

FRI 3–SUN 19 OCTOBER 2025

JUNG CHANG

MARY PORTAS

ALAN DAVIES

JAY RAYNER

HUGH BONNEVILLE

NICK CLEGG

RUBY TANDO

IRVINE WELSH

SIMON ARMITAGE

MICHAEL PALIN

LADY HALE

RACHEL JOYCE



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KEY DATES

Friends priority booking opens: Wednesday 20 August, 10am

General ticket sales open: Tuesday 26 August, 10am

Book online: ilkleylitfest.org.uk (24 hours)

Book by phone: 01943 816714

Wed 20 August–Fri 3 October:

- Mon–Fri: 10am–4pm
- Sat & Sun: Closed

Sat 4–Sun 19 October:

- Mon–Fri: 12pm–4pm
- Sat & Sun: 10am–12pm



WELCOME

TO THE 2025 ILKLEY LITERATURE FESTIVAL

We're delighted to present the programme for this year's festival. Join us in October for a celebration of word power, with an exciting array of writers and thinkers hosting panels, in-depth discussions, debates and workshops. We want you to be a part of the conversation, so bring your curiosity and your questions as we celebrate the power of ideas and the written word.

You can expect entertaining, insightful and engaging talks from a huge variety of guests, including journalists, comedians, politicians, award-winning writers, debut novelists, national treasures, academic experts, poets and historians. You'll be spoiled for choice with events and writing workshops exploring fiction, non-fiction and poetry, and with subjects ranging from folklore to fermentation, geology to globalisation, and cavapoos to comedy.

See you in October!

The ILF Team

Find out more about how you can support the work we do or donate to the

Ilkley Literature Festival at:

ilkleyliteraturefestival.org.uk/support-us



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Please note that photography and/or filming may take place at ILF events and workshops. Photos and films may be used by Word Up North online and in print for press and marketing purposes. If you do not wish to appear in photographs or films, please inform a member of staff at the event.



HIGHLIGHTS



Nick Clegg: How to Save the Internet

Friday 3 October

7–8pm

From £17.50/14.50 concessions

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Gyles Brandreth: Somewhere, A Boy and A Bear

Saturday 4 October

12–1pm

From £17.50/14.50 concessions

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Lee Lawrence: The Colour of Injustice

Saturday 4 October

5–6pm

£12/9 concessions

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Sabrina Ghayour: Persiana Easy

Saturday 4 October

7.30–8.30pm

£12/9 concessions

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Rachel Joyce & Esther Freud: Family Affairs

Saturday 4 October

7.30–8.30pm

£12/9 concessions

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Alan Davies: White Male Stand-Up

Wednesday 8 October

7.30–8.30pm

From £17.50/14.50 concessions

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Mary Portas: I Shop, Therefore I Am

Thursday 9 October

7.30–8.30pm

From £17.50/14.50 concessions

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Ben Chu: Exile Economics

Saturday 11 October

3.45–4.45pm

£12/9 concessions

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Tim Spector: Ferment

Monday 13 October

7.30–8.30pm

From £17.50/14.50 concessions

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HIGHLIGHTS



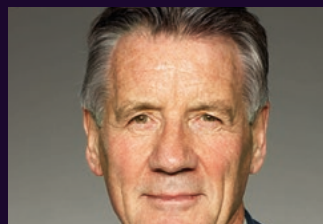
Lady Hale: With the Law on Our Side

Wednesday 15 October
7.30–8.30pm
£15/12 concessions
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Rayner: Nights Out At Home

Thursday 16 October
7.30–9.30pm
From £25/£22 concessions
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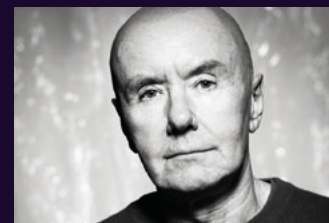
Michael Palin: Venezuela

Friday 17 October
8.30–9.30pm
From £17.50/14.50 concessions
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Jo Hamilton: The Post Office Scandal and Me

Saturday 18 October
3.45–4.45pm
£12/9 concessions
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Irvine Welsh: Men in Love

Saturday 18 October
6.15–7.15pm
£12/9 concessions
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Jung Chang: Fly, Wild Swans

Saturday 18 October
6.15–7.15pm
£15/12 concessions
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An Evening with Hugh Bonneville

Saturday 18 October
7.30–8.30pm
From £17.50/14.50 concessions
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Mark Radcliffe: Et tu, Cavapoo?

Sunday 19 October
5–6pm
From £17.50/14.50 concessions
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Ruby Tandoh: All Consuming

Sunday 19 October
6.15–7.15pm
£12/9 concessions
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FESTIVAL THEMES



Doing Justice

From the individual, to the system, to the planet – how can we ensure justice and equality for all? Hear the personal story of **Jo Hamilton's** bravery and hope in the face of one of the UK's worst miscarriages of justice and allow **Lady Hale** to demystify the inner workings of the legal system. **Lee Lawrence** investigates the scale of racial injustice in the UK and **Tony Juniper** explores how a fairer world could be the answer to the climate crisis.



Talking Politics

Politics, politics, politics. With so much to cover, where to begin? Let's start close to home, with a series of events on UK politics: past, present and future. **Patrick Maguire** and **Gabriel Poggrund** share the inside story of Labour under Starmer and **Steve Richards** looks at the legacy of former Prime Minister Tony Blair. Get the inside scoop on life as an MP and Chief Whip with **Simon Hart** and decode the history of the UK in data with **Georgina Sturge**. But we're not done there. Next stop: the world. Take in geopolitics and explore the rise of India and China (and what it means for the rest of us) with **Vince Cable**, discuss what happens if globalisation fails with **Ben Chu** and get the inside story of Xi Jinping from **Michael Sheridan**.



Soft Power

This year we're exploring the figures and events that you didn't learn about in history class. **Terry Stiaistny** and **Charlie English** reveal the secret origins of modern psychological warfare, and the astonishing, sometimes bizarre, ways in which governments have conducted their battles for hearts and minds. **Yvonne Singh** introduces the journalists who were putting ink to paper to declare that Black lives mattered long before a hashtag was invented. And **Sonia Purnell**, **Thant Myint-U** and **Emily Herring** re-examine the legacies of influential but overlooked writers, power players, philosophers and peacemakers.



Food for Thought

We hope you're hungry! We've got quite the menu of events exploring food and our relationship with it. **Ruby Tandoh** traces how being 'into food' went from a subculture to a national obsession, while **Sabrina Ghayour** brings us all of the flavour and none of the fuss with her Middle Eastern recipes made easy. **Tim Spector** shares the life-changing power of microbes and makes his science-backed case for bringing more fermentation into your kitchen and **Jay Rayner** takes questions on his 25-year career as a restaurant critic. Eat up!



FESTIVAL THEMES



In Verse: The Rising of the North

We've been showcasing the cutting edge of poetry since our inaugural festival in 1973. This year our poetry strand has a distinctly northern accent, as we explore the north's poetic heritage and future. Hear from the rising stars of the poetry scene at our New Northern Poets showcase, discover the talent coming out of the University of Leeds Poetry Centre, rediscover the controversy and power of Tony Harrison's 'V.' 40 years on, and catch a reading from the Poet Laureate, Yorkshire's own **Simon Armitage**.



Explore Moor: Connections

How do our connections with the earth, our landscape and nature shape us? Brace yourself as we dive into the world of cold water swimming with **Sara Barnes**. Take a journey through deep time with **Anjana Khatwa** to understand the profound influence rocks have had on human life. Discuss the latest big ideas for how we can save our planet and tackle the climate crisis with **Tony Juniper** and **Mike Berners-Lee** and discover the hidden stories rural spaces reveal about our history with **Jason Allen-Paisant** and **Corinne Fowler**.



The Dark Side of the Internet

Join us as we investigate the toxic subcultures of the 'manosphere' with journalist **James Bloodworth**, find out how the internet is being dismantled (and whether we can save it) with **Nick Clegg** and discover why screen addiction has become so prevalent – and how we can take back control – with the help of **Dr Kaitlyn Regehr**.



Novel Ideas

We've lined up a show-stopping array of authors to discuss their novels and explore the craft of storytelling, world building and character creation. Hear from bestselling, renowned authors including **Rachel Joyce**, **Esther Freud** and **Irvine Welsh**. Discover the hottest new novels in our events with Women's Prize-shortlisted **Nussaibah Younis** and **Sanam Mahloudji** and our John Murray Press Proofs & Prosecco Party. And, if you've ever fancied trying fiction writing yourself, a few authors are on hand to show you how. Join us for panel discussions, talks, reading groups and workshops that celebrate the power of fiction.



FRIDAY 3 OCTOBER

**1. Nick Clegg: How to Save the Internet**

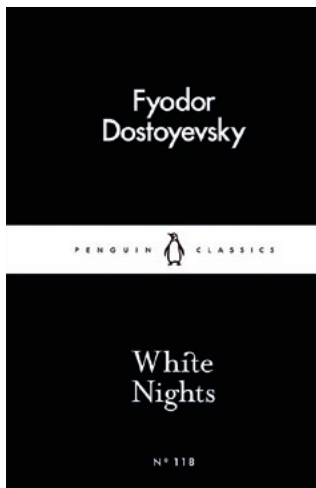
King's Hall
7–8pm

Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions

Nick Clegg, former President, Global Affairs, at Meta, Deputy Prime Minister of the UK and Liberal Democrat leader, kicks off this year's festival with an essential conversation on how the internet is being dismantled and whether we can save it. Clegg takes us behind the scenes at Meta to set out where Big Tech has gone wrong (but also explains where it's gone right) and introduces the radical reforms that are urgently needed to save the internet.



SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER

**2. Dostoyevsky Reading Group: 'White Nights'**

Church House
11–12pm

£12/9 concessions

Discover Fyodor Dostoyevsky's short story 'White Nights' (1848) in this guided reading group led by **Dr Sarah Hudspith**, one of the UK's foremost Dostoyevsky scholars. Explore and discuss the story's themes of loneliness, unrequited love and how to find hope in the strange city of St Petersburg.

This is the first of two reading groups on Dostoyevsky led by Dr Hudspith, the second reading group on Sat 11 October focuses on 'The Meek One'. Sessions complement one another but can be attended individually.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**3. Gyles Brandreth: Somewhere, A Boy and A Bear**

King's Hall
12–1pm

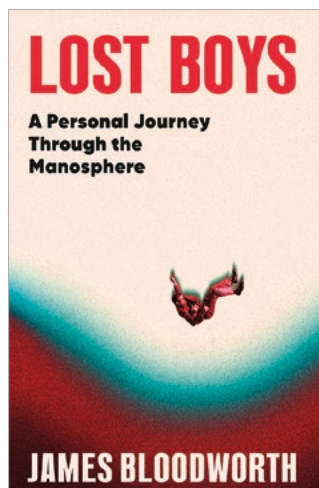
Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions **S**

He's back! Need we say more? Oh, go on then... Festival favourite **Gyles Brandreth** returns to Ilkley with his new book, *Somewhere, A Boy and A Bear*.

2026 will mark the centenary of the publication of the bestselling, beloved children's classic, *Winnie-the-Pooh*. Brandreth, who knew the real Christopher Robin, tells the story of A. A. Milne (to whom there was so much more than Pooh), exploring fascinating family dynamics and the nature of childhood itself.



SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER

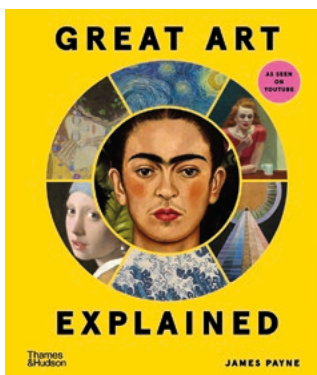


4. James Bloodworth: A Personal Journey Through the Manosphere

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
12–1pm

£12/9 concessions

Orwell Prize-longlisted journalist **James Bloodworth** shares the findings of his astonishing undercover investigation into the paranoid and misogynistic online subcultures of the 'manosphere'. Find out why so many men are becoming susceptible to these bizarre and harmful underground subcultures, what their emergence says about Western society, and whether we can do anything to halt their encroachment upon our social and political landscape.



5. James Payne: Great Art Explained

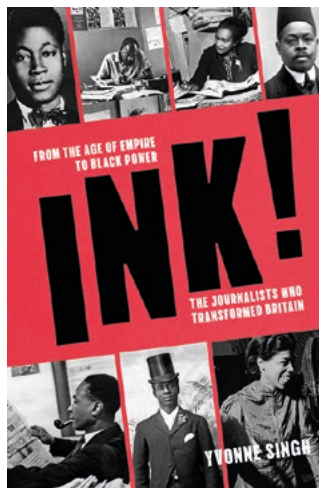
All Saints' Church

12–1pm

£12/9 concessions

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

Writer and curator **James Payne** is giving art history a fresh lick of paint. Having gained a following of over 1.7 million subscribers on YouTube with his refreshingly entertaining art analysis, he's now bringing his expertise to Ilkley to unveil the fascinating stories behind some of the world's best-known paintings and sculptures. Whether you're a seasoned art enthusiast or a curious newcomer, this afternoon with Payne will enrich your understanding of the world's greatest treasures and leave you thoroughly entertained.



6. Yvonne Singh: INK! From Empire to Black Power

Church House

1.30–2.30pm

£12/9 concessions

Before social media, much less a #BLM hashtag, journalists of colour were putting hot metal to paper to declare that Black lives matter. Let journalist **Yvonne Singh** introduce you to the pioneers who strove to give their communities a voice; individuals who addressed global racial injustice and whose work acted as a catalyst for change. Hear the story of past sacrifices and struggles that have shaped Britain's present and ultimately laid the blueprint for a progressive future.





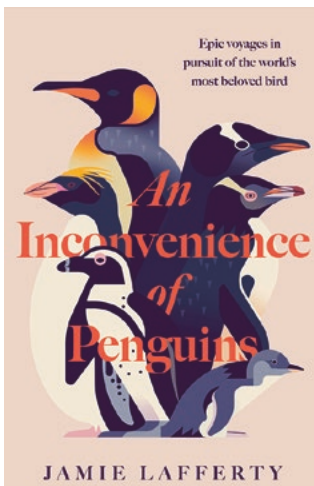
SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER



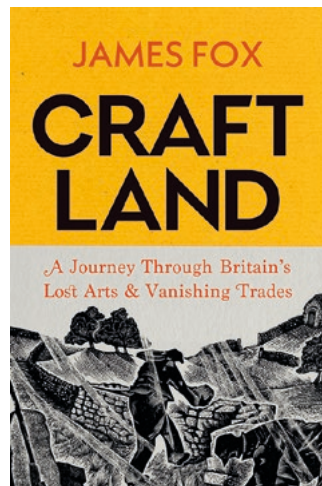
Stuart Maconie © The Sunday Times, News Licensing

**7. Stuart Maconie:
With a Little Help
From Their Friends****King's Hall
2.30–3.30pm****Tickets from £17.50/14.50
concessions** 

The Beatles were a success story unlike any other: four lads from Liverpool who went on to become the best-selling music act of all time. But they didn't do it on their own; like all the best stories, theirs has an incredible supporting cast. Broadcaster and consummate northerner **Stuart Maconie** shares how The Beatles got by with more than just a little help from their friends.

**8. Jamie Lafferty:
An Inconvenience
of Penguins****Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
2.30–3.30pm
£12/9 concessions**

From Kings and Emperors to Macaronis and Rockhoppers, award-winning travel writer **Jamie Lafferty** has seen them all on a birding quest like no other. Now, Lafferty brrr-ings his penguin proficiency to Ilkley, recounting his voyages to some of the world's most inaccessible landscapes to see all 18 species of penguin. Discover the history of our unique relationship with the world's most popular bird, featuring cameos from human characters including Ernest Shackleton, Charles Darwin and Sir Francis Drake.

**9. James Fox:
Britain's Lost Arts and
Vanishing Trades****All Saints' Church
2.30–3.30pm
£12/9 concessions** **ALSO LIVE STREAMED**

Britain has always been a craft land. For generations what we made with our hands defined our identities, built our communities and shaped our regions.

Art historian **James Fox** has travelled the length of Britain to seek out our last remaining master craftspeople, chronicling the vanishing skills and traditions that once governed every aspect of life on these shores. Fox explains how, in our increasingly digital age, crafts and the wisdom of craftspeople is more valuable than ever.



SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER



Gareth Heaton © Jonathan Cherry

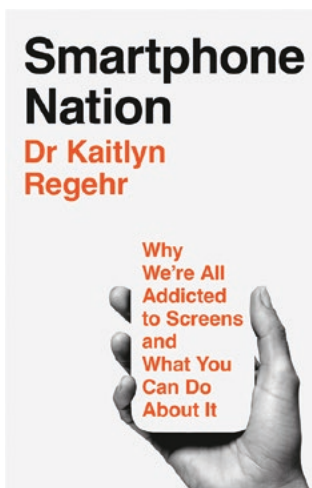
10. Gareth Heaton: Sharpening Skills

Church House

4–5pm

£12/9 concessions

Join professional knife sharpener and Ilkley local, **Gareth ‘Gaz’ Heaton**, to learn the lost craft of knife sharpening. Using techniques from his new book *Do Maintain*, he’ll explain what you need to properly sharpen your kitchen knives, scissors and garden tools at home, and how to get started. You’ll leave knowing your bevel from your burr, and with a newfound appreciation for maintenance – of our things and ourselves.



11. Dr Kaitlyn Regehr: Smartphone Nation

All Saints’ Church

5–6pm

£12/9 concessions

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

In a world where offline isn’t an option, how can you protect yourself – and your family – from online harm?

Dr Kaitlyn Regehr, one of the UK’s leading experts on digital literacy, explains what we and our children are being fed on our devices and, crucially, how to take control over it. Regehr demystifies the algorithms driving our digital world and shares life-changing practical tools for challenging screen addiction. Put down the phone and come along to this empowering event.



Lee Lawrence © Smokin Monkey Photography

12. Lee Lawrence: The Colour of Injustice

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman

5–6pm

£12/9 concessions

Lee Lawrence was just eleven when his mother, Cherry Groce, was shot by police in his family’s Brixton home. He spent next 30 years fighting for justice and for the police to admit their wrongdoing.

Today, Lawrence helps marginalised people find their voice, manage conflict and achieve justice. Join us for a vital conversation as Lawrence shares deeply-researched stories of innocent Black British people – past and present – whose lives have been impacted by racial prejudice and bias in the UK.



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SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER



13. Rachel Joyce & Esther Freud: Family Affairs

All Saints' Church
7.30–8.30pm

£12/9 concessions **S**

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

Renowned authors **Rachel Joyce** and **Esther Freud** discuss the nuances of family relationships – their tensions, what breaks them and what it takes to mend them – in their new novels, *The Homemade God* and *My Sister and Other Lovers*.

Joyce is the bestselling author of seven novels, including *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* which was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. Freud is the author of nine previous novels and her work has been widely translated. Her debut novel, *Hideous Kinky* was adapted into a film starring Kate Winslet.



