



Stratford  
**Literary  
Festival**

# Spring Festival

8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> May 2025

Alison Steadman  
Mishal Husain  
Dame Jacqueline Wilson  
Reeta Chakrabarti  
John Boyne  
Sally Phillips  
Dr Julie Smith  
Susie Dent  
Cecelia Ahern  
Juliet Stevenson  
Jeremy Vine  
Dharshini David

Sir Graham Brady  
Emma Barnett  
Tracy Borman  
Simon Jenkins  
Charlie Higson  
Chloe Dalton  
Carol Klein  
Diana Henry  
Robin Ince  
Julia Samuel  
Kit de Waal  
...and lots more



**Plus** Tabletop Games Café  
Comic Workshop | Bunny v Monkey Trail  
**FREE** Drop-in Activities





MUCH ADO  
ABOUT NOTHING

TITUS  
ANDRONICUS

HAMLET  
HAIL TO THE  
THIEF

THE CONSTANT  
WIFE

4.48 PSYCHOSIS

THE WINTER'S  
TALE

THE TWO  
GENTLEMEN  
OF VERONA

FAT HAM

MEASURE FOR  
MEASURE

ROALD DAHL'S  
THE BFG

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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# Welcome to our 18<sup>th</sup> Spring Festival

We're delighted to bring you the line-up for this May's Festival - a fabulous mixture of well-known names, bestselling authors, leading experts and issue-led events that will make for some great conversations. We're really proud to be including as always several exciting emerging writers and writing workshops, because that's what book festivals are all about: providing a platform for the writers of tomorrow. Please come along and support them on their journey.

There's plenty to inspire young readers and, for the first time this year, we're including tabletop gaming - a brilliant angle on the magic of storytelling.

We look forward to having you with us.

**Annie Ashworth | Festival Director**



Cover: detail from a painting  
by local artist Barbara Perkins  
[rodnbarbart.com](http://rodnbarbart.com)

## How to Book

By phone: **0333 666 3366** (Mon-Fri 9am-7pm)

Online: [stratlitfest.co.uk](http://stratlitfest.co.uk)

In person during the Festival:

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

All tickets incur a booking fee to cover  
the costs of our external box office.  
There will be a £2.50 charge to post tickets.

Scan me to book



Go to our website at [stratlitfest.co.uk](http://stratlitfest.co.uk)  
for the latest news and any programme  
changes or additions

Festival Team: **Charlotte Brennan** (Festival Administrator and Fundraising Lead)  
**Jo James** (Operations Director and Programming)  
**Becci Smith** (Schools and Children's Events Programming)  
**Suzanne Worthington** (Stewards and Volunteers Coordinator)  
**Alison Morris** (Author Care)  
**Liz Wise** (Books with Friends Coordinator)  
**Judy Reaves** (Set Design)  
**Tamsin Williams** (Wigwam PR)

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

Stratford Literary Festival is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation no.: 1164662

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April

## Festival General Knowledge Quiz

£17 | 7-9pm



Roll up for our annual fundraising general knowledge quiz. Gather together a team of six of your cleverest friends and pit your wits against other teams to be the general knowledge champions of Stratford. We promise no literary questions - well, the odd one might slip in!

*Tickets include a sharing platter per table and a donation to the Festival's outreach work in schools, the community and prisons.*

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

## Alix Almond WORKSHOP: Linocut

£45 | 9am-12pm



Learn to linocut and create your own book plate or name plate to personalise your favourite books or journal. Carve and handprint a single colour design of your choice - be inspired by your favourite story - guided by printmaker Alix Almond. Come and find out all about the magic of the printing spoon! Suitable for beginners or those with some experience of linocut. Alix teaches linocut workshops across Coventry and Warwickshire. She uses a variety of linocut techniques to print single colour, reduction and layered linocuts and is inspired by landscapes, wildlife and colour. See her work at [alixalmond.com](http://alixalmond.com)

*Tickets inc materials*

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

## Jennifer Collier WORKSHOP: Paper Flowers

£45 | 10am-12.30pm



We welcome back the hugely talented paper artist whose workshops always sell out! Learn a unique skill as she shows you how to create decorative paper flowers from recycled papers, with a choice of six different types of flowers to make, from the very easy through to a five-petal origami flower. See her work at [jennifercollier.co.uk](http://jennifercollier.co.uk)

*Tickets inc materials*

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

## Julian Treasure and Alice Vincent Are You Listening?

£14 | 12-1pm

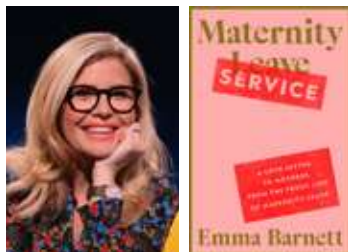


Hearing is the first sense we develop and yet, in an increasingly noisy and distracted world, most people pay scant attention to the sounds around them, causing them to lose contact with the essential skill of listening. Julian is an expert in communication and his TED Talk *How to Speak so that People want to Listen* is the sixth most-viewed TED Talk of all time. *Why Women Grow* author Alice Vincent's latest book asks if sound - seeking it, trying to hold on to it, making space for it in life - can reconnect us to lost parts of herself but to a life more consciously lived. Talking to Julia Wheeler

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Emma Barnett**  
**A Love Letter to Mothers**

£15 | 12-1pm



We welcome the new voice of the Radio 4 *Today* programme and former *Woman's Hour* presenter to talk about her work. Emma has balanced her broadcasting career with raising two young children and health concerns, yet her experience of maternity leave left her unprepared for the more complicated reality of what it means to be on maternity service. She sets out to capture this reality so familiar to many women, and celebrates the work of being on maternity leave, with its soaring highs and challenging lows, and its impact on how women feel about our purpose and ourselves. Babies are welcome at this event.

Talking to Clare Clark

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Jennifer Collier**  
**WORKSHOP:**  
**Paper - Storybook Gloves**

£45 | 2-4.30pm



We welcome back the hugely talented paper artist whose workshops always sell out! You'll create your own Storybook Gloves from beautiful found and recycled papers. You'll have a choice of three types of gloves to make, which will be embellished and stitched to add exquisite detail. All materials are provided, but please do bring your own special papers, books and maps to personalise your work. See her work at [jennifercollier.co.uk](http://jennifercollier.co.uk)

*Tickets inc materials*

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Chloe Dalton**  
**and Lottie Hazell**  
**Raising Hare and Piglet**

£10 | 2-3pm



Meet two authors whose books smashed through the debut charts last year and continue to dominate the best-seller charts. *Raising Hare* chronicles the journey and challenges of caring for a leveret and preparing for its return to the wild, sharing firsthand an extraordinary relationship between human and animal, serving to remind us that the most remarkable experiences, inspiring the most hope, often arise when we least expect them. Local author Lottie Hazell's debut novel *Piglet* received huge acclaim and is a deliciously dark and piercing story of food and secrets.

Talking to Deirdre Shields

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Susie Dent**  
**A Woman of Words**

£15 | 2-3pm



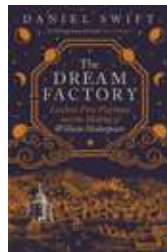
The queen of Dictionary Corner delves into her holdall of words and amazing word phrases, and also reveals her debut novel which unsurprisingly is a crime novel based around words! When an anonymous letter is delivered to the Clarendon English Dictionary, it puzzles the team of lexicographers. When more letters arrive and the team pull apart the clues within them, the questions become more insistent and troubling. Someone is trying to lead the lexicographers to the truth, while another is desperate to keep it buried.

