful tales to life from the original medieval and early modern texts, accompanied by her original linocut illustrations, providing incisive commentary into the legends and their role within the political culture of contemporary Europe.

Talking to Rebecca Jones

Thursday 29th October

**Baroness Minette Batters
Harvest**

£16.04 | 5pm



Join the first female president of the National Farmers' Union (headquartered just down the road at Stoneleigh) as she tells the story of how she fought for British farms through some of the country's most tumultuous years. Born and raised on a small farm, which she eventually ended up running, her love of farming has never wavered. Blending memoir and manifesto, her story is a powerful insight into the real lives of farmers, a love letter to British rural life – and a rallying cry to save it.

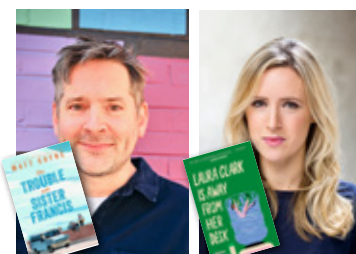
Talking to
Tim Hubbard



Thursday 29th October

**Matt Coyne
and Helen Russell
Book Taster Event –
Fabulous Fiction**

£13.90 | 6.30pm



Matt Coyne, author of the bestselling *Frank and Red*, is back with his latest – a hilarious story of the 60-year old, weary nun, who drives like a lunatic and smokes like a stacked chimney and runs the Blessed Assumption Boys Club. He's joined by the journalist and keynote speaker, Helen Russell, with her latest, *Laura Clark is Away from Her Desk* – a homage to fed-up women. Join them for a conversation about the joy of writing brilliant characters and joyful fiction.

Talking to
The Book Taster,
Jenna Smith



Thursday 29th October

**Jon Elledge
31 Inventions that
Built Our World**

£14.97 | 6.30pm



The author of *The Sunday Times* bestseller *A History of the World in 47 Borders* takes a journey through the ideas and technologies that made modernity possible. He'll explain how, for 10,000 years, we humans have been busy altering our environment and making 'progress', evolving seamlessly from hunter-gatherers to the urban sophisticates we see ourselves as today. From elevators to electric lighting, and parks to pedestrian crossings, he'll remind us of the innovations that we barely notice, but without which our world would fall apart. But how did these vital inventions actually come to be?

Talking to John Jefferies

Thursday 29th October

**Sir Nicholas Hytner
A Life in Stages**

£21.38 | 6.30pm



The multi-award-winning theatre and film director (and former director of the National Theatre) joins us to discuss his storied career and the art and alchemy of making theatre. From stewarding smash hits like *The History Boys*, *The Madness of King George*, *The Lady in the Van* and *War Horse*, to opening the doors of the National to a wider audience than ever before, and changing the public's perception of what theatre is for, few people have influenced the British stage as much as Hytner.

Talking to RSC Co-Artistic Director
Tamara Harvey

This event is supported by Festival
Friends and Benefactors

Thursday 29th October

**John Sweeney
and Daniel Trilling
Turning Right**

£13.90 | 8pm



Over recent years right-wing parties and organisations have seen increased support both here and in Europe. Some have moderate policies, some more extreme, but the direction of travel is irrefutable. What has caused this shift? And are we actually less liberal than we would like to believe? Or are we being fed an unsubstantiated narrative – and if so, by whom? John Sweeney is an investigative journalist whose latest book looks at the appeal and the life of Nigel Farage. Daniel Trilling is a specialist in European politics and the rise of the far right.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Thursday 29th October

**Celia Imrie
The Elegant Hustler:
Adventures from a
Life on the Move**

£21.38 | 8pm



Join the stage and screen actress, official national treasure and windy *Celebrity Traitors* superstar as she journeys back in time and shares the most memorable adventures of her life, riding ocean waves and iconic railways around the world. From tours across Australia with Glenda Jackson to rolling through America's sweeping plains on Amtrak, and unforgettable trips on India's legendary trains - she'll share memories of pure escapism, drama and fun.

Talking to Fidelis Morgan



Friday 30th October

WORKSHOP
Layla Robinson
Make a Dried Flower Wreath
£64.14* | 9.30-11.30am



Learn how to create a vibrant and everlasting dried flower wreath with the floral artist. Let your creativity run wild as she teaches you how to cut and preserve flowers while maintaining their bright colours, and shows you how to design and create your own stunning, sustainable wreath.

**Inc all materials*



Friday 30th October

Sarah Moss
The Winter Guest
£13.90 | 11am



The Sunday Times bestselling author of *Ripeness*, *Summerwater* and *Ghost Wall* brings us her propulsive new book. On Christmas Eve, Janice and Gerry meet for the first time in a hotel on the west coast of Ireland. They are strangers to one another, but they each have a story to tell, a confession to make. As a snowstorm rages outside, the night begins to take an unexpected turn, and the strangers' conversation will have consequences far beyond their candlelit table.

Talking to Olivia Chapman

Friday 30th October

Dr Xand van Tulleken
Make Me Well
£16.04 | 12pm



There has never been a more confusing time to try to be healthy. The writer, broadcaster (with his twin brother) and public health expert brings us his investigation into the Wild West of the wellness industry. From the supplement industry to wearable technology, the market is flooded with products and services claiming to improve 'wellness' rather than curing or preventing specific diseases. But do any of them actually help us take better care of ourselves?

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Friday 30th October

D.J. Taylor
Tolkien: The King Under the Mountain
£13.90 | 12.30pm



We all know the worlds J.R.R. Tolkien created. Since his death in 1973, his major works – *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Silmarillion* – have sold over half a billion copies and been adapted into wildly successful films. But the man who made Middle Earth has remained an enigma – a deeply conservative Oxford don and Roman Catholic who jealously guarded his private life from an intrusive media. The novelist and biographer brings us his unravelling of Tolkien's life and work.

Talking to Tiffany Murray



Friday 30th October

WORKSHOP
Emelia Hutchinson
An Introduction to Playwriting
£32.07 | 1.30-3pm



Have you always wanted to write a play but never known where to start? This practical workshop is designed for writers of all levels who are new to the craft. Through a mix of discussion and practical exercises, you'll explore the fundamentals of playwriting including crafting dialogue, character, action and structure. Emelia has worked as a director, dramaturg and creative facilitator for venues and companies across the UK, including, The Watermill Theatre, Oxford Playhouse and The North Wall Arts Centre. Age 16+

Friday 30th October

Jim Al-Khalili
On Time
£16.04 | 2pm

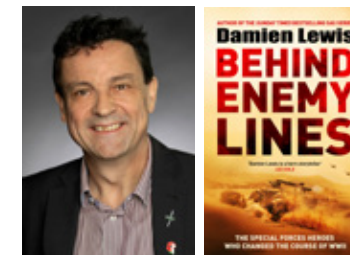


Does time have a beginning and end? Can it be reversed? Is it even real? While we have come a long way towards deciphering the laws of the universe, many physicists still regard time as one of the greatest unsolved mysteries. Join the quantum physicist, BBC *The Life Scientific* broadcaster and *New York Times* bestselling author for answers to all of the above and more, as he brings us his fresh insights into the meaning and nature of time.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Friday 30th October

Damien Lewis
SAS: Behind Enemy Lines
£16.04 | 2pm



The Top 10 bestselling author and historian uncovers the story of a real-life special forces hero who helped change the course of WWII. Serving in the Long Range Desert Group patrol – the forerunner to the SAS – Archie Gibson spearheaded a string of daring and audacious missions. Miraculously, he survived the war, and went on to write his own account of his service, a tale of duty, true grit and brotherhood. While this was never meant to see the light of day, Archie's family decided his story had to be told. Now, Lewis has brought his story to life for the first time.

