



BUDLEIGH SALTERTON LITERARY FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING BOOKS BY THE SEA

WED 23 - SUN 27 SEPT 2026



Five days brimming with book talks, inspiring conversations,
hands-on workshops and family fun

An Enthusiastic Sponsor of the Budleigh Literary Festival!

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For more information:
3dMD.com/budlitfest



3dMD
3dMD.com



WELCOME FROM THE FESTIVAL TEAM

FIVE DAYS. BIG IDEAS. BRILLIANT STORIES.

Our festival brings together acclaimed authors, fresh new voices, expert thinkers and our vibrant local community to celebrate books by the sea.

This year's line-up includes **Caroline Quentin, Patrick Gale, Rachael Stirling, James Holland, Bryony Gordon, John Crace, Jasmine Elmer** and **Dawn O'Porter**.

Journey through questions of identity and place, from Devon's landscapes to far wider worlds. Dive into the lives of brilliant, complicated women - from Daphne du Maurier to Agatha Christie and Barbara Cartland. And explore who gets to tell the story - unpacking voice, truth and perspective along the way.

You'll also find page-turning fiction, hands-on workshops and eye-opening conversations across politics, history, science, nature and the arts. Our *Local Spotlight* shines on Devon's own creative voices - stories and writers rooted right here, ready to be discovered.

We have plenty of family fun at the weekend with FREE and low-cost events bursting with imagination, storytelling and creativity. Our Children's Champion **Maz Evans** is joined by **Rob Biddulph, Louie Stowell, RAMZEE** and more to spark ideas and inspire young readers. (p28-30)

Whether you're with us for one talk or you stay all day the festival is made for wandering. Drift between talks, try something new, browse the bookshop, then pause for a chat (and maybe a coffee) in the marquee.

HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2026 INCLUDE:

- **The Writers' Hub** returns - our dedicated space for all local writers, at all stages, hosted again by Word Kitchen (p11)
- Our Festival Read is **Broken Country** by **Clare Leslie Hall** and we welcome a host of other outstanding fiction authors including **Amanda Craig, Emma Stonex, Olly Smith** and **Louisa Young**.
- **NEW: The Traitors Circle** by **Jonathan Freedland** is our first ever Non-Fiction Festival Read and don't miss other experts including **Lord Peter Ricketts, Claudia Hammond, Luke Harding, Ijeoma Uchegbu** and **Paul Mason**.
- **NEW: Marquee Nights:** unwind with relaxed, sociable events including FREE music (p44) a wine tasting with **Helen McGinn** (p10) and our new **BudLitFest Book Quiz** hosted by Festival President **Cathy Rentzenbrink** and Guest Curator **Jennie Godfrey**. (p26)

Welcome to our festival - where books become conversations.

 AUTHOR EVENTS

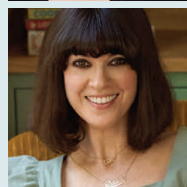
 IMMERSIVE EVENTS

 FESTIVAL READS

 FAMILY EVENTS



BSL AVAILABLE



WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27



LOUISA YOUNG

THE GOLDEN HOURS

10am-11am
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12



JAMES HOLLAND

THE VISIONARIES

11am-12pm
ST PETER'S CHURCH
£15

Do you love *The Cazalet Chronicles* as much as we do?

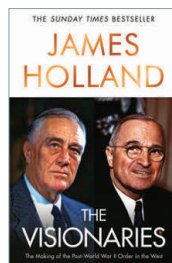
Louisa Young, Elizabeth Jane Howard's niece, continues this beloved saga and carries forward its rich literary legacy.



It's Christmas 1962, and the Cazalets gather as old certainties fade and a new era begins. Across generations, lives shift, tensions surface, and change gathers pace. Warm, vivid and compelling, this is the Cazalets stepping boldly into the swinging sixties.

Talking to Natasha Poliszczuk

A unique look at the people in power who make history, from one of the most authoritative voices on 20th-century history.



From the world on the eve of war in 1914, through to the Versailles Treaty and the global financial catastrophe of the late 1920s and early thirties, and the political earthquakes that followed, *The Visionaries* takes a broad sweep of history with important lessons for today. It's a reminder that while history does not repeat itself, patterns of human behaviour certainly do.

Talking to Andrew Chatterton



"The Golden Hours is a wonderful read."

NINA STIBBE



"A must-read."

ANTHONY SCARAMUCCI

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

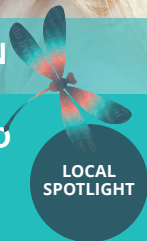
SUN 27

5

KATE LORD BROWN

THE SILVER THREAD

12pm-1pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£5



LOCAL
SPOTLIGHT

Devon-based author **Kate Lord Brown** is an acclaimed bestselling writer and journalist. Her latest, *The Silver Thread*, is a sweeping novel that weaves together the stories of Bel, a young designer drawn into the world of Liberty's Japonisme textiles, and Mira, a curator uncovering secrets in a long-sealed Paris apartment.

Spanning continents and generations, it's a vivid, immersive tale of creativity, courage and connection.

Talking to Mary Morris



PAUL DE ZULUETA

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF THE DU MAURIERS

12:30pm-1:30pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

Get ready for a rare glimpse behind the myth. *Last Night I Dreamt* opens up the life of Daphne du Maurier as you've never seen it before, through the eyes of her eldest grandson, **Paul de Zulueta**. Drawing on private archives and personal memory, it brings us astonishingly close to Daphne, from her Cornish writing life to the passions, war, and contradictions that shaped *Rebecca*, *Jamaica Inn* and *The Birds*.

A vivid story of a remarkable dynasty: artists, rebels and rule-breakers whose legacy echoes across generations.

Talking to Tim Hubbard



"Utterly immersive."

ESSIE FOX

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27



WORKSHOP: UNWRITTEN STORIES

UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF HANDWRITING ANALYSIS

1pm-4pm
MASONIC HALL
£35

Discover what your handwriting says about you in this fun and fascinating 3-hour Graphology Workshop!

Let graphology expert **Christina Strang** guide you through the clues and characteristics revealed.

Identify how handwriting can reflect personality traits, emotions, communication styles, and subconscious patterns. Through interactive exercises and real examples, you'll explore the meaning behind the form, spacing, and movement in writing.

Insightful, surprising and full of "aha" moments, this is a fascinating introduction to the psychology of handwriting. No experience needed - just bring a pen and your curiosity.



[PHOTO BY LILARTSY ON UNSPLASH]

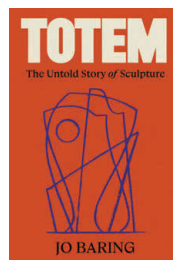


JO BARING

TOTEM: THE UNTOLD STORY OF SCULPTURE

2pm-3pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

For forty thousand years, we have been carving and moulding, shaping and chiselling, feeling our way and sensing our place in the world through sculpture.



Jo Baring, art historian and curator, takes us on a journey through prehistoric beginnings to contemporary masters.

From the Lion Man in a German cave to Michelangelo's Pietà and the works of Hepworth, Moore and Bourgeois, this is sculpture seen afresh as memory, myth and meaning made visible.

Talking to Natasha Poliszczuk

BSL interpretation is available for this event



"Groundbreaking."
KATY HESSEL

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27



SUSAN WARD MEMORIAL TALK

LUKE HARDING

TRUMP, PUTIN AND THE NEW
AGE OF CONQUEST2pm-3pm
ST PETER'S CHURCH
£15

A gripping, on-the-ground account from the award-winning foreign correspondent of a world sliding back into great-power rivalry.

Trump's America backs Putin's war in Ukraine, Europe is recast as an enemy, and an anti-West bloc of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea emerges.

Travelling from bombed Ukrainian villages to Korea's divided peninsula, **Luke Harding** captures a dangerous new age of conquest where modern firepower meets 19th-century imperial ambition.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



ELLIE LEVENSON

ROOM 706

4pm-5pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£5

Meet Kate, who has been carefully balancing marriage and motherhood alongside the pursuit of desire until she finds herself caught in the wrong place at precisely the worst time.



Join debut writer

Ellie Levenson in conversation with **Jennie Godfrey** to celebrate *Room 706* - a gripping, high-stakes and thought-provoking novel about secrets, split-second decisions, and the moment everything tilts.

They'll also explore what it feels like to be a debut writer, the craft of plotting an unputdownable thriller and what lies ahead.

Talking to Jennie Godfrey

*"More gripping than a thriller."*

ANDREY KURKOV

*"As tender as it is surprising."*

SARAH JESSICA PARKER

WED 23

THURS 24

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LIZ EARLE

FEELING BETTER THAN EVER

ST PETER'S CHURCH

5pm-6pm

£12



SHEHAN HETTIARATCHY

THE CAREFUL SURGEON

TEMPLE CHURCH

5pm-6pm

£12

So much of what we've been told about ageing, especially as women, is wrong. We're not meant to shrink, fade or be sidelined but we haven't been shown the full picture of what is possible...



After her previous sell-out visit in 2024, we're thrilled to welcome back **Liz Earle**. Drawing on cutting-edge science, Liz has effectively turned back her biological clock by several decades and now feels stronger, happier and more purposeful in her 60s than ever before. She joins us to share her simple but strategic habits and tips.

This is not anti-ageing, this is ageing well.

Talking to Natasha Poliszczuk



"This is a refreshing and myth-busting bio-hacker's handbook."

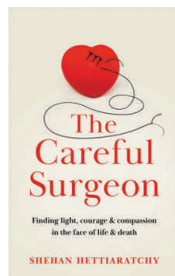
TIM SPECTOR

Can we find light, courage and compassion in the face of life and death? Most of us will never know what it's like to hold someone's life in our hands but leading surgeon **Shehan Hettiaratchy** has

spent his career doing exactly that.

Unflinchingly honest, he'll show us how things can go wrong within a minute and how, when the darkness sets in, he is able to get up and do it all again. His work spans treating victims of the Grenfell fire and the Westminster Bridge attack, the Haiti earthquake and surgical missions to Ukraine and Gaza. He was awarded an OBE in 2025 for his humanitarian work.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



"Gripping and inspiring."