14. Sabrina Ghayour: Persiana Easy

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
7.30–8.30pm

£12/9 concessions

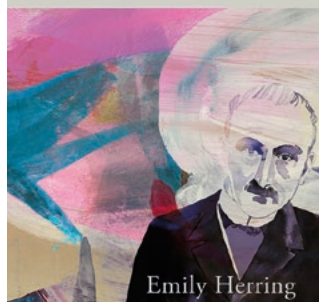
Bestselling chef **Sabrina Ghayour** returns to Ilkley with a new collection of mouth-watering Middle Eastern recipes. Ghayour, whose recipes Nigella Lawson praised as 'all flavour, no fuss' and *The Times* described as 'Ottolenghi with rocket fuel', will explain how you can balance irresistible flavour with accessible cooking. From midweek meals and traybakes to pastries and sweet treats, discover *Persiana* made easy and come away with dishes to delight your family and friends, time and again.



SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER

Herald of a Restless World

How Henri Bergson Brought Philosophy to the People



15. Emily Herring: How Henri Bergson Brought Philosophy to the People

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
12–1pm

£12/9 concessions

At the dawn of the 20th century Henri Bergson became the most famous philosopher on earth. An international celebrity, he made headlines around the world debating luminaries like Bertrand Russell and Albert Einstein about free will and time. His vision of creative evolution and freedom was so disruptive that the *New York Times* branded him 'the most dangerous man in the world.' **Emily Herring** revives the story of the philosopher who defined individual creativity and transformed 20th-century thought.





SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER



Anjana Khatwa © Rob Coombe

16. Anjana Khatwa: Whispers of Rock

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
1.15–2.15pm
£12/9 concessions

Award-winning earth scientist and TV presenter **Anjana Khatwa** explains the profound influence rocks have had on human life, from the sacred stones of Stonehenge and the rose red city of Petra, to towering mountains and the smallest grains of sand. Boldly alternating between modern science and ancient lore, Khatwa will take you on an exhilarating journey through deep time and, along the way, explore how connecting with the earth can guide us through the toughest times.



17. Thant Myint-U: Peacemaker

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
2.30–3.30pm
£12/9 concessions

In 1971, the UN's longest-serving Secretary-General U Thant was ranked the sixth 'most admired man' in America. So why is he largely forgotten today?

Award-winning historian **Thant Myint-U** traces his grandfather's rise from Burmese schoolteacher to the centre of global politics during a golden age of diplomacy. Discover U Thant's integral yet forgotten role in the 20th century's most critical crises – from mediating a peaceful end to the Cuban Missile Crisis to ensuring the ceasefire held after the 1967 Six-Day War – and the shifting world order he affected.



18. Gareth Russell: Queen James

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
3.45–4.45pm
£12/9 concessions

James Stuart was many things: King of England, Scotland and Ireland, genius, liar, witch-hunter, spendthrift, idealist, and lover. Though he did not always love wisely, he never failed to do so boldly. He fell in love three times – with a Scottish lord, a knight and George Villiers, 'the handsomest man in the whole world'. He was infatuated three more times – with a Highland earl, a Welsh lord and an English spy. Historian **Gareth Russell** shares the dramatic life and loves of King James I, bringing the power struggles and backbiting of the Jacobean court to life.



SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER



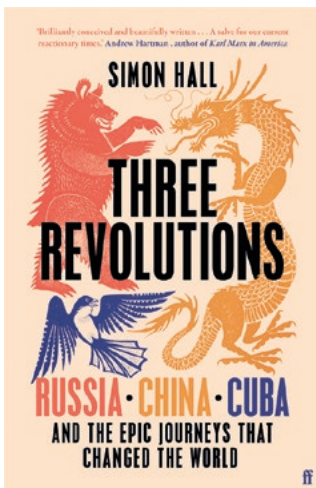
19. Ned Boulting: The Accidental Tour-ist

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
5–6pm

£12/9 concessions

Ned Boulting is the UK's voice of cycling. He's covered every Tour de France for ITV since 2003 and had memorable, chaotic encounters with top riders and from all the key races around the world. Hear his behind-the-scenes stories on life at the Giro d'Italia; the growth of women's racing; replacing the great Phil Liggett; the Flemish classics; and the life and times of greats such as Chris Froome and Mark Cavendish.

Cycling enthusiasts, you do not want to miss this. *Allez, allez, allez!*



20. Simon Hall: Three Revolutions

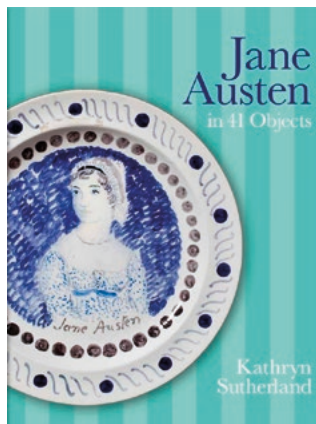
Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
6.15–7.15pm

£12/9 concessions

Simon Hall, Professor of Modern History at the University of Leeds, tells the stories of the three communist revolutions in Russia, China and Cuba that changed world history forever. Discover the epic journeys at the heart of each revolution and the electric testimony of journalists from their frontlines, as Hall explains how these stories raise fundamental questions today about the nature of political power, the limits of idealism and the role of the journalist.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



21. Constructing the Material World of Austen & the Brontës

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
7.30–8.30pm

£12/9 concessions

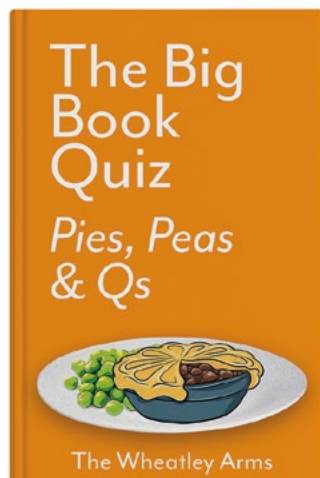
More than 200 years after Jane Austen's death and more than 170 after the deaths of Anne, Emily and Charlotte Brontë, we are still uncovering clues about their extraordinary lives through the objects they left behind and the buildings they set foot in.

Join **Ann Dinsdale**, Principal Curator of the Brontë Parsonage Museum, **Sharon Wright**, bestselling biographer of Maria Branwell Brontë, and **Kathryn Sutherland**, Senior Research Fellow at Oxford University and Patron at Jane Austen's House, as they discuss the life and times of Austen and the Brontës.



WEDNESDAY 8 OCTOBER

THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER



22. The Big Book Quiz I: An Evening of Pies, Peas & Qs

The Wheatley Arms
7–9.45pm
£23*

Do you know your *Chronicles of Narnia* from your *Game of Thrones*? Your Anne Tyler from your Ann Patchett? **Quiz Master Mel** returns by popular demand with her annual book quiz!

Test your knowledge of literary trivia while feeding body and mind with pie, peas and potatoes*. Put together a team of 4–6 people or come along by yourself and we'll link you up with fellow book-brained festival goers.

And, if you've got room for seconds, join us for another serving of the Big Book Quiz (with different questions) on Wednesday 15 October.

*Meal included in ticket price. Meat and vegetarian pie options available.



Alan Davies © Tony Briggs

23. Alan Davies: White Male Stand-Up

King's Hall
7.30–8.30pm
Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions

Bestselling author and comedian **Alan Davies** shares how he navigated his way from the camaraderie of the comedy circuit, via life-changing fame, to the unwelcome realisation that most people know him from a bank advert and think he's had a perm. Following on from *Just Ignore Him*, the bestselling memoir of his traumatic childhood, Davies shares the story of how he threw himself into the joyous and idealistic world of stand-up comedy, with its uplifting highs and painful lows.



Mary Portas © Linda Nyland

24. Mary Portas: I Shop, Therefore I Am

King's Hall
7.30–8.30pm
Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions

The 1990s: Britpop is dominating the charts, Kate Moss and Naomi Campbell stare out from every glossy magazine and British fashion is ripe for reinvention. Leading the charge is a twenty-something **Mary Portas**.

With her trademark wit, grit and candour, Portas shares the lessons that shaped her career and takes us behind the shop window, explaining how she transformed Harvey Nicks into a global fashion destination by leaning into her instincts and taking bold creative risks.

Presented in partnership with Discover Ilkley.





FRIDAY 10 OCTOBER

SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER



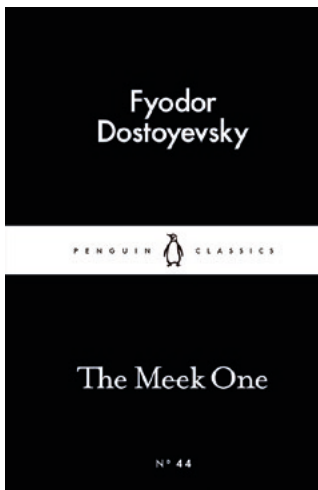
Simon Armitage © Paul Stuart

25. Simon Armitage: An Evening with the Poet Laureate

King's Hall
7.30–8.30pm
Tickets from £17.50/14.50
concessions

Join Poet Laureate and Yorkshireman **Simon Armitage** for an engaging evening of readings from his two new poetry books: *Dwell* and *New Cemetery*.

Dwell, a recent *Sunday Times* bestseller, uses elements of riddle and folklore to reimagine the dwellings of living creatures all around us – gorgeously illustrated by Cornish print-maker Beth Munro. Hot-off-the-press in September, *New Cemetery* is a luminous and wry collection reflecting a changing world of unstable weather patterns and unpredictable news events, all observed across a few acres of Pennine upland.