Talking to Jo Durrant

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Daniel Swift**  
The Dream Factory -  
London's First Playhouse

£14 | 3-4pm



In 1576, in a muddy field in Shoreditch, James Burbage erected London's first purpose-built commercial playhouse. Through the life of this little-known playhouse, discover how Shakespeare became Shakespeare, how the Elizabethan stage began to flourish and the world that produced *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Daniel Swift teaches at the New College of the Humanities in London. His first book, *Bomber County*, was longlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize and the *Guardian* First Book Award, and his essays and reviews have appeared in *The New York Times*, *New Statesman*, and *Harper's Magazine*.

Talking to Dr Abigail Rokison-Woodall

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Tim Minshall**  
Your Life is Manufactured

£15 | 4-5pm



We live in a manufactured world and there exists a nearly invisible, awe-inspiring global system of manufacturing that enables virtually every aspect of our existence. The Professor of Innovation at the University of Cambridge charts how this world came to be, and reveals the seismic impact manufacturing has had on our lives and the natural world, exploring how it could offer us a path to a truly sustainable future, and gives us the ability to make better choices for ourselves, our communities and the planet.

Talking to Deirdre Shields

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Carol Klein**  
Hortobiography

£16 | 4-5pm



The BBC *Gardener's World* presenter has rescheduled after traffic issues stopped her being with us in 2024. Her memoir talks about her life as a plantswoman from her first experiments in plantswomanship in her Devon cottage garden, to an entirely unexpected career as one of Britain's most familiar television presenters. She explores why our relationship with the natural world is so important, and what it brings to our lives.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Phil Craig**  
1945 The Reckoning

£14 | 4.30-5.30pm



Sub-titled: *War, Empire and the Struggle for a New World*, the latest book by *The Scandal Mongers* Podcaster and TV producer looks at the legacy of WW2. Clearing away the haze of nostalgia, he considers the many uncomfortable truths that emerge about attempts to rekindle empires and the clumsy decisions that have informed the shape of the world today. What did victory in the Second World War truly mean for the world, and the British, Dutch and French especially?

Talking to John Jefferies

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Diana Henry**  
**Crazy Water, Pickled Lemons**  
£16 | 5.30-6.30pm



The ideal event for foodies, especially those who love the cuisine of the Middle East, Mediterranean and North Africa. The bestselling *Daily Telegraph* food writer's first book has been republished and gathers together dishes that combine colourful, aromatic and perfumed ingredients, bringing an intoxicating whiff of warmer climes to your table. Diana Henry is the author of eight further cookbooks and was the Guild of Food Writers Cookery Journalist of the Year in 2007, 2009 and 2015, and won the Fortnum & Mason Cookery Writer Award in 2019.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Giles Milton**  
**The Stalin Affair**  
£16 | 6-7pm



The internationally bestselling historian's latest book reveals the remarkable true story of the Allies' secret mission to wartime Moscow in 1941. Stalin's forces faced a catastrophic defeat which would make the Allies' liberation of Europe virtually impossible, until Britain and America mobilised an elite team of remarkable people with the mission of keeping the Red Army in the war, discovering as they did so that the Soviet dictator had a terrifying masterplan for the post-war world.

Talking to Clare Clark

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Dan Richards**  
**Overnight: Stories After Dark**  
£14 | 7-8pm



*The Sunday Times* bestselling author takes us on an exploration of night - the nocturnal world, insomnia, the creative potential of the dark hours, the work that happens at night to keep the modern world moving. What can Moomintroll teach us about insomnia? What can international shipping, ferries and trains offer us as a lifeline? *Overnight* is a celebration of all things nocturnal, of those who labour while the rest of us sleep.

Talking to Jo Durrant

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Jonn Elledge**  
**A History of the World in 47 Borders**  
£14 | 7-8pm



People have been drawing lines on maps for as long as there have been maps to draw on. Sometimes rooted in physical geography, sometimes entirely arbitrary, these lines might often have looked very different if a war or treaty or the decisions of a handful of tired Europeans had gone a different way. The journalist and former Assistant Editor of *New Statesman* tells the stories of these borders, explaining how political identities were shaped, why the world looks the way it does - and the hilarious scale of human folly.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

## Local Author Showcase

Speakers FREE. Audience £5  
7.30-9pm



Back due to popular demand! Whether you have a germ of an idea, or a fully formed piece of writing, this is the night for you. Come along and share your work in a friendly and supportive environment - and bring family and friends to cheer you on! Each author has just two minutes to speak about their work, making this a fast-paced, fun and fascinating evening. There is a bar open before this event, during the interval halfway through, and at the end while authors and audience mingle, buy books and get them signed. If you'd like to be considered for a two-minute slot, please email [info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk](mailto:info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk).

Hosted by: Jo James

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

## Mishal Husain Broken Threads

£16 | 7.45pm-8.45pm



Mishal Husain is a respected and widely recognised figure formally as a Radio 4 Today presenter and TV newsreader for the BBC, and now as Editor-at Large for Bloomberg. Her Sunday Times bestselling memoir gives a personal and unique perspective of India in 1947, when Partition created the new state of Pakistan, by centring the experiences of her four grandparents. Her research is accompanied by letters, diaries, unpublished memoirs, tapes and interviews with her surviving family, and interrogates the impact of colonialism, imperialism, religion and conflict that continues to echo today.

Talking to  
Clare Clark

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Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Ellie Stevenson WORKSHOP: Family History through Artefacts

£25 | 9.30-11.30am



Following last year's sell out workshop, the book coach and author returns to show you how to delve even deeper into your family's history through exploring the stories behind familiar objects. In this hands-on workshop, you'll discover how photos, letters and household items can enrich your understanding of your family's past, and bring that past to life. Through practical activities and exercises, you'll explore the history behind such items, discover their significance in your family and learn how to use them to create a legacy.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Dr Lucy Pollock The Golden Rule

£15 | 10-11am



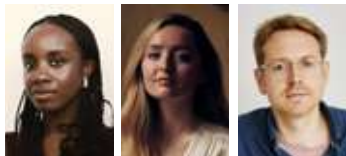
In a society obsessed with staying young, how can we age with confidence? Today, we are living longer, and have choices about how we will age. What will make us happy? What are we frightened of, and what might allay those fears? What changes will help us to flourish as we age? The bestselling doctor who specialises in older people shares what she has learned over 30 years about loss, impossible families, becoming older without children, sexuality, race, love and living with uncertainty. Discover principles we can all try to live by to bring positive change, so we all benefit from a kinder, more compassionate society.



Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Alayo Akinkugbe, Lucy Steeds & Joe Tucker Who's Art For?

£10 | 11.30am-12.30pm



The art world has always been steeped in snobbery with women, working class artists and people of colour the most under-represented. Three writers address this through fiction and real lives. Joe Tucker's uncle Eric's enormous body of work wasn't discovered until his death and now sells for thousands. Lucy Steed's novel exposes how one woman fought back against being marginalised and Alayo Akinkugbe considers how Black people have had no place in the history of art.



Talking to Tim Hubbard

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Sir Graham Brady Kingmaker

£16 | 12-1pm



Sir Graham Brady was the chairman of the powerful 1922 Committee from 2010. As the leader of the group with the power to choose a new leader of the Conservative Party, it was his hand that held the executioner's axe over five consecutive Prime Ministers' heads. Silent until now and with access to every key decision-maker of the past 14 years, he offers unique insights into the character and choices of successive Prime Ministers and the administrations they led, and what the future holds for the Tory party. Talking to Julia Wheeler

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Mary Costello and Elaine Garvey A Celebration of Irish Writing

£12 | 12.30-1.30pm



We're bringing together two exciting voices that confirm the huge regard held for Irish writers. Mary Costello's short story collection, *The China Factory*, was nominated for the *Guardian* First Book Award and shortlisted for an Irish Book Award and her first novel, *Academy Street*, was named overall Irish Book of the Year. Elaine Garvey has also published short stories and her first novel, *The Wardrobe Department*, is set between the bustling streets of Soho and the sweet grass of Leitrim and Donegal.