BENJAMIN HALL

WED 23

THURS 24

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PATRICK GALE

LOVE LANE

7:30pm-8:30pm
ST PETER'S CHURCH
£15

Extraordinary secrets buried under the surface of seemingly ordinary lives.

What happens when you return to a country- and a family- you left behind? In the acclaimed novelist's latest book, Canadian wheat farmer Harry Cane, the protagonist of Patrick's acclaimed novel *A Place Called Winter*, returns to find England transformed by two world wars and a family for whom he has become just a distant myth.

Can he stay and make a new life back home, or will he find himself cast out again for having witnessed too much?

Talking to Tim Hubbard
BSL interpretation is available for this event



"I have just fallen in love with a beautiful book."

RACHEL JOYCE



NON FICTION FESTIVAL READ

JONATHAN FREEDLAND

THE TRAITORS CIRCLE

7:30pm-8:30pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£10

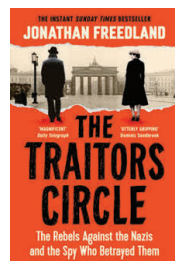
We're thrilled that prize-winning journalist and bestselling author of *The Escape Artist* **Jonathan Freedland** comes to Budleigh for our first Non-Fiction Festival Read!

The Traitors Circle became an instant *Sunday Times* bestseller and tells the thrilling true story of one of the most dramatic episodes of the second world war.

With deep moral resonance for our own time, he asks what kind of person it takes to risk everything and stand up to tyranny.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

THIS EVENT IS KINDLY SPONSORED BY
MICHAEL AND VALERIE JACKAMAN



"Astonishing - Freedland is a master."

MICK HERRON

WED 23

THURS 24

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SUN 27



HELEN MCGINN

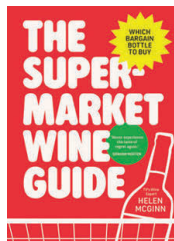
DRINK BETTER FOR LESS

7:30pm-9pm
MAIN MARQUEE
£30

Want to impress at your next dinner party? Wondering how much you should be paying for a really good bottle these days? Much loved TV wine expert

Helen McGinn returns to Budleigh for a lively and delicious evening celebrating the joy of great-value supermarket wines.

You'll taste four specially selected wines, as she shares insider tips, surprising finds and the stories behind them. Expect plenty of chat, laughter and "aha" moments as Helen demystifies the aisles and helps you drink better for less with *The Supermarket Wine Guide*.



"Never experience the taste of regret again."

GRAHAM NORTON



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Image by *Ian Crichton Art*

WRITERS' HUB

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27



WED 23 & THURS 24



WRITE . CONNECT . DISCOVER

10am-6pm

MINI MARQUEE

£20 early bird, then £25. Day passes £15

Hosted by

**Word
Kitchen**

Back after a sell-out first year, the Writers' Hub is a dedicated festival space for local writers at all stages of their writing journeys offering two days of inspiration, conversation and practical advice.

Experts appearing include **Hayley Camis**¹, Head of Publicity at Bloomsbury, poet **Harula Ladd**², author **Orlando Murrin**, author-turned publisher **Jude Cook**³, documentary maker **Zoe Flood** and literary agent **Juliet Pickering**.

Topics include: The importance of competitions • AI - friend, foe, or both? • The journey to publication • Who tells the story? • The benefits of writing • Championing older women writers and MUCH MORE!

Other facilities include a writers' lounge, local writers' showcase, a poet in residence and drop-in advice sessions. Whether you're seeking feedback, fresh ideas, publishing guidance or simply time to write, you'll find it here.

Exclusive to Festival Pass holders, the Writers' Hub is open daily from 10am-6pm, with access to all talks, workshops and activities included in your pass.

Word Kitchen develops spoken word and other events, workshops and networks to grow connection, confidence and wellbeing through writing and storytelling. We are also proud curators of the Exeter Novel Prize.

Cooking up connection & community through literature and spoken word.

To see the full 2-day programme visit:
www.wordkitchen.org.uk

To buy your two-day pass go to:
wegottickets.com/WordKitchen

WED 23

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LOCAL
SPOTLIGHT

IAN MORTIMER

THROUGH THE WINDOWS OF AN ORDINARY HOUSE

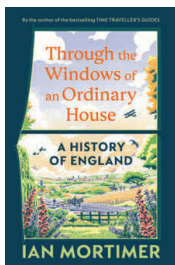
10am-11am
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

A History of England...

What can one house tell us about 900 years of Devon life – or the history of England itself?

Join *Sunday Times* bestselling author of *The Time Traveller's Guides*, **Ian Mortimer**, as he brings to life the remarkable story of Mearsdon, his home on the edge of Dartmoor. Drawing on an unbroken record of its inhabitants since the thirteenth century, he'll share the lives of those who lived there and will reveal how great national events from the Black Death to the two world wars affected a rural community in deepest Devon.

Talking to Tim Hubbard



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

WITH CLARE CLARK

11:30am-12:30pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£10

Back by popular demand.

Festival interviewer **Clare Clark** has a secret - she's been identified as being in the top 5% of *The Times* crossword solvers in the country.

Aimed at beginners, her workshop will gently guide you through how to read a clue, get inside the head of the setter and find the answer.

No experience necessary.

[Photo by Ross Sneddon on Unsplash]



"The most remarkable medieval
historian of our time."

THE TIMES

WED 23

THURS 24

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SUN 27



JUDITH MACKRELL

THE LIVES AND LOVES OF GWEN AND AUGUSTUS JOHN

12pm-1pm
PUBLIC HALL
£12

A riveting story of the two extraordinary siblings whose art and lives subverted society's expectations.

Augustus: vivid, volatile and promiscuous. He was a hero among romantics and bohemians, celebrated as one of the great British talents of his generation. Gwen's art was magnificent, but she was also more reserved, and as a woman she struggled for the recognition which has only come to her now, years after her death.

Judith Mackrell delves into their radical world and the changing world they inhabited with her extraordinary *Women's Prize for Non-Fiction* shortlisted book.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



"Outstanding...."
JONATHAN JONES



JULIET PICKERING

WORKSHOP: FROM PAGE TO PUBLISHED!

1pm-3pm
MASONIC HALL
£30

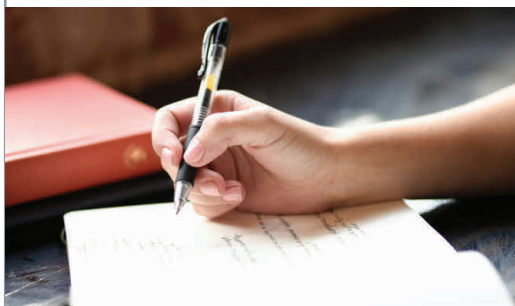
How to take your book to and through publication.

In this friendly, engaging session, **Juliet Pickering** - agent and director at Blake Friedmann Literary Agency - guides you through finishing your story (fiction or non-fiction), submitting to agents and publishers, and what to expect from the publication process.

Covering key tips on editing, pitching your work and collaborating effectively with your publisher, Juliet will demystify the path to becoming a published author and building a writing career.

There will be time to work on your pitch, so bring a pen and paper.

[Photo by Hannah Olinger on Unsplash]



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TYNDALE 500

THE BOOK THAT CHANGED A NATION

2pm-3:15pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£5



MATTHEW SWEET

A LIFE OF BARBARA CARTLAND

2pm-3pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

In 1526, the first *English New Testaments*, translated by William Tyndale, were smuggled into England aboard merchant ships. This quiet act of defiance became the catalyst for a wider rebellion.

Tyndale's translation, written in language ordinary people could understand, challenged the authority of church and state and helped reshape English society. Its influence echoed through centuries of culture, politics and identity, and still shapes the language we use today.

Five hundred years later, join **Lee Emerson**, **Steve Owen** and **Ian Margeson** of Scott Drive Church, Exmouth, for a fascinating illustrated talk exploring the story, impact and enduring legacy of the book that changed a nation.

Penniless virgins.
Reckless dukes.
Flappers. Airmen.
Suffragettes. Barbara Cartland made them fall in love. She wrote 723 books without touching a typewriter: instead, she reclined on her sofa with a Pekinese on her lap - and romantic fiction billowed out of her.



Writer and broadcaster **Matthew Sweet** has drawn on archives and firsthand accounts to reveal the woman behind the powder and mascara - a clever, socially precarious writer navigating a twentieth-century world of war-damaged men, class conflict and sexual peril.

Part satire, part biography, part social history, *The Great Dictator* reveals how a literary legend was made.

Talking to Clare Clark

WED 23

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PAGE TO STAGE

4pm- 4.45pm
PUBLIC HALL
Free but ticketed



ALISON HASTIE

GREEN SHOES

4:30pm-5:30pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£8



LOCAL
SPOTLIGHT

A celebration of words written to be performed and the freshest work you'll hear all week!

We are delighted that performance poets **Chris White** and **Rebecca Tantony** from Exeter based SPORK! return to host our annual day long celebration of the spoken word for Year 9 local secondary schools pupils.

THEY start at 9.30am, but YOU can come and cheer on their inspiring and life affirming performances.

For more information Schools can email davidmarston@budlitfest.org.uk



In the early 1980s, a voice in a dream told **Alison Hastie** to "make shoes" - shaping a life and career that would span four decades. Rooted on Dartmoor and the radical traditions of the West Country, her story weaves together craft, feminism, community and resilience.



From co-founding Green Shoes to navigating personal and professional highs and lows, this is a powerful reflection on creativity, independence, and what it means to live - and work - differently in a mass-produced world.

Talking to Tim Hubbard



"An inspiring and uplifting celebration of enterprise, feminism, conscience and creativity" TERENCE BLACKER

WED 23

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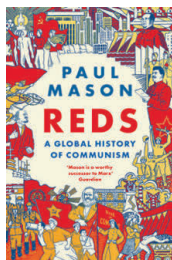


PAUL MASON

REDS: A GLOBAL HISTORY OF COMMUNISM

5pm-6pm
ST PETERS CHURCH
£12

From former Channel 4 News and BBC *Newsnight* economics editor **Paul Mason** comes a bold and sweeping history of communism, an idea far older, and more enduring, than many assume.