26. Dostoyevsky Reading Group: 'The Meek One'

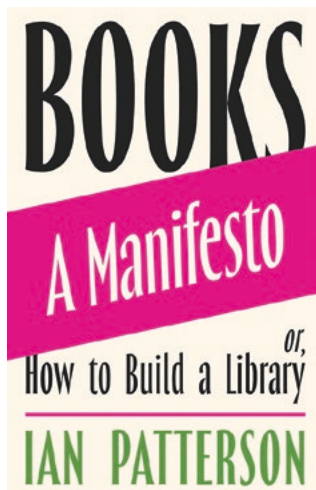
Church House
11–12pm
£12/9 concessions

Explore Fyodor Dostoyevsky's short story 'The Meek One' (1876) in this guided reading group led by **Dr Sarah Hudspith**, one of the UK's foremost Dostoyevsky scholars. Examine and discuss Dostoyevsky's masterful depiction of human psychology, desperation, greed and manipulation. Please note this story deals with the theme of suicide.

This is the second of two reading groups on Dostoyevsky led by Dr Hudspith, the first reading group on Sat 4 October focuses on 'White Nights'. Sessions complement one another but can be attended individually.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



27. Shelf Expression: How Do Books Shape Your Life?

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
12–1pm
£12/9 concessions

Ian Patterson, author of *Books: A Manifesto*, joins **Laura Lucia Rossi** and **Olivia Santovetti** from the University of Leeds Centre for World Literatures in this lively panel discussion exploring the deep connections between reading and identity. Combining new research from Santovetti and Rossi's research project 'Reading for Life' with Patterson's insights into reading, editing and collecting books, discover how the books you read – from childhood favourites to life-changing discoveries or quiet companions – shape who you are and what you remember.



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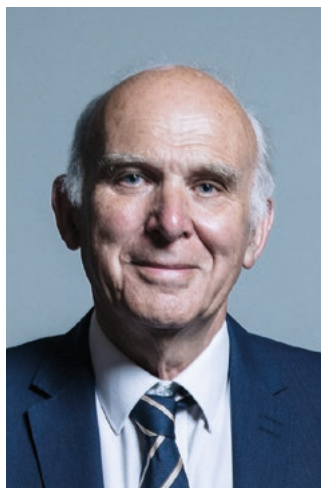
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SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER



28. Vince Cable: Eclipsing the West

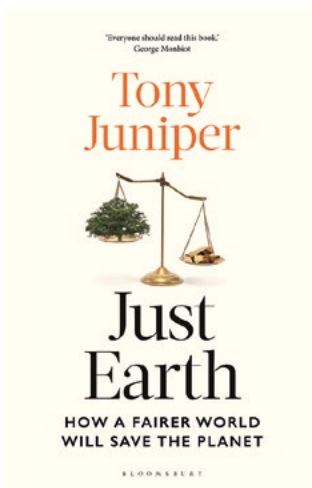
All Saints' Church

1.15–2.15pm

£15/12 concessions

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

The Western-dominated world is coming to an end. As America withdraws from its role as enforcer of the international order, other countries are moving in to fill the void. Among them are two rising Asian 'superstates': China and India. Former senior politician and professional economist **Vince Cable** draws on the latest data and a lifetime of political and economic experience to offer a compelling account of what the rise of China and India means for the future.



29. Tony Juniper: Just Earth

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall

1.15–2.15pm

£12/9 concessions

The environmental crisis is already here – and it's set to get much worse. How can we lead good lives without hastening global collapse?

In this hopeful event, environmentalist and Chair of Natural England **Tony Juniper CBE** shows that the answer lies in fairness. Hear how we can achieve real, lasting change by breaking the traps set by global inequalities and closing the gap between rich and poor, the powerful and the weak.



30. Stan Erraught: Rebel Notes

Church House

2.30–3.30pm

£12/9 concessions

Popular music is political even when it doesn't directly address political issues. **Stan Erraught**, lecturer in the School of Music at the University of Leeds, explores how popular music intersects with global conflicts. From democracy movements in Hong Kong, to republican rap in Ireland, to the ways in which Ukraine and Russia's once-shared pop music culture has been split by the war, discover how popular culture can help us to understand conflict.

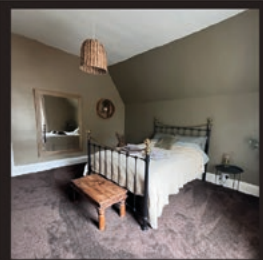


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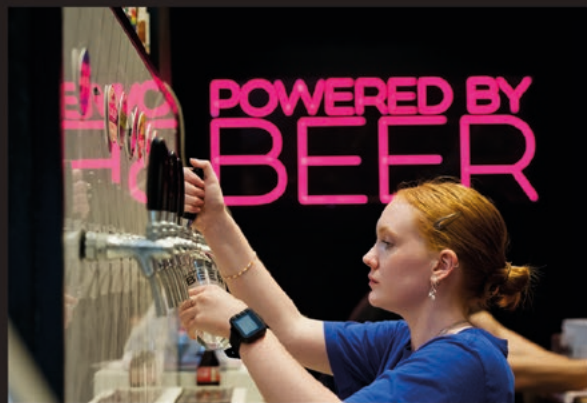

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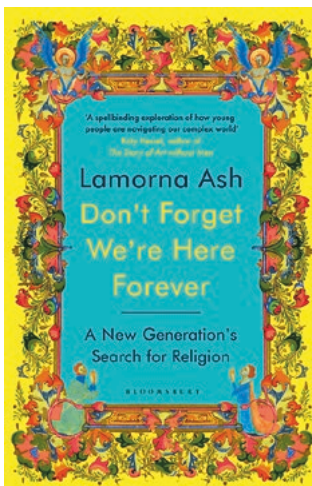
SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER



31. Georgina Sturge: **A History of the UK in Data**

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
2.30–3.30pm
£12/9 concessions

What has data ever done for us? Answering that question is **Georgina Sturge**, House of Commons Library statistician. Hear the rich history of the times the UK has counted itself – from the revolutionary first census of 1801 to modern worries over technological surveillance – and find out about those who resisted the state's attempts at tabulation. Sturge draws out the human stories in the tangle of data to share a vital snapshot not of who we imagine ourselves to be, but who we really are.



32. Lamorna Ash: **A New Generation's Search for Religion**

All Saints' Church
3.45–4.45pm
£12/9 concessions

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

Why are young people in Britain today turning to faith in our age of uncertainty?

Somerset Maugham Award-winning writer **Lamorna Ash** embarked on a journey across Britain to meet the new generation wrestling with Christianity in our age of disconnection and apathy. Hear about how her own deeply personal journey with religion inspired her investigation and what the people she met at Evangelical youth festivals and Quaker meetings, a silent Jesuit retreat to a monastic community in the Inner Hebrides, taught her about our universal need for nourishment of the soul.

Presented in partnership with All Saints Ilkley.



All Saints Ilkley



33. Ben Chu: **Exile Economics**

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
3.45–4.45pm
£12/9 concessions

Nations are turning away from each other. Faith in globalisation has been fatally undermined by the pandemic, the energy crisis, surging trade frictions and swelling great power rivalry. So what happens if globalisation fails?

Economist and trusted BBC Verify correspondent **Ben Chu** picks apart the unfathomably intricate web of interdependence that has come to bind nations together and underlines the dangers of the new push to isolationism, a phenomenon he calls exile economics. Explore this new world in all its promise and peril.



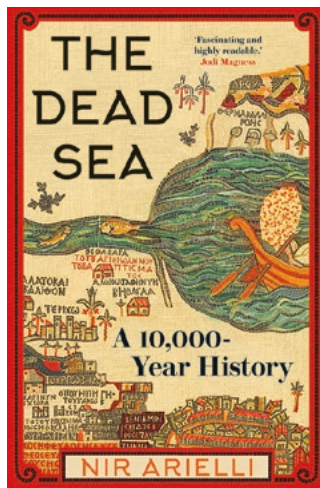


SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER

**34. Emilia Hart & Rachel Bower: Folklore Fiction****Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman**
5–6pm
£12/9 concessions

Prize-winning Bradford-born writer **Rachel Bower** and bestselling British-Australian writer **Emilia Hart** discuss how they crafted compelling stories of women's lives in their folklore-inspired fiction.

Bower's *It Comes from the River* is an unforgettable, uncanny debut novel about the power of women when they work together that is infused with the fables of Northern England. Hart's instant bestseller *The Sirens* tells the story of sisters separated by centuries through a powerful dual-timeline, interwoven with mythical elements.

**35. Nir Arielli: A Living History of the Dead Sea****Church House**
5–6pm
£12/9 concessions

The Dead Sea is a contradiction: famed for its healing properties, yet deadly to many lifeforms. Civilizations have built ancient cities and fortresses around its shores for centuries. **Nir Arielli**, Professor of International History at the University of Leeds, uncovers the lake's complex history, tracing its religious, economic, military and scientific importance. Amid environmental degradation and renewed conflict, Arielli makes a powerful case for why the Dead Sea must be saved.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



Source: The Wellcome Collection

36. Gregory Radick: Darwin's Emotional Evolution**Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall**
6.15–7.15pm
£12/9 concessions

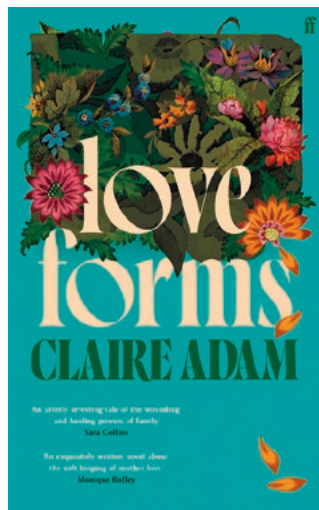
In 1872, Charles Darwin published *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, transforming the full range of human emotional expressions, from perky smiles to sulky pouts, into evidence for evolution. His search for that evidence led him to recruit a colourful team of expert observers from zoological gardens and physiology laboratories but also insane asylums, art photography studios and colonial outposts. Historian **Gregory Radick** tells the story behind this extraordinary and enigmatic book – a book in which Darwin's own emotional life played a surprising and decisive role.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER



37. Claire Adam & Emma Nanami Strenner: **Lost and Found**

Church House
7–8pm
£12/9 concessions

Emma Nanami Strenner and Claire Adam discuss themes of motherhood, adoption, abandonment and lost daughters in their new novels.

