

# BOSWELL BOOK FESTIVAL

The World's Only Festival  
of Biography & Memoir

2024  
10-12  
MAY

Dumfries House  
Ayrshire



FEATURING

ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH

DONNA ASHWORTH

DOON MACKICHAN

JAMES NAUGHTIE

JOHN CURTICE

LEN PENNIE

PATRICK GRANT

ROSE REILLY

TOM HOLLAND

WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

XINRAN

AND MORE...

Including



CLICK HERE  
TO JOIN OUR

*Mailing*  
LIST



The World's Only Festival of Biography & Memoir

# BOSWELL

## BOOK FESTIVAL 2024

10-12 MAY

DUMFRIES HOUSE · AYRSHIRE

### BOX OFFICE

WWW.BOSWELLBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK  
TELEPHONE: 0333 0035 077

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Cover illustration copyright Kate Leiper, Royal Drawing School  
Festival Artist in Residence 2024

### FESTIVAL TEAM

**Artistic Director:** Caroline Knox  
**Operations Director:** Daphne Parlour  
**Schools & Family Curator:** Janet Smyth  
**Marketing & PR:** Fiona Duff  
**Social Media:** Caroline Rankin  
**Volunteers:** Ghislaine Kennerley  
**Programming, Author Hospitality & IT Support:** Victoria Henderson, Karen Wood and Stefan Mallia  
**Dumfries House:** Evan Sampson and Sheila Gregory

Huge thanks to the many friends who volunteer their time to make the Festival possible and to the Trustees who give of their time so generously: James Knox (Chairman), Margaret Boswell Elliott, Peter Kennerley, Caroline Knox, Gillian Watson, Dr William Zachs.

Also thanks to the Dumfries House staff and the Army Cadet Force for their invaluable help.

The Boswell Book Festival is an event inaugurated and staged by The Boswell Trust, a charity registered in Scotland number SC041655 and a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland SC380815

Registered office: Auchendrane, By Ayr, KA7 4TW. The Trust is established for the advancement of heritage, literary arts and education, specifically the restoration of James Boswell's Mausoleum in Auchinleck Churchyard and the creation of a visitor attraction in the adjoining Boswell Aisle.

The Boswell Trust has done its best to ensure the accuracy of all statements mentioned in this programme. Any errors are inadvertent.



## WELCOME TO THE BOSWELL BOOK FESTIVAL



Keeping true to our unique theme of biography and memoir is, our audience feedback tells us, the overriding reason for the Festival's popularity. As always, there has been an astounding array of life stories to choose from ranging from the first-hand accounts of two living legends from WW2 to tales of a composer, a nun, a politician....and a baker, tailor, soldier, spy. And grab the chance to hear in person Ayrshire's football world cup winner, Rose Reilly, and comedy genius, Doon Mackichan.

As recent best-seller lists testify, the lives of poets and their verse reach out to readers in today's uncertain times. Don't miss the joy and consolation of hearing the voices of Jackie Kay, Donna Ashworth, Len Pennie and Alexander McCall Smith.

Help get the readers of the future hooked on books by rocking up to our children's festival for hours of fun, excitement and hilarity created by our wildly talented artists and writers.

Neither festival would be possible without the generosity of our sponsors, patrons, friends and volunteers.

Caroline Knox  
Director

## BOSWELL ONLINE...

[boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://boswellbookfestival.co.uk)

If you can't make it to the festival in person, you don't need to miss out.

After the success of the hybrid programme in 2023 we will be live-streaming all events from the main venues in 2024.

We are very glad to be able to offer this opportunity and greatly value the engagement with the Festival of those attracted to our unique theme of biography and memoir from all over the UK and beyond.

## BECOME A BBF FRIEND OR PATRON

For full details of all our packages please speak to the on-site Box Office, visit our website [www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk), or email [info@boswellbookfestival.co.uk](mailto:info@boswellbookfestival.co.uk)



The Festival Organisers would like to thank His Majesty The King for making a substantial donation to support the Festival through King Charles III Charitable Fund and His Majesty's Privy Purse Charitable Trust.



DUMFRIES HOUSE



Tansy Trust

We are also deeply grateful to those who support the festival anonymously.

### MEDIA PARTNERS



# FRIDAY 10 MAY

TICKETS: [WWW.BOSWELLBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.BOSWELLBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK)

AN EXCLUSIVE EVENT FOR ALL THE FAMILY. AGE 7+



## ROSE REILLY WITH LOUISE BAILLIE

17:30 / £10, Under 16 £3

With the success of the Lionesses having changed the map for women's football forever, come and hear the legendary Ayrshire footballer Rose Reilly MBE, the only Scottish person to have won a football World Cup.

Despite her early and obvious skills on the park she was barred from playing football with the boys at school, and so took to disguising herself as a boy called 'Ross'.

During the 1960s and 1970s it was unheard of for a woman to be a successful football player in Scotland, so at just 17, Rose moved abroad

to become a professional footballer with Reims in France before moving to AC Milan where, in 1983 she scored the winning goal in the Women's World Cup final which gave Italy the title over the United States of America, and was voted the world's best female footballer. Rose also represented Scotland at international level.

Louise Baillie's new book *Spectacular Scottish Women* tells the story of 30 inspirational women including poet Jackie Kay, percussionist Evelyn Glennie and Rose Reilly herself.

In conversation with Louise Baillie



Rose 1971, future World Cup winner

## JACKIE KAY

18:00 / £10, £8c

*May Day* is the long-awaited new collection from one of our best-loved poets and former Makar of Scotland, Jackie Kay. As the title suggests, these poems cast an eye over several decades of political activism, from the international solidarity of the Glasgow of Kay's childhood, accompanying her parents' Socialist campaigns, through the feminist, LGBT+ and anti-racist movements of the 80s and 90s, up to the present day when a global pandemic intersects with the urgency of Black Lives Matter.

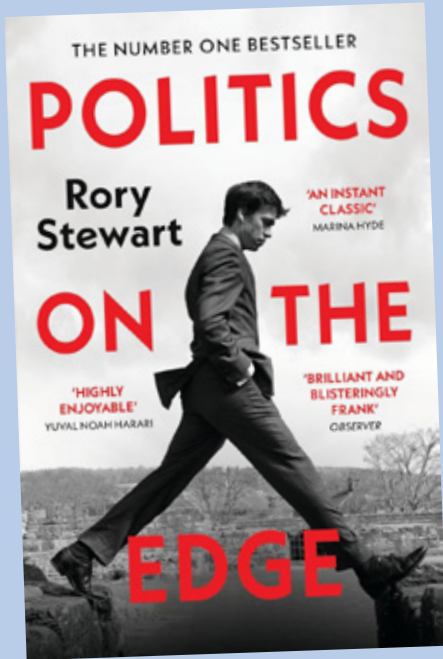
Kay brings to life a cast of influential figures, delving beneath the surfaces of received narratives: the Jamaican model Fanny Eaton, for example, muse of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in England; Paul Robeson, Angela Davis and the poet Audre Lorde; and a 'what-if' poem concerning Rabbie Burns and a road-not-taken towards the West Indian slave trade. Woven through the collection is a suite of lyric poems concerning the recent losses of Kay's parents: poems of grief and profound change that are infused with the light of love and celebration.

In conversation with Sheena McDonald



ONE OF OUR BEST-LOVED POETS AND FORMER MAKAR OF SCOTLAND





## RORY STEWART

18:00 / £5

Live on stage at the Festival, BBC's Allan Little will introduce his pre-recorded interview with Rory Stewart.

In his best-selling book, *Politics On The Edge*, Rory Stewart relates how over the course of a decade as an MP, he went from being a political outsider to becoming an effective government minister to standing for prime minister - before being sacked from a Conservative Party that he had come to barely recognise. Stewart learned at first-hand how hollow our democracy and government had become as individual politicians laid the foundations for today's political and economic chaos.

Grounded in his earlier careers as a Scottish soldier, diplomat, travel writer, philanthropist and international academic, he talks with wisdom and approachability – familiar to his thousands of followers on-line including from his co-hosted podcast 'The Rest is Politics' – on our era of populism and global conflict offering sanity and empathy in a disputatious age.

## APPEARING BY VIDEO LINK PRE-RECORDED

### ESTHER RUTTER

19:30 / £5

Esther Rutter's pre-recorded interview.

William and Dorothy Wordsworth are an essential element in this powerful memoir of recovery from mental illness.

In her early twenties, Esther Rutter suffered a breakdown while teaching English in Japan. Sectioned and held in a Japanese psychiatric institution until she could be flown home her recovery only began when she went to live and work in the Lake District becoming immersed in the realm of the great poet William Wordsworth.

As an intern at Dove Cottage, Wordsworth's home, at first Rutter finds the landscape itself is alien and intimidating and lurking among those hills is the fear of a regression into her mental illness.

Slowly she sets about drawing together from her surroundings the threads of her personal story, recovery and the legacy of the Wordsworth siblings who brought her there.

Her search for a sense of belonging intertwined with the stories of the Wordsworths and the Dove Cottage community culminated in lifelong bonds of friendship, and – finally – love.

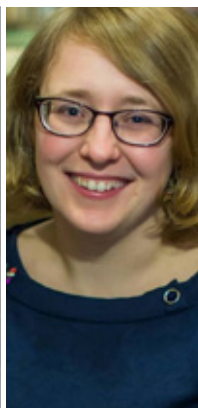
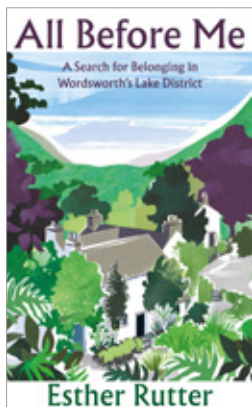


Image: Chris Scott

Image: Matt Cockett



## FIERCE, FRANK AND FUNNY

SANDI TOKSVIG



### DOON MACKICHAN

19:30 / £12, £10c

For the legion who watch BBC's *Two Doors Down*, Doon Mackichan's role as Cathy is a fan-favourite. Irresistibly funny and hugely admired, multi award-winning actress and writer Doon's other comedy credits include *Plebs* (for which she was nominated for a BAFTA), *Brass Eye*, *Alan Partridge* and the double Emmy-winning *Smack the Pony*.

Reflecting on 40 years in 'the business', *My Lady Parts* explores the bear pit of the stand-up comedy circuit and highlights her determination to take on ground-breaking

and challenging comedy roles while at the same time coping as a working mother in a business that does not exactly welcome babies and children.

Fearless and funny as ever, in her inimitable style comedienne Doon will talk about the ways in which society still expects women to adhere to certain stereotypes, calling for a radical rework of attitude for future generations.

In conversation with Anna Burnside

# SATURDAY 11 MAY

TICKETS: [WWW.BOSWELLBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.BOSWELLBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK)

## ADAM SISMAN

10:45 / £10, £8c

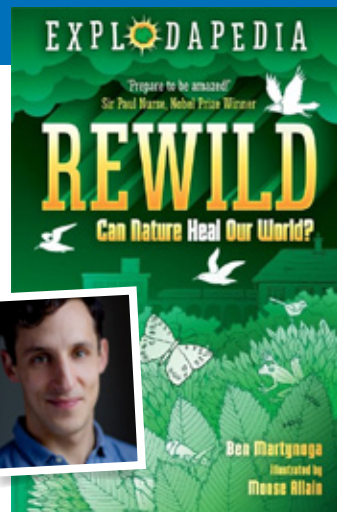

John le Carré's biographer reveals the secret life of the man that he was not able to include in his 'supposed' definitive 2015 portrait of the writer. Along the way he explores the complex relationship that a biographer faces when writing about a subject who is still alive.

Secrecy came naturally to le Carré, and there were some secrets that he fought fiercely to keep – even from his chosen biographer. Nowhere more so than in his private life.