Reds traces its global evolution from early origins to today's shifting world order, asking urgent questions about capitalism, democracy, and the future. In an age of climate crisis and artificial intelligence, could communism still shape what comes next? This will be a provocative and timely exploration of one of history's most contested ideologies.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

“Mason is a worthy successor to Marx.”

GUARDIAN



FESTIVAL FICTION READ

CLARE LESLIE HALL

BROKEN COUNTRY

6pm-7pm
PUBLIC HALL
£10 including a drink

This year's extraordinary read has been described as a love story with the pulse of a thriller. Reece Witherspoon called it 'a story I couldn't put down' and it has already become a bestseller, with a screen adaptation on the way.

Talking to Clare Clark



EVENT SPONSORED BY:



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DAMIEN LEWIS

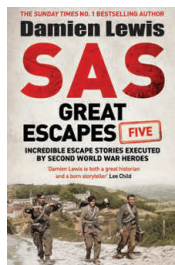


OPEN MIC

SAS GREAT ESCAPES FIVE

6pm-7pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

The *Sunday Times* No 1 bestselling historian **Damien Lewis** joins us with his latest *SAS Great Escapes Five* and the recent *SAS: The Great Train Raid*, bringing to life extraordinary true stories of daring, endurance and ingenuity from the world's most famous fighting force.



From dramatic breakouts in wartime Italy to epic journeys across the Sahara and a secret 1943 mission to liberate a concentration camp, these are edge-of-the-seat accounts of courage against the odds.

6:30pm-8:30pm
BROOK KITCHEN
£6

Word
kitchen

Word Kitchen's popular open mic returns after last year's sell-out event. Writers at every stage are welcome to take the mic - poets, prose writers, memoirists and more. Expect a rich, lively mix of readings to move and amuse, alongside food and drinks available to purchase on the night.

This year's headline act is the fabulous poet and comedian **Kev Mud** described by *The Guardian* as 'an intoxicating mix of surreal stand-up and social justice.'

To book an open mic slot, contact co-curator David Lloyd at sidmouthdavid@outlook.com



"Damien Lewis is both a great historian and a born storyteller."

LEE CHILD



WED 23

THURS 24

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SUN 27



DAWN O'PORTER

HUNGRY EYES

7:30pm-8:30pm
ST PETERS CHURCH
£15

What happens at your kitchen table stays with you. Join us as bestselling novelist, broadcaster and *Celebrity Masterchef* finalist **Dawn O'Porter** serves up a sharp, funny and deeply personal memoir.



She traces a path through the moments and meals that shape who we become and the ingredients we use to gradually build a life.

As the spotlight shifts from Hollywood to home, food became her stage, where she made sense of life and discovered her love language. What if everything you thought you were chasing, was already right here?

Talking to Julia Wheeler



*"Dawn writes like she cooks - with love.
Indecently moreish."*

LOUIS THEROUX



WORKSHOP

ANDREW CHATTERTON'S
HISTORY BOOK CLUB

8pm-9pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£5



LOCAL
SPOTLIGHT

What makes a great history book impossible to put down and what should you read next?

Join author and Budleigh based history enthusiast **Andrew Chatterton** for this specially curated, interactive session exploring the very best in history writing, from gripping narratives to thought-provoking non-fiction.

Expect lively recommendations, surprising discoveries and plenty of "if you liked that, try this" moments to expand your reading list. Andrew will share personal favourites and guide you to books that bring the past vividly - and unforgettably - to life.

[Photo by Chris Lawton on Unsplash]





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WED 23

THURS 24

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SUN 27

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IJEOMA UCHEGBU

THE WONDROUS CHEMISTRY OF EVERYDAY LIFE

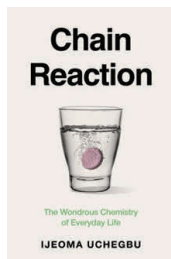
10am-11am
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

What can chemistry reveal about what it means to be human?

Professor Dame Ijeoma Uchegbu's book, *Chain Reaction*, is a vivid and deeply personal journey into the chemistry underpinning everything we touch, consume and inhabit.

She brings to life the chemical bonds that hold our bodies together and the reactions that sustain all life, while recounting her own story, from childhood in post war Nigeria to a groundbreaking career designing treatments for blindness.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



"Nowhere have I seen chemistry described so lucidly, comprehensively and made so fun."

JIM AL-KHALILI



ANDREW MILLER

ARVON MASTERCLASS: FOLLOW THE SPARK!

10am-12pm
MASONIC HALL
£35

Join Arvon and Booker-shortlisted novelist **Andrew Miller** for an inspiring fiction workshop that asks: what fires you up as a writer? What truly engages your curiosity?

Whether you have dreams of writing a novel but are yet to begin, or you've made a start but it's feeling a little flat on the page, this session will help you bring a sense of play and exploration into your work, guiding you to follow the stories that matter to you, develop your unique voice and create fiction that sings. Please bring a pen and paper.

[Photo by Yannick Pulver on Unsplash]



WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

21

EMMA STONEX

THE SUNSHINE MAN

11am-12pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£8

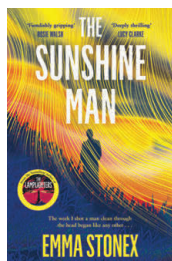
LOCAL
SPOTLIGHT

Look no further for
your next page turner!

Emma Stonex, bestselling author of *The Lamplighters* joins us to talk about her gripping book, *The Sunshine Man*. It's an unbearably tense thriller and a nuanced examination of fractured lives, grief and trauma set against the haunting beauty of rural Devon.

She joins us to talk about her writing journey and life in the southwest.

Talking to Clare Clark



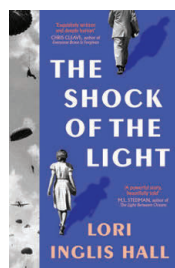
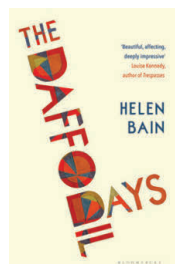
HELEN BAIN + LORI INGLIS HALL

HILARY MANTEL EMERGING WRITERS' EVENT

1pm-2pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£5

The Daffodil Days offers a rich, multi-voiced portrait of Sylvia Plath's final year in Devon, capturing a rural community on the cusp of change. *The Shock of the Light* explores the emotional impact of the Second World War through twins Tessa and Theo, evacuated as children - only one returns home. Together, these powerful novels explore memory, revelation and the enduring pull of the past.

Talking to Jennie Godfrey



THE DAFFODIL DAYS

"Deeply researched and utterly convincing."

MELISSA HARRISON

THE SHOCK OF THE LIGHT

"Truly compelling."

WILLIAM BOYD

"A deeply thrilling and emotionally
rich page-turner."

LUCY CLARKE

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

22



CAROLINE QUENTIN

DRAWN TO NATURE

2pm-3pm
ST PETER'S CHURCH
£15

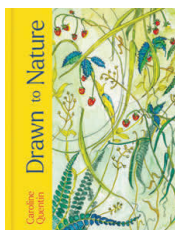
How can the natural world help us find joy and connection in everyday life?

Join **Caroline Quentin** as she celebrates *Drawn to Nature*, an uplifting exploration of the outdoors. Blending personal reflections with stories from her life as an actor, Caroline shares the people, places and gardens that have shaped her love of nature, from Devon and Somerset to wherever life takes her.

With her own charming illustrations throughout, this is a celebration of finding beauty in every space.

A warm, inspiring event for anyone seeking a greener, calmer life.

Talking to Tim Hubbard



JANE CORRY

HOW TO WRITE YOUR LIFE STORY IN SIX EASY STEPS

2pm-4pm
MASONIC HALL
£25

Writing your life story doesn't have to take years!

Join *Sunday Times* bestseller **Jane Corry** who will talk you through six easy ways of describing the important stages of your life. Too many people wish they knew more about their forebears. This is your chance to leave memories of your life for your children, grandchildren and other relatives and friends.

No previous writing experience needed.

P.S. Humour will be involved!

[Photo by Fuu J on Unsplash]



WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

23



DANIEL HAHN

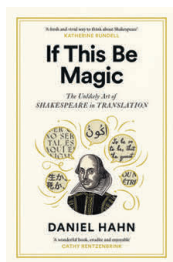


ALEV SCOTT

SHAKESPEARE IN TRANSLATION

3:30pm-4:30pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

What does it mean to translate Shakespeare? When we change all the poetry, all the wordplay, all the syntax - all the words - is it still Shakespeare? And is it still any good?



If you've wondered about how to rebuild a topical 400 year old joke in a new culture, or are curious about why Lady Macbeth's pronouns are a problem then this deliciously fresh look is for you. **Daniel Hahn**, seasoned translator and Shakespeare fanatic, will change the way you think about language itself.

Talking to Cathy Rentzenbrink



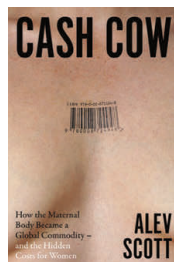
"It's a fresh and vivid way to think about Shakespeare."

KATHERINE RUNDELL

CASH COW

2:30pm-3:30pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£8

Should surrogacy be paid or banned altogether? Is it right to pay more for 'VIP' egg donors? And who should profit from the maternal body?



Join investigative journalist **Alev Scott** as she shares the realities of IVF, surrogacy, the breastmilk market and the urgent questions raised about ethics, exploitation and choice.

This promises to be an eye-opening event about the intersection of desire, desperation and big business.

Talking to Mary Morris



"..will change the way you think about family, fertility and the future."

PETER FRANKOPAN

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

24



BRYONY GORDON

PEOPLE PLEASER

5pm-6pm
ST PETER'S CHURCH
£12



ARTHUR SNELL

ELEMENTAL

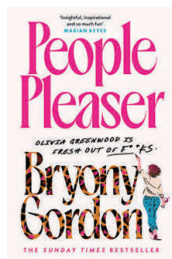
6pm-7pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

Do you find yourself saying yes when you really mean no?

Join the brilliant **Bryony Gordon** for a warm, funny and unflinchingly honest event celebrating her debut novel *People Pleaser* which blends her trademark wit with sharp insight into modern womanhood.

From burnout, boundaries and what happens when we finally start putting ourselves first, you'll be cheering on Olivia Greenwood's riotous journey from chronic people-pleaser to unapologetic truth-teller. Part rom-com, part therapy and wholly relatable.