Talking to Clare Clark

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Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Marianne Brown The Shetland Way

£12 | 1-2pm



The need for energy to run our world is non-negotiable, but how do we balance that necessity with preserving the natural world and the earth's resources, and ensuring communities aren't exploited, especially those that are more deprived? Confined to Shetland due to Covid, and after the death of her father, the environmental journalist shares her experience of discovering a father she barely knew, and learning how the controversy of the proposed installation of wind farms had split the community. Talking to Fiona Lindsay

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Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## The Book Spa with Sceptre Books

£5 | 2-3pm



Are you stuck in a reading rut, always reaching for the same type of books in the bookshop or the library? Are you looking for inspiration, a freshen-up, a new topic that will excite you, relax you or calm your soul? Two editors from Sceptre Books, an imprint of publishing giants Hodder & Stoughton, bring you a smörgåsbord of titles to tickle your literary taste buds. Goody bag included with each ticket.

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Sceptre

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Julia Samuel with Kit de Waal Therapy Works Podcast

£16 | 2.30-3.30pm



The bestselling author and psychotherapist welcomes you into the heart of her therapy room for a live recording of her hugely successful *Therapy Works* podcast, in which she delves into conversations that explore life's profound challenges. The podcast is a journey through therapeutic dialogues that may stir deep emotions, yet these are the very emotions that can illuminate our lives in unexpected ways. She'll be talking to the novelist Kit de Waal about her triumphs, her struggles, and her personal growth.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Tracy Borman OBE Holbein and The Year That Changed Tudor England

£16 | 3-4pm



The year 1533 changed everything for Henry VIII and was captured forever by Hans Holbein, the most famous court painter of the age. The *Ambassadors*, which is seen by millions of visitors to the National Gallery each year, is full of hidden meanings and symbols that have remained hidden for 500 years. Based on her new book, the historian and Chief Curator for Historic Royal Palaces will unlock the mysteries of this painting and reveal the secrets that it tells us about the Tudor court.

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Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Simon Kyle Sleep

£14 | 3.30-4.30pm



If we get a decent night's sleep, we're likely to be slimmer, happier and healthier. But why do we seem to get worse at it, and turn to devices and tricks to track our sleep success? The Professor of Sleep Research at the Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences at the University of Oxford looks at the nature of sleep, what constitutes good rest, and how we might just be getting enough even though we convince ourselves we're not.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

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Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

### Christopher Summerfield These Strange New Minds: AI and What it Means

£14 | 4.30-5.30pm



The march of AI technology is set to upturn our economies, challenge our democracies, and refashion society in unpredictable ways. We can expect these new systems to soon be making autonomous decisions on the user's behalf, with transformative impact on everything we do. It is vital we understand how they work. The Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Oxford and staff research scientist at Google DeepMind gives us accessible, up-to-date and authoritative information on this radical new technology and how we can make it work for us - not us for it.

Talking to Clare Clark

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

### Simon Jenkins A Short History of British Architecture

£16 | 4.30-5.30pm



With roles as both deputy chairman of English Heritage and chairman of the National Trust, the author and broadcaster is well placed to take us on a tour of why Britain looks like it does and the impact of 20th century modernism on communities. He'll talk about why everyone is a consumer of architecture and makes the case for the importance of everyone learning to speak its language. 'Provocative, elegant, intriguing - Jenkins is a bold, imaginative writer' Rory Stewart.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

### Dame Jacqueline Wilson Think Again

£15 | 6-7pm



The multi-million selling writer's first adult novel was an instant *Sunday Times* bestseller last year. Now in paperback, you can discover what happened to the beloved Girls series characters Ellie, Magda and Nadine, and how life panned out for them in this uplifting, life-affirming book about friendship, family and finding fulfillment in unexpected places. Dame Jacqueline Wilson is a Festival Ambassador.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

### Kit de Waal The Best of Everything

£14 | 6-7pm



The author of many acclaimed books including *My Name is Leon* and a memoir, *Without Warning and Only Sometimes*, brings us her latest novel, described by Bernardine Evaristo as 'a profoundly compassionate novel of devastating power'. Paulette's the kind of woman who likes the future all mapped out until her world is turned upside down. The novel looks at what it means to care and learning to care in the aftermath of loss.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



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Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Booklovers' Wine Club Wines and Books to Match Your Mood

£35 | 6.45-8pm



The sell-out Wine Club returns with this year's Festival event - matching wines and books to your mood. Whether you are feeling happy, in love, excited, or sad, bored or deflated, James Richards and Lynn Taylor of Vin Neuf Wines will bring you the wines to celebrate or change your mood, and some brilliant readings to match.

Tickets include all tasting wines

VIN NEUF  
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Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Charlie Higson The Name's Bond - Rewriting a Classic

£15 | 7.30-8.30pm



How do you take on a classic character of literature and make it your own? Charlie Higson is a successful author, actor (best known for *The Fast Show*, comedian and writer for television and radio who created the phenomenally successful *Young Bond* series which has now sold over a million copies in the UK and has been translated into over 24 different languages. He's also written an adult Bond novel, *On His Majesty's Secret Service*. How does he ensure 007 fans are not disappointed? And what would M say?

Talking to Clare Clark

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Impromptu Shakespeare

£18 | 7.45-8.45pm



Hold on to your doublets, ruffs and trunk hose. The Bard is back! With story and verse improvised in the moment, enjoy a riotous new Shakespeare play every time - performed by Impromptu Shakespeare's whip-smart cast. Packed with wit, lyrical smarts, romance, and a dash of double-crossing, this leading ensemble do the Bard proud with a brand new hit this very evening, inspired by your suggestions. Winner Best Comedy Event, Buxton Fringe 2021. 'Shakespeare from the hip. Ingenious and very funny' - Will Gompertz, BBC Arts Editor. 'Simply sublime, side-splittingly hilarious improvised comedy almost worthy of the Bard himself'

★★★★ *Broadway Baby*

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

## Rupert Dastur WRITERS' WORKSHOP: Creating Compelling Characters

£45 | 9.30-11.30am



Join the writer, editor and publisher as he helps you craft characters that breathe on the page, exploring inner and outer lives, perspective and voice. The workshop offers tools for thinking deeply and meaningfully about character, generating material, and finding flow. Rupert's writing has been shortlisted for the Bath Short Story Award and the Fish Short Story Prize, and won the Federation of Scottish Writers' Award. He is the founder of TSS Publishing and director of the Cambridge Prizes for Short Fiction.

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Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

Georgina Moore  
WRITERS' WORKSHOP:  
Preparing for Publication  
£25 | 9.30-10.30am



Producing a manuscript is only the beginning of your journey to finding a readership. How do you craft a compelling pitch to an agent or publisher, or word a enticing blurb when taking the independent publishing route? And what's the best social media? Deputy MD of PR agency Midas, Georgina is an award-winning book publicist with 20 years' experience. She has worked with a huge variety of authors from debuts to household names. Her most recent PR campaign for Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* won the FutureBook and PPC awards for campaign of the year. She is also the author of the bestseller *The Garnett Girls* and *River of Stars* which will be published in July.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

Stig Abell and Ava Glass  
Crime and Thrillers  
£15 | 12-1pm



Two new crime thrillers from seasoned bestselling authors both at the top of their game. Stig Abell presents the breakfast show on Times Radio and was a regular presenter on Radio 4's *Front Row*. His books include *How Britain Really Works* and the latest in his Jake Jackson series, *The Burial Place*, it set on an archaeological dig. Ava Glass is the author of the high-octane Emma Makepeace thrillers. Dubbed 'The new queen of spy fiction' by the *Guardian* newspaper, Ava is CWA Dagger-shortlisted and her books include *Alias Emma (The Chase)*, *The Traitor* and *The Trap*. *The Traitor* was a Richard and Judy Bookclub pick. A former crime reporter and communications consultant, for five years Ava worked closely with spies.  
Talking to Tim Hubbard