Apparently content in his marriage, the novelist conducted a string of love affairs over four decades, which introduced both jeopardy and excitement into what was otherwise a quiet, ordered life. Le Carré seemed to require the stimulus they provided in order to write. To keep these relationships secret, he made use of tradecraft that he had learned as a spy.

*The Secret Life of John le Carré* allows Sisman to at last paint the full portrait. As he says: 'Now that he is dead, we can know him better.'

# The Secret Life of John le Carré



## BEN MARTYNOGA

10:45 / £10, £8c

Rewilding is a powerful concept. While some see it as a miracle cure, others see it as a menace. Biologist and writer Ben Martynoga argues that – though not always easy – rewilding must be an essential part of our future. As climate change and biodiversity loss accelerate, he reminds us that all humans rely on thriving nature. Martynoga will highlight inspiring rewilding projects already underway globally. He will also introduce species with the power to revive ecosystems – from otters nurturing kelp forests to lynx helping trees grow and resurrected woolly mammoths that could keep the Arctic frozen.

Author of the award-winning *Explodapedia*, a pioneering non-fiction series introducing biology's biggest ideas to readers 12y and up, Martynoga's writing about science and the environment also appears in *The Guardian*, *New Statesman* and the *Financial Times*.

# Making Architecture

## The work of John McAslan + Partners

Kenneth Frampton  
Alan Powers  
Kenneth Powell  
Chris Foges  
Elizabeth Farrelly  
Marwa El Mubark

Thames & Hudson



## JOHN MCASLAN

10:45 / £10, £8c



Anyone who has stood beneath the soaring canopy of London's King's Cross station or crossed the elegant threshold of the revitalised Burrell Collection will have experienced the particular genius of super-star Scottish architect John McAslan. Born and educated in Dunoon, trained at Edinburgh University, McAslan enjoys an international reputation as one of the most innovative, humane and socially aware architects of the age. His landmark projects range

from New York's Penn Station to Doha's Cultural Quarter in Qatar. At the same time, McAslan has never neglected his Scottish roots nor his sense of social responsibility. He has transformed Dunoon's derelict Burgh Hall into a vibrant arts centre run as a charity; and has launched the Hidden Homelessness initiative to find architectural solutions to one of society's greatest blights. For a blast of positivity in these ugly times, discover John McAslan's rare ability to create beautiful and utile buildings to improve all our lives.

In conversation with James Knox



**HENRY HEMMING**

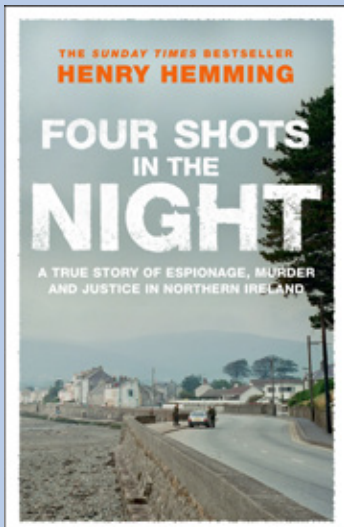
12:00 / £10, £8c

This is the true story of the assassination of an undercover British agent, at the centre of a web of secrets, lies and betrayals, and how it led to the largest murder investigation in British history.

In a double twist, best-selling author,

Henry Hemming, will invite the audience to share the detective work in solving the murder of undercover British agent, Frank Hegarty, whose body was found by the side of a muddy lane with its wrists tied and tape over each eye. He will interrogate why it matters, as he asks: how did the Troubles really come to an end? Was it a feat of diplomatic negotiation, as we've been told – or did spies play the decisive role? And how much can, or should, a courageous spy risk for the good of his country?

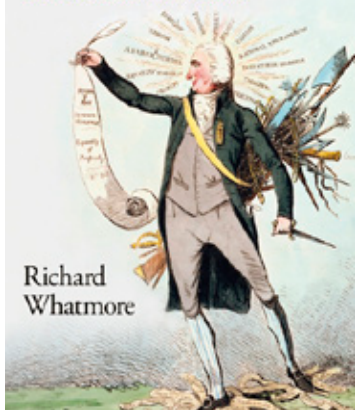
This ground-breaking and moving account of a single murder serves as a cautionary tale for the current issues of today.



**A TRUE STORY OF  
STAKEKNIFE, MURDER  
AND JUSTICE IN  
NORTHERN IRELAND**

**The End of Enlightenment**

EMPIRE, COMMERCE, CRISIS



Richard Whatmore

**RICHARD WHATMORE**

12:00 / £10, £8c

The Enlightenment is popularly seen as the Age of Reason, a key moment in human history when ideals such as freedom, progress, natural rights and constitutional government prevailed. In this radical re-evaluation, historian Richard Whatmore shows why, for many at its centre, the Enlightenment was a profound failure.

*The End of Enlightenment* traces the changing perspectives of economists, philosophers, politicians and polemicists around the world, including figures as diverse as David Hume, Adam Smith, Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft. They had strived to replace superstition with reason, but witnessed instead terror and revolution, corruption, gross commercial excess and the continued growth of violent colonialism.

Returning us to the tumultuous events and ideas of the eighteenth century and digging deep into the thought of the men and women who defined their age, Whatmore asks "Do we once again live in a world that has suffered an end of enlightenment as strategies formulated after 1945 have gradually failed or been abandoned?"

In conversation with Colin Kidd



COINNEACH MACLEOD

**FASTEN YOUR APRONS!**

**COINNEACH MACLEOD**

12:15 / £10, £8c

Giving us his best selection of treats and tales yet! International bestseller Coinneach Macleod is here with his latest book *The Hebridean Baker at Home: Flavours & Folklore from the Scottish Islands*.

For this book, he travelled from Islay, via Barra, Uist, Berneray and Harris before arriving home to Lewis. Coinneach shares recipes and stories that have been handed down through the generations; he bakes and celebrates the flavours of Scotland

creating simple dishes from his Double Dram Cake and Marmalade Shortbread to hearty savoury dishes, including Leek Bread & Butter Pudding and Salmon Wellington.

With over 100,000 followers on Instagram his fan base can expect songs, stories, and beautiful photography. So, fasten your apron, and prepare to embark on an adventure that will transport you to the heart of a Hebridean kitchen.

SATURDAY 11 MAY

## ANSTEY HARRIS

12:15 - 13:45

£12, £10c

Rothsay Room

If a story reports the truth, it's non-fiction: if it stretches the truth, it's fiction. In either or both, the reader has to believe wholeheartedly in the coincidences, lucky breaks, and surprise discoveries that are the meat of real life and of writing about it.

How to Write True Stories about Real Life will look at what non-fiction can learn from fiction, placing the reader robustly in a narrative non-fiction and learning the transferable craft skills that can keep them there - glued to your story.

This workshop is hands-on and interactive, with discussion and writing exercises that can help engage your reader and pull the very best structure from a story that could be too true to be believed.

Please let us know if you have any additional needs or barriers to participating in this workshop.

## HOW TO WRITE TRUE STORIES ABOUT REAL LIFE WORKSHOP



Steven J. Reid



Steven Veerapen

## STEVEN VEERAPEN & STEVEN REID

13:30 / £10, £8c

King James VI and I has long suffered from being damned with faint praise as the 'wisest fool in Christendom'. Two new biographies tell a different story.

Historian Steven Reid's is the first detailed narrative of the king's childhood, education and shrewdly planned rise to power at the age of 19 after a lifetime controlled by Regents. He also throws fresh light on James's relationship with his mother, imprisoned in England; and sets his reign and culture in Scotland within the wider context of other Protestant courts in Europe.

Novelist and historian Steven Veerapen's portrait of the king and his English court debunks the caricature of history to reveal the sovereign as his contemporaries knew him: a gregarious idealist obsessed with the idea of family, whose personal and political goals could never match up to reality. With reference to letters, libels and state papers, this portrait illuminates the personal, domestic, international and sexual politics of this misunderstood and much under-estimated sovereign.

In conversation with Anna Groundwater

## OLGA HENDERSON

13:30 / £10, £8c

At 92, Olga Henderson is one of the last eyewitnesses to life in a Japanese Prisoner of War camp.

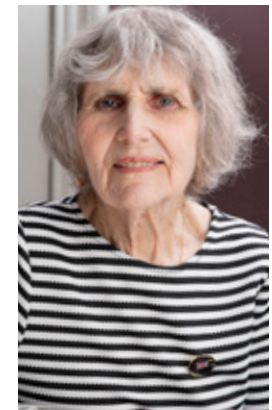
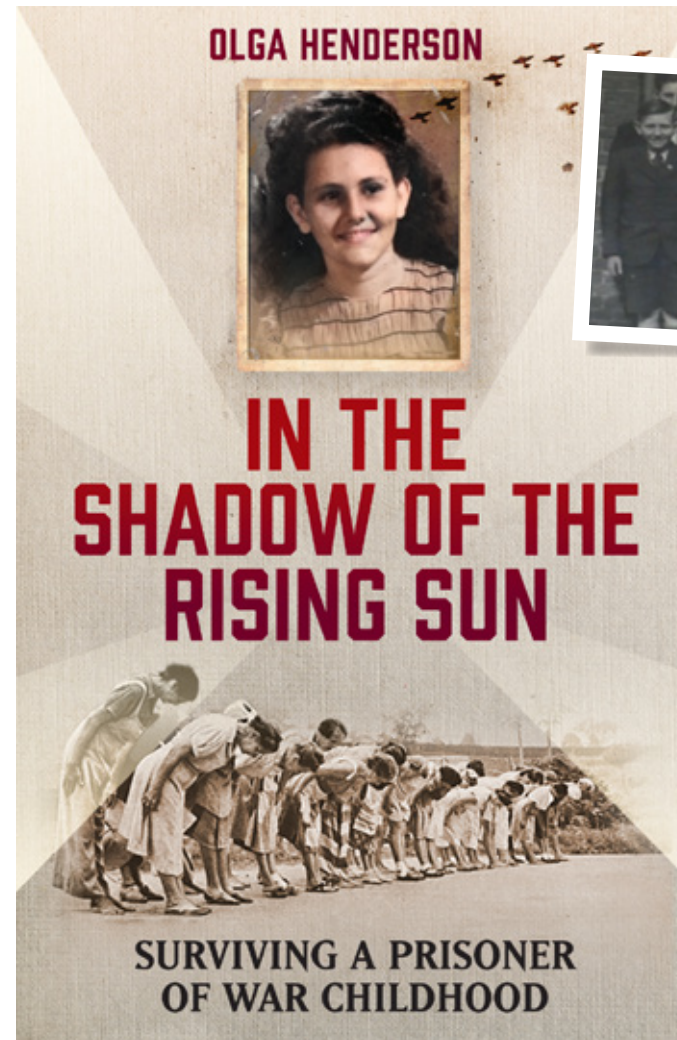
82 years after the unexpected fall of Singapore she has shared the poignant story of her childhood in *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun*.