Friday 30th October

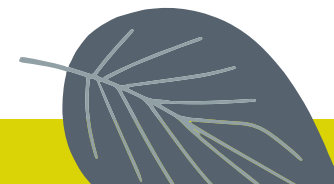
Sophie Shorland
All the Queen's Men
£13.90 | 3.30pm



After ascending to the throne, the most eligible woman in Europe was flooded with proposals from princes, archdukes and kings. But she kept them all waiting for five decades, playing each suitor off against the other for her own ends. The historian, and author of *The Lost Queen* and *Queen Catherine's Court*, discusses how Elizabeth turned the competition for her hand into foreign policy – using courtship as diplomacy, flirtation as statecraft, and her perpetually single status as the key to England's survival in the tangled web of European politics.

Talking to Deirdre Shields

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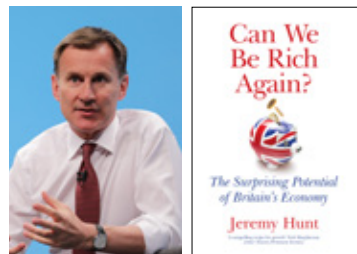
Friday 30 th October	Friday 30 th October	Friday 30 th October	Friday 30 th October
Rory MacLean Geography of Heaven £13.90 3.30pm When Rory MacLean's wife died, he couldn't imagine living without her. So he set out to find out where she'd gone. He spent five years travelling the world, researching notions of the afterlife, and the neuroscience of grief, and seeking out places where the veil is thin. Join him as he discusses a travelogue like no other, and his journey from watching gods walk on fire in Kerala to laying his hand on the stepping stone to another world at Jerusalem's Temple Mount. What does heaven mean and why do we seek it? Talking to Tiffany Murray	Teresa Krasny Claude Monet: A Life in Letters £16.04 4pm Claude Monet's letters offer an unmatched glimpse into the life of the hugely influential artist, revealing his passions, anxieties and frank opinions, and expanding our view of his working life and practice. The editor of the first major English language collection of Monet's letters discusses his life and legacy. She will be joined by the leading actor David Troughton*, who will read from the letters, bringing the 'father of impressionism' to life in Monet's own words. Talking to Tim Hubbard (*subject to availability)	Alycia Pirmohamed Shorelines: Memory, Migration and the Selves We Become £13.90 5pm As a young Muslim woman, the Canadian poet grew up with her body as racialised and her faith as seemingly dangerous. Her affinity to the natural world conflicted with feelings that she was unwelcome in these landscapes. By contrast, the stories of her parents' homeland felt painfully distant. She examines the idea of homeland and the mythmaking it demands, asking what it means to carry hidden histories across borders and generations and how place and identity intertwine. Alycia teaches Creative Writing at the University of Cambridge. <i>Shorelines</i> won the Nan Shepherd Prize. Talking to Julia Wheeler	Joanne Harris Sleepers in the Snow £16.04 5pm The bestselling author of <i>Chocolat</i> brings us her chilling new ghost story. Out on the moor, in the snow, a house stands beneath a pylon, full of memories and old things. The house has a new occupant, just through a bitter divorce and ready for a fresh start. But as the nights start to draw in and the weather takes a turn, so does the house. Joanne Harris is the author of several acclaimed novels and novellas and was the Chair of the Society of Authors. Talking to Tiffany Murray

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Friday 30th October

Sir Jeremy Hunt
Can We Be Rich Again?

£21.65 | 6pm



Despite a revolving door of PMs and a lot invested in the current incumbent, the former Chancellor believes Britain's economy is stuck. A succession of economic shocks have led to low growth, stagnant living standards and divided politics. But, he believes Britain still has a great deal going for it and the solutions to our economic malaise are in plain sight and work elsewhere. He'll set out his credible case for optimism about the future of Britain's economy, and a roadmap for how we can get there.

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Friday 30th October

Warhammer Games Café

£10.69 | 6.30-8.30pm



Throw some dice or try your hand at 'the hobby' as our popular Warhammer workshop returns! Join us for a chance to build, paint and play with Warhammer figures with guidance from local tabletop gaming group Scribes of War. 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 Warhammer. Starter model kits and paints will be provided by Games Workshop, the company behind Warhammer, and attendees are also welcome to bring their own models. Age 12+

Friday 30th October

George E Osborn
Power Play – The Political Influence on Gaming

£13.90 | 6.30pm



Video games are the world's largest entertainment medium. They connect billions of people across the globe, creating digital third spaces where people share ideas and create identities. But they are also being used by autocrats, populists and violent extremists to influence the real world around us. The games industry expert lifts the lid on this new political frontier, and what democracies must do to protect and harness the immense power of play before the battle for digital influence is lost for good.

Talking to Jordan Erica Webber

Friday 30th October

Ian Buxton
Whiskies Galore – A Tour of Scotland's Island Distilleries

£18.17* | 7.30pm



Drinkers the world over are entranced by the heritage and mystique of Scotland's island whiskies, not to mention their highly distinctive flavours – often imitated, but seldom bettered. Join the author of the bestselling *101 Whiskies to Try Before You Die* as he discusses this new, updated edition of his boozy, island-hopping journey in search of the most magical of drams.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

**Inc a dram of whisky and a special glass to take home*



Friday 30th October

Marina Litvinenko
A Life in Fragments

£16.04 | 8pm

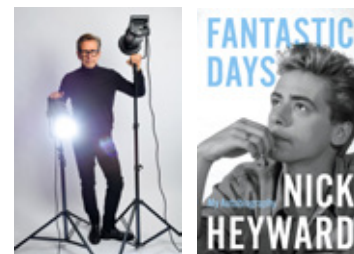


Alexander Litvinenko died in 2006 in a poisoning that caused shockwaves around the world. His murder left his widow seeking justice for her husband, but she was obstructed every step of the way, and it wasn't until 2016 that a public inquiry finally confirmed it had been a 'state sponsored murder'. But how did it come to this? And why are the lessons he provided still important now, 20 years on? His widow explains exactly why, shares her inspirational personal story behind the tragedy and explains the importance of the continued fight to reveal the crimes of Putin's regime.