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

Dr Julie Smith  
Open When...  
£16 | 12-1pm



The internationally bestselling author of *Why Has Nobody Told Me This Before?* is back with another instant bestseller-A must-have companion to turn to when you need help to navigate life's twists and turns; when being human starts to get complicated. Based around a series of real -life scenarios, she'll guide you through the storm, offering calm, clarity and a laser focus on the best way forward, with real-time tools that will help you reframe a situation and decide on your next move.  
Talking to Julia Wheeler

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

Simon Mayo MBE  
and Jeremy Vine  
Crime from the Ashes  
£16 | 2-3pm



We welcome two very well-known radio voices both of whom have turned to crime. Jeremy Vine presents the Radio 2 weekday lunchtime show and his debut novel, *Murder on Line One*, concerns an unsolved murder that comes to the attention of a late-night radio talk show host. Simon Mayo, now a Greatest Hits Radio presenter, is already a *Sunday Times* bestselling novelist. His latest, *Black Tag*, is set in a London art gallery, which has a suspicious fire.  
Talking to Steph McGovern

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Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

### Anne Sebba The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz

£14 | 2-3pm



The award-winning historian draws on meticulous archival research and exclusive first-hand accounts to tell the full and astonishing story of how, in 1943, German SS officers in charge of Auschwitz-Birkenau ordered that an orchestra should be formed among the female prisoners. What role could music play in a death camp? What was the effect on those women who owed their survival to their participation in a Nazi propaganda project?

Talking to Clare Clark

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

### Catherine Airey, Rupert Dastur and Joanna Miller Penguin General Debuts

£10 | 2.30-3.30pm



The leading literary fiction publisher brings us three of their most exciting debut authors for 2025. Rupert Dastur's compassionate novel *Cloudless*, is set on a family farm in North Wales. Catherine Airey's *Confessions* traces the arc of three generations of women as they experience in their own time the irresistible gravity of the past, and Joanna Miller's *The Eights* is about female friendship and is set in 1920s Oxford as women are admitted for the first time.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

### Dr Suzanne O'Sullivan and Dr Julie Smith The Age of Diagnosis

£14 | 4-5pm



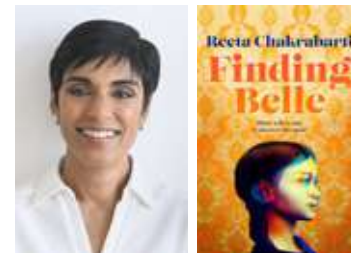
From autism to allergies, ADHD to long Covid, more people are being labelled with medical conditions than ever before. Is it a good thing we are all more aware or can a diagnosis, particularly a Googled self-diagnosis, do us more harm than good? The award-winning, leading neurologist, Dr Suzanne O'Sullivan and bestselling clinical psychologist Dr Julie Smith talk about how the boundaries between sickness and health are being redrawn, the influence of social media and the pressures that puts on health practitioners. When should you trust yourself and when is the right time to seek help?

Talking to Vivienne Parry OBE

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

### Reeta Chakrabarti Finding Belle

£16 | 4-5pm



The Chief Presenter for BBC News talks about her career and the areas she has covered as a news reporter, as well as the latest string to her bow. Her debut novel is a story of mothers and daughters set between the beaches of Mombassa, Kolkata and the English suburbs. Reeta has previously been a judge for the 2021 David Cohen Prize for Literature; she was the chair of the 2021 Costa Book of the Year; and in 2023 chair of the BBC National Short Story Award.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Supported By

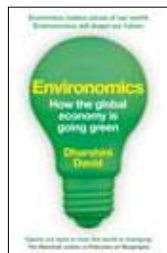




Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

**Dharshini David OBE**  
**Environomics**

£16 | 6-7pm



With the sub-title: *How the Global Economy is Going Green*, the BBC Chief Economics Correspondent follows the course of an average day to reveal the green changes that are already taking place. Exploring industries such as energy, food, fashion, technology, manufacturing and finance, she asks what is happening, how quickly, who is driving it all - and what it means for us? She'll show how even the smallest details in our day are part of a much bigger story about where our world is heading.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Supported by



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Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

**John Boyne**  
**Air**

£15 | 6-7pm



We welcome back the internationally bestselling writer of novels including *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *The Heart's Invisible Furies* with the last in his elements series. Being in limbo, 30,000 feet in the air, offers time to reflect and take stock. For Aaron Usher, it's an opportunity to connect with his 14-year-old son as they travel halfway across the world to meet a woman who isn't expecting them. John has won four Irish Book Awards, including Author of the Year in 2022, along with a host of other international literary prizes.

Talking to Clare Clark

SUPPORTED BY



Promoting Irish Arts Worldwide for 20 years

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

**Jasper William Cartwright**  
**The Art of Tabletop**  
**Storytelling**

£8 | 7-8pm



Tabletop role-playing games are not new (Dungeons and Dragons recently celebrated its 50th anniversary!) but they have exploded in popularity in the last five years. Have you ever wondered what all the fuss is about? Join Professional Game Master Jasper William Cartwright (Three Black Halflings, NADDPOD, Dimension 20) as he talks all things D&D - from how to play the game, to creating memorable characters, to building a world to explore. Whether you're interested in storytelling but a complete newbie to the game, an experienced D&D player or someone looking for top tips on running your own game, come along to find out more about the art of making up a story with your friends.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

**Alison Steadman**  
**Out of Character**

£18 | 7.45-8.45pm



The critically acclaimed actress has barely been off our stages and screens since her debut as the overbearing Beverley in *Abigail's Party* and came to a whole new audience and as the nerve-stricken Mrs Bennet in the BBC's *Pride and Prejudice* and Pamela in *Gavin and Stacey*. She'll be talking about her life from her Liverpool upbringing to secret auditions for drama school, and the road to multi-awards and becoming one of the greatest character-actors of the age.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

SPONSORED BY



**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

## Dungeons and Dragons Games Café

£10 | 8-9.30pm



Are you ready for an adventure? Come along and play Dungeons and Dragons with our talented team of Dungeon Masters. Whether you're a complete newbie to the game 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.

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

## Clare Clark WORKSHOP: How to Solve the Cryptic Crossword

£14 | 9.30-10.30am



Our very own Festival interviewer is a talented crossword solver, so if you're stumped by an anagram or floored by a crucial abbreviation but desperate to impress your friends and family, then this is the workshop for you. Clare will help you to dissect the clues and discover what they're asking, and arm you with a tool kit so never again will you be chewing the end of your pencil and swearing with despair and frustration over the blasted crossword.

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

## John Boyne, Antony Garvey and Manuela Perteghella MP The Newspaper Review

£10 | 9.30-10.30am



Pick up a coffee from the Festival Café and join our panel as they sift through the Sunday papers and pick out stories that have caught their eye. John Boyne is the highly acclaimed bestselling Irish author, Manuela Perteghella is Lib Dem MP for Stratford and Antony Garvey is a Chief Producer at BBC News.

Chaired by Dharshini David

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

## Beth Molyneux Words to Live and Die By

£12 | 11am-12pm



The Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Specialist at the South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust shares a book of haiku poems published thanks to funding from the Hospital Trust Charity. It features haiku poems from hospital staff, patients and relatives and also entries from Michael Rosen, Donna Ashworth, Evie King and a foreword by William Sieghart of the Poetry Pharmacy. Come along and write your own haiku, with a bit of help, about your own life or that of those you've loved and lost.

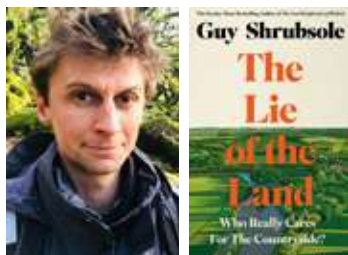
SUPPORTED BY



Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## Guy Shrubsole The Lie of the Land

£14 | 11am-12pm



Just 1% of the population own half of England, and are paid billions of pounds of public money to be good stewards. But what happens when they don't care for it? The environmentalist and writer explains how communities are fighting back: the river guardians, small farmers and trespassing activists restoring our lost wildlife. He offers a bold vision for our nation's wild places, and how we can treat them with the awe and attention they deserve. Guy is a double *Sunday Times* bestseller and winner of the Wainwright Prize for Conservation.