In February 1942, the tranquil life of nine-year-old Olga Morris in Johor Buru was abruptly shattered. With 20 minutes to gather essentials before being loaded into a truck and driven across the causeway before it was blown up, the moment of leaving

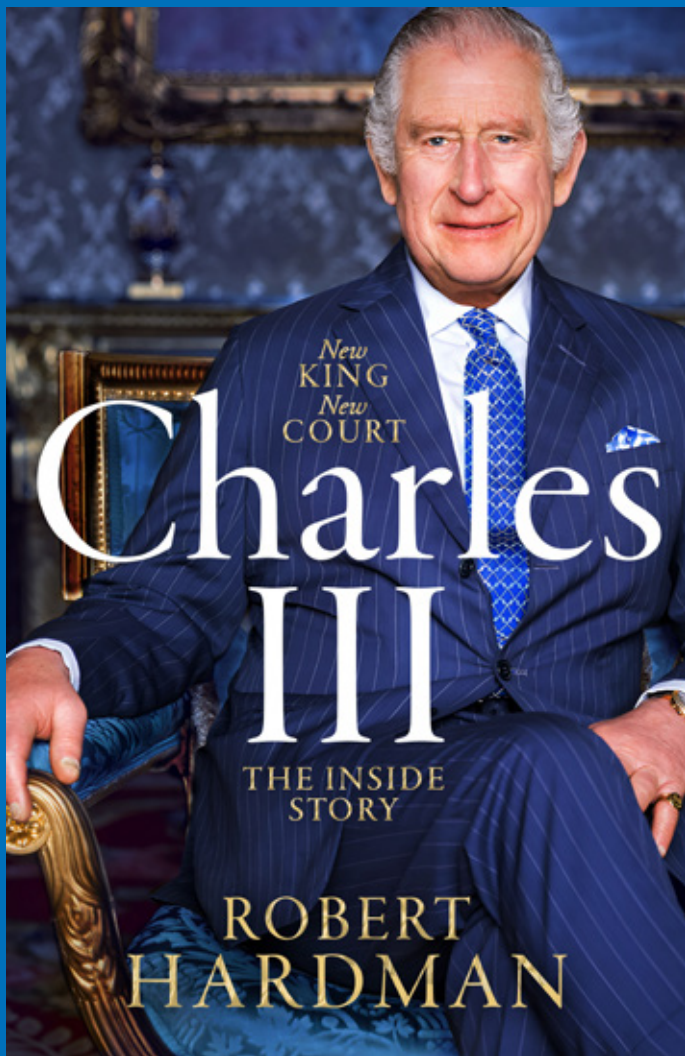
remains etched in Olga's memory. As bombs rained down on Singapore, the family rushed to the Harbour but, denied passage, they endured the relentless bombardment of the city before eventually being captured by the Japanese army. Nearly three years of captivity at the notorious Changi Jail and Sime Road camp followed.

Join Olga as she unveils a compelling story of a childhood lost in the shadows of war and a testament to the enduring human spirit in the face of adversity.

In conversation with Simon Robinson



A COMPELLING STORY OF A JAPANESE PRISONER OF WAR CAMP IN SINGAPORE



**THIS IS A  
DRAMATIC STORY  
OF TRANSITION  
AT THE VERY  
TOP - AND OF  
A SOVEREIGN  
RESOLUTE IN  
MAKING HIS  
MARK**



Event sponsored by  
the Hillhouse Group

**ROBERT HARDMAN**

14:00 / £10, £8c

Given unrivalled access to the Royal Family, their close friends, staff past and present plus previously unseen papers in the Royal Archives, this is a brilliant insider's portrait of Charles III by the bestselling biographer and royal commentator.

Faced with family dramas, political crises, and questions about the future of the monarchy in Britain and elsewhere, the new King had no shortage of challenges.

In his talk Robert Hardman, who has been there to witness it all, will describe the vital role played by Queen Camilla, the King's relationships with Prince William and Prince Harry, his plans for reforming the monarchy and his evolving place on the world stage.

*Charles III, New King. New Court. The Inside Story* is a fascinating account of a king determined to maximize 'the time God grants me' – and even enjoy it.

In conversation with Sally Magnusson

**COMMEMORATING 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY**

**100 YEAR OLD  
VETERAN OF  
BLETCHLEY PARK**

**PATRICIA OWTRAM**

15:15 / £10, £8c

A rare opportunity to hear from Patricia Owtram, one of the last veterans of the 'Secret War', 100 years old, a remarkable WW2 Women's Royal Naval Service Special Duties Interceptor whose knowledge of German played a pivotal role in obtaining crucial Enigma code for Bletchley Park and the Admiralty.

Pat reflects on the secrecy of the 'Y' Service (wireless interception) and the impact of the war on her family including not knowing that her sister Jean was serving with the Special Operations executive (S.O.E). At the same time their father was a prisoner of war on the river Kwai. Pat's vital work in the lead-up to D-Day led to her being awarded the Legion of Honour by the French government.

From a fairytale childhood to playing a crucial role in turning the tide of war Pat went on to become a journalist and a pioneering woman TV producer.

*Codebreaking Sisters* and *Century Sisters* were both co-written with her late sister Jean.

In conversation with Simon Robinson



**SATURDAY 11 MAY**



**MICHAEL J MALONE**  
15:15 - 16:45  
£12, £10c  
Rothsay Room

Discover the power of self-awareness through the written word in this enriching session on writing for wellbeing. Join us as we explore writing as a tool for self-discovery.

Through guided exercises and reflective prompts, we aim to help you cultivate a deeper understanding of your thoughts, emotions, and experiences.

Whether you love writing or are just getting started, this session is for you – offering a safe and nurturing space to embrace the therapeutic benefits of writing, ignite your creativity, and embark on a journey towards greater self-awareness and well-being.

**WRITING FOR WELLBEING WORKSHOP**



**CATHERINE COLDSTREAM**  
15:15 / £10, £8c

As a young woman, Catherine Coldstream converted to Catholicism in a fit of religious zeal mixed with grief after the death of her beloved father the artist William Coldstream, believing that sisterhood in the austere Carmelite order of Akenside Priory in Northumberland would fulfil her spiritual and intellectual needs.

Her twelve years as a nun proved how wrong she was.

In her path from novice finding peace in an ancient way of life to the taking of her final vows, she discovers that all is not as it seems behind the Priory's closed doors. Power struggles erupt and lead to conflict over God's divine authority which are mediated through flawed and all-too-human members of the community. Catherine must decide whether to protect the serenity she has found, or to speak out?

A love song to a lost community, *Cloistered* reminds us what can happen when good people cut themselves off from the wider world.

In conversation with Sheena McDonald



Image: Keiko Ikeuchi

**A PROFOUNDLY MOVING MEMOIR**  
**MARK HADDON**

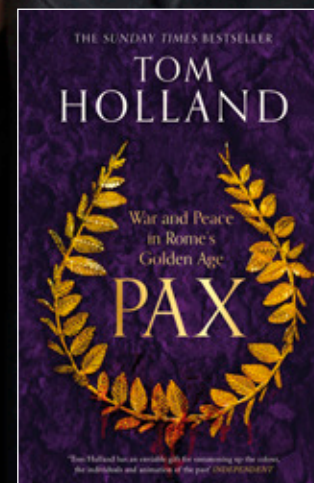
**TOM HOLLAND**  
15:30 / £12, £10c

The Pax Romana has long been revered as a golden age. At its peak, the Roman Empire stretched from Scotland to Arabia, and contained perhaps a quarter of humanity. It was the wealthiest and most formidable state the world had yet seen.

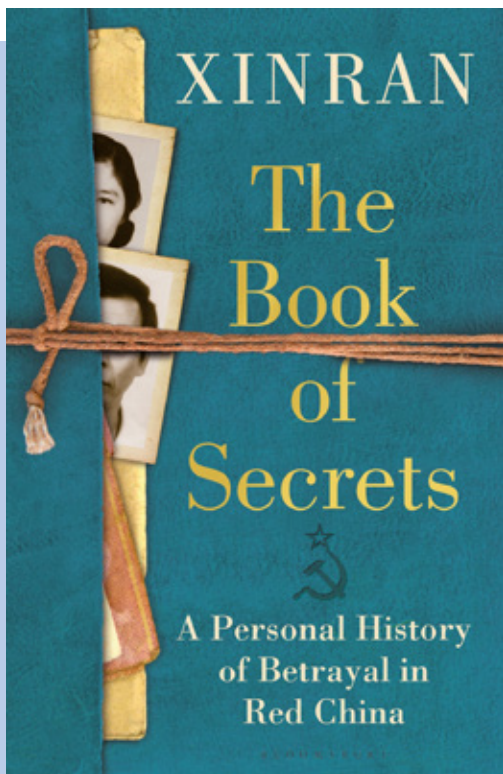
Vividly sketching the lives of Romans both ordinary and spectacular, from slaves to emperors, and beginning in 69AD, a year that saw four Caesars in succession rule the empire – and ending some seven decades later with the death of Hadrian, *Pax* presents a dazzling history of Rome at the height of its power.

From the gilded capital to realms beyond the frontier, historian Tom Holland portrays the Roman Empire in all its predatory glory: from the destruction of Jerusalem and Pompeii to the building of the Colosseum and Hadrian's Wall and the conquests of Trajan.

In conversation with Rodge Glass



**CO-HOST OF THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR HISTORY PODCAST 'THE REST IS HISTORY'**



**XINRAN**  
16:45 / £10, £8c

No one has done more than Xinran, the British-Chinese author, journalist and activist, to tell the truth about the lives of ordinary people in twentieth-century China. Her first books, *The Good Women of China* and *Sky Burial*, recounted some of these stories.

In her latest book, *The Book of Secrets*, the lives of military intelligence officer Jie and his wife Moon, a family torn apart by the Tiananmen Square massacre, are woven into a narrative using a recently found archive of personal diaries and letters that not only illuminates the shadowy world of intelligence in China, but also the emotional tragedies that political extremism inflicts on those working within.

Drawing on Jie's own vivid biography of his youth, Xinran pieces together his trajectory as he joins the great hope of the Chinese young – the Communist Party – and becomes a loyal cadre until the late 1970s when, as a chief in the security forces, he makes a decision that will poison his family against him.

In conversation with Georgina Adam

**GORDON TURNBULL**  
16:45 / £10, £8c

When James Boswell's multiple volumes of confessional diaries and letters were first published in the 20th century, they were hailed and assailed in equal measure for their warts-and-all honesty, showing their subject in 'light' and in 'shade'. In our age of unflinching memoirs, live-stream 'owning up' on multiple platforms, and up-to-the minute emoting from the wild west of X, Boswell's un-squeamish honesty would appear to be totally on trend. Or is it?

**THE COST OF OPENNESS**

Gordon Turnbull, former General Editor of the Yale Boswell Editions, making his annual Festival appearance, follows Ayrshire's great diarist and biographer along his disturbingly candid path, wondering at the cost at which Boswell's openness came, and asking, is honesty always the best policy?