Strenner has been a journalist for over twenty years, writing for *Vogue*, *ELLE* and *The Times*. Her debut *My Other Heart* is a sweeping and heartfelt story about finding your roots across borders and beyond blood-ties.

Adam's prize-winning first book *Golden Child* was named one of the BBC's '100 Novels that Shaped the World'. Her heart-aching novel *Love Forms* tells the story of a mother's search for the daughter she left behind a lifetime ago.

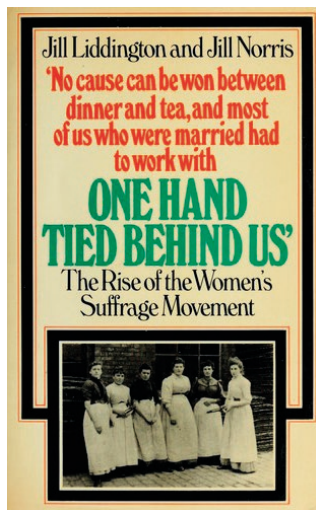


38. Steve Richards: **Tony Blair**

King's Hall
7.30–8.30pm
Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions

Was Tony Blair a visionary, impatiently looking ahead, or a leader trapped by his past? How long was the shadow cast by the Iraq war? And how enduring is his legacy?

Political columnist and man-who-saw-it-all **Steve Richards** casts new light on Blair's time in office, revealing the real Tony Blair, showing that many of the challenges facing him were the ones that still face Labour today and discussing the lessons today's government can learn from the Blair years.



39. Dr Jill Liddington: **Writing Women Up North**

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
7.30–8.30pm
£12/9 concessions

When we think about women's writing in the north, we often think of the Brontës. Yet, beyond the Brontës, there have been so many northern women who wrote compellingly about their own lives.

Join author **Jill Liddington** for a revealing talk on some of the fascinating northern women writers who she has introduced us to; from icons such as Anne Lister, who wrote five-million-word diaries, to Selina Cooper, one of the 29,000 Lancashire women cotton workers who signed and took their suffrage petition down to Westminster.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS





SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER



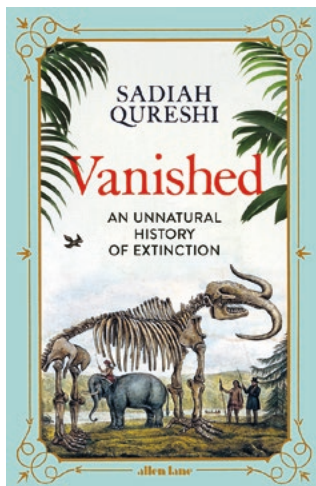
Malachi Whitaker circa 1930. Whitaker Family Collection

40. Valerie Waterhouse: Malachi Whitaker's Yorkshire

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
12–1pm
£12/9 concessions

Born in 1895 in Bradford, Malachi Whitaker was a celebrated author, lauded by the likes of Vita Sackville-West and Stevie Smith. She published prolifically, and the BBC aired over 50 broadcasts of her stories. But her work has not always received the attention it deserves.

Now, Whitaker's 1939 memoir of life in Bradford on the cusp of war is finally being republished. Join Whitaker's biographer **Valerie Waterhouse** for a discussion of this exceptional, overlooked Yorkshirewoman and her writing.

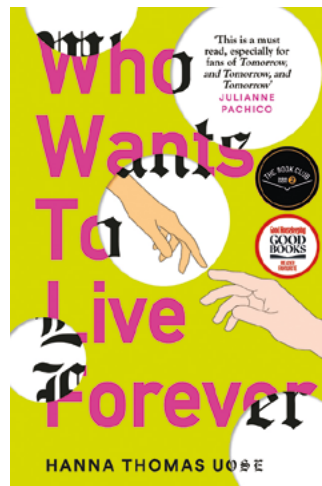


41. Sadiah Qureshi: An Unnatural History of Extinction

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
1.15–2.15pm
£12/9 concessions

Anyone alive today is among a tiny fraction of the once living: over 90% of species that ever existed are now extinct. But extinction is a surprisingly modern concept.

Sadiah Qureshi, Chair of Modern British History at the University of Manchester, explains that extinction is a phenomenon that's not as natural as we might think. Revealing the tangled and unnatural histories of extinction and empire, Qureshi will show how extinction is more than a scientific idea; it's a political choice that has led to devastating consequences.



42. Jess Kitching & Hanna Thomas Uose: Life, Death & Love

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
2.30–3.30pm
£12/9 concessions

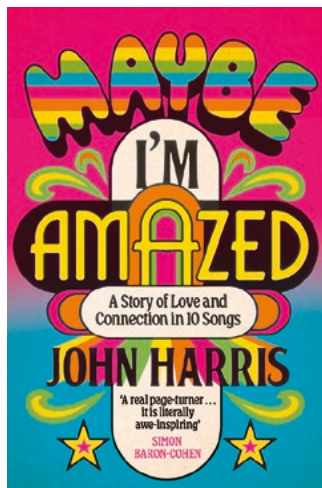
Can love really conquer all? Even time? Even death? **Jess Kitching** and **Hannah Thomas Uose's** new novels meld romance and speculative fiction to meditate on the nature of life, love and mortality.

Kitching's *The Life Experiment* is a poignant, life-affirming love story about two people whose lives are turned upside down when they enter an experiment that predicts when they will die. Thomas Uose's *Who Wants to Live Forever* is a time-bending, decades-long love story that explores what happens when one partner chooses to live forever, rather than love forever.





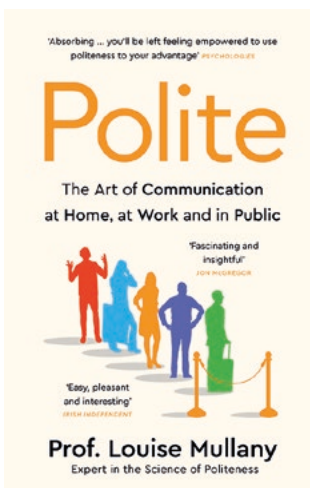
SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER



43. John Harris: **Maybe I'm Amazed**

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
3.45–4.45pm
£12/9 concessions

When prize-winning writer and journalist **John Harris's** son James was diagnosed with autism, it was music – The Beatles, Kraftwerk, Funkadelic, The Velvet Underground and more – that became a source of precious connection and endless wonder for them both. Join us to hear Harris talk about his experience of raising an autistic child in a prejudiced world, the connections between neurodiversity and creativity and how James's connection with music has lessons in listening and living for us all.



44. Louise Mullany: **Polite**

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
5–6pm
£12/9 concessions

Politeness rules our day-to-day lives, whether it's speaking to colleagues about issues at work, dealing with difficult family members or wondering if you should eat the last piece of pie.

For years, **Professor Louise Mullany** has examined the unseen science of politeness and what it says about us. Come along to find out whether women really are more polite than men, how a better understanding of politeness can help us in all aspects of life, and whether politeness standards are declining.



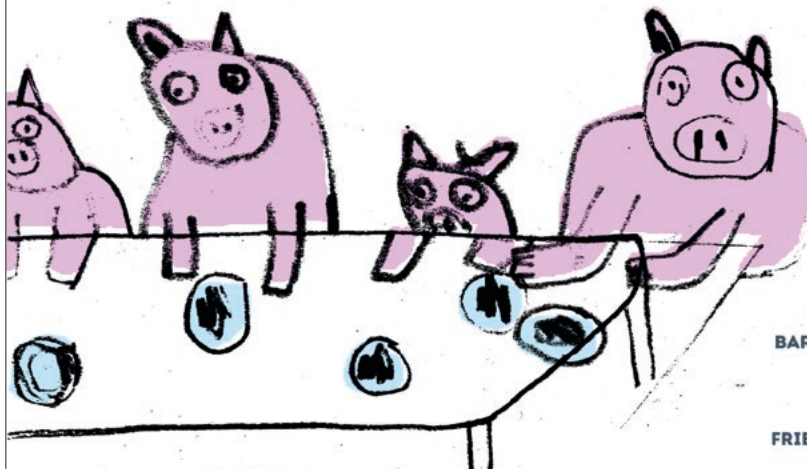
45. Fern Riddell: **Victoria's Secret**

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
6.15–7.15pm
£12/9 concessions

Queen Victoria's friendship with her servant turned companion John Brown has been immortalised in the public imagination. But is there more to their story than we know? What has history been hiding from us?

In this provocative exploration of Queen Victoria's emotional world, and her passionate midlife, acclaimed cultural historian **Fern Riddell** re-examines everything you thought you knew about one of Britain's most enduring women. Join us for an extraordinary retelling of the intimate life of a queen and an unmissable account of a woman in love.

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SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER

MONDAY 13 OCTOBER

TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER



Clockwise from top left: Andrew McMillan, Malika Booker, Jo Clement and Paul Farley

46. Tony Harrison's 'V.': Reimagined

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
7.30–8.30pm
£10/8 concessions

MPs called for it to be banned. *The Daily Mail* labelled it a 'torrent of filth'. What was it about Tony Harrison's poem 'V.' that stirred up so much controversy? Written in 1984 during the Miners' Strike, 'V.' describes Harrison's visit to his parents' graves which had been vandalised. It explores class, alienation, anger and northern identity. Forty years on, **Andrew McMillan** brings together fellow northern poets **Malika Booker**, **Jo Clement** and **Paul Farley** to re-imagine this seminal piece of public poetry and read from their newly commissioned poems.