Friday 30th October

Nick Heyward
Fantastic Days: My Story

£16.04 | 8pm



In 1981, Nick Heyward and school friends Graham Jones and Les Nemes signed their band Haircut One Hundred to Arista records. Within a short period, they had scored four Top 10 singles, a No.2 platinum album and countless magazine covers for Heyward who had become a pin-up and star. Forty-four years later, they are about to release their follow-up album. Nick will tell a story about childhood dreams and jealousy, about international fame and being a commercial outcast, about depression and enlightenment, and about the longest overdue comeback in pop music history.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Saturday 31st October

WORKSHOP
Louise Doughty
How to Write About Your Family

£32.07 | 10.30-12.30pm



Writing a memoir about your family is a complicated business – what are you allowed to write? How do you tell your story without upsetting your loved ones (or not-loved ones...)? Where do you start? This practical workshop comes from the bestselling novelist who has recently turned her storytelling skills upon her own relatives. She will take you through the pleasures and pitfalls of memoir, how to think about narrative structure and the balance between anecdote and authenticity. Come with a notepad and pen for lots of advice and some writing exercises, along with an opportunity for Q&A.

Saturday 31st October

Matt Baker
My Dogs & Me

£18.17 | 11am



From training young sheepdogs as a boy on the Dales to famous Meg on *Blue Peter*, the life of the *Countryfile* and former *The One Show* presenter has always been shared with dogs. Join the bona fide national treasure as he discusses his career and the canine companions who have accompanied him through every chapter of his life, and what they have taught him about friendship and family.

Talking to Caroline Hutton

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Saturday 31st October

Clare Clark
and Roisin Maguire
Novels and Landscape

£16.04 | 1pm



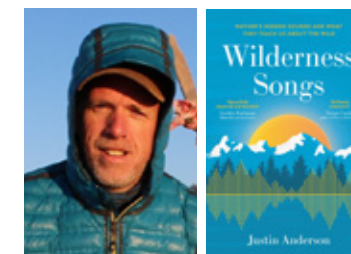
Two novelists bring us books exploring rural communities under threat, and explore how setting can be the main character in a piece of fiction. Clare Clark's *Adder Stone* is inspired by the true story of the Welsh village flooded in 1963 to create a reservoir for Liverpool, and explores who we are when we lose the places that define us. In *Snow Birds* (Roisin Maguire), a longtime resident of an Irish village reluctantly bands together with visiting city dwellers when corporate interests threaten a nearby island colony of rare birds.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Saturday 31st October

Justin Anderson
Wilderness Songs: Nature's
Hidden Sounds

£16.04 | 1pm



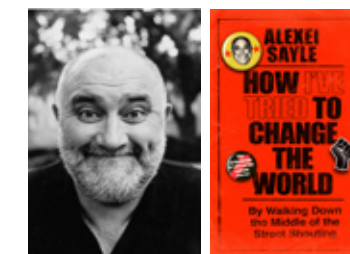
The wildlife documentary maker (BBC Planet Earth series, National Geographic, Discovery Channel) discusses his quest to track down the most unusual and impressive natural sounds on the planet. From watching blue whales who can converse across oceans to hearing the elusive whistling of the Northern Lights, Justin has travelled the world to learn about the secrets and complexities of these natural soundscapes – and will even play us some of the sounds he recorded along the way.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Saturday 31st October

Alexei Sayle
How I've Tried to Change
the World

£18.17 | 1pm



Born in working-class Liverpool in 1952 to devoted members of the British Communist Party, Sayle has spent a lifetime walking down the middle of the street shouting. Join the punk comedian and Radio 4 stalwart as he brings us his memoir of seven decades of life on the left. A social history told through marches and rallies from the first miners' strike in 1974 to protests against the 2003 invasion of Iraq, he traces the enduring struggle for a better, fairer world.

Talking to
Fiona Lindsay

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Saturday 31st October

Matthew Rice
A Year in the Garden

£16.04 | 2.30pm



The artist and designer behind some of Emma Bridgewater's instantly-recognisable designs brings us his new guide to gardening and enjoying nature throughout the year. Centred around a year's worth of gardening at his Cotswolds home, Ham Court, Rice documents the passing of the seasons, via the daily work of gardening, packed with practical advice, drawings and recipes, as well as personal anecdotes.

Talking to Caroline Hutton

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

Saturday 31st October

**Caroline Sanderson
and Louise Doughty**
**My Family and Other
Memories**
£14.97 | 2.30pm



How do we hold on to our loved ones after they are gone? *The Bookseller* editor Caroline Sanderson and novelist Louise Doughty discuss grief, love, and telling family stories through memoir. Sanderson's *Listen with Father* recounts her journey reconnecting after his death with the classical music her father loved. In *On This Spot Fell One Tear of Love*, Doughty tells her parents' love story in reverse, beginning at the end of their lives and tracing it back 50 years to the secret origin of their love affair.

Talking to Olivia Chapman

Saturday 31st October

Dame Margaret Hodge
Battle Axe: A Memoir
£18.17 | 2.30pm



Born in Alexandria in 1944 to Jewish parents from Germany and Austria, the politician and life peer arrived in England aged four – stateless, foreign, and an outsider. She'll describe a lifetime of battling back in a memoir of 50 years as an elected representative, from councillor to council leader, MP to minister. Called a champagne socialist, a national treasure, a loony leftie, a radical reformer, a traitor and, yes, a battle axe, she'll talk about how she hasn't much minded and explain what has always mattered more.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Saturday 31st October

Gus Casely-Hayford
Objects & Us
£14.97 | 3pm



The curator and the Director of new V&A East takes us on a journey through objects both commonplace and exceptional from all corners of the world, as he discusses what they reveal about our histories, needs and desires, and explains how every culture in history has imbued certain objects with special value, and there is evidence even our pre-human ancestors were collectors. Objects, then, tell important stories - about what we need, and about who we really are.

Talking to Deirdre Shields

Saturday 31st October

Bella Mackie
Claws Out!
£14.97 | 4pm



The Sunday Times bestselling writer (*How to Kill Your Family*) brings us her new, deliciously wicked thriller. Social climber Diana Leyland is determined to snag a fourth rich husband, setting her sights on David Ferrand and his five-storey Hampstead townhouse and liberal elite social circle. But there's a snag: David's daughter Cat is digging into her past, and has discovered that all Diana's former husbands are six feet under. To lose one husband is unlucky. To lose two is careless. But three?

Talking to Clare Clark

Saturday 31st October

Sir Jonathan Bate
**The Garden – Our 4,000-
Year Quest for Paradise**
£16.04 | 4.30pm



The garden has always been far more than a place to grow things. It is where we work out our relationship with the natural world, and our longings for beauty and order. Join the Shakespeare scholar, former Oxford college Provost, literary critic and cultural historian as he traces the history of the garden from Eden to Versailles, from Capability Brown to New York's High Line. Drawing on poetry, painting, philosophy, mythology and religion, he'll show us how the garden has inspired our greatest art and consoled us in our darkest hours.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Saturday 31st October

Jeannette Nelson
Finding a Voice
£13.90 | 5pm



The leading voice coach joins us for a discussion about her fascinating career and the power of dialogue. Across 25 years at the National Theatre (including a decade as Head of Voice) and her current role as the Royal Shakespeare Company's resident voice coach, Jeannette has worked with some of the greatest actors of our time, including Al Pacino, Juliette Binoche, and Benedict Cumberbatch. How does she weave her vocal magic?