JUDGE OF THE BBC'S THE GREAT BRITISH SEWING BEE

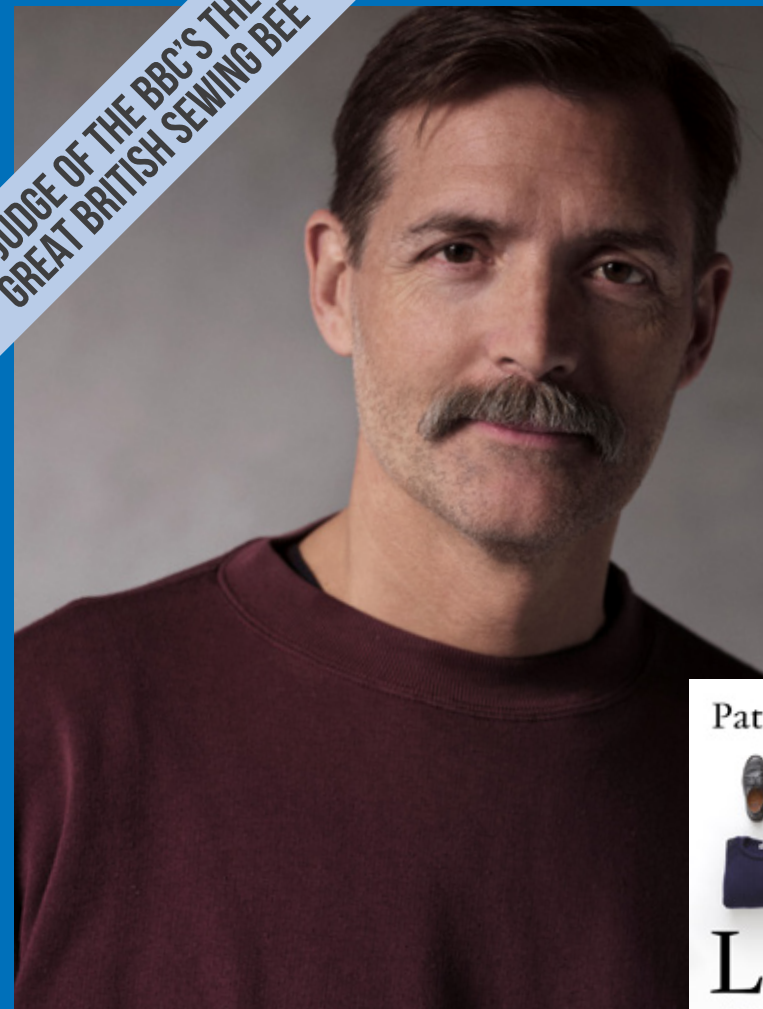


Image: Chris Floyd



**PATRICK GRANT**  
17:00 / £12, £10c

No one knows – or loves – good, proper clothes like Patrick Grant. Edinburgh-born, he will talk about his journey through fashion from total obscurity, running one historic tailor's shop on Savile Row, to becoming a TV star best known for his role as judge of the BBC's The Great British Sewing Bee and a leader in the fashion industry with 121K followers on Instagram.

This is a passionate and revealing book about loving clothes but hating the way they're made, about everything wrong with the fashion industry today, and how to set it right.

We can love clothes more, and better. But the way to do it is through *Less*.

In his book Patrick, who co-chairs the Future Textiles Training programme at Dumfries House, explains why he's putting his money into a sustainable future.

In conversation with James Knox

SATURDAY 11 MAY

Image: Juliana Johnston

## NICHOLAS PEARSON & SALLY MAGNUSSON

18:15 / £10, £8c

As well as her acclaimed career as a novelist, Hilary Mantel long contributed to newspapers and journals, unspooling stories from her own life and illuminating the world as she found it. This strand of her writing was an integral part of how she thought of herself.

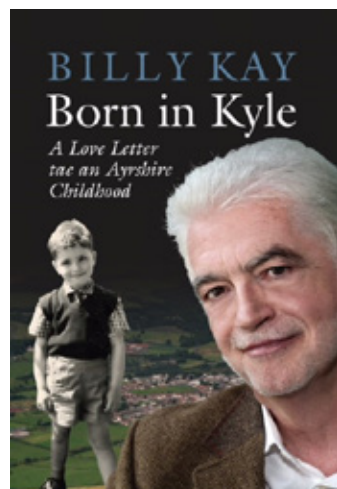
*A Memoir of My Former Self* collects the finest of this writing over four decades and takes the readers from her unique childhood to her all-consuming fascination with Thomas Cromwell that grew into the Wolf Hall trilogy.

In this celebration of Mantel's life and writing, her editor, publisher and friend of over twenty years, Nicholas Pearson, will be joined by one of her biggest fans, the historical fiction writer of *Music in the Dark*, Sally Magnusson, in exploring her life and her inspirational legacy.

Chaired by Katie Grant



IN 2005, HILARY MANTEL EMAILED HER EDITOR NICHOLAS PEARSON THE FIRST 40 PAGES OF A NEW BOOK, WHICH WOULD TRANSFORM NOT ONLY HER CAREER, BUT OUR EXPECTATIONS OF HISTORICAL FICTION. HERE, HE RECALLS HOW WOLF HALL CAME TO LIFE



## BILLY KAY

18:15 / £10, £8c

Scottish writer, broadcaster and language activist, Billy Kay's early life in Ayrshire took place in a strong Scots-speaking environment. His most notable work, *Scots: The Mither Tongue*, was adapted for a television series.

In *Born in Kyle: A Love Letter tae an Ayrshire Childhood*, written in both Scots and English, Kay gaes back tae his ain linguistic an cultural ruits in the town o Gawston in Ayrshire an scribes vieve memoirs o growin up there in the saicent hauf o the 20th century.

Working class family life, the strong sense of community from a still-living mining tradition, football heights and gambling lows and Scots songs connecting to the poets and writers who had gone before – is brought vividly to life here.

Whether you already love the Scots language or are just discovering it, take this opportunity to hear it spoken as it should be!

## SIR JOHN CURTICE

18:30 / £12, £10c

Ever-present at general elections, the political scientist and Professor of Politics at Strathclyde University, John Curtice is the household name and well-known voice that has illuminated British and Scottish politics with his brilliant insights for many years, accurately predicting the results in 2005, 2010, 2015 and 2017.

In a political landscape of partisan squabbles and mudslinging, Curtice's 'just the facts' analysis brings a refreshing objectivity to the conversation.

Even amid the excitement of election night, he never lets his mask of neutrality slip to reveal his own political leanings though he will have a good idea of who will be the next prime minister several hours before the rest of the country.

In the new book *British General Election Campaigns 1830–2019*, edited by Iain Dale, there is an insightful chapter by John Curtice on the 1997 election. Join the polling expert whose word is tantamount to gospel, 27 years on.

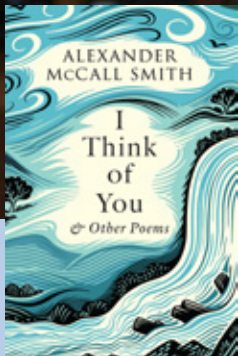
In conversation with Allan Little



AMID THE EXCITEMENT OF ELECTION NIGHT, HE NEVER LETS HIS MASK OF NEUTRALITY SLIP

SATURDAY 11 MAY

# A MASTER STORYTELLER



## SIR ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH

20:00 / £12 £10c

Recently knighted for his services to literature, academia and charity, Alexander is a national treasure. Poetry has always been integral to his identity. Writing in his charming book, *What W. H. Auden Can Do for You*, Alexander revealed the poet's influence on his own life.

Recently he has also published collections of his own poetry, *I Think of You* and *In a Time of Distance*, exploring themes of fondness, food, fishing and friendship as he travels from Edinburgh to ancient Greece, from Botswana to Argyllshire, and from Dallas to Helsinki.

A master storyteller, Alexander triumphs as an affectionate chronicler of others' lives. His latest novel, *The Perfect Passion Company*, has been described by readers as "brilliant, unique and beautiful". This new series follows the life of Katie as she takes on her cousin's dating agency in Edinburgh's New Town and showcases a cast of characters who (mostly) find their true love.

In conversation with William Zachs



## LOTS TO DO

### Dumfries House

30 minute mini-tours / £9.00 through Dumfries House website or buy on the day.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to experience the superb interiors and treasures of Dumfries House which have been restored to their original splendour. Combining the architecture of Robert Adam and his brother with the furniture of Thomas Chippendale and leading 18th century Scottish cabinet makers, the house and original contents, which include nearly 10% of Chippendale's surviving work, represent one of the most important documents of the Scottish Enlightenment.

#### Saturday & Sunday Tour times:

11:00	11:30	12:00	12:30	13:00
13:30	14:00	14:30	15:00	15:30
16:00	16:30			

### Waterstones Bookshop Festival Marquee

The excellent team from Waterstones, Ayr provide our on-site bookshop. On offer will be a superb selection of titles by or about our authors for all to browse and discover new delights. Book signings: Authors will be delighted to sign copies of their books immediately after their events.

### Festival Café Bar Festival Marquee

Waiting for a talk or coming out of one? In our Festival marquee, soup, sandwiches, wraps, large selection of cakes, tray bakes and scones together with teas, coffees, wine, beer and soft drinks will be on offer for your delectation.

### Coach House Café

A short walkway takes you to the newly extended Coach House where there is a more extensive menu on offer, from a warming bowl of homemade soup and a wide range of hot or cold snacks to a light lunch or supper. Freshly brewed coffee and tea with delicious cakes also await you or alternatively relax with a glass of wine or beer.

Friday	10:00 - 18:00
Saturday	10:00 - 18:00
Sunday	10:00 - 18:00

### Woodlands Restaurant

Friday 17:00-19:00 or by request.  
Saturday/Sunday 10:00 - 18:30 or by request.  
For reservations phone Reception on 01290 425959

This stylish restaurant offers a refreshingly imaginative range of delicious dishes using fresh and locally sourced ingredients, including seasonal vegetables from the Dumfries House garden.



The World's Only Festival of Biography & Memoir

# BOSWELL

## BOOK FESTIVAL 20-12 MAY 24

DUMFRIES HOUSE · AYRSHIRE



### BOX OFFICE

0333 0035 077

[www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk)



### HOW TO WATCH

**LIVE:** All tickets £10/£8c except where indicated. Events are one hour long also except where indicated.

**ONLINE:** Events will be available to watch 'live' online via our website.

Online tickets £5 or Online Rover ticket £35

### VENUES FOR 2024

Our main festival events over the weekend will take place in four venues:

- Pavilion
- Boswell Marquee
- Tapestry Room
- Rothesay Room

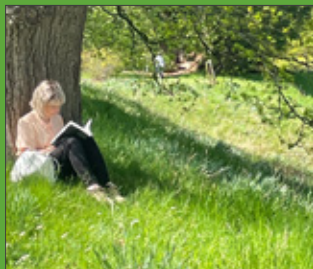


Entrance to ALL MAIN Festival events will be through the Box Office at Reception. The venue for each individual talk will be clearly marked on the website on the evening of Friday 10 May. Information Boards will display venues as you approach Reception.

No drinks to be taken into the venues please.

### CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

Events take place at the Engineering Centre. See page 38 for programme and tickets.



Please check [www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk), Facebook, Instagram or X (Twitter) for the latest news, special events and information.

# FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE



## FRIDAY 10 MAY / OPENING EVENING

17:30	Rose Reilly with Louise Baillie
18:00	Jackie Kay
18:00	Rory Stewart - pre-recorded via Videolink with Allan Little live on stage
19:30	Esther Rutter - pre-recorded via Videolink
19:30	Doon Mackichan

## SATURDAY 11 MAY

10:45	Adam Sisman	10:45	John McAslan	10:45	Ben Martynoga
12:00	Henry Hemming	12:00	Richard Whatmore		
12:15	Coinneach Macleod	12:15	Anstey Harris Workshop (12:15 - 13:45)		
13:30	Olga Henderson	13:30	Steven Reid & Steven Veerapen		
14:00	Robert Hardman				
15:15	Patricia Owtram	15:15	Catherine Coldstream		
15:15	Michael Malone Workshop (15:15 - 16:45)				
15:30	Tom Holland				
16:45	Xinran	16:45	Gordon Turnbull		
17:00	Patrick Grant				
18:15	Nicholas Pearson & Sally Magnusson	18:15	Billy Kay		
18:30	John Curtice				
20:00	Alexander McCall Smith				

## SUNDAY 12 MAY

10:30	Xinran & Catherine Coldstream with Suzanne Heywood		
10:30	Gordon Turnbull & Adam Sisman & Lionel Dumas-Perini		
10:30	Aasmah Mir		
12:00	Suzanne Heywood	12:00	Jenny Brown & Nicholas Pearson
12:15	William Dalrymple	12:15	Rodge Glass Workshop (12:15 - 13:45)
13:30	Jane Wellesley	13:30	Gavin Francis & Allan Little
14:00	Donna Ashworth		
15:15	Errollyn Wallen with James MacMillan		
15:30	Kirsty Logan, Len Pennie, Jen Stout	15:30	John Niven
16:45	Ariane Banks		
17:00	Nigel Toon	17:00	Jen Stout
18:30	Christian Lewis	18:30	James Naughtie

# SUNDAY 12 MAY

TICKETS: [WWW.BOSWELLBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.BOSWELLBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK)

## THREE WOMEN DISCUSS THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL FORCES ON THEIR LIVES AT A TIME WHEN EQUAL POWER AND EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN REMAINS ELUSIVE

Image: Keiko Ikeuchi



Xinran



Catherine Coldstream



Suzanne Heywood



### XINRAN & CATHERINE COLDSTREAM WITH SUZANNE HEYWOOD

10:30 / £10, £8c

**Xinran** was born in Beijing in 1958 before moving to London in 1997. Her radio programme in China became famous for its unflinching portrayal of what it meant to be a woman in modern China and led to her much-acclaimed book *The Good Women of China*. Her charity The Mother's Bridge of Love reaches out to Chinese children in all corners of the world.