Talking to Clare Clark



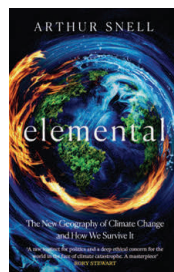
"Insightful, inspirational and SO much fun."

MARIAN KEYES

What will living on a warmer planet look like?

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

Talking to Ian Muir Cochrane



"A masterpiece."

RORY STEWART

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

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JASMINE ELMER



JOHN CRACE

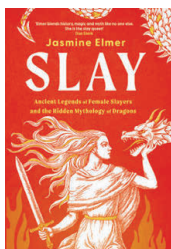
SLAY

6pm-7pm

CHURCH ON THE GREEN

£8

Who really slayed the dragons? Join mythologist **Jasmine Elmer** as she uncovers the hidden history of female dragon slayers in *Slay*.



Across cultures and centuries, dragons have symbolised danger, chaos and the unknown but the stories we've inherited have too often centred on male heroes. Don't miss the chance to discover the fierce, forgotten women who conquered these monsters. Bold, original and empowering, this is a fascinating exploration of myth, history and storytelling and a chance to rediscover the women written out of legend.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



"She is the slay queen!"

DAN SNOW

HOW DOES THIS GOVERNMENT THING WORK AGAIN?

7:30pm-8:30pm

ST PETER'S CHURCH

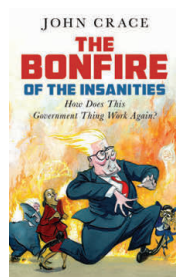
£15

Does satire help us navigate a political world that often feels stranger than fiction?

Prepare for an evening of razor-sharp wit as celebrated *Guardian* political columnist **John Crace** takes to the festival stage to discuss his latest work, *Bonfire of the Insanities*.

With the trademark humour and humane scepticism that have made his writing so beloved, Crace will dissect the dizzying theatre of public life - where scandal outpaces common sense, yesterday's certainty becomes today's punchline, and we collectively try to keep our footing amid the noise.

Talking to Clare Clark



"I love his cleverness, his wit, and his heart."

NIGELLA LAWSON

WED 23

BUDLITFEST BOOK QUIZ

FRIDAY

7:30pm-9.30pm
MAIN MARQUEE

Fancy a fun night out with a bookish twist? Join quizmistresses **Cathy Rentzenbrink** and **Jennie Godfrey** for the inaugural BudLitFest Book Quiz - an evening of lively rounds, literary brainteasers and plenty of laughs.

There are brilliant bookish prizes up for grabs, so gather your team and get ready to turn the page on a night of friendly competition. Whether you're a quiz regular or just in it for fun, all are welcome.



All proceeds go towards books for the local Foodbank to distribute to families at Christmas

£10pp including a welcome drink



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FOODBANK

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THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

DATES FOR 2027

SPRING WEEKEND 6-7 MARCH
FESTIVAL 22-26 SEPTEMBER

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

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FOR SALE

Family Fun Weekend



LOUIE STOWELL



ST PETER'S
CHURCH

LOKI: A BAD GOD'S GUIDE TO CAUSING CHAOS

10am-11am | 7+ | £4 child / £4 adult

Calling all mischief-makers! Bestselling author and Norse myth superfan **Louie Stowell** comes to Budleigh to share her hit Loki series. Dive into a world of chaos and fun with live drawing, quizzes and plenty of wild Norse myth facts.



SOPHY HENN



THE
PLAYHOUSE

I WANT EVERYTHING!

10am-10:45am
3+ | £2 child / £2 adult

Big Ghost wants ALL the things! But Little Ghost shows that what they really need is a friend to help them out...

Join award-winning author-illustrator **Sophy Henn** for a double Storytime of *I Hate Everything* and the brand new sequel *I Want Everything*. Then join in with a ghostly draw-along!



SOPHY HENN



THE
PLAYHOUSE

HAPPY HILLS

1pm-2pm
6+ | £2 child / £2 adult

Welcome to Happy Hills – it's a place where anything can happen!

Join **Sophy Henn**, author/illustrator extraordinaire of the hilariously funny graphic novel series, *Happy Hills*. Enjoy a Disco Cat dance off, help Captain invent some new pants and meet the latest troublemakers - Zombie Gummy Bears! With character draw-alongs and more.



RAMZEE



MASONIC
HALL

CARTOON DRAWING WORKSHOP

2pm-3pm 9+ | 4pm-5pm 5+
£5 child / Adults FREE

Join award-winning storyteller, cartoonist and *The Cheat Book* creator **RAMZEE** for a fun, interactive session on turning ideas into stories. He'll share his own work, show how he created his characters and plots, and introduce inspiring illustrated fiction. Step by step, you'll learn the basics of character creation and then design your own!

PLEASE NOTE: Adults must accompany children

PLEASE NOTE: Adults are required to buy a ticket for some events. Check event details.



KARL NOVA



THE
PLAYHOUSE

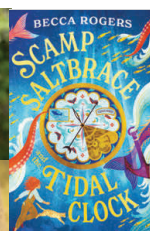
RHYTHM AND POETRY WITH KARL NOVA

4pm-5pm | 8+ | £2 child / £2 adult

Award-winning author, hip hop artist and performance poet **Karl Nova** brings words to life in this high-energy event. Expect laughter, rhythm and on-the-spot freestyle. Featuring poems from his CLIPPA Award-winning *Rhythm and Poetry* and *The Curious Case of Karl Nova*, alongside live music, storytelling and a lively Q&A, this is a joyful, noise-filled celebration of words, beats and big imagination.



BECCA ROGERS



MASONIC
HALL

WORKSHOP: MONSTERS, MYTHS AND MERMAIDS

10-11am | 8-12yrs | £5 child / Adults FREE

A fun, interactive workshop inspired by author **Becca Rogers** swashbuckling novel *Scamp Saltbrance* and *The Tidal Clock*. You'll invent fierce mermaids, watery worlds and fantastical sea creatures, and leave with the building blocks for your own adventure. Plus readings from the book and an author Q&A.

PLEASE NOTE: Adults must accompany children



MAZ EVANS



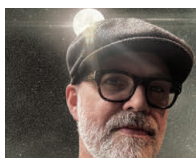
CHURCH
ON THE
GREEN

THE LAST BARD

11.30am-12.30pm
7+ | £4 child / £4 adult

Dive into the world of Shakespeare with superstar author **Maz Evans**, creator of the *Who Let the Gods Out* series and new book *The Last Bard*, in a fun-filled hour designed to help you unlock your creativity.

Join Maz on a whirlwind tour of Shakespeare's greatest hits and their modern equivalents, from *The Lion King* to *West Side Story*, in this hilarious, anarchic show...



ROB BIDDULPH



ST PETER'S
CHURCH

DRAW WITH ROB: THE LAST WOLF

1pm-2pm | 7+ | £4 child / £4 adult

Ready to draw, laugh and howl at the moon? Join multi-award-winning author and illustrator **Rob Biddulph** for a fun-filled family event packed with creativity and storytelling. Enjoy a live Draw With Rob session and musical moments from *South*, plus celebrate the 10th anniversary of the beloved *Odd Dog Out*. Be among the first to discover *The Last Wolf*, a thrilling new adventure where secrets lurk and danger comes after dark.

Family Fun

Mini Marquee



Join us for a packed weekend of stories, crafts and imagination. Inspired by Winnie-the-Poo and other fabulous fictional bears & woodland creatures, the Mini Marquee will offer 'un-bear-lievable' fun. Suitable for all ages.

Bear Trail Treasure Hunt

ALL WEEKEND | FREE

Follow the clues around The Green as it transforms into a bear-filled adventure trail. Solve the puzzle and collect a paw-some prize at the end.

PLEASE NOTE: This activity is self supervised.

Fri

2PM

Bounce & Rhyme

FREE

We host Budleigh Library's weekly event for toddlers and preschoolers. Come and join the family fun.

Sat

11AM-4PM

Crafts & Activities

FREE

Drop in throughout the day for a range of FREE and FUN family activities, inspired by bear and woodland stories. Make Honey Slime, Piglet Biscuits and Friendship Bracelets in our Books In The Woods themed space. Great prizes to be won!

Sun

10AM-2PM

A relaxed day of creative activities and storytelling sessions.

Storytime with Katy Cawkwell

11.30am 3-6yrs | FREE | 30 MINS

3pm 4-7yrs | FREE | 30 MINS

Devon based storyteller Katy Cawkwell brings enchanting tales to life in two lively storytelling sessions full of imagination and fun.

Teddy Bears' Picnic

1pm | FREE

Bring a blanket, a picnic and your favourite teddy (and grown-up!) and enjoy some great stories outdoors. There may even be a surprise furry guest... If wet, the picnic will still go ahead inside the Mini Marquee.



Mini Book Beach Hut

NEW

Choose a pre-loved children's book and take it home - free - while stocks last. A mini beach hut, full of stories, by the Mini Marquee - just waiting to be discovered.



WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27



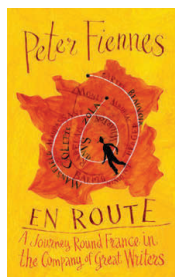
PETER FIENNES

AMANDA CRAIG + LEON CRAIG

A JOURNEY ROUND FRANCE IN THE COMPANY OF GREAT WRITERS

10am-11am | £12
PUBLIC HALL

Join acclaimed writer **Peter Fiennes** in the company of some of France's greatest writers as he celebrates French literature, art, landscape, food and wine, and explores the identity of this sublime, mysterious and sometimes fractious country.



Drink with de Beauvoir in the bars of Rouen; follow Edith Wharton's 'Motor-Flight' along the Loire Valley to the home of George Sand; linger near Bordeaux with François Mauriac, join Colette in the trenches at Verdun... and head to Paris to consign Maupassant to an asylum and Sartre to his grave.

Talking to Tim Hubbard



"Witty and packed with gossip."