Talking to Tim Hubbard

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## Tom Baldwin and Marc Stears England: Seven Myths that Changed a Country

£15 | 12-1pm



As the new government heads for a year in office, the bestselling biographer of Sir Keir Starmer and the influential head of the think tank, the UCL Policy Lab, unravel seven myths that have distorted ideas of this country and have provided ammunition for charlatans or culture warriors from both left and right. Travelling across the country, from muddy fields in the Home Counties to the ports of Plymouth and Hull, they spoke with many different people, including politicians Nigel Farage and David Lammy, playwright James Graham and scientist Sarah Gilbert, to discover a startling picture of a country that belongs to no one in particular.

Talking to Clare Clark

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## Vybarr Cregan-Reid and Daisy Buchanan Books - The Final Chapter?

£14 | 12.30-1.30pm



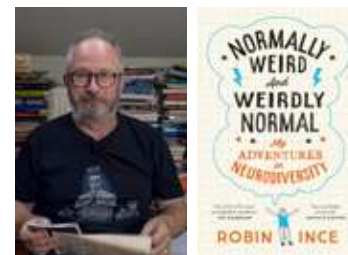
Two writers share the joy of books and the impact they can have on our lives at a time when the arts are being squeezed out at every level and where book bans in schools and libraries have surged to record highs. Author and broadcaster, Vybarr Cregan-Reid uncovers the profound impact that books have in shaping our reality at a time when their value is under attack from governments around the world. Writer Daisy Buchanan invites us to discover the literary worlds that have helped her in unwinding anxiety to survive - and thrive. But what if, in our brave new digital world, books are no longer relevant?

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## Robin Ince Normally Weird and Weirdly Normal

£14 | 12.30-1.30pm



For over 30 years, the award-winning broadcaster and comedian has entertained thousands in person and on air. But underneath the surface, a whirlwind was at play - a struggle with sadness, concentration, self-doubt and near-constant anxiety. But then he discovered he had all the hallmarks of ADHD and his stumbling blocks became stepping stones. He'll use his own experiences, with a large dose of wit, to explore the neurodivergent experience and to ask what the point of 'being normal' really is.

Talking to Vivienne Parry OBE



**EXPLORE WORDS AND IDEAS**



FOR ALL OUR EVENTS SCAN

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**WARWICK  
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CENTRE**

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## Juliet Stevenson CBE My Stratford

£16 | 1.45-2.45pm



One of the country's best known actors joins us to talk about her stellar career on stage and screen with roles in *Truly, Madly, Deeply*, for which she was nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Actress in a Leading Role, *Emma*, *Bend It Like Beckham*, *Mona Lisa Smile*, *Being Julia*, *Infamous*, *Wolf*, and *Reawakening*. She won an Olivier Award for Best Actress for her role as Paulina in *Death and the Maiden*, and her fifth Olivier nomination was for her work in the 2009 revival of *Duet for One*. She has also received three nominations for the BAFTA TV Award for Best Actress. But her career all started here in Stratford and she'll be talking about that and everything that followed.

Talking to Fiona Lindsay

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## John Higgs Exterminate! Regenerate! The Story of Dr Who

£14 | 2-3pm



Doctor Who and his extraordinary time-travel adventures have mesmerised generations. And the off-screen story is equally extraordinary - a tale of failed monks, war heroes, 1960s polyamory and self-sabotaging broadcasting executives - reflecting the path of the BBC over the last six decades. Join John Higgs on an intergalactic journey tracking the story behind this cultural TV classic that has been so much a part of our lives. John is the author of several books including *I Have America Surrounded*, *The Kif*, *Stranger Than We Can Imagine* and *Watling Street*.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## Masud Husain Our Brains, Our Selves

£14 | 2-3pm



What makes us who we are? Is it our background, families, education that creates our identities? According to the Professor of Neurology and Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Oxford, all of the above, but more fundamental is our brain. Discover how our brains create our identity, how that identity can be changed, and sometimes even be restored when things go wrong. By understanding how our brains normally function, neurologists are bringing hope to patients with brain disorders and illuminating the human experience.

Talking to Clare Clark

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

## Cecelia Ahern Into the Storm

£16 | 3.30-4.30pm



The massively successful author of 18 novels including *PS I Love You* and *Where Rainbows End* - both made into films - brings us her latest, *Into The Storm*, set on a wild night in the middle of December. GP Enya is crouched over a teenage boy, performing CPR in the rain. The boy survives, but Enya's life splinters in two. Trapped in a loveless marriage, the storm propels her to break free. To date, Cecelia's books have sold 25 million copies internationally, and are published in over 40 countries, in 30 languages.

Talking to John Boyne

SUPPORTED BY





## Luxury in the heart of England

With vast landscaped grounds, adorned with 85 bedrooms including 7 apartments, sweeping staircases and inviting log fires, The Welcombe Hotel truly has the wow factor with its abundance of history and character, located just one mile from Stratford-upon-Avon town centre.

For those who enjoy keeping active, there's an 18-hole par 70 championship golf course, acres of picture-perfect landscaped gardens, as well as a gym and an indoor swimming pool. Or if you are looking for relaxation, enjoy the state-of-the-art spa which includes a sauna, steam room and six blissful treatment rooms.

We've proudly partnered with Stratford Literary Festival to offer a **15% discount** on your stay when you book directly with us.



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[reservations@thewelcombhotel.co.uk](mailto:reservations@thewelcombhotel.co.uk)  
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[www.montpelliergallery.com](http://www.montpelliergallery.com)

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

### Stefan Stern Fair or Foul - The Lady Macbeth Guide to Ambition

£14 | 4-5pm



Most of us wrestle with daunting life-choice questions from time to time. What should I be aiming for? Am I being ambitious enough? Has an excess of ambition led me astray? The journalist and management writer who is Visiting Professor at Bayes Business School considers different aspects of ambition and its place in our lives. He asks. What does success mean? When is enough enough? And is Lady Macbeth right to suggest that only those with the 'illness' of ambition achieve the highest goals?

Talking to Julia Wheeler

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

### Nige Tassell Final Destination: Riding Britain's Trains to the End of the Line

£14 | 4-5pm



On the 200th birthday of the world's first passenger-carrying railway, we're off to ride Britain's railway network all the way to its lesser-travelled-to corners, its seldom-visited outposts right to the end of the line. By delving into their histories and talking to their communities, Tassell reveals much about places that rarely have light cast upon them - from ferry ports to abandoned resorts, from tiny hamlets to towns being reclaimed by the sea - an odyssey that tells us much about Britain today. Nige is an author and journalist covering popular culture, including music and sport.

Talking to  
Tim Hubbard



Heart of England Community Rail Partnership

SPONSORED BY



Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

### Florence Knapp and Nussaibah Younis Orion Debuts: The Names and Fundamentally

£8 | 5.30-6.30pm



We introduce two writers who have blasted onto the scene with critical acclaim for their debut novels. Florence Knapp's *The Names* looks at how a name can define you: Powerfully moving and full of hope, this is the story of three names, three versions of a life, and the infinite possibilities that a single decision can spark. Nussaibah Younis' *Fundamentally* is a biting original, wildly funny and razor-sharp exploration of love, family, religion, radicalism, and the decisions we make in pursuit of connection and belonging.