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

Saturday 31st October

David Larbi
Frequently Happy
£13.90 | 5.30pm



The TikTok poetry sensation brings us his bestselling guide to finding the joy – no matter how big or small – in every moment. In the middle of the stresses of daily life, it's easy to miss the opportunities we have for delight. Larbi will remind us that it's possible to find happiness in every season of life, encouraging us to build a deeper habit of noticing and appreciating the simple and profound pleasures all around us.

Talking to Olivia Chapman

Saturday 31st October

Lucy Porter
**Middle-Aged Women
Get Sh*t Done**
£16.04 | 6pm



We all know that middle-aged women are the glue that binds society together. They are invincible, all-powerful, and you mess with them at your peril. But, says the stand-up comedian and Radio 4 regular, they are also knackered and would like a break. Join her as she sets out her irreverent call to arms: 'Women, put down your to-do lists and let someone else take on all the crap for a bit'.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

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Saturday 31st October

The Booklovers' Wine Tasting
Matching Wine to Books about Food
£39.55* | 6.30-8pm



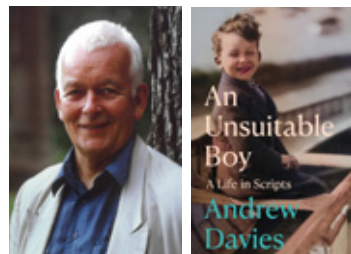
A red Burgundy with anything by Julia Child? A crisp white paired with Anthony Bourdain? Our ever-popular wine and book club is back with a twist. Be sure to book early for a night of fantastic wines chosen by James Richards of Vin Neuf, matched with a series of brilliant readings by Lynn Taylor from books about food. Cheers! Over 18s only.

**Inc all tasting wines*



Saturday 31st October

Andrew Davies
An Unsuitable Boy:
A Life in Scripts
£18.17 | 6.30pm

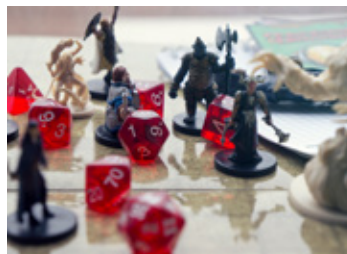


The man behind our favourite period dramas – from *Pride and Prejudice* to *Bleak House* – has finally turned his pen on the most challenging subject of all: himself. The writer and Warwickshire resident discusses his own story, which is every bit as compelling and chaotic as the characters he's brought to life. From his complicated bond with his mother and the family dynamics that still influence his writing, to the memory of his wife Diana and their long, happy marriage that was complicated by affairs on both sides, nothing is off the table.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

Saturday 31st October

Dungeons & Dragons Games Café
£10.69 | 7-9pm

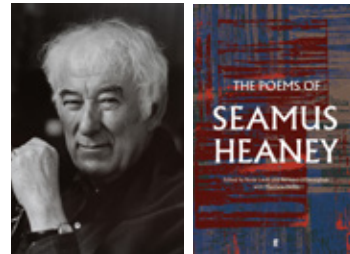


Bring your friends into a world of magic, mayhem and mystery this Halloween with our talented team of Dungeon Masters. Whether you're a complete newbie to Dungeons & Dragons or an experienced player, borrow some dice and a ready-made character from us and get stuck in! This event is all about finding the fun in telling a story together.

Age 18+

Saturday 31st October

Catherine Heaney and Bernard O'Donoghue
My Father, Seamus Heaney
£14.97 | 7pm



Join us to celebrate the life and legacy of the poet Seamus Heaney as a landmark new collection of his poems is published, spanning all 12 of the late Nobel Laureate's poetry collections plus previously unpublished works. Catherine Heaney, who manages his estate, will discuss her father's life and work, and the poet and collection's editor, Bernard O'Donoghue, will share the challenge of bringing all his poetry together for the first time.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

SPONSORED BY



Saturday 31st October

Peter Ormerod and Alexander Larman
David Bowie – Starman
£14.97 | 7.30pm



Bowie, arguably one of the biggest influences on music in the 20th century, died 10 years ago this year. Always changing and developing, his vision was unique. Two biographers of this music icon discuss his life and work. Peter Ormerod brings us the story of how Bowie's ceaseless search for meaning through religions helped give his songs the timelessness and depth. Alex Larman explores the second half of his career from commercial failure to re-establishing himself as the powerhouse that has now made him a musical legend.

Talking to Pete Selby

Saturday 31st October

Greg James
All the Best for the Future
£23.52 | 8pm



A warmhearted love letter to the lost art of having fun, the BBC Radio 1 Breakfast Show host and Radio 4 *Rewinder* presenter explores the ways he thought his life would turn out and what actually happened – and encourages everyone not to let go of their inner child. He'll share the things that wind him up, make him sad, make him laugh and the little passions and interests that he relies on to get him through the day – whether it was a good one or a bad one.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Sunday 1st November

WORKSHOP Clare Clark
Cracking the Cryptic Crossword
£13.90 | 9.30am



Can you never quite crack the cryptic crossword? Do the clues leave you bemused and befuddled? If so, help is at hand! Our crossword whiz (who also happens to be our interviewer, a novelist, and an all-round smart cookie) will teach you how to decode even the most head-scratching of clues, arming you with a puzzle-solving toolkit that will have you storming through it in no time. Crosswords will be supplied. Tea and coffee will be available to purchase.

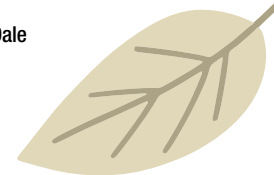
Sunday 1st November

Sunday Newspaper Review
with Stephen Sackur, Sir Robin Niblett and Lucy Porter
£14.97 | 10am



Times Radio's Stephen Sackur, political scientist Sir Robin Niblett and comedian and Radio 4 favourite Lucy Porter join us to leaf through the Sunday papers. From the big, breaking national stories of the day to local interest in our very own *Stratford Herald*, our panel will discuss who is making headlines and what is going on in the world. Tea and coffee will be available to purchase.

Talking to LBC presenter Iain Dale



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FOR ALL OUR EVENTS SCAN

Sunday 1st November

Dr Louise Newson
The Power of Hormones
£13.90 | 10.30am

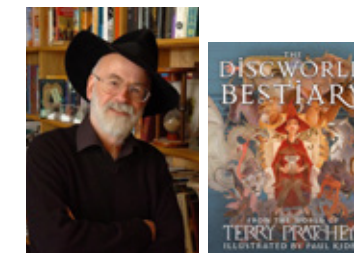


For decades, three vital hormones in the female body – progesterone, oestrogen and testosterone – have been misunderstood. Their critical roles in improving the function of women's brains, bones and hearts have been ignored, normalising women's suffering for generations. Join the leading doctor and women's hormone specialist (and Stratfordian) for a discussion about the uncomfortable truth behind medicine's blindness and complacency, as she dismantles menopause myths and gives women the knowledge that they should have about their bodies.