SEBASTIAN FAULKS

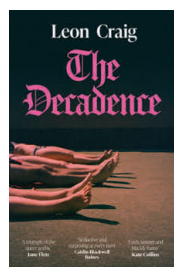
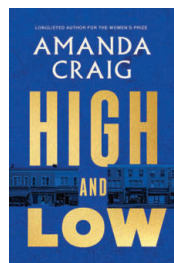
THINGS I WISH I'D KNOWN AS A NOVELIST

10am-11am
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

Is creative writing taught or is it something you learn the hard way? And what does it really take to sustain a life as a novelist today?

Two novelists, a generation apart and with different approaches to creativity, have very different views on this – and as they happen to be mother and daughter, expect sparks to fly! Each is a storyteller in a different genre – one a State of the Nation novelist weaving contemporary characters and dilemmas into strong plots involving betrayal, murder and redemption, the other mining Gothic tropes for stories about prejudice, fear, feminism and horror.

Join acclaimed novelist **Amanda Craig** and writer-editor **Leon Craig** for a lively, intergenerational conversation on the craft and business of fiction.



WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

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FEATHEREDNESS

PRINTMAKING WORKSHOP

Two sessions:
10am-11.15am / 11.45am-1pm
MASONIC HALL
£5*

Inspired by the birdlife on the Lower Otter Estuary, join this fun and friendly printmaking workshop to create your own original prints with collagraph and monotype. We'll use feathers, plants and other estuary materials, to a bird-themed soundtrack. Led by **Emma Molony**, artist and printmaker at Double Elephant Print Workshop. No experience required.

Featheredness is a creative environmental project, supported by an Arts and Culture East Devon Award.

www.doubleelephant.org.uk

**All ages welcome but U16s need to be accompanied by a ticket buying adult*



LORD PETER RICKETTS

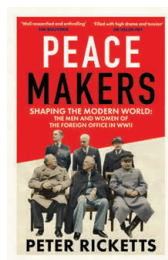
PEACE MAKERS

12:30pm-1:30pm
ST PETER'S CHURCH
£12

What if the Second World War was won not just on the battlefield - but across negotiating tables, in embassies and behind closed doors?

Join **Lord Ricketts** for a gripping new perspective on WWII with *Peace Makers*. Drawing on his own remarkable career at the heart of British diplomacy, he brings to life the men and women who forged alliances, backed resistance networks and helped shape the post-war order. From Blitz-hit Whitehall to besieged embassies across the world, this is a story of resilience, intrigue and influence.

Talking to Ian Muir Cochrane



"Well researched and enthralling."

TIM BOUVERIE

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

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EMILY HOWES

MRS DICKENS

12.30pm-1.30pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£8

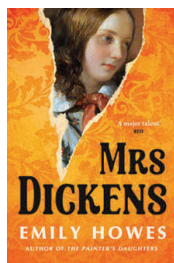


AMY JEFFS

ARTHUR: A NEW LIFE

12:30pm-1:30pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

London, 1835. Kate Hogarth falls in love with a young Charles Dickens but as his fame rises, her place in his story begins to shrink. Meanwhile, orphan Anne Brown is drawn into the Dickens household, where opportunity and loyalty come at a cost.

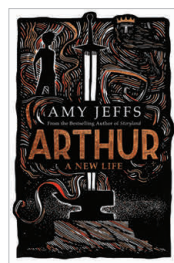


Acclaimed for her richly drawn historical fiction, **Emily Howes** returns with a gripping, compassionate novel that asks: what happens when the greatest storyteller controls the narrative?

Talking to Jennie Godfrey

How do myths survive and why do we keep remaking them?

Sunday Times bestselling author **Amy Jeffs** brings us a reimagining of the legendary king through early medieval and early modern sources, moving through forests, citadels and the Otherworld itself.



Meet a vivid, unsettling Arthur: warlord, monster-slayer, fairy-touched hero and wounded ruler still dreaming of return. Come along to hear captivating tales of the medieval with some hauntingly beautiful songs to accompany.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



"Pitch-perfect storytelling."

ANNIE GARTHWAITE



"Beautifully illustrated and engagingly told."

DAN JONES

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27



CLAUDIA HAMMOND

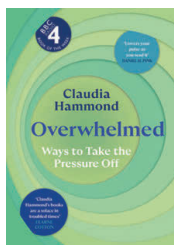
OVERWHELMED

1:30pm-2:30pm

PUBLIC HALL

£12

All of us are familiar with the unsettling sensation of overwhelm. It's as if there's ever more to do, and ever less time in which to do it. But there is a way out!



Addressing particular problems that can trap us into feeling overwhelmed, from procrastination to the fear of regret, imposter syndrome, perfectionism and a seemingly never-ending to-do list, presenter of BBC Radio 4's *All in the Mind*, **Claudia Hammond** offers science-backed solutions that will help us to take the pressure off.

Talking to Tim Hubbard



"..winning blend of science, empathy and humour."

DANIEL PINK



RACHAEL STIRLING

ALL ABOUT MY MOTHER:
THE LIFE OF DIANA RIGG

3pm-4pm

ST PETER'S CHURCH

£12

What's it like being Diana Rigg's daughter? Join acclaimed actress **Rachael Stirling** for an intimate conversation about her mother.

From Emma Peel and 007's only wife to Medea and Mrs Danvers, Rigg's life was fearless on and offstage, from fighting for equal pay to taking on the press.



Drawing on *All About My Mother*, her show-stopping mother-daughter memoir, Rachael brings the vivid story of Diana Rigg to life - a funny, vibrant and tender portrait of love, loss and an extraordinary bond.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



"A game-changing, glitter-cannon of a book."

CAITLIN MORAN

WED 23

THURS 24

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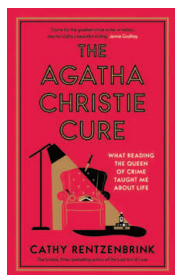


WRITE WITH CATHY & AGATHA

WITH CATHY RENTZENBRINK

3pm-4:30pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£10

Have you always wanted to write but don't know where to start? **Cathy Rentzenbrink** invites you to explore writing as a source of creativity, confidence and wellbeing in this lively, interactive event inspired by the Queen of Crime, **Agatha Christie**.



Expect tips, tricks and playful writing provocations drawn from Christie's genius for ingenious plots, unforgettable characters, red herrings and perfectly timed twists. Drawing on her experience teaching writers of all levels, Cathy will help you unlock ideas and enjoy the process.

Bring a notebook, have a go, and see what happens. Absolutely no experience needed!



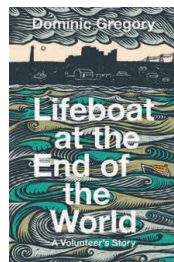
DOMINIC GREGORY

LIFEBOAT AT THE END OF THE WORLD

4:30pm-5:30pm
PUBLIC HALL
£12

Most of us will never experience what it means to put our lives on the line for strangers at sea.

Join RNLI volunteer **Dominic Gregory** for a gripping account of life aboard the Dungeness lifeboat, at the frontline of one of the UK's most demanding roles. In *Lifeboat at the End of the World*, he reveals the intense training, trust and teamwork behind every rescue, from stricken vessels to small boats crossing the Channel today.



Talking to Julia Wheeler

Our town was deeply affected by the tragic events of Christmas Day 2025 when two men perished at sea. All profits from this event will be donated to the RNLI and the Coastguard Rescue Team.



Lifeboats

Fundraising in aid of the RNLI



"... a hymn to human decency, and that makes it a very timely book indeed."

TIM WINTON

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27



OLIVER BULLOUGH

EVERYBODY LOVES OUR DOLLARS

6pm-7pm
ST PETER'S CHURCH
£15

Leading investigative journalist **Oliver Bulough** joins us for a wildly thrilling exposé of the dark financial secrets at the heart of the global economy.

Without money laundering, most major crime simply wouldn't pay - from South American drug cartels to Nigerian kleptocrats, Afghan terrorists, traffickers and tax evaders. And yet the system not only survives, it thrives: moving dirty money has never been easier, or more secure.

So just why has every attempt to stop it failed?

Talking to Ian Muir Cochrane



OLLY SMITH

DEATH BY NOIR

7:30pm-8:30pm
PUBLIC HALL
£12

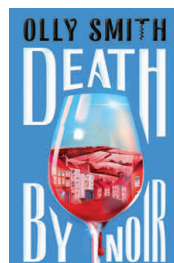
What begins with a glass of something excellent... can end very badly indeed.

Join bestselling wine expert, broadcaster and author **Olly Smith** as he discusses his sparkling crime debut with fellow food and crime writer **Orlando Murrin**.

Death by Noir features eccentric wine shop owner Barclay Flint, who becomes the prime suspect when a friend is found dead in their Sussex town. Can he clear his name using his extraordinary wine-tasting skills to sniff out the truth?

Expect cosy crime, sharp questions, laughter and more than a few tasting notes along the way.

Talking to Orlando Murrin



"Utterly fascinating. Like being given X-ray glasses to see the real world."

MARINA HYDE



"Pop open something special and settle in for a page turner."

DERMOT O'LEARY



DOMINIC DROMGOOLE

TIME FRAMES

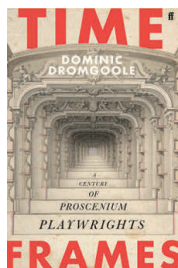
7:30pm-8:30pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12

What can a century of theatre tell us about a century of change?

Join former Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe, **Dominic Dromgoole**, for a witty and wide-ranging journey through the proscenium age, from 1865 to 1965. He brings to life over sixty playwrights, from towering figures to forgotten voices, who used theatre to capture a world in flux and responded to social upheaval, shaping and reflecting their times from behind the frame of the stage.

Erudite, irreverent and richly entertaining, this is theatre history as you've never seen it before.

Talking to Tim Hubbard



WET THE WHISTLE

BAR OPENING TIMES
MAIN MARQUEE

WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY
12PM - 9PM

SUNDAY
12PM - 4PM



[Photo by Kevin Kelly on Unsplash]

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

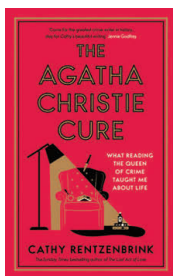
SUN 27



CATHY RENTZENBRINK

THE AGATHA CHRISTIE CURE

10am-11am
PUBLIC HALL
£12



Can a book change the course of your life?