**Suzanne Heywood**, author of *Wavewalker*, is a now Chief Operating Officer of a large company but enduring a nomadic childhood she had

to fight every inch of the way to reach university and career success, harnessing her hardships as sources of resilience to give her an understanding of the experience facing many women.

By contrast **Catherine Coldstream**, author of *Cloistered*, chose to hide herself in an all-women enclosed Carmelite monastery only to run away 12 years later. She speaks about the challenges in re-entering a society very different to the one she had left behind.



Adam Sisman



Gordon Turnbull



Lionel Dumas-Perini

### ADAM SISMAN, GORDON TURNBULL & LIONEL DUMAS-PERINI

10:30 / £10, £8c

The self-deprecating genius who invented the art of modern biography, James Boswell, realised that getting up close to his subject was the key to success. But how do those fascinated by Boswell himself cope with their addiction? How do they grapple with his monumental legacy of journals, books, letters and miscellaneous archive that reveal a man of so many contradictions, doubts, moral turpitudes, self-absorptions and literary brilliance?

**Adam Sisman**, author of *Boswell's Presumptuous Task*, will describe the challenges of writing about Boswell's own challenges of writing Johnson's biography. Scholar Dr **Gordon Turnbull**, editor

## LIVING WITH BOSWELL

of *Boswell's Book of Company*, which recorded the men and women entertained by Boswell at Auchinleck (and what they drank) and of Boswell's unflinching *London Journal 1763-1763* will talk of his career-long immersion in Boswell's life and world; while Corsican filmmaker, **Lionel Dumas-Perini**, returns to the festival and will describe his far-flung quest for Boswell in his forthcoming documentary on 'Boswell and Corsica'.

Chaired by James Knox, chairman of The Boswell Trust

Image: Ben Wulf



### AASMAH MIR

10:30 / £10, £8c

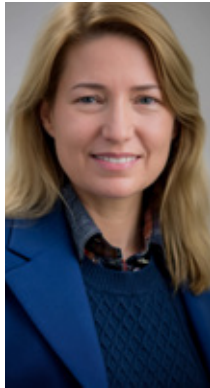
Aasmah Mir candidly shares the highs and lows of a childhood in 1970s Glasgow growing up between two cultures - finding that outside the house she was too Asian and was bullied when trying to fit in at school but retreating to the safe haven of her home she found she was not Asian enough.

By contrast Mir's mother, with a self-confidence that came from growing up in cosmopolitan Lahore, had happily agreed to the marriage that brought her to Glasgow in 1966.

*A Glasgow Girl* reveals parts of the Pakistani immigrant experience rarely seen and reveals how the wheels of progress have turned across two generations - but how they have also got very stuck.

Aasmah Mir is an award-winning broadcaster who has worked in TV and radio for over 25 years. She is the co-presenter of the Breakfast Show on Times Radio.

# JAW-DROPPING ADVENTURE ON THE HIGH SEAS



## SUZANNE HEYWOOD

12:00 / £10, £8c

When she was just seven, Suzanne Heywood's parents took her and her brother on what was meant to be a three-year voyage around the world. In reality, the family spent the next 10 years surviving storms, shipwrecks, reefs and isolation. Heywood had little formal schooling, missed out on friendships, and was subjected to emotional and physical abuse with no state showing an interest in her welfare.

From the bestselling author of *What Does Jeremy Think?*, *Wavewalker* is the incredible true tale of an astonishing upbringing as her parents' adventure of a lifetime becomes young Suzanne's worst nightmare. Heywood, despite finding positives in her life at sea, longed for stability and an education, and begged her parents to allow her to live a normal life. Through her own determination, teaching herself through whatever books she could lay her hands on, she eventually escaped earning an interview and acceptance at Oxford University aged 17.

In conversation with Katie Grant

## JENNY BROWN & NICHOLAS PEARSON

12:00 / £10, £8c

**Jenny Brown** has run her own Literary Agency for 20 years and was previously Head of Literature at the Scottish Arts Council, presenter of book programmes for Scottish Television and founder Director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival. She represents 50 writers mostly based in Scotland including Sally Magnusson, Malachy Tallack, Melanie Reid and the late Alasdair Gray.

**Nicholas Pearson** is one of the leading lights in today's publishing world. He is publishing director at John Murray, having previously worked at Fourth Estate, Faber & Faber, Orion, Jonathan Cape and The Bodley Head. He has edited numerous acclaimed writers including Hilary Mantel, Doris Lessing, Jonathan Franzen, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Alan Garner.

Take a glimpse beneath the covers at the changing world of publishing with these two hugely experienced professionals. With stories from behind the scenes they will discuss the threats and benefits of AI, the current trends (Faction, Romantasy and Memoir), the selling power of the celebrity author and their encounters with many memorable personalities.

Image: Sandy Young Photography



## PUBLISHING BEHIND THE SCENES



## WILLIAM DALRYMPLE

12:15 / £12, £10c

In August 1765 the East India Company defeated the young Mughal emperor, whose empire at that time generated just under half the world's wealth and forced him to establish a new administration. Run by English merchants who collected taxes using a ruthless private army, this new regime saw the company transform itself from an international trading corporation into something much more unusual: an aggressive colonial power in the guise of a multinational private company, headquartered in one small office in London.

Multi-award-winning and bestselling historian William Dalrymple tells the remarkable story of the dangerously unregulated East India Company as it has never been told before, drawing on reams of scarcely seen documents which bring to life Mughal generals and Rohilla princes; and re-interprets the roles of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, leading company men.

*The Anarchy* is the fourth and final volume in Dalrymple's magisterial *The Company Quartet* which brings together two hundred years of tumultuous colonial history, covert political machinations and bloody resistance.

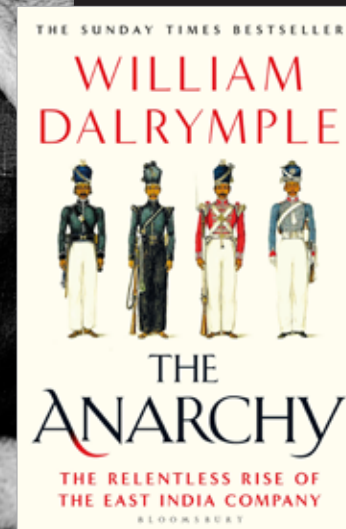


Image: Bikramjit Bose

SUNDAY 12 MAY

## RODGE GLASS

12:15 - 13:45  
£12, £10c  
Rothesay Room

Alasdair Gray and Michel Faber's biographer Rodge Glass leads a welcoming workshop on biographical writing, concentrating on how to construct a portrait and bringing your real-life characters vividly to the page.

Whether you're writing about historical characters, about yourself or your family, this event will explore the relationship between biography and autobiography. Open to all, whatever stage you are at in your writing life.

Rodge Glass is a Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Strathclyde.

## BIOGRAPHICAL WRITING WORKSHOP



Image: Alan Dimmick



## JANE WELLESLEY

13:30 / £10, £8c

The epithet 'blue eyes and wild spirit' captures the fascination of Dorothy Wellesley – poet, traveller, heiress and rebel. When she became the lover of fellow-poet and gardener, Vita Sackville-West, she wrecked her marriage to the future duke of Wellington but gained entrée to the circle of Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury group of writers and artists. A significant poet in her own right, she was hailed by none other than W.B. Yeats

as one of the most important of her generation. She in turn became his intimate friend and muse in his final years, being present at his death bed.

This riveting and unflinching biography by her granddaughter, drawing on unpublished archives and private family papers, reveals a reckless and often vulnerable woman of great talent, passions and integrity who deserves this long overdue recognition as being a ground breaker ahead of her times.



## GAVIN FRANCIS & ALLAN LITTLE

13:30 / £10, £8c

Which writers changed your life? For GP Gavin Francis, the bestselling author of *Recovery*, it's the seventeenth century physician Sir Thomas Browne.

For renowned BBC special correspondent, Allan Little, it's the legendary foreign correspondent James Cameron.

Sir Thomas Browne, subject of Francis's latest book, studied medicine abroad before settling in Norwich where he practised as a doctor and wrote some of the greatest works of the seventeenth century including *Religio Medici* (*Religion of the Doctor*).

James Cameron was renowned for his reports on international conflicts such as the Chinese invasion of Tibet and the Korean War, remarkable for their candour and independence.

In conversation, Gavin Francis will describe how he and Browne share a fundamental curiosity about the world; while Allan Little will talk about Cameron's classic memoir *Point of Departure* that led him to become a journalist.

## DONNA ASHWORTH

14:00 / £12, £10c

With a following of over 1.2 million, the UK's no.1 bestselling poetry author Donna Ashworth speaks to all generations of women and has a dedicated fan base which include the likes of Lisa Snowden, Cat Deeley, Fearne Cotton, and Davina McCall.

Donna's latest book *Wild Hope* follows on from her collection *I Wish I Knew*, a Sunday Times Best Seller. With her 2020 poem *History Will Remember When The World Stopped* going viral over lockdown, it is no surprise that Donna Ashworth has amassed millions of devoted readers. Her writing not only helps us to find hope on the days we feel worn down and helpless but her social media accounts have been set up to create a safe community for women to connect.

Donna lives in the hills of Scotland with her husband, two sons and dogs. Touching on both her life and her books, if you are looking for inspiration during these challenging times then this is the talk for you.

In conversation with Theresa Talbot

## BEAUTIFUL AND UPLIFTING DAVINA MCCALL

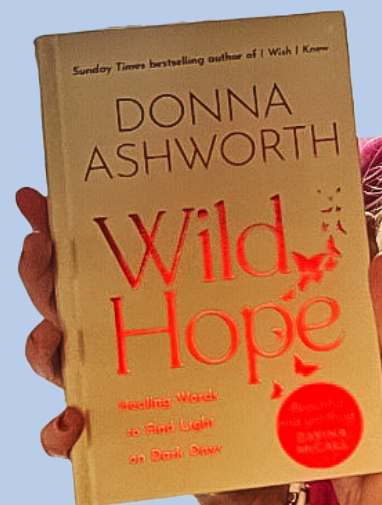


Image: Robert Ashworth





Image: Azura Primavera



## ERROLLYN WALLEN WITH JAMES MACMILLAN

15:15 / £10, £8c

When Errollyn Wallen, aged nine, told her uncle that she could hear 'all these sounds in my head' and didn't know what to do with them, he suggested that perhaps she was a composer. Today Wallen is an international composer and singer-songwriter, as much at home with pop and jazz than with classical music. But it was a tortuous journey for the girl born in Belize, brought up in Tottenham, to fulfil her calling, surviving childhood abuse, a suicide attempt and racial prejudice.

This is a memoir, brilliantly told through diary entries, poetry and vivid prose, of the triumph of creativity and musicianship, which has seen Wallen conduct her operas and orchestral works in the world's greatest theatres and concert halls. One of her recent operas, *Dido's Ghost*, was composed in Strathy Point lighthouse in the Highlands, where she frequently returns as it 'has opened a new door to creativity.'