Presented in partnership with New Writing North and Durham Book Festival.

NEW WRITING NORTH **DURHAM BOOK FESTIVAL**



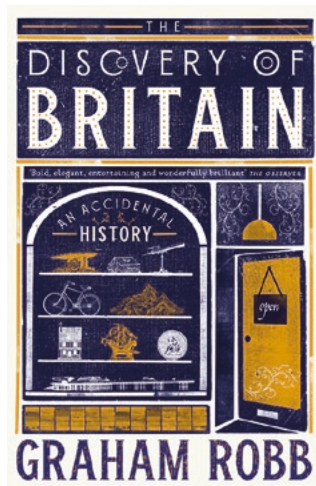
Tim Spector © Peter Schiazza

47. Tim Spector: Ferment

King's Hall
7.30–8.30pm
Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions

From homemade kombucha and kefir, to sourdough, miso and coffee, bestselling author and Professor of Epidemiology **Tim Spector OBE** is on a mission to bring fermenting into your life and kitchen. Spector, the original pioneer of microbiome research and among the top 100 most cited scientists in the world, will share the life-changing benefits of fermentation on your gut health, immunity and mood, and even the planet. Discover the extraordinary science of fermentation and why it's the key to good food and good health.

Presented in partnership with Friends of Ham.



48. Friends Reception with Graham Robb

All Saints' Church
6–7pm
Become a Friend and attend for free

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

In an event exclusively for Friends of the Festival, **Graham Robb** takes us on a time-travelling adventure around the 'spindly, sea-wracked islands' we call home as he discusses his latest book *The Discovery of Britain*.

From the creation of Stonehenge to the advent of multiculturalism, you'll encounter history as you've never seen it before: panoramic and intimate, poignant and shocking, seriously funny, and enlightening in the most surprising ways.



TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER



Edward Stourton © Colin Thomas

49. Edward Stourton: Confessions – Life Re-examined**King's Hall
7.30–8.30pm****Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions**

Edward Stourton is one of the best-known names in British broadcasting. Born to expat parents in colonial Nigeria, he attended Cambridge alongside a network of future ministers, judges and newspaper editors. As a young journalist, he witnessed events that made international headlines before returning home to join the infighting on BBC Radio 4's *Today*. But the world has changed and so has he. Hear Stourton's remarkable journey, told with humour and candour, and the insights that only forty years' experience of writing and reporting can bring.

**50. John Murray Press: Proofs & Prosecco Party****All Saints' Church****7.45–8.45pm****£14/11 concessions****Over 18s only**

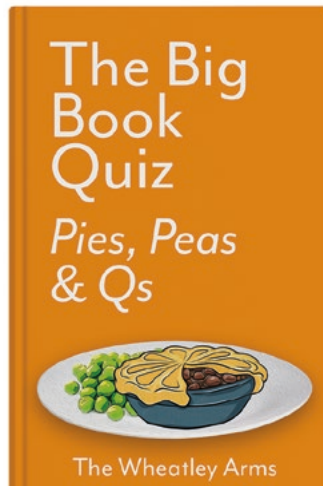
Meet three of the next big names in fiction and get an exclusive first look at their novels before they're published!

The Last Witch on the Knock is **Aimée MacDonald's** fierce Scottish debut inspired by a local legend about one of the last women killed for witchcraft. **Lucie McKnight Hardy's** *Night Babies* is a menacing slice of folk horror set in rural Wales. And **Cailean Steed's** *The Mirror Halls* takes the reader on a spellbinding journey to discover what it means to dream, to grieve, to die, and to really live.

Enjoy a glass of prosecco on arrival and take home a free goody bag with two proof copies.



WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER

**51. The Big Book Quiz II: An Evening of Pies, Peas & Qs****The Wheatley Arms****7–9.45pm****£23***

Know what year Roddy Doyle won the Booker Prize? Can tell the words of one Swift (Jonathan, Graham or even Taylor) from another? Then get ready as **Quiz Master Mel** returns to test your literary trivia!

While Mel feeds your brain with book facts, the Wheatley Arms will provide bodily sustenance – a tasty pie and pea supper*. Get a team together of 4–6 people or come along by yourself and we'll link you up with fellow word wizards.

Please note: this is the second serving of the Big Book Quiz. Questions will be different to those asked on Wednesday 8 October.

*Meal included in ticket price. Meat and vegetarian pie options available.



WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER

THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER



52. Lady Hale: With the Law on Our Side

All Saints' Church
7.30–8.30pm
£15/12 concessions

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

Our laws and justice system are vast and ancient. To most of us, they are a web of intimidating institutions and practices.

In this eye-opening event, **Lady Hale**, the first female Supreme Court Justice and former President of the Supreme Court, explains how the law *is* on our side. Exploring the complexities of real courts and real decisions, she shares true stories from every part of the justice system, from lowly benefits tribunals to the Old Bailey. Learn your rights with a supremely expert guide.

Presented in partnership with Gateley PLC.

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53. Jay Rayner: Nights Out At Home

King's Hall
7.30–9.30pm, including interval

Tickets from £25/£22 concessions

The ever-tasteful, often hilarious writer and restaurant critic **Jay Rayner** is here to answer the questions you've always wanted to ask, put to him by a host of virtual star interviewers. What expertise does a restaurant critic need? What's the best way to roast a chicken? Is he just an utterable snob? And, if he's so bloody clever, why doesn't he just open his own damn restaurant? Plus, you'll get to ask your questions too. You won't be needing seconds after this joyfully greedy show.



54. Sonia Purnell: Kingmaker

All Saints' Church
7.30–8.30pm
£12/9 concessions

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

Pamela Churchill Harriman was one of the most powerful women of the 20th century. There is practically no-one in politics, culture and fashion whose lives she did not touch: from her father-in-law Winston Churchill, through the Kennedys and Gloria Steinem, to Bill Clinton and Nelson Mandela. Yet her glamorous social life and infamous erotic adventures often overshadowed her true accomplishments. Prize-winning and bestselling biographer **Sonia Purnell** sets the record straight, unveiling the spectacular story of how Harriman left an indelible mark on the world today.



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FRIDAY 17 OCTOBER

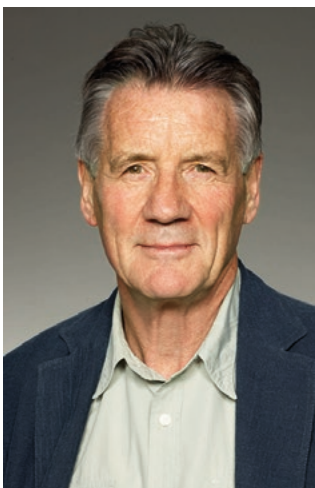


55. Mike Berners-Lee: A Climate of Truth

King's Hall
6.30–7.30pm

Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions

Bestselling author and sustainability expert **Mike Berners-Lee** is back by popular demand following his sold-out King's Hall appearance in 2019. Berners-Lee explains why raising the standards of honesty in our politics, media and businesses is the crucial step if humanity is to thrive in the decades ahead. And how, with this simple principle, you too can have a radical impact on the issues you care about most.



Michael Palin © John Swannell

56. Michael Palin: Venezuela

King's Hall
8.30–9.30pm

Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions

You'll be transported from West Yorkshire to South America with Britain's best-loved humourist and travel writer **Michael Palin** in this immersive hour-long talk. Hear Palin's vivid account of his travels in Venezuela, one of South America's most culturally rich, vibrant but also troubled nations. With his trademark warmth and humour, Palin will share his stories from the road, painting a vivid and varied portrait of this complex country.

Pre-signed copies will be available to buy after the event.

SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER



57. The Working Class Library: Live Podcast

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
12–1pm

Pay what you decide **S**

Discover a new 'canon' of working-class books that tell a different story to the established British literary canon in this live recording of the Working Class Library podcast, with editor **Richard Benson** and **Claire Malcolm**, CEO of New Writing North.

Benson and Malcolm will be joined by a special guest writer to discuss the working class credentials and perspectives of one of Yorkshire's most famous literary sons, Alan Bennett, exploring his family memoir, *Untold Stories*.

The Working Class Library podcast is a venture of *The Bee*, a new magazine of writing by working class writers published by New Writing North.

**NEW WRITING
NORTH**



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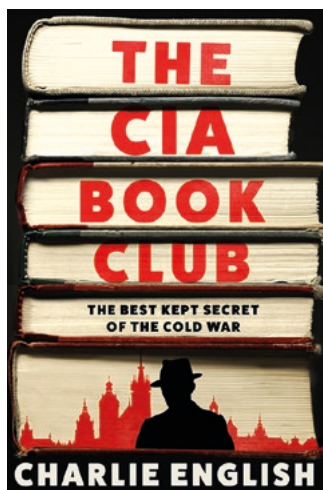


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SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER



58. Charlie English & Terry Stianthny: Frontlines of Psychological Warfare

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
1.15–2.15pm

£12/9 concessions

Times Radio political reporter **Terry Stianthny** and former head of *Guardian* international news **Charlie English** reveal unbelievable yet true stories of 20th century psychological warfare in this panel event.

Stianthny's *Believable Lies* tells the untold story of the Political Warfare Executive, a secret British organisation briefed to wage psychological warfare to beat the Nazis. English's book *The CIA Book Club* tells the astonishing story of how ten million books were smuggled across the Iron Curtain in an attempt to win the Cold War with literature.