Talking to Olivia Chapman

Sunday 1st November

Rob Wilkins
The Discworld Bestiary
£13.90 | 11.30am



Step inside the wondrous mind of Terry Pratchett at this event celebrating a new exhaustive illustrated guide to the creatures and critters of *Discworld*. Rob Wilkins, director of the Pratchett Estate, will guide you through the wisdom from the great minds of the Disc – and interjections from some of its more unconventional thinkers.

Talking to John Jefferies



Sunday 1st November

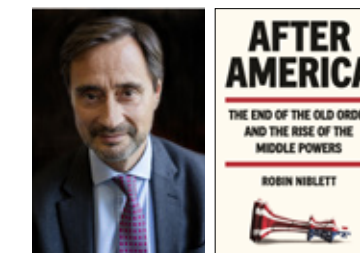
My One and Only
Which Novel Will Be
Left on the Shelf?
Free | 12pm



Imagine a law is passed that says you can only have ONE novel on your bookshelf? In the lead-up to the Festival, we'll have been asking our audiences, Friends and Benefactors, authors and publishers what their One and Only would be and now the results will have come in... Join the bestselling, award-winning author John Boyne and the Professor of Shakespeare Studies at the University of Oxford Emma Smith, with Tim Hubbard as they weigh up the pros and cons of the Top 5 choices in our poll, before we reveal the No.1, which will be ceremonially placed on our Bookshelf for One.

Sunday 1st November

Sir Robin Niblett
After America
£16.04 | 1pm



When Donald Trump returned to the White House, he upended the post-1945 Pax Americana which had underwritten 80 years of global stability and opportunity. The global order seems to be returning to an imperial age, dominated by the USA, Russia and China. The political scientist and former Director of Chatham House analyses this new, post-America order, and what this means for the future of geopolitics.

Talking to Helen Bagnall



Sunday 1st November

Stephen Sackur
Hard Truth – Investigations
that Shook the World

£14.97 | 1pm



Is it enough to bear witness and move on? What does impartiality mean when the truth itself is drowning in a sea of disinformation and lies? The Times Radio host and former BBC *HARDtalk* presenter discusses the need for fearless, investigative and truth-telling journalism in a world turned toxic by disinformation, and how he has re-examined the assumptions underpinning the journalism he grew up with.

Talking to
Olivia Chapman



Sunday 1st November

Kit Yates
You Don't Know What
You're Missing

£13.90 | 2pm



We all like to think we're making decisions based on reality, but in fact we are almost always working from incomplete information. Join the popular mathematician for an explanation of the blind spots and gaps in our knowledge, and how to make sense of the world with an incomplete picture. From avoiding common pitfalls to filling in gaps without guessing, he will show you how to turn your misses into hits.

Talking to Clare Clark

Sunday 1st November

Iain Dale
Have I Said Too Much?

£13.90 | 2.30pm



The veteran LBC broadcaster and political commentator has led a life full of incident and success, but has also had some very public failures. From nearly throwing up on Margaret Thatcher to accidentally calling the Archbishop of Canterbury something less than pious on live radio, he will discuss his unfiltered new memoir. Packed with the raw candour that has earned him 750,000 listeners a week, he will reflect on coming out aged 40, his encounters with a dozen prime ministers, and coming to terms with his thwarted political ambitions.

Talking to Professor Emma Smith

Sunday 1st November

Simon Garfield
The Pen – A Human History

£13.90 | 2.30pm



The pen is our oldest tangible connection between an individual mind and the world at large, but the pen's own story is just as eventful as anything it has written. The prolific and acclaimed writer on everything from typefaces to maps tells the story of how the simplest tool has shaped our lives, going on a journey from a reed on the Nile to the home of Montblanc and Bic, via the desks of everyone from Jane Austen to Sigmund Freud.

Talking to
Deirdre Shields

Sunday 1st November

James Aldred
A Wagon in the Woods

£14.97 | 2.30pm



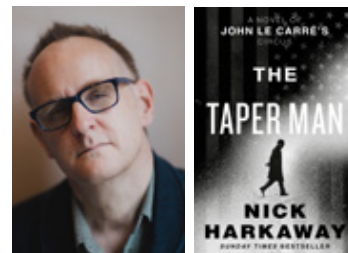
When the Emmy-winning wildlife filmmaker and author of *Goshawk Summer* (winner of the 2022 Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing) tracked down an old horse-drawn wagon he had played in as a child, it transported him back to a magical summer in the New Forest 40 years ago, awakening in him a desire to relive this magic with his own young family. Hear him talk about delving into the region's natural history and storied past as he painstakingly restored the wagon, reconnecting with the wild place that meant so much to him as a child.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

Sunday 1st November

Nick Harkaway
The Taper Man

£14.97 | 3.30pm



The bestselling author returns to the shadow world of his father, John le Carré, for a new George Smiley adventure. 1965. The world is on a knife-edge, and the Cold War is cooler than ever. British intelligence has one formidable clandestine asset in Moscow: a senior officer in the Red Army privy to deep Soviet secrets. But when a British agent is shot in Helsinki, Smiley uncovers a counter-intelligence operation putting Britain's star source in jeopardy.

Talking to Stephen Sackur

Sunday 1st November

Mary Portas
I Shop, Therefore I Am

£16.04 | 4pm



In the 1990s, Harvey Nichols was the most exciting shop in London. Head behind the shop window with the Queen of Shops, as she brings us her memoir of revitalising the moribund department store, at the time more likely to be associated with dowagers than daring fashion designers. By the end of the decade, 'Harvey Nicks' was renowned for its outrageous, traffic-stopping window displays, and had become an era-defining fashion destination. She'll describe how she pulled it off, the lessons she learned along the way and what she thinks the future looks like for the high street.

Talking to
Tim Hubbard



Sunday 1st November

**Gail Crowther
and Paul de Zulueta**
Private Lives – Marilyn Monroe
and Daphne du Maurier
£14.97 | 4pm



Two biographers delve into the intricacies and nuances of the personal lives of two very different, very well-known women – and discuss how what goes on behind the scenes is not always what one would expect. Gail Crowther investigates the literary life of Marilyn Monroe. Often dismissed as one of the 'ditsy blondes', the star was an active and engaged reader who socialised with many writers. Paul de Zulueta charts the unconventional lives of Daphne du Maurier, his grandmother and her aristocratic ancestors, tracing how this unconventional and turbulent legacy shaped her writing.

Talking to Clare Clark



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Sunday 1st November

John Boyne
The Weight of Angels
 £14.97 | 4pm



Join the internationally bestselling author of *The Heart's Invisible Furies* as he imagines an alternative future for Oscar Wilde. What if, instead of suing the Marquess of Queensberry for libel when faced with a homophobic insult, he had simply ignored it? Boyne will discuss his imagined future for the feted playwright, in which he got to witness the momentous and cataclysmic events of the early 20th century, rather than dying in penury in Paris at the age of 46.

Talking to Professor Emma Smith

Sunday 1st November

Greg Wise
Grief Talking
 £18.17 | 5.30pm



The acclaimed actor and author explores how we can navigate the chaotic, messy journey of bereavement. From the sudden death of a close friend in his twenties to the emotional aftermath of his sister's death from cancer and the pain of infertility, Wise will discuss the many types of loss and how it can shape us, and how he thinks we should reconsider our modern, suppressive culture of mourning in favour of something kinder and more open.