One Christmas, Festival President **Cathy Rentzenbrink**, drained by life's upheavals, turned to her first literary love, Agatha Christie, for comfort and finds something deeper.

Revisiting the novels and the mystery of Christie's 1926 disappearance, she uncovered a story of survival and reinvention.

In this anniversary year marking 50 years since Christie's death, this warm, insightful event blends memoir and literary detective work to explore how the books we love can help us begin again.

Talking to Julia Wheeler

BSL interpretation is available for this event



"She makes the everyday profound."

MARIAN KEYES



DR ALAN DESMOND

WHAT YOUR DOCTOR ISN'T TELLING YOU ABOUT FOOD

12pm-1pm
TEMPLE CHURCH
£12



Can what you eat really shape how long (and how well) you live?

Join NHS gastroenterologist **Dr Alan Desmond** as he reveals how the modern food environment is quietly reshaping our health. He cuts through the confusion to explain why diet is now a leading driver of disease and how simple, realistic changes can make a lasting difference.

Plenty of clinical experience and the latest research but no fads and no guilt. Just food that works.

BSL interpretation is available for this event



"Shows just how powerful real, everyday food can be for our long-term health."

ELLA MILLS

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

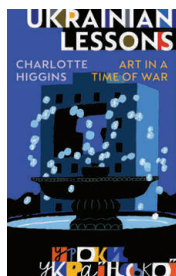


CHARLOTTE HIGGINS

ART IN A TIME OF WAR

2pm-3pm
PUBLIC HALL
£12

The Guardian Chief Culture Writer **Charlotte Higgins** never expected to report from a war zone. But in 2022 she travelled to Ukraine and found a country where culture itself is under attack but also fiercely alive.



In *Ukrainian Lessons*, she explores how artists and writers respond to invasion, and how art becomes a means of survival, resistance and testimony.

Part reportage, part personal reckoning, this is a powerful, moving account; an unforgettable reflection on war, memory and the vital role of culture when everything else is at stake.

Talking to Julia Wheeler



"This is the most beautifully written, moving book I can ever remember reading." PHILIPPA PERRY



FEATHEREDNESS

CREATIVE WALKING & WRITING WORKSHOP

2pm-4.30pm
MASONIC HALL
£15*

Join novelist, sound artist and creative writing academic **Ellen Wiles** for a bird-themed walk around the Lower Otter Estuary, listening, watching and imaginatively tuning in to the experiences of the birds inhabiting the salt marsh through a series of creative prompts. Develop your ideas further in the accompanying writing workshop with a bird-themed soundtrack, guided by Ellen.

Clipboards, paper, pencils will be provided. Do bring binoculars if you have them.

The 2 mile walk begins at Lime Kiln car park SY073821; EX9 6JD;
///enrolling.laugh.belonged.

Please wear weather-appropriate clothing and footwear and bring water/snacks. The workshop will run in the Masonic Hall.

Featheredness is a creative environmental project, supported by an Arts and Culture East Devon Award.

www.doubleelephant.org.uk

*suitable for age 10+ U16s need to be accompanied by an adult ticket holder

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27

40



RICHARD COLLETT

ALONG THE BORDERS

2:30pm-3:30pm
CHURCH ON THE GREEN
£8

LOCAL
SPOTLIGHT

GILES MILTON

EMPIRE AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

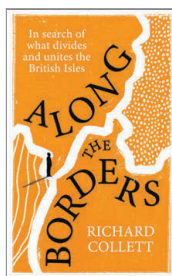
4pm-5pm
ST PETER'S CHURCH
£12

How do borders divide us and how do they quietly bring us together?

Join Devon-based travel writer **Richard Collett** for a fascinating journey through the UK's borderlands. Travelling by bus, boat, train and foot, he meets the people who live on the edges of nations - nationalists and pub landlords, town criers, reenactors and refugee support workers - each shaping ideas of identity in unexpected ways.

Far from being fixed lines on a map, Collett shows borders as living, shifting spaces where cultures meet, clash and merge.

Talking to Mary Morris

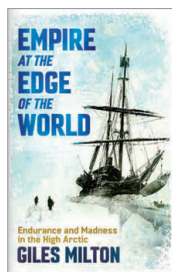


One man's obsession with empire sent fifteen people into the Arctic but only one would return.

Join bestselling historian **Giles Milton** as he reveals the sweeping (and often stranger than fiction) account of a 1913 expedition to Wrangel Island in the Siberian Arctic. Driven by ambition and geopolitical fantasy, Vilhjalmur Stefansson's plan to claim a frozen outpost in Britain's name spirals into catastrophe.

A story of survival and imperial hubris in the far north - where, as recent years have reminded us, the struggle for influence has never really gone away.

Talking to Andrew Chatterton



"Packed with intriguing details, revealing insights and flashes of hope."

SHAFIK MEGHJI

"The master of narrative history."

SUNDAY TIMES

WED 23

THURS 24

FRI 25

SAT 26

SUN 27



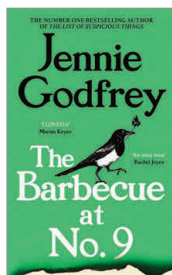
JENNIE GODFREY

THE BARBEQUE AT NO 9

4pm-5pm
PUBLIC HALL
£12



We're so thrilled to welcome back **Jennie Godfrey** with her brilliant second novel, in conversation with festival president **Cathy Rentzenbrink**.



Summer, 1985. Neighbours gather for a Live Aid barbecue on Delmont Close but behind the bunting and small talk, something darker is stirring. Secrets simmer, tensions rise, and the day begins to unravel.

Warm, witty and quietly devastating, this is a moving story of friendship, community and the hidden fault lines beneath family life.

Talking to Cathy Rentzenbrink



"A beautiful story about secrets, lies and community."

GRAHAM NORTON



23RD - 27TH
SEPTEMBER
FESTIVAL
CAFÉ

9.30AM - 4.30PM*
*SUNDAY 4.00PM CLOSE

TEA, COFFEE, CAKES,
CREAM TEAS, FRESH
SALADS, SANDWICHES,
LIGHT LUNCHES AND
MUCH MORE!

THE FESTIVAL MARQUEE, STATION ROAD,
BUDLEIGH SALTERTON, EX9 6RN



FESTIVAL MARQUEE

A warm welcome awaits you in the marquee - the hub of the festival. We have planned some exciting new evening events this year, alongside some old favourites. Good food, a well stocked bar, the fabulous Waterstones bookshop, the information and ticket desks await you.

Pickle
SHACK

WET THE WHISTLE

W
Waterstone's

FESTIVAL INFORMATION DESK & TICKET OFFICE

OPEN
Wed-Sat 10am-5.30pm
Sun 10am-1pm

Our volunteers will be happy to help you with information, updates on events, ticket availability and lost property.



WATERSTONES POP UP BOOKSHOP

We are delighted to continue our partnership with Waterstones. Come, browse and buy from a great selection of books. Signed copies of books by authors appearing at the festival will be available. Look out for the book signings happening at Waterstones in the marquee.

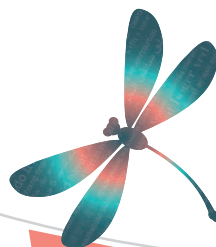


SUSTAINABILITY

The festival is committed to sustainable waste management. We have engaged Devon Contract Waste to ensure that all waste from the Marquee is recycled effectively and we ask that visitors support us in our commitment to sustainability.

MUSIC IN THE MARQUEE

Come and listen to amazing local musicians performing in the main marquee. Most events are free, no ticket required!



5pm-6pm

WED
23

THE WILDSTRINGS

FREE

Festival favourites The Wildstrings will be performing in the marquee, bringing you foot-tapping grooves, sensitive slide and deft guitar.



6.30pm-8pm

THURS
24

MARK WAISTELL

FREE

We are delighted to welcome back Mark - a local singer songwriter whose music draws widely from folk-acoustic to classical.



5:30pm-6:30pm

FRI
25

WOODBURY WHALERS

FREE

Great to have the Whalers back with us this year singing some of your favourite sea shanties.



12.30pm-1.30pm

SAT
26

NOAH LAYZELL

FREE

New to the festival this year we are pleased to welcome Noah - a brilliant classical guitarist.

Sit back, relax and listen.



7.30pm-9pm

SAT
26

THE TAKE 4 BAND

TICKETS £10

The Take 4 band bring a concert version of their fun mix of swing, jazz and blues to the marquee.

All profits going towards books for the local Foodbank to distribute to families at Christmas.



1pm-2pm

SUN
27

THE CLARION QUARTET

FREE

Back by popular demand the quartet will be performing a mixture of light, classical and relaxing music for you to enjoy.

STORIES THAT REACH FURTHER: OUR CHARITY AND COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival is more than a celebration of books - it's a charity that brings stories to life, sparks imagination, and creates opportunities that last far beyond the page. Every ticket you buy helps open the door to reading for young people across our community.

IMPACT IN ACTION

Our schools programme brings writers and illustrators directly into local classrooms, creating moments that stay with children for life.

- For many, it's the first time they've met a real author.
- The first time they've seen a story come to life before their eyes.
- The first time they realise: *this could be me.*



*"A truly unique and inspiring workshop.
Dean Atta's radiance and enthusiasm
is tremendously contagious!"*

ARIANNA BREEN, ECC 6TH FORM



*"This experience was incredibly inspiring.
I left with a new-found
sense of self."*

JESSICA WAITE, ECC 6TH FORM



BY THE NUMBERS

- 1719 children reached through school visits each year
- Subsidised family festival tickets - most just £4 in 2026
- FREE activities for all in the Mini Marquee
- Books donated to support local school libraries
- Annual Children's Literary Quiz - who will win the Dartington Bowl?

READING FOR EVERYONE

We champion reading for pleasure at every age.

Our much-loved **Festival Read** brings the whole community together - readers, writers, and local businesses - to share one book and one conversation.

This year, we're expanding with a **Non-Fiction Festival Read**, inviting audiences to engage, question, and connect in new ways.

ACCESS FOR ALL

We believe stories should never be out of reach.

That's why we offer:

- **Affordable tickets for families**
- **Free creative activities**
- **Open access events for schools and young people**

From Winnie-the-Pooh in the Mini Marquee to our Schools Online Quiz, we create spaces where stories belong to everyone.