Talking to Clare Clark

SUPPORTED BY



Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

### Juliet Stevenson and Sally Phillips By a Lady - A Celebration of the Wit of Jane Austen

£20 - £25 | 7-8.15pm



It is a truth universally acknowledged that Jane Austen was one of the wittiest observers of human relationships and female friendships who ever put pen to parchment. Loosen your stays and join two of the UK's leading actresses in a celebration of 250 years since her birth. Juliet Stevenson is an acclaimed actress with major roles on stage and screen. Sally Phillips has appeared in everything from *Smack the Pony*, to *Jam & Jerusalem*, *Miranda* and Shazza in the *Bridget Jones* films. She co-starred in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies* as Mrs Bennet.

SPONSORED BY



Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Alix Almond**  
**WORKSHOP: Linocut**  
£45 | 9am-12pm



Learn to linocut and create your own book plate or name plate to personalise your favourite books or journal. Carve and handprint a single colour design of your choice - be inspired by your favourite story - guided by printmaker Alix Almond. Come and find out all about the magic of the printing spoon! Suitable for beginners or those with some experience of linocut. Alix teaches linocut workshops across Coventry and Warwickshire. She uses a variety of linocut techniques to print single colour, reduction and layered linocuts and is inspired by landscapes, wildlife and colour. See her work at [alixalmond.com](http://alixalmond.com)

Tickets inc materials

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Jennifer Collier**  
**WORKSHOP: Paper Flowers**  
£45 | 10am-12.30pm



We welcome back the hugely talented paper artist whose workshops always sell out! Learn a unique skill as she shows you how to create decorative paper flowers from recycled papers, with a choice of six different types of flowers to make, from the very easy through to a five-petal origami flower. See her work at [jennifercollier.co.uk](http://jennifercollier.co.uk)

Tickets inc materials

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May

**Jennifer Collier**  
**WORKSHOP:**  
**Paper - Storybook Gloves**  
£45 | 2-4.30pm



Create your own Storybook Gloves from beautiful found and recycled papers. You'll have a choice of three types of gloves to make, that will be embellished and stitched to add exquisite detail. All materials are provided, but please do bring your own special papers, books and maps to personalise your work. See her work at [jennifercollier.co.uk](http://jennifercollier.co.uk)

Tickets inc materials

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

**Ellie Stevenson**  
**WORKSHOP: Family History**  
**through Artefacts**  
£25 | 9.30-11.30am



Following last year's sell out workshop, the book coach and author returns to show you how to delve even deeper into your family's history through exploring the stories behind familiar objects. In this hands-on workshop, you'll discover how photos, letters and household items can enrich your understanding of your family's past, and bring that past to life. Through practical activities and exercises, you'll explore the history behind such items, discover their significance in your family and learn how to use them to create a legacy.

# Workshops



Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

**Georgina Moore**  
**WRITERS' WORKSHOP:**  
**Preparing for Publication**  
£25 | 9.30-10.30am



Producing a manuscript is only the beginning of your journey to finding a readership. How do you craft a compelling pitch to an agent or publisher, or word a enticing blurb when taking the independent publishing route? And what's the best social media? Deputy MD of PR agency Midas, Georgina is an award-winning book publicist with 20 years' experience. She has worked with a huge variety of authors from debuts to household names. Her most recent PR campaign for Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* won the FutureBook and PPC awards for campaign of the year. She is also the author of the bestseller *The Garnett Girls* and *River of Stars* which will be published in July.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

**Rupert Dastur**  
**WRITERS' WORKSHOP:**  
**Creating Compelling Characters**  
£45 | 9.30-11.30am



Join the writer, editor and publisher as he helps you craft characters that breathe on the page, exploring inner and outer lives, perspective and voice. The workshop offers tools for thinking deeply and meaningfully about character, generating material, and finding flow. Rupert's writing has been shortlisted for the Bath Short Story Award and the Fish Short Story Prize, and won the Federation of Scottish Writers' Award. He is the founder of TSS Publishing and director of the Cambridge Prizes for Short Fiction.

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

**Catherine Airey, Rupert Dastur and Joanna Miller**  
**WRITERS' WORKSHOP:** Penguin General Debuts  
£5 | 2.30-3.30pm



The leading literary fiction publisher brings us three of their most exciting debut authors for 2025. Rupert Dastur's compassionate novel *Cloudless*, is set on a family farm in North Wales. Catherine Airey's *Confessions* traces the arc of three generations of women as they experience in their own time the irresistible gravity of the past, and Joanna Miller's *The Eights* is about female friendship and is set in 1920s Oxford as women are admitted for the first time.

Supported By



Talking to  
Tim Hubbard

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> May

**Clare Clark**  
**WORKSHOP:** How to Solve the Cryptic Crossword  
£14 | 9.30-10.30am



Our very own Festival interviewer is a talented crossword solver, so if you're stumped by an anagram or floored by a crucial abbreviation but desperate to impress your friends and family, then this is the workshop for you. Clare will help you to dissect the clues and discover what they're asking, and arm you with a tool kit so never again will you be chewing the end of your pencil and swearing with despair and frustration over the blasted crossword.

**Numbers are limited so book early!**

All events take place at The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Bridge Foot, Stratford CV37 6YR



# Events for Families

Please note:

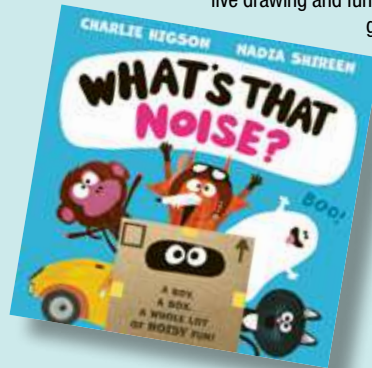
Adults are also expected to  
buy a ticket to events.

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

**Nadia Shireen  
and Charlie Higson**  
**What's That Noise?**  
£8 | 10-11am | Age 4+



Join author, actor and comedian Charlie Higson and award-winning illustrator Nadia Shireen for this fast and funny event based on their brand-new picture book, *What's That Noise?* Laughs, noisy games, live drawing and fun for all the family guaranteed!



**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

**Dame Jacqueline Wilson**  
**The Seaside Sleepover**  
£8 | 10-11am | Age 6+



One of the UK's bestselling children's authors (and a Festival Ambassador) brings you the latest in her hugely popular *Sleepovers* series featuring Daisy and her friends - and Daisy's sister Lily. The summer holidays have finally arrived, and Daisy longs for a proper holiday at the seaside, building sandcastles, eating lots of ice cream and maybe even spotting a mermaid in the sea. Daisy's sister, Lily, wants to come too, but she uses a wheelchair which can make trips to the seaside tricky. Especially with all that sand! Then Scruff arrives in their life...



**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

## Bunny vs Monkey Trail

FREE | All day

Can you find mischievous Bunny, Monkey and their friends around the Festival site? Go on a hunt for these beloved characters in this family-friendly trail created especially for us by *Bunny vs Monkey* author and illustrator Jamie Smart.



**FREE  
drop-in  
FUN!**



**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

## Superhero Drop-In and Do Drawing, craft and games!

FREE | 11am-1pm | Age 5+

Pop along and get creative with superhero craft and games, plus create your own character with *The Phoenix Comic* artist Abby Bulmer.



In partnership with The Phoenix Comic

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

## Maz Evans

### Oh What a Knight!

£8 | 11.30am-12.30pm | Age 7+



Embark on a madcap journey with superstar author Maz Evans - from the Maya Underworld, through Ancient Egypt and all the way to Camelot to find Excalibur and save the world. Join in the fun and games and discover ancient myths and Arthurian legend in this hilarious, energetic event.





Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

Gareth P Jones  
Fairytale Musical Mash-Up  
£8 | 1-2pm | Age 5+



Author, performer, musician. Gareth does it all! Come and sing, laugh and learn along as he brings his books to life in an interactive musical performance based on his fairytale retellings: *Rabunzel*, *Snowy White* and *Cindergorilla*.



Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

Comic Workshop  
With The Phoenix Comic  
£10 | 2-3pm | Age 8+



Channel your inner artist and get creative in this interactive comic creation workshop with cartoonist and comic artist Abby Bulmer as seen in *The Phoenix* comic, *Sonic the Hedgehog* and *My Little Pony*.



Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May

Introduction to  
Dungeons and Dragons  
£10 | 3.30-4.30pm | Age 11-16



Interested in playing Dungeons and Dragons but not sure where to start? Or perhaps you are a Dungeon Master looking for tips and tricks? Bring your friends along to this interactive D&D workshop where you'll explore how to play, how to create characters and how to run your own game at home!

Please note: Adults are also expected to buy a ticket to events.

Children 14+ may attend alone but the Festival takes no responsibility for them.

# Events for Families



THE  
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*Fill up on our fresh and  
light bites before heading  
to the theatre...*

**Pre-theatre Dining**

2 Courses | £27.50pp

3 Courses | £30.00pp

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

# Events for Schools

**We have two brilliant events for schools during the Literary Festival in May.**

**Bring your classes to the exciting environment of the Festival's stage at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. The Festival is subsidising these events and offering them as part of its charitable outreach commitment to support a love of reading in young people.**

Tickets: **£5** per child  
Staff attend **free**

To book your school, email  
[charlotte@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk](mailto:charlotte@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk)

Homeschooling? Email us for details.

## Nadia Shireen Grimwood - Party Animals KS1 10am Crowne Plaza Hotel

Laugh your head off with award-winning author and illustrator Nadia Shireen on a journey into the weird and wonderful world of *Grimwood!* You'll get to meet thieving eagles, dramatic ducks, riotous rabbits and one particularly party-mad crow... You'll discover where Nadia finds her inspiration and learn more about what it takes to create your own story. Have your pencils at the ready as Nadia shows us, step-by-step, how to draw some of her fantastic characters from her latest book *Grimwood: Party Animals!*



**Julia Donaldson,  
Festival Outreach Patron**

We are delighted that the UK's bestselling author is Patron of our work in schools, the community and prisons.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> May

## Maz Evans Oh What A Knight! KS2 1.15pm Crowne Plaza Hotel

Embark on a madcap journey with superstar author Maz Evans – from the Maya Underworld, through Ancient Egypt and all the way to Camelot to find Excalibur and save the world. Join in the fun and games and discover ancient myths and Arthurian legends in this hilarious, energetic event.



# The Festival's Work in Schools

Throughout the year we take authors into schools to inspire young people to a lifelong love of books. Recently schools across the region have enjoyed visits from authors including:

Sam Sedgman  
Janelle McCurdy  
Joseph Coelho  
Alex Wheatle  
Sarah Coyle  
Adam Rutherford

Anthony McGowan  
Brothers McLeod  
M G Leonard  
Louie Stowell  
Matt Goodfellow  
Neill Cameron

Alex Falase-Koya  
Sophy Henn  
Hiba Noor Khan  
Gareth P Jones  
Tom Percival  
Onjali Q Raúf

## Big Give School Library Campaign

In 2024 we raised over £8000 to restock the libraries of five local primary schools. Each school had a special visit from bestselling author/illustrator Rob Biddulph to officially 'open' the new library!



Please become a Friend of the Festival and support our work!



# Festival in the Community



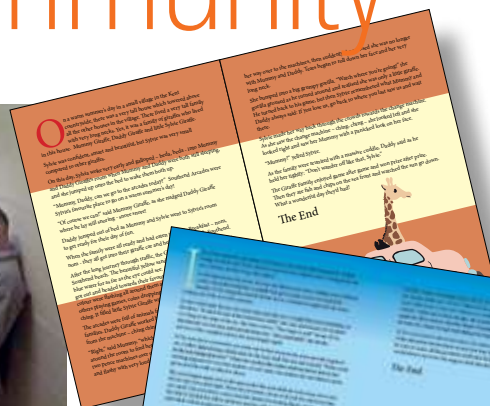
## Books with Friends

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



## Bedtime Story Workshops in Prisons

Since 2017, we've been running workshops in prisons across the country with the children's authors Hollie Hughes and Smriti Prasadam-Halls, teaching prisoners to write a bedtime story for their children, which we then professionally produce for them. The aim of the workshops is to reduce the trauma for the child of having a parent in prison, and to discourage reoffending. Find out more on our website: [stratlitfest.co.uk](http://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  
Friends of the Festival and private benefactors



# Become a Friend

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

## Membership Benefits:

- Priority booking
- News and offers from the Festival

**Friends Membership:**  
£35 - priority booking

## Benefactor Membership:

£100 or £500 - complimentary tickets and priority booking

Please go to [stratlitfest.co.uk/friend](http://stratlitfest.co.uk/friend) for more information.



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- 5 minute walk from Stratford upon Avon train station



# Your Visit

## We want to make it as enjoyable as possible

### FESTIVAL INFORMATION DESK AND BOX OFFICE

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

### LOCAL AUTHORS' TABLE

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



### 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 CAFÉ

This year the Festival has its own hub café in the Seymour Room for drinks and coffee or tea. A place to rest between events, meet up with friends and talk about what you've seen or are planning to see. Open: 9.30am to 7pm.

### FESTIVALGOERS' SPECIAL DISCOUNT

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





## ACCESSIBILITY

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

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

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

We use microphones at all events except workshops.



## STRATOSPHERE - THE FESTIVAL ONLINE

Can't get to us or want to listen back to an event again? We'll be recording selected events and putting them on our website for you to catch up on soon after the Festival finishes.

## *FOUND OUT THERE - STORIES FOR YOU*

**5-8pm each day**

Follow the sounds of clacking keys and you'll find Adam Holton with his typewriter. Give him three random words and the name for a character and he'll type you a story while you wait. Each story is roughly 400 words and takes around five minutes. Pay what you feel is right. For more information go to [foundoutthere.com](http://foundoutthere.com)



## YOUR TICKETS

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

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

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

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

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

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



## STAYING OVER

**We are in partnership with the following hotels:**

Arden Hotel, Waterside CV37 6HN

DoubleTree by Hilton,  
Arden Street CV37 6QQ

Crowne Plaza, Bridge Foot CV37 6YR

Welcombe Hotel,  
Warwick Road CV37 0NR

## 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.**



## Terms and Conditions

Most events take place at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, but please check your ticket and 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 incur 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](mailto: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.
- » 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 are expected to buy a ticket 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. Ticket-bookers 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 and authors will sign copies of their books after each event. Books featured at the Festival and those signed at earlier events will be on sale at Waterstones, 8 High Street. We request that you do not bring copies of books for signature not purchased at the event.
- » Some events may be filmed or recorded. By buying a ticket you are giving your consent to be filmed or recorded as a member of the audience. Please let one of the Festival team know if you do not wish to be in a photograph.
- » All details and prices are correct at time of going to press.

## Making the Festival Happen

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

All the wonderful authors, illustrators and artists who come to the Festival; the publishers who have worked with us, especially Sceptre, Orion and Penguin General; all who steward and volunteer for 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.