Talking to Helen Bagnall

Sunday 1st November

Bonnie Garmus
Peck & Peck
 £16.04 | 5.30pm

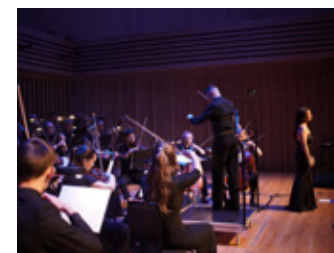


The author of the wildly successful *Lessons in Chemistry* (you saw her here first!) brings us her latest novel, the tale of a young man whose life is turned upside down when he is hired by the most prestigious poetry journal in the world. New York City, 1982. Batter Gray is a recent graduate with the skill no employer is looking for – an 'ear' for poetry. Then Batter gets his dream job propelling him into the literary fast lane. But all is not well at the highly dysfunctional Peck & Peck.

Talking to Olivia Chapman

Sunday 1st November

English Musical Theatre Orchestra
Simply Sondheim
 £26.73 | 7.30-9.30pm



The composer and lyricist Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021) is widely regarded as one of the most important figures in 20th century theatre, credited with reinventing the American musical, for which he received numerous accolades including eight Grammys and the Pulitzer Prize. We celebrate his legacy with an evening of his music, with songs from his best known creations including *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, and of course *Sunday in the Park with George*. The performance is two 45-minute halves with a short interval.

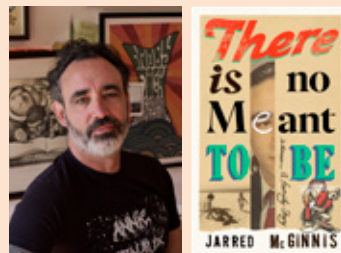


Workshops



Thursday 29th October

WORKSHOP
Jarred McGinnis
Memory and Story
£32.07 | 10am-12pm



We all remember events in a different way depending on our circumstances when they happened. For example, your sibling might have a different recollection because they were older or younger. How does that change our perception and recall? The author of the award-winning novel *The Coward* invites you to bring a parent, another family member, a close friend or come alone to this unique workshop based on shared memories and experiences. He'll show you how to remake or write those funny, profound, chaotic stories that shape your lives together and you will leave with techniques for drawing out memories – whether you're writing a family history or piece of fiction, or just want to share how you remember the past.

Thursday 29th October

WORKSHOP
Alix Almond
Linocut
£48.11* | 10am-12.30pm



Join the popular artist and printmaker for our ever-popular linocut workshop! Bring along an idea that inspires you, and Alix will guide you through the process of designing, carving and handprinting your own single-colour image. Her own work is inspired by landscapes, wildlife and colour. She is a member of Warwickshire Open Studios and teaches her award-winning linocut workshops across Warwickshire and Coventry. Suitable for beginners and those with some experience of linocut, and all materials included. This event always sells out - so be quick if you want to join!

**Inc all materials*

Thursday 29th October

WORKSHOP
Alix Almond
Linocut
£48.11* | 2pm



Join the popular artist and printmaker for our ever-popular linocut workshop! Bring along an idea that inspires you, and Alix will guide you through the process of designing, carving and handprinting your own single-colour image. Her own work is inspired by landscapes, wildlife and colour. She is a member of Warwickshire Open Studios and teaches her award-winning linocut workshops across Warwickshire and Coventry. Suitable for beginners and those with some experience of linocut, and all materials included. This event always sells out - so be quick if you want to join!

**Inc all materials*

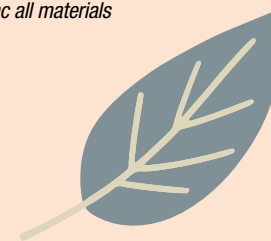
Friday 30th October

WORKSHOP
Layla Robinson
Make a Dried Flower Wreath
£64.14* | 9.30-11.30am



Learn how to create a vibrant and everlasting dried flower wreath with the floral artist. Let your creativity run wild as she teaches you how to cut and preserve flowers while maintaining their bright colours, and shows you how to design and create your own stunning, sustainable wreath.

**Inc all materials*



Friday 30th October

WORKSHOP
Emelia Hutchinson
An Introduction to Playwriting
£32.07 | 1.30-3pm



Have you always wanted to write a play but never known where to start? This practical workshop is designed for writers of all levels who are new to the craft. Through a mix of discussion and practical exercises, you'll explore the fundamentals of playwriting including crafting dialogue, character, action and structure. Emelia has worked as a director, dramaturg and creative facilitator for venues and companies across the UK, including The Watermill Theatre, Oxford Playhouse and The North Wall Arts Centre.

Ages 16+

Saturday 31st October

WORKSHOP
Louise Doughty
How to Write About Your Family
£32.07 | 10.30-12.30pm



Writing a memoir about your family is a complicated business – what are you allowed to write? How do you tell your story without upsetting your loved ones (or not-loved ones...)? Where do you start? This practical workshop comes from the bestselling novelist who has recently turned her storytelling skills upon her own relatives. She will take you through the pleasures and pitfalls of memoir, how to think about narrative structure and the balance between anecdote and authenticity. Come with a notepad and pen for lots of advice and some writing exercises, along with an opportunity for Q&A.

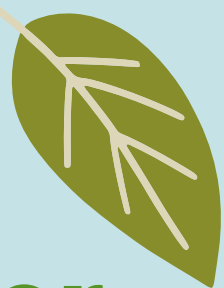
Sunday 1st November

WORKSHOP
Clare Clark
Cracking the Cryptic Crossword
£13.90 | 9.30am



Can you never quite crack the cryptic crossword? Do the clues leave you bemused and befuddled? If so, help is at hand! Our crossword whiz (who also happens to be our interviewer, a novelist, and an all-round smart cookie) will teach you how to decode even the most head-scratching of clues, arming you with a puzzle-solving toolkit that will have you storming through it in no time. Crosswords will be supplied. Tea and coffee will be available to purchase.

Numbers are limited so book early!



Events for Families



Friday 30th October

Warhammer Games Café
£10.69 | 6.30-8.30pm | Age 12+



Throw some dice or try your hand at 'the hobby' as our popular Warhammer workshop returns! Join us for a chance to build, paint and play with Warhammer figures with guidance from local tabletop gaming group Scribes of War. 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 Warhammer. Starter model kits and paints will be provided by Games Workshop, the company behind Warhammer, and attendees are also welcome to bring their own models.

Adults GO FREE unless otherwise stated!

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 31st October

Nicola Baker Saving Snowflake
£9.62 | 10-11am | Age 8+



how her book ideas come from her real life on the farm!

Journey to Whistledown Farm for a heart-warming adventure with the star of *Our Farm on the Dales*. Enjoy a snippet of this snowy tale and get inspiration for your own stories as Nicola shares

Saturday 31st October

Myles McLeod and Evgenia Golubeva Fairytale Fiasco
£9.62 | 10-11am | Age 5+



Join author-illustrator Evgenia Golubeva and author Myles McLeod, the duo behind the *Fairytale Fiasco* books, for a lively hour of stories turned upside down. Listen to a reading from the book, participate in a draw-along, and create a brand-new comic version of a famous fairytale! Bring your imagination and your best plot twists.