59. Sara Barnes: The Cold Fix

All Saints' Church
1.15–2.15pm

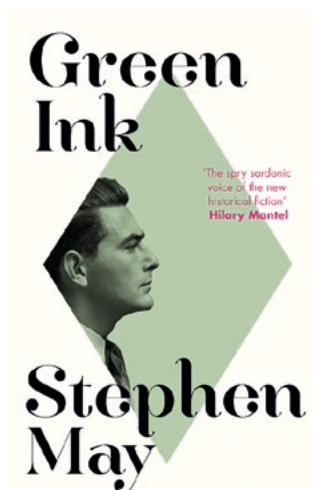
£12/9 concessions

ALSO LIVE STREAMED

In 2017, **Sara Barnes** was diagnosed with severe osteoarthritis and found herself facing major surgery and a future of limited mobility. Rather than obsessing about what she could no longer do, she focused on what she could do and took to the water of the tarns, river pools and lakes in her home county of Cumbria. Find out how cold-water swimming changed Barnes's life, and how it has the power to change yours.

Presented in partnership with Alpkit.

alpkit



60. Sophie Haydock & Stephen May: Stranger than Fiction?

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
2.30–3.30pm

£12/9 concessions

Stephen May and **Sophie Haydock** discuss how they reimagined real-life historical figures and events in their latest novels, *Green Ink* and *Madame Matisse*.

Green Ink explores the disappearance of firebrand socialist MP Victor Grayson in 1920, while *Madame Matisse* reimagines in dramatic detail the stories of Henri Matisse's wife Amelie, lover Lydia and daughter Marguerite. Discover the research and imagination required to bring historical figures back to life on the page, and where the line between truth and fiction blurs.



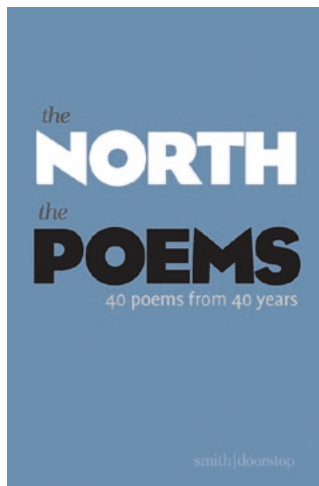


SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

**61. Poet's Corner Reading Group****Ilkley Arts Studio****3.15–4.45pm****FREE, booking required**

Get together with other poetry lovers in our friendly, informal group session hosted by **Jamie Field** and **Rachel Curzon**, two of Word Up North's 2025 New Northern Poets. You'll take part in a group discussion of selected poems over a cup of tea and even the odd biscuit.

Suitable for anyone over the age of 14 with an interest in poetry. No specialist knowledge is required beyond a love of words! Details of the poems chosen for the discussion will be provided in advance.

WORD UP NORTH**62. The Poems: 40 Years in the North****Church House****3.30–4.30pm****£12/9 concessions**

Hear some of the 40 best poems of the last 40 years, gathered from *The North*, the UK's inspirational poetry magazine produced by The Poetry Business.

Editors **Ann and Peter Sansom** will read from and discuss this remarkable anthology, featuring poems by Simon Armitage, David Constantine, Ian McMillan, Kim Moore, Helen Mort, Shash Trevett and more. You'll also hear from Leeds-based writer **Ian Harker**, one of Word Up North's 2024 New Northern Poets, as he launches his prize-winning collection, *Gain Access*.

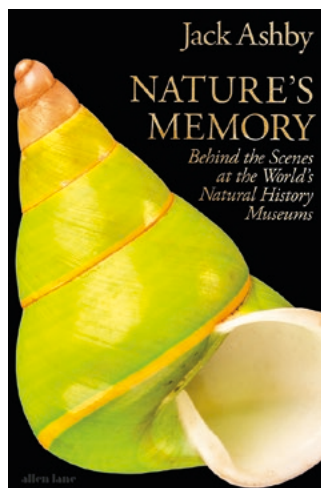
**63. Jo Hamilton: The Post Office Scandal and Me****All Saints' Church****3.45–4.45pm****£12/9 concessions** **S****ALSO LIVE STREAMED**

Jo Hamilton was one of more than 700 sub-postmasters prosecuted by the Post Office based on false information, her story immortalised in the smash hit ITV drama *Mr Bates vs The Post Office*. But there's more to Hamilton's story, beyond the headlines and the corridors of the High Court and the UK's political institutions. Hear the untold struggle she faced during the biggest miscarriage of justice in modern history, and the how the strength of her community helped her to fight back against the odds.





SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

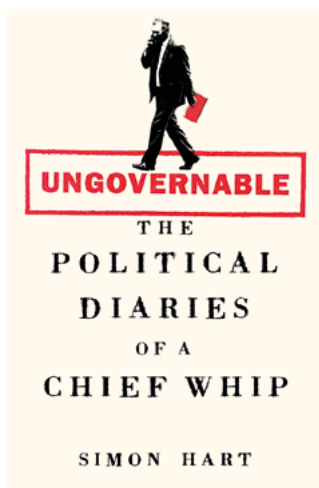


64. Jack Ashby: Behind the Scenes at the Natural History Museums

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
3.45–4.45pm

£12/9 concessions

Natural history museums are incredibly popular tourist attractions, but we don't often stop to think about what they really tell us about our world. **Jack Ashby**, curator and president of the Society for the History of Natural History, reveals how the science being done behind the scenes at natural history museums around the world is playing a key role in saving life on earth. Discover the joys, eccentricities and planet-saving potential of the world's best-loved museums.

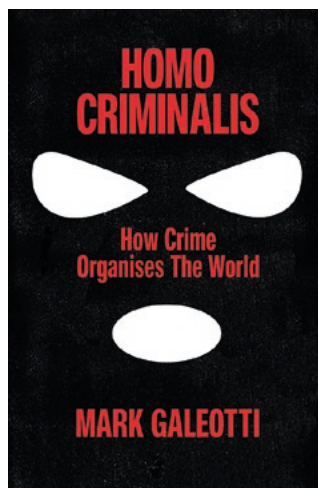


65. Simon Hart: Ungovernable

King's Hall
5–6pm

**Tickets from £17.50/14.50
concessions**

Former Chief Whip and Conservative MP **Simon Hart** had a front-row seat to the most turbulent times in Britain's recent political history. He's seen and heard it all, from negotiations around Brexit and the impact of Liz Truss's extraordinary forty-nine-day premiership, to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, becoming one of the few Chief Whips to survive for an entire premiership. Now, Hart shares his insider story and unflinching reflections on the heart of British politics from the centre of government.



66. Mark Galeotti: How Crime Organises the World

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
5–6pm

£12/9 concessions

When does a bandit become a monarch? When does a gang become a government? And is organised crime at the heart of every modern state?

Join **Professor Mark Galeotti** for a thrilling whistle-stop tour of how the world's criminal underbelly has shaped state-making, capitalism, globalisation and all forms of so-called legitimate power. Galeotti will show the emergence of modern society through the evolution of the underworld of organised crime, explaining how this dark underbelly shapes us, no matter how we try to outpace it.





SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER



Zaffar Kunial

67. University of Leeds Poetry Centre Showcase

Church House
5–6pm

£12/9 concessions

Join us for a showcase of readings by exceptional poets associated with the thriving University of Leeds Poetry Centre. Participating poets include **Charlotte Eichler, John Whale, Maia Elsner, Matt Howard** and **Zaffar Kunial**.

Presented in partnership with the University of Leeds.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



Jung Chang © Zhang Xiaohong

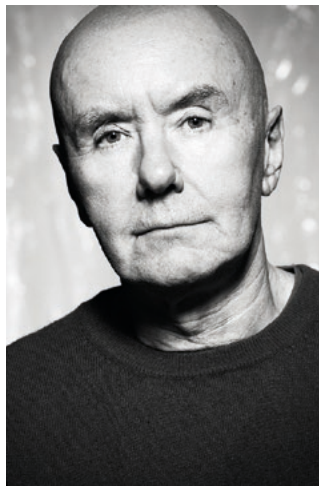
68. Jung Chang: Fly, Wild Swans

All Saints' Church
6.15–7.15pm

£15/12 concessions

 **ALSO LIVE STREAMED**

Jung Chang's global bestseller *Wild Swans* defined a generation. An epic personal history of Chang, her mother and grandmother – 'three daughters of China'. Beginning with her grandmother's birth in 1909 under the last emperor, through Mao Zedong's rule and the Cultural Revolution, up to Chang's emigration to Britain in 1978. But her story didn't end there. Now, nearly half a century on, Chang brings the story of her family, and of China, up to date. Join us for a deeply moving and unforgettable evening.



Irvine Welsh © Zoe Law

69. Irvine Welsh: Men in Love

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
6.15–7.15pm

£12/9 concessions

Choose life. Choose love? **Irvine Welsh** joins us to discuss the sequel to his million-copy bestseller, *Trainspotting*. *Men in Love* picks up in a new era, as the *Trainspotting* crew fall for rave and romance in the late 1980s, the closing years of Thatcher's Britain. But as the 1990s dawn, will finding love be the answer to the group's dreams or just another doomed quest? Catch up with Renton, Spud, Sick Boy and Begbie and hear from the master storyteller himself.





SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER



70. New Northern Poets Showcase

Church House

6.45–7.45pm

Pay what you decide

Hear from Word Up North's 2025 cohort of New Northern Poets: **Nóra Blascsó**k, **Rachel Curzon**, **Nígeen Dara**, **Jamie Field**, **Vanessa Napolitano** and **Laura Strickland**. This is a unique opportunity to catch readings of new work from some of the most exciting rising poets in the north at the beginning of their poetic careers.