WHY WE DO IT

Because stories matter.

Because creativity should be shared.

Because investing in young readers and emerging writers is investing in the future of our community.



WITH THANKS

With special thanks to the LED (Learning & Engagement) team, whose continued support and energy makes this work possible.



TEN YEARS OF AUDIFY'S SUPPORT

This year marks a remarkable milestone: ten years of Audify's support of the Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival. Here, managing director Curtis Alcock reflects on what keeps drawing him back – and why, when it comes to words, the Festival offers something a bookshelf alone never could.

It's hard to believe we've been involved with the Festival for a decade. And what a privilege it's been for us, not only as a local independent business built on the premise that words connect, but for me personally.

Every year, I return from the Festival arms laden with far more books than my creaking bookshelves thank me for. But how can I leave behind all those new trains of thought, those cheeky challenges to long-held perspectives, those mysteries and characters that won't let go of my imagination?

“How can I leave behind all those new trains of thought... that won't let go of my imagination?”

And I know I'm not alone, because I see it everywhere...

Rapt audiences; queues for book-signing; overheard conversations between strangers brought together by a shared interest in the same talk; curious and insightful questions by attendees on topics I hadn't even known existed.

All of us, connecting through words, written and spoken.

Written, words crystallise an author's boundless mind into something fixed in time and space, yet forever reflecting and refracting anew depending on how we approach their work. Thoughts and feelings, otherwise impalpable and unseen, primed with words carefully picked from a panoply of possibilities, each chosen by the writer to make just the

right first impression on our own anticipating minds.

Spoken, words exist only in the moment. There's no opportunity for edits, no rewind for the listener. We must 'be there'; as it happens, when it happens. Then, through conversation, we create together: shared ideas, new experiences, lasting memories. Words, connecting Past to Future through the Present.

“Through conversation, we create together: shared ideas, new experiences, lasting memories.”

At the Budleigh Salterton Literary Festival, we experience both the written and the spoken. Every talk, reading, and question connects us with other ways of thinking, whether from authors or fellow attendees. We get to glimpse perspectives, experiences and ideas beyond ourselves.

So I can't help but be reminded of that quotation from Albert Einstein:

“All that is valuable in human society depends upon the opportunity for development accorded the individual.”

Few places illustrate this better than the Festival. Not only during the Festival itself, but through its year-round work with local schools, encouraging a love of reading, writing, and the power of words.

We're proud to have been part of that for the past decade. Proud to support something that shares our passion for words. And proud to help bring people together to celebrate books by the sea... and the words they contain.



Curtis Alcock

**BUDLEIGH SALTERTON
LITERARY FESTIVAL**

CELEBRATING BOOKS BY THE SEA

10

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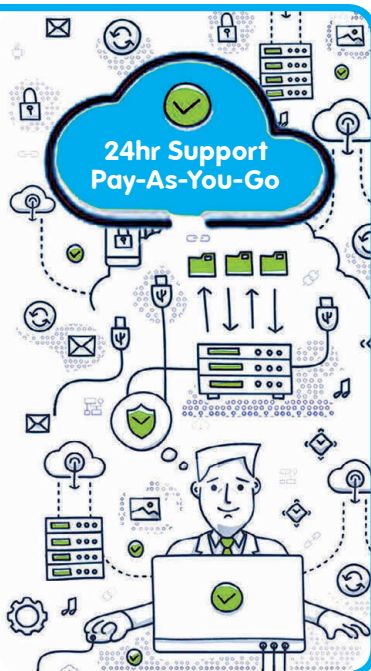
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BUDLEIGH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Classical Music on the Coast

25 JUNE - 3 JULY 2027

Featuring world renowned artists and
emerging young talent.

WWW.BUDLEIGHMUSICFESTIVAL.CO.UK

 [BUDLEIGHMUSICFESTIVAL](https://www.instagram.com/budleighmusicfestival)  [/BUDLEIGHMUSICFESTIVAL](https://www.facebook.com/budleighmusicfestival)



FESTIVAL TEAM

Hon. President: Cathy Rentzenbrink
Chair: Sue Briggs
Artistic Director: Kate Abbey

FESTIVAL COMMITTEE:

Deputy Chairs: David Marston & Jane Stark
Author Hospitality: Jane Burton
Venues: Jane Stark
Treasurer: Ruth Jones
Chair of Learning & Engagement team: David Marston
Volunteer Stewards Co-ordinator: Mags Milne
Book Sales Co-ordination: Gill Harris
Grants Applications: John Rust-Andrews
Festival Friends Co-ordinator: Hilary Shiels
Production Co-ordinator: Jennie Stogdon
Box Office & Ticket Sales: Gareth Thomas
Sponsorship: Linden Harris & Lorraine Pethick
Festival & Programming Assistant: Tessa Williams

ASSOCIATES & ADVISORS:

Martin Briggs	Steve Hagger	Mandy Beck	Alison Cecil
Louise Burrows	Lisa Borman	Ulrike Hardinge	Emma Richardson
Hilary Drew	Terri Passenger	Caroline Walshaw	Ann Duff
Andrew Grant	George Norman	Peter Rowntree	Shannon Langan

We would like to thank the following for their support with this year's Festival:

All our sponsors and supporters; our authors and the publishers who have sent their authors to us; all the staff at Waterstones Exeter; the venues who have made themselves available for the Festival, including the Public Hall, St Peter's Church, Temple Church, The Masonic Hall, The Church on the Green, Salterton Playhouse, McQueenie Mulholland PR,

Splitpixel, the staff at Budleigh Library, Hatch Marquees, Loft at the Community Hub, Al Findlay, Pickleshack Catering, Abele Tree House, Mandy Butcher, Festival Artist Jed Falby, all our volunteer drivers & stewards, our Festival interviewers and all our programme distributors.

Production:
Marketing & Publicity:
Programme Design:
Venue First Aid & Paramedic support:

Chris Welch & his team / Prosound
Sue McQueenie / McQueenie Mulholland
Trudie Burne / Bright Blue C Design Studio
Emrys Security



WITH THANKS

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FESTIVAL PARTNERS



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Michael & Valerie Jackaman
The Justham Trust
Ian & Susan Lacey
Nigel & Heleen Lindsay-Fynn
Moyra Murrell & Lyn Meadows
Daphne Rowe
David & Ann Tucker

The generosity of our Friends and Benefactors enables us to deliver author visits free of charge to schools.



TICKET SALES

Tickets are available to Festival Friends from Monday 13th July at 9am and then to the public from Monday 20th July at 9am

BUY YOUR TICKETS:

Online at budlitfest.org.uk

In person at the Budleigh Information Centre on
Tues/Wed/Frid 10.30am-12.30pm

By phone 0333 666 3366

At The Box Office in the Main Marquee during
Festival Week from 10am-5.30pm Mon-Sat
10am-12.30pm Sun
(card payments only)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- There is a 6.9% booking fee.
- There is no charge to have your tickets emailed.
- Postal ticket delivery is an additional £2.50.
- Tickets cannot be ordered by email.
- You can save your tickets in your wallet on your phone (preferred) or print them.
- Seating is unreserved.
- Tickets are not refundable unless we cancel an event, in which case we will refund the customer the ticket price and the booking fee.
- Postal charges cannot be refunded.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Events are an hour long unless stated otherwise. Doors open half an hour before the start of the event. The venue must be vacated between events. Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult. If you are unable to attend without the help of a personal assistant please buy a Person with Additional Needs Ticket. Your personal assistant will be admitted free of charge. All main venues are fully accessible. If you need to be seated in a particular area of a venue

because you have a visual or hearing impairment or are in a wheelchair please let us know at festival@budlitfest.org.uk well in advance. All information is correct at the time of going to press. Sometimes circumstances beyond our control mean we have to make changes. Please visit budlitfest.org.uk and check your emails for updates. For full terms and conditions and answers to Frequently Asked Questions visit our website at budlitfest.org.uk

Welcome and Information Desk / Refreshments /
Booksales / Book signings / Ticket sales

1 PORTALOOS FOR
EVENING GUESTS

↑ TO SIDMOUTH

2

P
FREE: 110

DEFIBRILLATOR

3

P
PAY & DISPLAY: 38

WITH BABY
CHANGING
& DISABLED
TOILET

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STATION ROAD

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BROOK ROAD

THE LAWN

RAGG LANE
CLIFF ROAD

WEST HILL

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TO KNOWLE,
EXETER &
EXMOUTH
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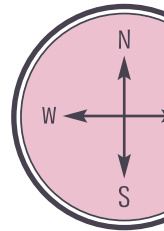