Saturday 31st October

Facepainting
FREE | 10.30-11.30am



FREE drop-in FUN!

Ghoul or ghost? Or Halloween sprite? Have your face painted so you really look the part!

Saturday 31st October

Drop in and Do Halloween
Free | 10.30am-12.30pm | Age 4+
Registration essential



FREE drop-in FUN!

It's Deja-BOO! Drop in and Do is back this Autumn with free arts, crafts and face-painting with a spooky twist. From pumpkin bunting to hanging bats and monster masks, there's something for every little ghost and ghou.

All supplies provided.



Saturday 31st October

WORKSHOP Playbox Theatre of the Unexpected
£10.89 | 11.30am | Ages 7-11



This Halloween, join Playbox Theatre for an exhilarating, immersive theatre experience where imagination takes centre stage. Led by Playbox's acclaimed artistic team, young participants will dive into a world of theatrical storytelling through dynamic movement, expressive mime, physical theatre, acting and ensemble play. Expect an inspiring session bursting with creativity, collaboration and playful discovery as together we conjure mysterious characters, thrilling adventures and wonderfully spooky worlds. No experience needed.



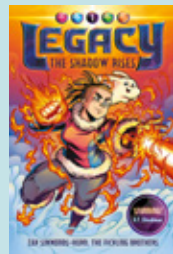
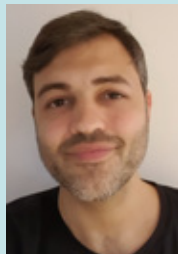
Saturday 31st October

Saturday 31st October

Sunday 1st November

Sunday 1st November

Zak Simmonds-Hurn
Comic Workshop
£9.62 | 1.30pm and 4pm | Age 7+



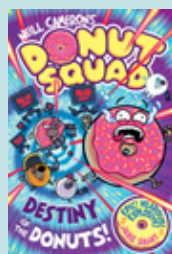
Join *Phoenix* comics artist Zak Simmonds-Hurn, who draws *Know Your Monsters*, *Dragon Guard* and *Legacy*, for a fun-filled workshop. Prepare to get your creative juices flowing and put your imagination to work as you create characters and bring them to life in your own comic strip.

Dungeons & Dragons
Games Café
£10.89 | 4-5.30pm | Ages 11-17



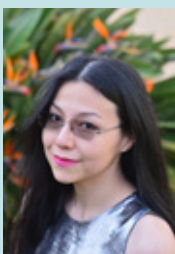
Get ready for a spooktacular adventure with your friends! Come and try *Dungeons & Dragons* with our talented team of *Dungeon Masters*. Borrow from us some dice and a ready-made character and get stuck in. No experience necessary – we'll help you all the way.

Neill Cameron
Donut Squad
£12 | 11am | Age 7+

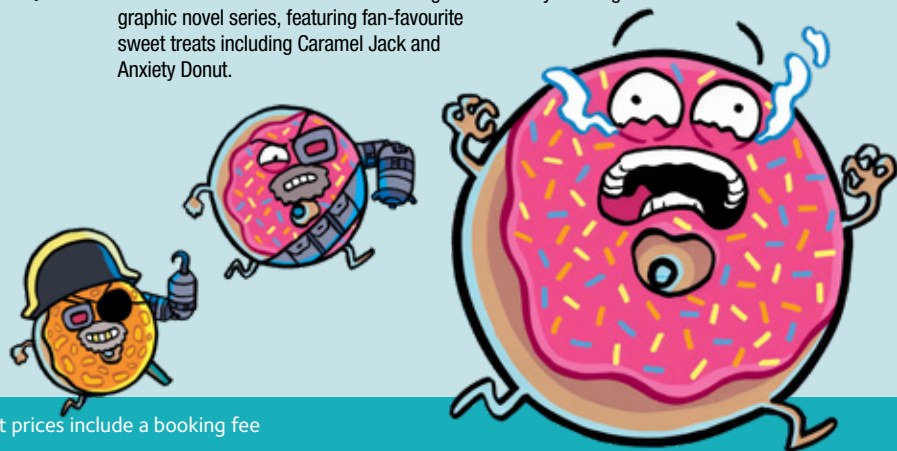


The Donut Squad are back from the future. A future where NO DONUTS ARE ALLOWED! Can the gang stop this futuristic nightmare from coming to pass? The legendary and bestselling *Phoenix* comic artist brings us the latest instalment of his bestselling graphic novel series, featuring fan-favourite sweet treats including Caramel Jack and Anxiety Donut.

WORKSHOP Sonia Leong
Drawing Manga
£9.62 | 12.30pm | Ages 11-16



A must for Manga fans! Learn the basics of drawing and designing your own Manga characters with flair in this workshop with the comic artist and graphic novelist. Perfect for beginners and those who are already creating!



Afternoon Tea
by the Avon

£20

per person

Exclusive to festival
ticket holders available
from 29 October until
1 November.

Take a pause
between events

Enjoy a selection of finger
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fine patisserie, served with
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**Stratford
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Outreach**

Changing Lives with Books

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.



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 70 workshops across the UK in male and female prisons with the writers Hollie Hughes, Smriti Prasad-Halls, Sophy Henn 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
Police Property Fund, World of Books
Festival Friends and 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 in 2026:

Emma Carroll
Frank Cottrell-Boyce
Christopher Edge
Sophy Henn
Patrice Lawrence
Smriti Prasad-Halls
Jane Riordan
Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre
Sam Sedgman
Davina Tijani

Devon Glover
Jonathan Stroud
Struan Murray
Sophie Anderson
Serena Patel
Alex Willmore
Kieran Larwood
Sarah Crossan
Tola Okogwu
Anna James
Joe Todd-Stanton

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



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of Reading 2026



Your Visit



All events take place at Crowne Plaza Hotel,
Bridge Foot, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6YR



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.



FESTIVAL CAFÉ

A place to rest between events, meet up with friends, have a cup of coffee and something to eat, 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 a **discount** or **treat** at selected cafés and restaurants. Go to stratlitfest.co.uk for details.



LOCAL AUTHORS' POP-UP

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



ACCESSIBILITY

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

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

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

We use microphones at all events except workshops.



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.

YOUR TICKETS

When you book by phone, tickets can 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 TicketSource, by going to help.ticketsource.com.

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

During the Festival, please go to the Information Desk in the Foyer of the Crowne Plaza Hotel and we'll 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.



Saturday 31st October
and Sunday 1st November

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 festivalgoers. 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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If you would like to become a Festival Friend or Benefactor and support our outreach work, please go to stratlitfest.co.uk or email info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk

Writers' Weekend 2026

SOLD OUT

Our popular weekend dedicated to emerging writers returns for its second year.

Designed to help writers to tell their stories – fiction or non-fiction – it will cover particular themes in sessions throughout the weekend.