Stratford Literary Festival is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation No. 1164662

**Festival Patron:** Maggie O'Farrell

**Festival Outreach Patron:** Julia Donaldson

**Festival Trustees:** Neil Davis, Philip Heath (Chair), Dr Diana Owen OBE, Madeleine Parker 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

### Our Interviewers:

John Boyne

Clare Clark

Dharshini David OBE

Jo Durrent

Tim Hubbard

John Jefferies

Fiona Lindsay

Steph McGovern

Vivienne Parry OBE

Dr Abigail Rokison-Woodall

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[stratlitfest.co.uk](http://stratlitfest.co.uk) or email  
[info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk](mailto:info@stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk)



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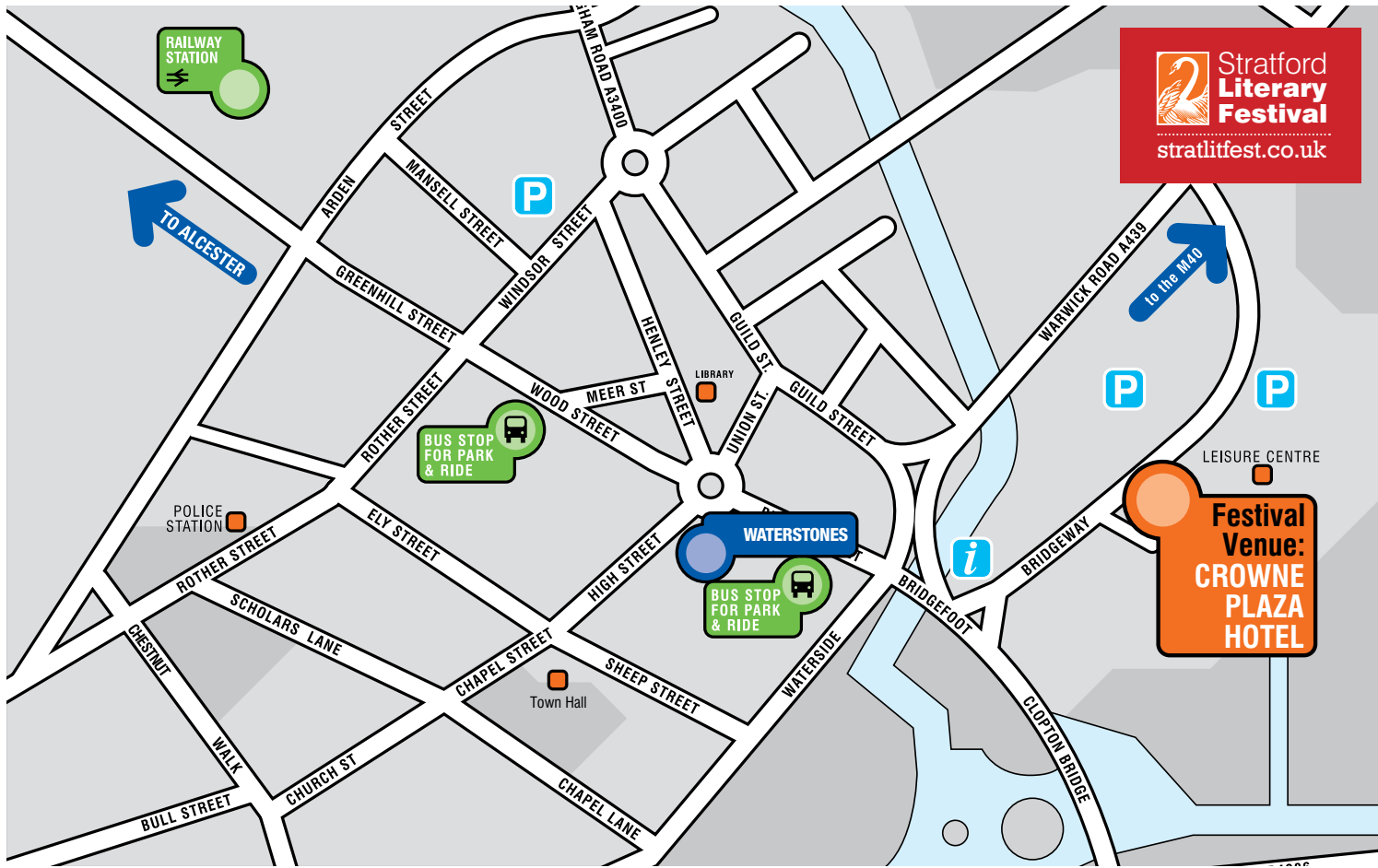
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Venue:  
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HOTEL**

# At a Glance

Date	Time	Event/Workshop	Booked
Thurs 10th April	7-9pm	Festival General Knowledge Quiz	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	9am-12pm	Alix Almond Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	10am-12.30pm	Jennifer Collier Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	12-1pm	Julian Treasure and Alice Vincent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	12-1pm	Emma Barnett	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	2-4.30pm	Jennifer Collier Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	2-3pm	Chloe Dalton and Lottie Hazell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	2-3pm	Susie Dent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	3-4pm	Daniel Swift	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	4-5pm	Tim Minshall	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	4-5pm	Carol Klein	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	4.30-5.30pm	Phil Craig	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	5.30-6.30pm	Diana Henry	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	6-7pm	Giles Milton	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	7-8pm	Dan Richards	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	7-8pm	Jonn Elledge	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	7.30-9pm	Local Author Showcase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Thurs 8th May	7.45-8.45pm	Mishal Husain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	9.30-11.30am	Elle Stevenson Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	10-11am	Dr Lucy Pollock	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	11.30am-12.30pm	Alayo Akinkugbe, Lucy Steeds and Joe Tucker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	12-1pm	Sir Graham Brady	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	12.30-1.30pm	Mary Costello and Elaine Garvey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	1-2pm	Marianne Brown	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	2-3pm	The Book Spa	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	2.30-3.30pm	Julia Samuel with Kit de Waal	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date	Time	Event/Workshop	Booked
Fri 9th May	3-4pm	Tracy Borman OBE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	3.30-4.30pm	Simon Kyle	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	4.30-5.30pm	Christopher Summerfield	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	4.30-5.30pm	Simon Jenkins	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	6-7pm	Dame Jacqueline Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	6-7pm	Kit de Waal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	6.45-8pm	Booklovers' Wine Club	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	7.30-8.30pm	Charlie Higson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fri 9th May	7.45-8.45pm	Impromptu Shakespeare	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	9.30-11.30am	Rupert Dastur Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	9.30-10.30am	Georgina Moore	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	12-1pm	Stig Abell and Ava Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	12pm-1pm	Dr Julie Smith	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	2-3pm	Simon Mayo MBE and Jeremy Vine	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	2-3pm	Anne Sebba	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	2.30-3.30pm	Catherine Airey, Rupert Dastur and Joanna Miller	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	4-5pm	Dr Suzanne O'Sullivan and Dr Julie Smith	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	4-5pm	Reeta Chakrabarti	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	6-7pm	Dharshini David OBE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	6-7pm	John Boyne	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	7-8pm	Jasper William Cartwright	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	7.45-8.45pm	Alison Steadman	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	8-9.30pm	Dungeons and Dragons Games Café	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	9.30-10.30am	Clare Clark	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	9.30-10.30am	John Boyne, Antony Garvey and Manuela Perteghella MP	<input type="checkbox"/>

Date	Time	Event/Workshop	Booked
Sun 11th May	11am-12pm	Beth Molyneux	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	11am-12pm	Guy Shrubsole	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	12-1pm	Tom Baldwin and Marc Stears	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	12.30-1.30pm	Vybari Cregan-Reid and Daisy Buchanan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	12.30-1.30pm	Robin Ince	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	1.45-2.45pm	Juliet Stevenson CBE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	2-3pm	John Higgs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	2-3pm	Masad Husain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	3.30-4.30pm	Cecelia Ahern	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	4-5pm	Stefan Stern	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	4-5pm	Nige Tassell	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	5.30-6.30pm	Florence Knapp and Nussalbah Younis	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sun 11th May	7-8.15pm	Juliet Stevenson and Sally Phillips	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Events for Families

Sat 10th May	All day	Bunny v Monkey Trail	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	10-11am	Nadia Shireen and Charlie Higson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	10-11am	Dame Jacqueline Wilson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	11-1pm	Superhero Drop-In and Do	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	11.30-12.30pm	Maz Evans	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	1-2pm	Gareth P Jones	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	2-3pm	Comic Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sat 10th May	3.30-4.30pm	Introduction to Dungeons and Dragons	<input type="checkbox"/>

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