In association with the Cumnock Tryst



## BECOMING A COMPOSER

Image: Phillip Gattward



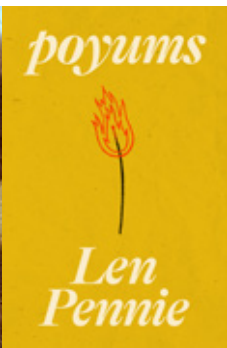
Image: Simone Falk



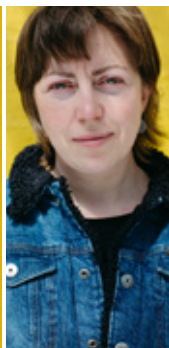
Kirsty Logan



Len Pennie



Len Pennie



Jen Stout

Image: Andrew Cawley

## KIRSTY LOGAN, LEN PENNIE & JEN STOUT

15:30 / £10, £8c

The art of biographical writing as defined by its rising stars. Three young emerging non-fiction writers discuss writing their own lives alongside the lives of others.

**Kirsty Logan** is an award-winning novelist whose memoir *The Unfamiliar* focuses on her motherhood and on her family around her, challenging our assumptions about pregnancy, gender roles, queer identity and what it means to be a parent.

**Len Pennie** draws on her life in her bold, unashamedly frank debut collection of poems *Poyums*. Moving deftly between English and Scots, she writes letters to her younger self,

advocates for women's rights and adapts fairy tales to process an abusive relationship.

**Jen Stout** is a journalist, writer, and radio producer from Shetland, frequently working in Ukraine. Her first book *Night Train to Odesa: Covering the Human Cost of Russia's War* is a highly personal journal of one young Scot's experience of war and of the Ukrainians.

Chaired by biographer Rodge Glass

## JOHN NIVEN

15:30 / £10, £8c

In 2010 John Niven's brother Gary tried to kill himself at the age of 42 after years of chaotic struggle against the world. He was in an induced coma in the intensive care unit at Crosshouse hospital in Kilmarnock, from which he never woke up. *O Brother* tells the story of the next few days and the 40-odd years that led to this moment.

Niven, author and screenwriter, himself no stranger to some of the self-destructive urges that bedevilled his brother, is well-known for his fiction, but his award-winning memoir, by turns heart-breaking and uproariously funny, evokes a working-class childhood of the 1970s and 80s in Irvine, a time when his little brother Gary was fearless, popular, stubborn, handsome, funny and sometimes terrifying, as it tries to answer the questions of guilt, culpability and regret that often haunt the survivors of suicide.

Niven's other best-selling books include *Kill your Friends*, *The Second Coming* and *Straight White Male*.



'An INCREDIBLE achievement' 'LAUGHS APLENTY' 'HILARIOUS' 'SUPERB'

'IT'S WRECKING ME' 'HEARBREAKING' 'Full of GREAT EMOTION' 'BRUTAL'

TWO BROTHERS, 'MOVING' 'One of THE BEST MEMOIRS I have ever read'

# O BROTHER

'A book whose genuine importance is only equalled by its sheer, visceral, compulsive readability' **CAITLIN MORAN**

'Absurdly well-written, painfully funny and painfully painful' **ADAM KAY**

**JOHN NIVEN**

'An extraordinary memoir; as devastating as it is colourful, forensic in its examination of family dynamics and so beautifully written' **JOJO MOYES**

**AS MOVING, SCALDING, FUNNY AND HARROWING AS ANY MEMOIR I'VE EVER READ**

**IAN RANKIN**

SUNDAY 12 MAY

## ARIANE BANKES

16:45 / £10, £8c

When her mother Celia Paget died, Ariane Banks inherited a battered trunk stuffed with letters and diaries belonging to Celia and her identical twin Mamaine.

This correspondence charted the remarkable lives of the Paget sisters and their friends and lovers, including Albert Camus, Arthur Koestler whom Mamaine went on to marry, George Orwell who proposed to Celia, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.

Out of this uniquely rich archive, Ariane weaves the story of these captivating and strikingly beautiful twins with their indissoluble sibling love, who overcame a meagre education to take 1930s London society by storm and move among Europe's foremost intellectuals during the twentieth century's most dramatic decades. Above all, it is a sparkling portrait of the deep connection between two spirited sisters.

Ariane Banks, writer and former publisher, brings alive the voices, memories and images of an intoxicating, lost world in *The Quality of Love*.

## The Quality of Love

Twin Sisters at the Heart of the Century



## A STORYTELLER OF SUPREME GIFTS...I AM IN AWE OF HER RESOURCEFULNESS AND COURAGE

FERGAL KEANE



Image: Andrew Gawley

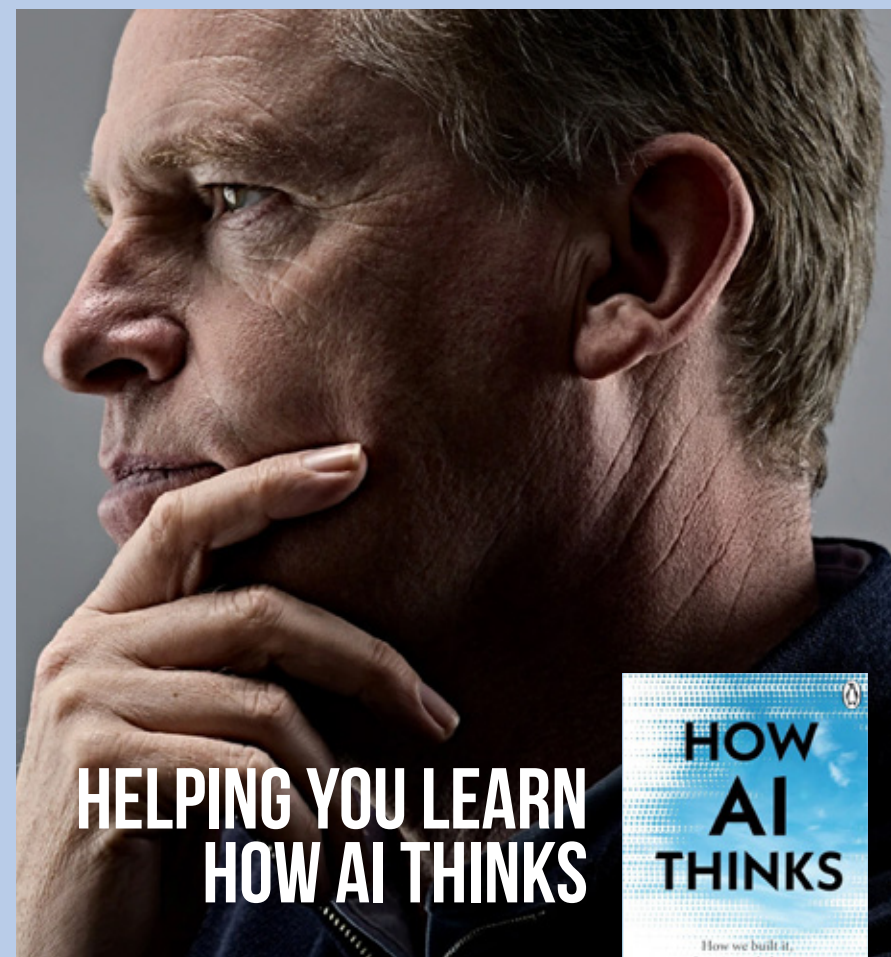
**JEN STOUT**  
17:00 / £10, £8c

When Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine, millions of lives changed in an instant: people were suddenly on the move and in this great flow of people was a journalist from Shetland.

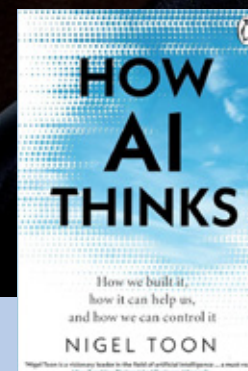
Jen Stout left Moscow abruptly, ending up on a border post in southeast Romania, from where she began to cover the human cost of Russian aggression.

Working alone, her first-hand, vivid reporting brought the war in cities across Ukraine, first Odesa, then Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Kyiv and Donbas home to readers in Scotland.

A writer always seeking to understand the bigger picture of the history, hopes and fears in this war in Europe, in her first book *Night Train to Odesa* she brings to life stories from those on the ground, from those enduring and surviving the daily catastrophe of the conflict, from the night trains, birthday parties, military hospitals and bunkers.



**NIGEL TOON**  
17:00 / £10, £8c



The rapid rise of artificial intelligence is reshaping our daily lives, sometimes in ways we're completely unaware of, but how? And what can we expect in the future? We stand at the brink of a historic change that will disrupt society and at the same time create enormous opportunities.

Nigel Toon, founder of Graphcore, a captivating storyteller and visionary leader in the field, named as one of the 'Top 100 entrepreneurs in the UK' by the *Financial Times*, explains that AI is a tool that we can control and use to augment our own amazing human intelligence.

Our search engines are becoming answer engines. Artificial intelligence is already revolutionising sectors from education to healthcare to the creative arts. But how does an AI understand sentiment or context? Addressing the question of the moment, Nigel wants to help you learn *How AI Thinks*.



**CHRISTIAN LEWIS**

18:30 / £10, £8c

Walking the entire 19,000-mile coastline of the UK saved his life but the real journey here is one of self-discovery.

In 2017, former paratrooper Christian Lewis, suffering with acute depression, made an impulsive decision to walk from Swansea to raise awareness and funds for the veterans' charity SSAFA. He had no idea when he started this once-in-a-lifetime experience that he would be crossing the finish line five and a half years later with fellow adventurer, his fiancée Kate, baby Magnus, his dog Jet and a renewed

sense of purpose - having raised almost half a million pounds and with an Instagram following of almost 10k.

*Finding Hildasay*, Christian's first best-selling book about his journey, saw him finally find peace on this uninhabited island. In the 2024 sequel, *Hildasay to Home*, Chris's struggles with mental health returned as he and Kate walked southwards, and he unravelled once again.

Only with the home stretch to Wales in sight did Chris slowly come back into himself and the adventurous family of four completed their epic challenge in July 2023.

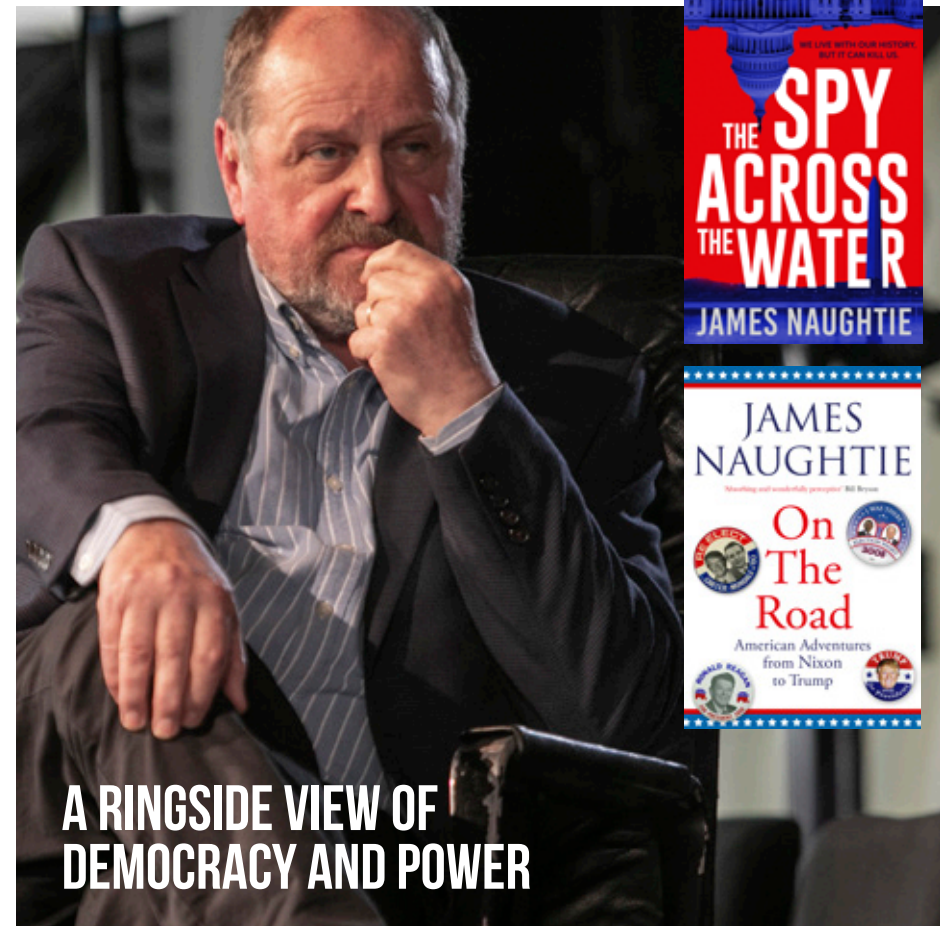
**JAMES NAUGHTIE**

18:30 / £10, £8c

Round off the festival in the company of veteran BBC broadcaster, James Naughtie, whose mellifluous tones and calm analysis have brought enlightenment and joy to generations of listeners to Radios 3 and 4.