The Tutors

Sarah Moss

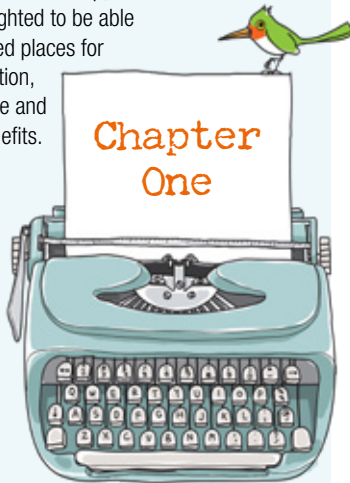
Sarah is the author of *Ghost Wall*, *Summerwater*, and most recently *Ripeness* (TILA award 2025) and *My Good Bright Wolf* (Saltire Scottish Non-Fiction Book of the Year 2025). Her latest, *The Winter Guest*, is just out. She has been nominated for several prizes.

Luigi Bonomi

Luigi has worked in publishing for over 40 years including being an editorial director at Penguin Books. He has been a fiction and non-fiction literary agent for 30 years and is responsible for discovering and launching the careers of many bestselling authors.

Supported Places

Thanks to the generosity of the Amazon Literary Partnership, we are also delighted to be able to offer supported places for people in education, or on low income and in receipt of benefits.



Making the Festival Happen

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 (Box Office)
Isabelle Acred (Fundraising)
Liz Wise (Books with Friends Coordinator)
Anna Menin (Copywriter)
Tiegan Weatherhead (Social Media)
Sue Lawton (Writers' Weekend Host)
Christie Carson (Information Desk)

Festival Patron: Maggie O'Farrell
Festival Outreach Patron: Dame Julia Donaldson
Festival Trustees: Neil Davis, Dr Diana Owen OBE, 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
Staging: Clearsounds

Our Interviewers:

Helen Bagnall	Caroline Hutton	Pete Selby
Olivia Chapman	John Jefferies	Deirdre Shields
Clare Clark	Rebecca Jones	Prof. Emma Smith
Iain Dale	Fiona Lindsay	Jenna Smith
Tamara Harvey	Tiffany Murray	Jordan Erica Webber
Tim Hubbard	Stephen Sackur	Julia Wheeler

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 and the Crowne Plaza Hotel; our interviewers; and of course our Friends and Benefactors, audiences, sponsors and advertisers who make the Festival possible.



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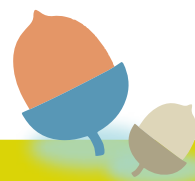
Terms and Conditions

All 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.

Stratford Literary Festival is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1164662

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At a Glance

Date	Time	Event	Booked	Date	Time	Event	Booked
Thurs 29 th Oct	10am-12pm	Workshop: Jarred McGinnis	☐	Fri 30 th Oct	6.30-8.30pm	Warhammer Games Café (12+)	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	10am-12.30pm	Workshop: Alix Almond	☐	Fri 30 th Oct	6.30pm	George E Osborn	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	12.30pm	Harriet Tye	☐	Fri 30 th Oct	7.30pm	Ian Buxton	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	1.30pm	Gavin Stoneystreet	☐	Fri 30 th Oct	8pm	Marina Litvinenko	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	2pm	Victoria Hislop	☐	Fri 30 th Oct	8pm	Nick Heyward	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	2pm	Workshop: Alix Almond	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	10.30-12.30pm	Workshop: Louise Doughty	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	2pm	Nigel Biggar and Brian Harrison	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	11.00am	Matt Baker	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	3.30pm	Dennis Sewell	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	1pm	Clare Clark and Roisin Maguire	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	4.30pm	Sir Max Hastings	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	1pm	Justin Anderson	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	5pm	Amy Jeffs	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	1pm	Alexei Sayle	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	5pm	Baroness Minette Batters	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	2.30pm	Matthew Rice	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	6.30pm	Matt Coyne and Helen Russell	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	2.30pm	Caroline Sanderson and Louise Doughty	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	6.30pm	Jonn Elledge	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	2.30pm	Dame Margaret Hodge	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	6.30pm	Sir Nicholas Hytner	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	3pm	Gus Casely-Hayford	☐
Thurs 29 th Oct	8pm	John Sweeney and Daniel Trilling	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	4pm	Bella Mackie	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	9.30-11.30am	Workshop: Layla Robinson	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	4.30pm	Sir Jonathan Bate	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	11am	Sarah Moss	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	5pm	Jeannette Nelson	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	12pm	Dr Xand van Tulleken	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	5.30pm	David Larbi	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	12.30pm	DJ Taylor	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	6pm	Lucy Porter	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	1.30-3pm	Workshop: Emelia Hutchinson	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	6.30pm	The Booklovers' Wine Club	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	2pm	Jim Al-Khalili	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	6.30pm	Andrew Davies	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	2pm	Damien Lewis	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	7-9pm	Dungeons and Dragons Games Café (18+)	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	3.30pm	Sophie Shorland	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	7pm	Catherine Heaney and Bernard O'Donoghue	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	3.30pm	Rory MacLean	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	7.30pm	Peter Ormerod and Alexander Larman	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	4pm	Teresa Krasny	☐	Sat 31 st Oct	8pm	Greg James	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	5pm	Alycia Pirmohamed	☐	Sun 1 st Nov	9.30am	Workshop: Clare Clark	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	5pm	Joanne Harris	☐	Sun 1 st Nov	10am	Sun Newspaper Review	☐
Fri 30 th Oct	6pm	Sir Jeremy Hunt	☐	Sun 1 st Nov	10.30am	Dr Louise Newson	☐

Date	Time	Event	Booked
Sun 1 st Nov	11.30am	Rob Wilkins	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	12pm	My One and Only	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	1pm	Sir Robin Niblett	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	1pm	Stephen Sackur	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	2pm	Kit Yates	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	2.30pm	Iain Dale	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	2.30pm	Simon Garfield	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	2.30pm	James Aldred	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	3.30pm	Nick Harkaway	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	4pm	Mary Portas	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	4pm	Gail Crowther and Paul de Zulueta	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	4pm	John Boyne	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	5.30pm	Greg Wise	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	5.30pm	Bonnie Garmus	☐
Sun 1 st Nov	7.30-9.30pm	English Musical Theatre Orchestra	☐

Events for Families			
Fri 30 th Oct	6.30-8.30pm	Warhammer Games Café	☐
Sat 31 st Oct	10-11am	Nicola Baker	☐
Sat 31 st Oct	10-11am	Myles McLeod and Evgenia Golubeva	☐
Sat 31 st Oct	10.30-11.30am	Facepainting	☐
Sat 31 st Oct	10.30am-12.30pm	Drop in and Do	☐
Sat 31 st Oct	11.30am	Workshop: Playbox	☐
Sat 31 st Oct	1.30pm and 4pm	Zak Simmonds-Hum	☐
Sat 31 st Oct	4-5.30pm	Dungeons and Dragons Games Cafe (11-17yrs)	☐
Sunday 1 st Nov	11am	Neill Cameron	☐
Sunday 1 st Nov	12.30pm	Workshop: Sonia Leong	☐





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