BUDLEIGH SALTERTON LITERARY FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING BOOKS BY THE SEA

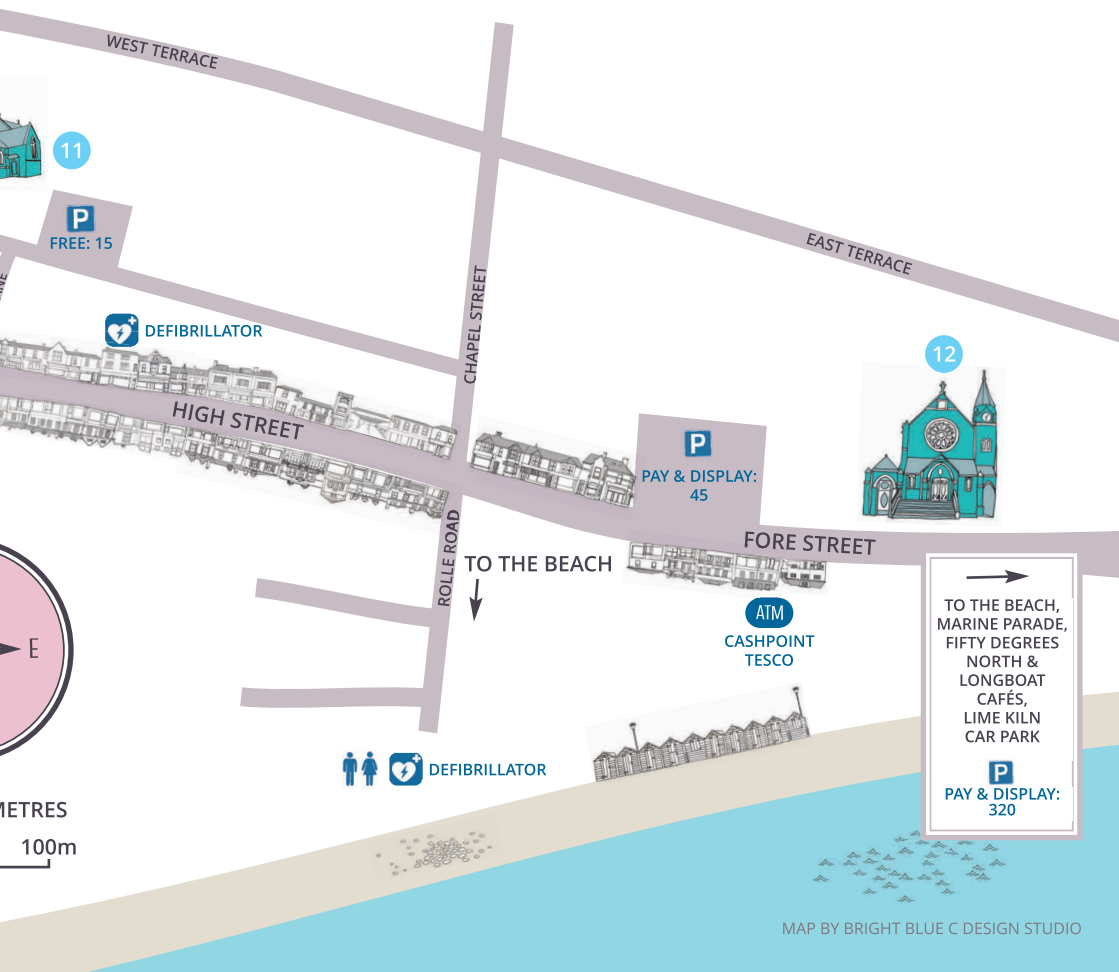
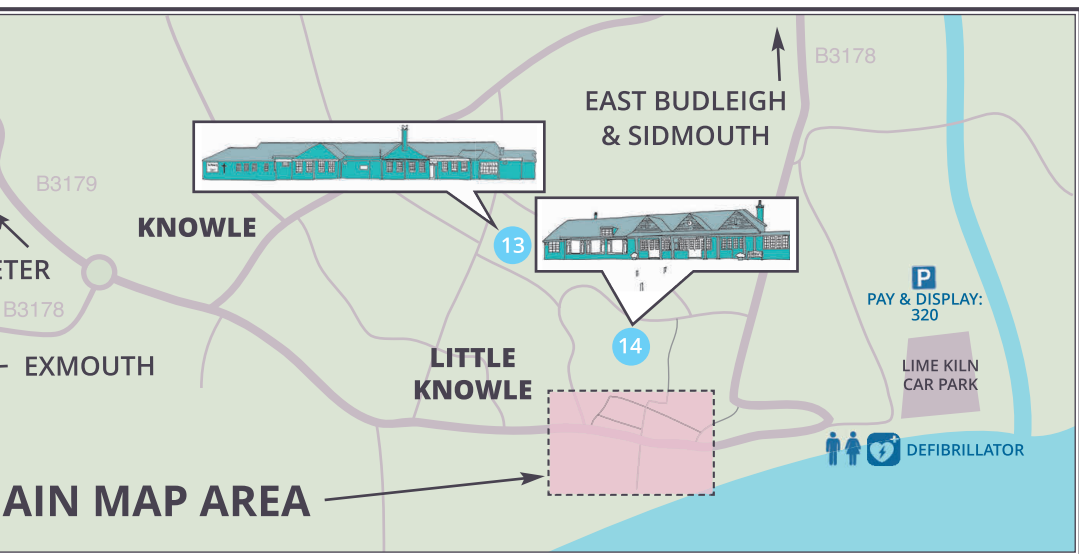
FESTIVAL VENUES

1. FESTIVAL MARQUEE On The Green
2. MINI MARQUEE On The Green
3. PUBLIC HALL
4. THE CHURCH ON THE GREEN
5. THE SALTERTON PLAYHOUSE Footpath at end of carpark
6. THE LOFT Budleigh Community Workshop
7. BUDLEIGH LIBRARY
8. BROOK KITCHEN
9. THE MASONIC HALL
10. ST PETER'S CHURCH
11. THE PETER HALL Behind St Peter's Church
12. TEMPLE METHODIST CHURCH
13. ST PETER'S SCHOOL Moor Lane
14. BUDLEIGH SALTERTON CROQUET CLUB Off Upper Stoneborough Lane

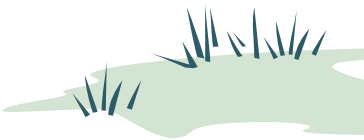


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FESTIVAL AT A GLANCE



WED 23 SEPT

TIME	AUTHOR/EVENT	VENUE	PAGE	BOOKED
10am-6pm	Writer's Hub	Mini Marquee	11	
10am	Louisa Young	Temple Church	4	
11am	James Holland	St Peter's Church	4	
12pm	Kate Lord Brown	Church on the Green	5	
12:30pm	Paul de Zulueta	Temple Church	5	
1pm	Workshop: Unwritten Stories	Masonic Hall	6	
2pm	Jo Baring	Temple Church	6	
2pm	Luke Harding	St Peter's Church	7	
4pm	Ellie Levenson	Church on the Green	7	
5pm	Liz Earle	St Peter's Church	8	
5pm	Shehan Hettiaratchy	Temple Church	8	
7:30pm	Patrick Gale	St Peter's Church	9	
7:30pm	Non-Fiction Festival Read: Jonathan Freedland	Temple Church	9	
7:30pm	Wine Tasting: Helen McGinn	Main Marquee	10	

THURS 24 SEPT

TIME	AUTHOR/EVENT	VENUE	PAGE	BOOKED
10am-6pm	Writer's Hub	Mini Marquee	11	
10am	Ian Mortimer	Temple Church	12	
11:30am	Cryptic Crossword: Clare Clark	Church on the Green	12	
12pm	Judith Mackrell	Public Hall	13	
1pm	Workshop: Juliet Pickering	Masonic Hall	13	
2pm	Tyndale 500	Church on the Green	14	
2pm	Matthew Sweet	Temple Church	14	
4pm	Page to Stage	Public Hall	15	
4:30pm	Alison Hastie	Church on the Green	15	
5pm	Paul Mason	St Peter's Church	16	
6pm	Festival Fiction Read: Clare Leslie Hall	Public Hall	16	
6pm	Damien Lewis	Temple Church	17	
6:30pm	Word Kitchen Open Mic	Brook Kitchen	17	
7:30pm	Dawn O'Porter	St Peter's Church	18	
8pm	History Book Club: Andrew Chatterton	Church on the Green	18	

FRI 25 SEPT

TIME	AUTHOR/EVENT	VENUE	PAGE	BOOKED
10am	Ijeoma Uchegbu	Temple Church	20	
10am	Arvon Masterclass: Andrew Miller	Masonic Hall	20	
11am	Emma Stonex	Church on the Green	21	
1pm	Helen Bain and Lori Inglis Hall	Temple Church	21	
2pm	Caroline Quentin	St Peter's Church	22	
2pm	Workshop: How to Write Your Life Story	Masonic Hall	22	
2:30pm	Alev Scott	Church on the Green	23	

FRI 25 SEPT

TIME	AUTHOR/EVENT	VENUE	PAGE	BOOKED
2pm	Bounce & Rhyme	Mini Marquee	30	
3:30pm	Daniel Hahn	Temple Church	23	
5pm	Bryony Gordon	St Peter's Church	24	
6pm	Arthur Snell	Temple Church	24	
6pm	Jasmine Elmer	Church on the Green	25	
7:30pm	John Crace	St Peter's Church	25	
7:30pm	BudLitFest Book Club Quiz	Main Marquee	26	

SAT 26 SEPT

TIME	AUTHOR/EVENT	VENUE	PAGE	BOOKED
10am	Louie Stowell	St Peter's Church	28	
10am	Sophy Henn	Playhouse	28	
10am	Peter Fiennes	Public Hall	31	
10am	Amanda Craig and Leon Craig	Temple Church	31	
10am	Featheredness Printmaking Workshop	Masonic Hall	32	
11am-4pm	Family Fun Drop In	Mini Marquee	30	
11:45am	Featheredness Printmaking Workshop	Masonic Hall	32	
12:30pm	Lord Peter Ricketts	St Peter's Church	32	
12:30pm	Emily Howes	Church on the Green	33	
12:30pm	Amy Jeffs	Temple Church	33	
1pm	Sophy Henn	Playhouse	28	
1:30pm	Claudia Hammond	Public Hall	34	
2pm	Workshop: RAMZEE	Masonic Hall	28	
3pm	Rachael Stirling	St Peter's Church	34	
3pm	Workshop: Write with Cathy & Agatha	Church on the Green	35	
4pm	Cartoon drawing workshop: RAMZEE	Masonic Hall	28	
4pm	Karl Nova	Playhouse	29	
4:30pm	Dominic Gregory	Public Hall	35	
6pm	Oliver Bullough	St Peter's Church	36	
7:30pm	Olly Smith	Public Hall	36	
7:30pm	Dominic Dromgoole	Temple Church	37	

SUN 27 SEPT

TIME	AUTHOR/EVENT	VENUE	PAGE	BOOKED
10am-2pm	Family Fun Drop In	Mini Marquee	30	
10am	Workshop: Becca Rogers	Masonic Hall	29	
10am	Cathy Rentzenbrink	Public Hall	38	
11:30am	Maz Evans	Church on the Green	29	
12pm	Dr Alan Desmond	Temple Church	39	
1pm	Draw With Rob Biddulph	St Peter's Church	29	
2pm	Charlotte Higgins	Public Hall	39	
2pm	Featheredness Walk & Workshop	Otter River / Masonic Hall	38	
2:30pm	Richard Collett	Church on the Green	40	
4pm	Giles Milton	St Peter's Church	40	
4pm	Jennie Godfrey	Public Hall	41	

PLEASE NOTE: All timings & venues may be subject to change. Check our website for up-to-date info.



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