With his unrivalled knowledge of US politics going back over forty years, Naughtie's *On The Road: American Adventures from Nixon to Trump* was acclaimed 'as a spell-binding tapestry of a nation'. Following his recent return to the States, he will share his frontline observations in this presidential year. On the home front, he will bring with his trademark fluency, laced with wit and wisdom, his unique take on the political rows, scandals and electioneering both north and south of the Border.

Woven into his commentary on actual events, Naughtie, a host of Radio 4's Book Club, will also discuss his latest thriller, *The Spy Across the Water* hailed by Lee Child as 'the best kind - intelligent, resonant, suspenseful... and plausible'. Set at a political turning point in the 1980s, with his protagonist, an ex-spook, now Ambassador in Washington, caught up in the Cold War and the Northern Ireland Troubles, Naughtie's fiction proves just as enthralling as his masterly grasp of Realpolitik.



**A RINGSIDE VIEW OF DEMOCRACY AND POWER**

# Boswell Children's Festival

**Saturday 11 May  
& Sunday 12 May**

## TICKETS

[www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk)  
**0333 0035 077**



## What to Expect

Events take place in the Engineering Centre or the Outdoor Classroom. **FREE drop-in colouring station.**

**The Engineering Centre** is a large room that is enclosed and set out with seats and the author and/or illustrator will be at the front.

They will be talking about their books in a fun, interactive way perhaps with a PowerPoint show or live drawing. The doors will be closed for the duration of the event but festival volunteers can let you in or out for comfort breaks.

**The Outdoor Classroom** is closed on 3 sides and open on one side with a circle of stone benches.

- **Children must be accompanied by an adult.**
- **Under 2s are free.**
- **Tickets £3.00 Special price for postcode KA18 addresses: £2.00**
- **Duration and age guidance is given for each event.**

## SPECIAL EVENT!

Friday 10 May in The Pavilion at Dumfries House

## Rose Reilly with Louise Baillie

17:30 - 18:30pm / Age 7+  
Under 16 £3.00 / Adult £10

**Come and meet Ayrshire's World Cup winning footballer Rose Reilly**

Ayrshire footballer Rose Reilly MBE is the only Scottish person to have won a football world cup! She will join Louise Baillie, the author of *Spectacular Scottish Women*, to talk about her career as an international striker. This family event will be a source of fascinating facts and inspiring stories about Rose and other amazing women athletes, musicians, scientists, queens, activists and models from Scotland.



## Drawing on Nature with Kate Leiper

10:15 - 11:00 / £3.00 / Age 5+

Join illustrator, Kate Leiper, and discover the migrating birds that pass Dumfries House.

Where have they been? And where are they going? Create your own artwork based on these amazing birds and their journey. A fun family event with no skills required!

## Vivian French & Kate Leiper: Storymapping fun

11:30 - 12:15pm / £3.00 / Age 4+

Kate and Vivian want you to help them make the longest map ever... a map of all the places you really REALLY want to visit! The moon, a treasure island, or the ice cream shop round the corner - we'll map them all, together with all the fantastical creatures you'd like to meet along the way!



## Alan Windram introduces Kevin the Orange

12:45 - 1:30pm / £3.00 / Age 3+

Award-winning author Alan Windram presents *Kevin the Orange* a laugh out loud picture book. Kevin is tired of being orange so with the help of his friend, Brian the Pear, Kevin tries being lots of different colours with hilarious consequences. A musical tale about the uniqueness of us as individuals, friendship and being happy in your own skin (peel).

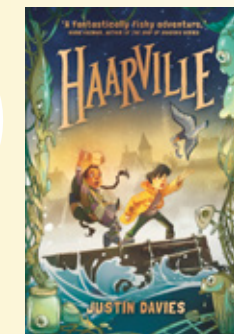
# The Engineering Centre Saturday 11 May



## Chae Strathie Rocking Scotland's People, Places & Stories

2:00 - 2:45  
£3.00 / Age 7+

Author Chae Strathie brings his stunning celebration of the rich culture and fascinating history of Scotland. Discover everything that makes Scotland so special - from its iconic landmarks to its magical myths and spooky ghost stories, from its bloody battles and its rich culture ... and everything in between.



## Justin Davies: Taking creative inspiration from real life

3:15 - 4:15  
£3.00 / Age 9+

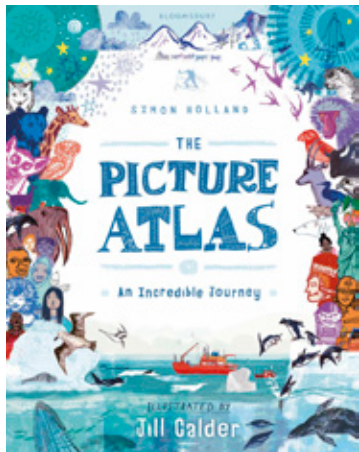
Welcome to Haarville – a place cut-off from the world where everything happens just a bit differently than you're used to. Meet its creator and get ready to make a fantastically fishy, sensationally sea-weedy, Haarville-inspired menu. During lockdown Justin Davies imagined this isolated, misty and murky setting from memories of favourite real-life places mixed with some serious internet research. Hope you're feeling hungry!

The  
Engineering Centre  
**Sunday  
12 May**

**Arctic Books Illustration  
Workshop with Jill Calder**

10:15 - 11:00 / £3.00 / Age 5+

Celebrating the Polar Bears featured in her popular children's books, *The Picture Atlas* and *The Sea*, illustrator Jill Calder will take you on a creative journey to the dramatic icy lands around the Arctic Circle and introduce you to beautiful Inuit art and stories. Jill will inspire you to draw amazing creatures, beautiful snowscapes and fierce, furry predators and then teach you to cut and fold your very own picture book!



**Fairytales  
Unboxed with  
Vivian French**

11:30 - 12:15 / £3.00

Age 6+

Bibi doesn't believe in fairies... until she meets Miss Myrtle, and is offered a chance to travel through seven

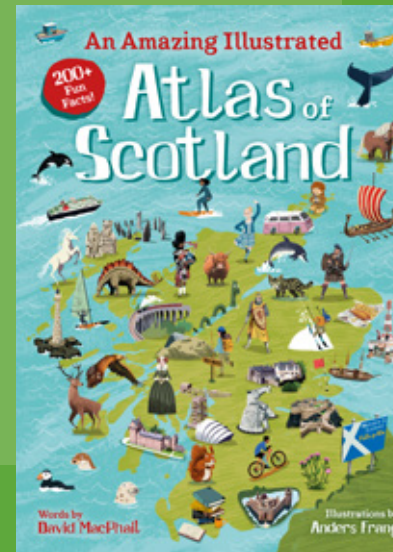
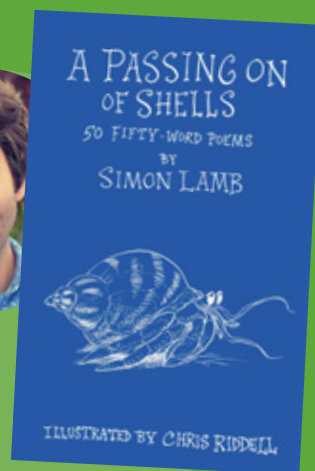
different fairytale worlds in order to win a wish. Come and hear about Vivian's new book, *Bibi and the Box of Fairytales*, learn the troll song... and make some moving magical characters!

**The Life of a Poem with Scriver**

**Simon Lamb**

12:45 - 1:30 / £3.00 / Age 7+

Where do poems come from? What stories do they have to tell? Join Simon Lamb, the Carnegie-nominated author of *A Passing On of Shells*, as he shares the biography of one of the poems from his debut poetry collection in his epic and intimate way, and then have a go at writing one of your own, inspired by your own life. What will you create?



**David MacPhail's Journey  
Around Scotland**

2:00 - 2:45 / £3.00 / Age 7+

Did you know that long ago Scotland was buried under a layer of ice one kilometre thick? That Orkney's neolithic village of Skara Brae is older than the Great Pyramid in Egypt? Or that, in order to take back Roxburgh Castle, Robert the Bruce's soldiers disguised themselves as cows? For these exciting facts and so many more, join David MacPhail, author of *An Amazing History Atlas of Scotland* for this journey into Scotland's amazing past.

**Joan Haig's Great Minds**

3:15 - 4:15

£3.00 / Age 9+



In *Great Minds: 2500 Years of Thinkers & Philosophers* by Joan Haig and Joan Lennon they ask what made Socrates so wise? Does 'nothing' exist? And why is time so weird? Put your thinking caps

on and come along for a mind-bending hour of big questions (and surprising answers!) as we meet some of the greatest minds in human history.

**THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM**



Scribble AND Scrawl  
**CRAWL!**

with

**Justin Davies  
& Jill Calder**

**Saturday 11 May**

11:30 - 1:00pm / £3.00 / 7+yrs

**Sunday 12 May**

2:00 - 3:30pm / £3.00 / 7+yrs

Enjoy drawing or sketching? Love writing stories or poems? Come and get creative on a family-friendly, Scribble & Scrawl Crawl with award-winning duo, illustrator Jill Calder & children's author Justin Davies. Be inspired by the sights and sounds around Dumfries House as Jill & Justin lead you on an interactive walking tour, with lots of writing and drawing fun guaranteed! We'll provide the prompts... all you need is your imagination! Paper and pencils provided. Begins and ends at the Outdoor Classroom. Dress for the weather.



ONE OF THE MOST  
INNOVATIVE  
WRITERS OF THE  
ENLIGHTENMENT AND  
INVENTOR OF MODERN  
BIOGRAPHY

# JAMES BOSWELL

1740 - 1795



James Boswell sprang from an ancient Ayrshire family, which had been settled at Auchinleck since the sixteenth century. He was born in Edinburgh in 1740 where his father, who became Lord Auchinleck, was a Judge in the Supreme Court of Scotland. His mother was descended from a minor branch of Scottish royalty.

He was educated at Edinburgh University followed by Glasgow University, where he attended the lectures of the great Enlightenment philosopher, Adam Smith. From the start, Bozzy as he was affectionately known, was drawn to the pleasure-loving side of life. His first visit to London at the age of 19 began a love affair with the city which never wavered. His charm, sensitivity and intelligence opened doors to the most brilliant men of the day, but the ultimate prize for Boswell was his friendship with the towering figure of Dr Samuel Johnson – compiler of the definitive dictionary of the English language and celebrated man of letters. Boswell's friendship led him to become Johnson's biographer and the account of his life, published 220 years ago this May, has never been out of print. His *Life of Johnson* established him as the inventor of modern biography and has upheld his reputation as one of the most innovative writers of the Enlightenment.

Boswell was also author of a pioneering travel book *An Account of Corsica* and his famous *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, which described an expedition made to the Western Isles with Dr Johnson. At the end of their journey, they stayed at Auchinleck where Johnson famously crossed swords with Boswell's father.

Boswell's fame redoubled in the twentieth century with the discovery and publication of his diaries, setting him alongside Pepys as one of the greatest diarists in the English language. Boswell ushered in the confessional memoir, which is so popular today. Nothing was omitted - including his innumerable sexual encounters, his battle with depression, his difficult relationship with his father, his frustrated political ambition and his life as a lawyer in the Scottish courts.

Boswell was an Ayrshireman through and through. He married his cousin, Margaret Montgomerie, with whom he had five children, and became Laird of Auchinleck on the death of his father in 1782 and devoted much time and money to the care of the Estate. He died in 1795 and was interred in the Boswell Mausoleum in Auchinleck churchyard.

## PAY A VISIT TO THE BOSWELL QUILL

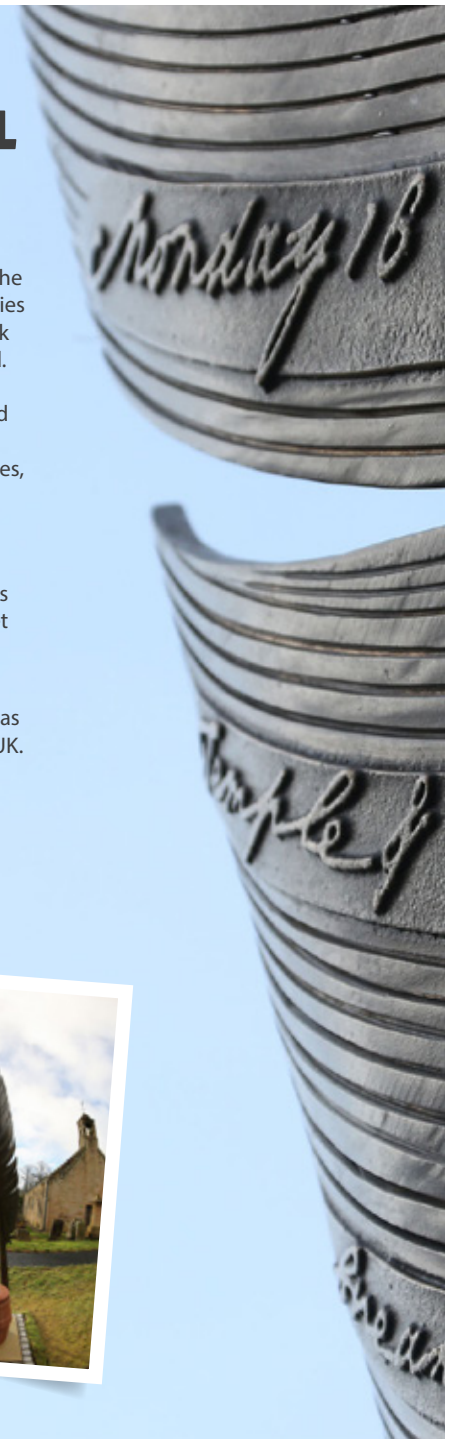
Installed in historic Auchinleck churchyard in November 2020 in the midst of lockdown, this giant bronze feather writing quill celebrates both the inventor of modern biography, James Boswell, and the universal power of the written word. The sculpture lies at the heart of a new visitor experience at Auchinleck churchyard where the famous biographer is interred. Four years in the making, the ambitious project, which is an all-round visitor destination, has involved re-landscaping around the existing war memorial, planting borders of shrubs as well as hedges and trees, including twelve yews named the Twelve Apostles.

A network of paths has been restored for visitors to explore the graveyard on a series of trails including one for children. A new sign at the entrance explains all, including the history of the site, along with leaflet holders of printed maps.

James Knox, chairman of the Boswell Trust, said: 'The Quill is destined to become a unique landmark as there is nothing like it in Scotland or the rest of the UK.'

The Trust is enormously grateful to LEADER, who provided the bulk of the funding, as well as to other private trusts for enabling us to commission the sculpture and to enhance its beautiful setting.'

[www.jamesboswell.scot](http://www.jamesboswell.scot)



# BOSWELL SCHOOLS' DAY

The Boswell Book Festival programme for Ayrshire schools is staged by the Boswell Trust in support of their charitable aim to advance heritage, literary arts and education and is free for schools to attend.

As the world's only book festival dedicated to memoir and biography, the events for children are designed to introduce ideas of discovering - past and present - the lives of change makers and influencers. Also, importantly, the events introduce the idea of how to tell our own stories and the importance of learning to do this in a way that acknowledges experiences and builds resilience and in advance of the festival this year an Outreach programme takes place in local primary schools connecting these communities directly to the festival.

Each year we welcome over 400 schoolchildren to Dumfries House on the opening day of the festival.

## PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOLS' DAY

FRIDAY 10 MAY 2024

BY INVITATION

### LIVE EVENTS:

• **How to Make the Future Truly Wild**  
with Ben Martynoga

Imagine a world where animals roam freely, trees and flowers grow abundantly, and humans live in harmony with the wild. Sound like a fairy tale?

But what if this world is not only possible, but also necessary for our survival? And what if we can get there by rewilding - the process of restoring nature to a state where it can take care of itself - and us - again? Meet biologist and writer Dr Ben Martynoga, author of *Rewild*, the brand-new title in the award-winning Explodapedia series, and get ready for a wild adventure!

• **Dumfries House Tour**

Pupils are invited to join a fun tour through the fabulous rooms of this great house built by Scottish architect brothers John and Robert Adam for Ayrshireman, the Earl of Dumfries, hearing tales of the children who once lived there as well as stories of a particularly smelly ghost.

• **Workshop: Space to Breathe**

With a guest appearance from James Boswell himself, pupils will explore their favourite - or imagined - outdoor space. Whether a garden, park, field or forest with flowers, trees, water and wild animals, what makes the perfect natural environment?



Scottish  
Friendly

# Scottish Friendly is proud to sponsor the Boswell Children's Festival

We are delighted to be a supporter of  
the Boswell Book Festival

10-12 May 2024, Dumfries House



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The **Cumnock Tryst**  
A meeting place for music

**2 – 6 October 2024**

Join the party! Celebrate our 10th Birthday Festival with exceptional musical experiences.  
[thecumnocktryst.com](http://thecumnocktryst.com)



Founder/Artistic Director:  
Sir James MacMillan CBE  
Patron: Nicola Benedetti CBE



## WEDDINGS & PRIVATE EVENTS

There can be no more memorable place for any special event than Dumfries House. It is so much more than an elegant, 18th century stately home and our team can tailor your event to create something that is formal or informal, but always special and memorable.

## LUXURY OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

Sitting on the edge of Dumfries House estate and a short walk from Dumfries House itself, Dumfries House Lodge is an exclusive five-star country guest house offering luxury bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation.

For information, and to book weddings or events, visit [dumfries-house.org.uk/hospitality](http://dumfries-house.org.uk/hospitality).  
For luxury accommodation visit [dumfries-house.org.uk/lodge](http://dumfries-house.org.uk/lodge)

DUMFRIES HOUSE Cumnock, East Ayrshire, KA18 2NJ

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**BEST WISHES TO THE BOSWELL BOOK FESTIVAL**

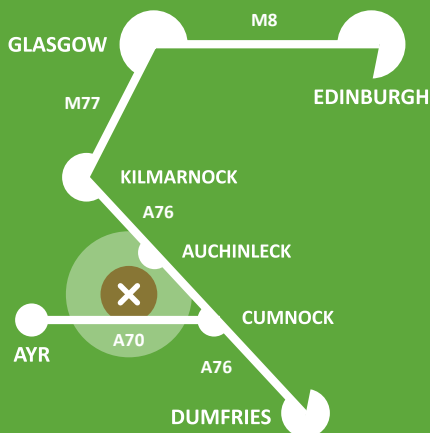


# HOW TO FIND US

FOLLOW THE SIGNS TO DUMFRIES HOUSE

Dumfries House,  
Cumnock, Ayrshire  
KA18 2NJ

Directions on: [www.dumfries-house.org.uk](http://www.dumfries-house.org.uk)



## By Air:

Glasgow International Airport is 50 minutes away.

## By Car:

Access to Dumfries House is from the A70 Ayr-Cumnock or Cumnock-Ayr direction. There are two entrances – one clearly marked 'cars only' and the other 'coaches only'.

## By Train:

The nearest train station is Auchinleck which connects to many lines in the region. The train from Glasgow Central calls at Barrhead, Dunlop, Stewarton, Kilmaurs, Kilmarnock, and Auchinleck. From Carlisle the train calls at Gretna Green, Annan, Dumfries, Sanquhar, Kirkconnel, New Cumnock and Auchinleck. Book a taxi in advance to pick you up from Auchinleck Station.

## Approximate journey times from:

Glasgow	50 mins
Edinburgh	2 hours
Dumfries	1 hour 10 mins
Stranraer	1 hour 30 mins
Carlisle	1 hour 30 mins

# BOX OFFICE

## ONLINE TICKETS

[www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk)

## BY TELEPHONE

**Tel: 0333 0035 077** (until 18:00 Friday 10 May)

Lines open: Mon - Sat, 09:00 - 18:00 (until 18:00 Friday 10 May then use Festival numbers below)

Most major credit and debit cards accepted – no cheques.

## Tickets also on sale at

**Waterstones, High Street, Ayr**

(open Mon - Sat 09:00 - 17:30 / Sun 13:00 - 17:00)

Until Thurs 9 May 17:30

## Festival Weekend Box Office

**Tickets by Phone 07530 380 021** (11/12 May ONLY)

Lines open: Sat 11 - Sun 12 May / 10:00 - 18:00

## Tickets On-Site Dumfries House

(from 16:30 Fri 10 May ONLY)

Fri 10 May 16:30 - 19:30

Sat 11 May 10:00 - 20:00

Sun 12 May 10:00 - 20:00

## Children's Festival Weekend Box Office

**Tickets by Phone 07555 924 377** (11/12 May ONLY)

Lines open: Sat 11 - Sun 12 May / 9:45 - 15:00

## Tickets On-Site Engineering Centre

(from Sat 11 May ONLY)

Sat 11 May 09:30-16:00

Sun 12 May 09:30-15:00

**Tickets:** Tickets must be paid for at the time of booking and are non-refundable. Tickets for The Boswell Book Festival are limited and may therefore not be available for purchase at the door on the day of performance. Where the postal option has been selected tickets will be sent 14 days before the event. There will be a handling charge added.

**Concessions:** Available to students, registered disabled (plus one carer), registered unemployed, under 16s and Young Scot cardholders. Proof of entitlement will be required.

**Events:** Events are one hour long unless specified. All seating is unreserved.

**Visitors with additional needs:** The marquee venues have wheelchair access. Seats on the front row or by the central aisle can be reserved for ticket holders with disabilities, subject to availability. To arrange, please phone the Box Office in advance.

**Latecomers:** Events start punctually. Members of the audience may not be admitted after the beginning of events.

Programme details are correct at the time of going to press. The Boswell Book Festival reserves the right to alter or cancel events. Please check the Festival website [www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk), Facebook or X (Twitter) for the latest news, special events and information. Remember your umbrella in case of rain!