Presented in partnership with the University of Leeds.



71. Informal Verse: A Poetry Networking Event

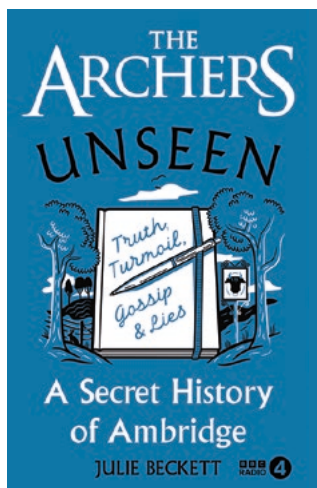
Church House

8–9pm

FREE, booking required

Whether you're trying to break into poetry publishing or simply want to meet with like-minded verse-lovers, Word Up North's informal networking event offers the opportunity to relax and make new connections in the poetry world over drinks and nibbles.

Presented in partnership with Martinez Wines.



72. Julie Beckett: The Archers Unseen

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman

7.30–8.30pm

£12/9 concessions

With more than five million listeners and having run for more than 20,000 episodes since its first broadcast in 1951, *The Archers* is a British institution. Join *Archers* writer, editor, director and superfan **Julie Beckett** for a canny, in-world exploration of Britain's best-loved soap. Location by location, via The Bull and the occasional barn, step behind the scenes with Beckett as she divulges the secret history of Ambridge.

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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**





SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER



73. An Evening with Hugh Bonneville

King's Hall

7.30–8.30pm

Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions **S**

Enjoy an evening with actor and bestselling memoirist **Hugh Bonneville**.

The star of *Paddington*, *W1A* and *Downton Abbey* will delight us with brilliantly vivid stories from his glittering career on stage and screen, from getting his first big break as Third Shepherd in the school nativity, to working with divas, dames and an invisible bear with a penchant for marmalade. Join us for a richly entertaining evening of stories and anecdotes from one of Britain's most accomplished actors.

FAMILY EVENT



74. Hugh Bonneville: Rory Sparkes and the Elephant in the Room

King's Hall

12–1pm

Children £6, Adults £10/6 concessions

Buckle up for the adventure of a lifetime in this hilarious family event with *Paddington* star and children's author, **Hugh Bonneville**. Find out how adventures on stage and screen helped Bonneville use his own childhood memories as inspiration for a story of adventure, friends and animal encounters!

Meet Rory Sparkes, a boy with a head full of dreams. As Rory plots to help his best friend, Guy, earn enough money to buy the latest top-of-the-line model boat (so they can set sail for South America), the circus rolls into town and everything spirals out of control. Will Rory's plans work out? Join us to find out!



75. Lorna Gibb: Rare Tongues

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman

12–1pm

£12/9 concessions

Get lost in translation on this enthralling tour around the rarest languages in the world with writer and linguist **Lorna Gibb**.

Discover the history of rare languages, the cultures they belong to and the tales they tell, from Australia to Finland, India to the Canary Isles, and Namibia to the United States. With language and culture becoming increasingly homogenous, Gibb explains how we are losing different viewpoints and ways of living and makes a case for the preservation of the rich linguistic diversity of our world.



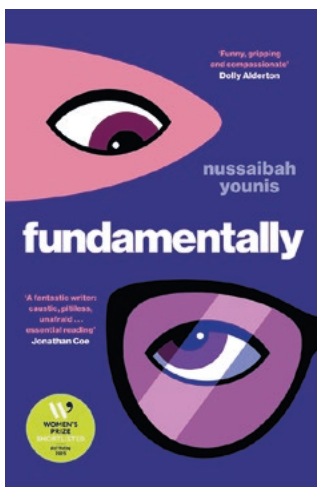
SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER



76. Patrick Maguire & Gabriel Pogrud: The Inside Story of Labour Under Starmer

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
1.15–2.15pm
£12/9 concessions

The Times political columnist **Patrick Maguire** and *Sunday Times* Whitehall Editor **Gabriel Pogrud** share the definitive, explosive behind-the-scenes account of Labour's brutal reinvention and dramatic return to power under Keir Starmer. Drawing on their unrivalled access throughout the party and extensive leaks of internal party documents, Maguire and Pogrud present a blistering exposé of the most significant and ruthless political transformation in a generation and explore what, after winning the ultimate prize, Labour might do next.



77. Sanam Mahludji & Nussaimah Younis: Seriously Funny

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
2.30–3.30pm
£12/9 concessions

Women's Prize for Fiction shortlisted writers **Sanam Mahludji** and **Nussaimah Younis** discuss how their razor-sharp debut novels balance serious social and political subjects with deliciously dark humour.

Mahludji's enormously entertaining *The Persians* follows five women from three generations of a once eminent Iranian family as their lives are turned upside down by revolutions personal and political. Younis's wildly funny *Fundamentally* follows Nadia, an academic tasked with rehabilitating ISIS women who becomes obsessed with saving fifteen-year-old East Londoner Sara, whether Sara wants to be saved or not.



Tony Robinson © Paul Marc Mitchell

78. Sir Tony Robinson: The House of Wolf

King's Hall
2.30–3.30pm
Tickets from £17.50/14.50 concessions

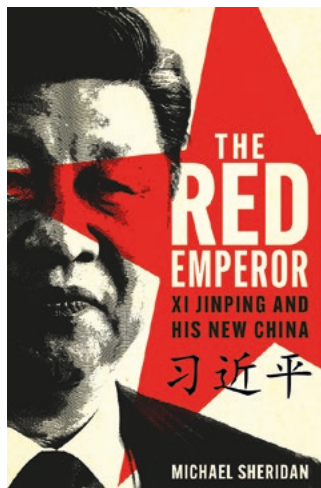
Sir Tony Robinson, actor, presenter, historical expert and star of *Blackadder* and *Time Team*, discusses his adult fiction debut, *The House of Wolf*.

Set in Anglo-Saxon England, *The House of Wolf* is an earthy, entertaining and gloriously witty recreation of the life of Alfred the Great and the making of England, centring around an epic struggle for power. Join us to hear how history inspired Robinson's debut novel.





SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER



79. Michael Sheridan: **The Red Emperor**

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
3.45–4.45pm
£12/9 concessions

Correspondent and leading expert on China, **Michael Sheridan**, joins us for a revelatory conversation on Xi Jinping, arguably the most powerful man in the world.

Sharing insights drawn from decades of reporting, Sheridan reveals that behind the façade of the Chinese Communist Party there is a modern dynasty and a new emperor. He shares an eye-opening analysis of Xi Jinping, from his early life and rise to power to his actions as absolute ruler. Hear how this loner and risk-taker became the most consequential leader of our time.

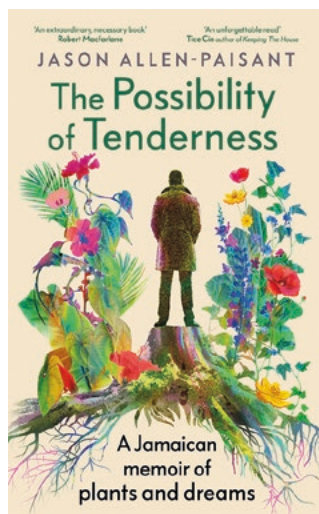


Mark Radcliffe and Arlo © Will Carne

80. Mark Radcliffe: **Et tu, Cavapoo?**

King's Hall
5–6pm
Tickets from £17.50/14.50
concessions

In 2024, BBC radio presenter **Mark Radcliffe** and his wife set off in their VW Beetle for a three-month sojourn in Rome, taking their beloved and pampered cavapoo, Arlo. And it went... about as well as you'd expect. Hear how one man and his dog took in the sights (and sniffs) of Rome – with Arlo being taunted by his mortal enemies in the city's cat colony to his fear of water extending to the Trevi Fountain – and gain a deeper insight into the eccentricities of the canine mind.



81. Corinne Fowler & Jason Allen-Paisant: **Roam and Reclaim**

Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
5–6pm
£12/9 concessions

T.S. Eliot Prize-winning poet **Jason Allen-Paisant** and professor of colonialism and heritage **Corinne Fowler** explore our connections with the land and uncover the hidden stories rural spaces can share about our history.

Allen-Paisant's *The Possibility of Tenderness* is a fierce reclamation of a link with the land, roaming from Jamaican hills to the woodlands of Leeds. Fowler's *Our Island Stories* brings to light, through ten country walks, the buried connections between Britain's countryside and the history of empire.





SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER



Ruby Tandoh © Eva Pentel

82. Ruby Tandoh: All Consuming

Ilkley Grammar School, B-Hall
6.15–7.15pm
£12/9 concessions

Being 'into food' is no longer a subculture. It's become mass culture, and a national obsession. Recipes aren't passed from hand to hand; they're on TV and in magazines, flooding YouTube and social media.

Join **Ruby Tandoh** for a laser-sharp, wry analysis of today's food culture. Tandoh will trace the roots of this extraordinary transformation, examining the social, economic, demographic and technological forces shaping the foods that we hunger for today and asking: 'are our tastes even our own?'



Story Explorer day!



Sunday 1 March 2026
Skipton Town Hall

Story telling

Draw alongs

Book events



**Star guests to be
announced...**

**Sign up to our mailing list for
updates: wordupnorth.org.uk**

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Bradford
Grammar
School

**WORD UP
NORTH**



WRITING WORKSHOPS

SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER



Rachel Bower © Jess Petrie

83. Getting Started with Fiction with Rachel Bower**Ilkley Grammar School
12.30–2.30pm
£25/22 concessions**

What makes a story? Let award-winning writer **Rachel Bower** show you in this fun, supportive workshop. Together, you'll escape the terror of the blank page, experiment with fresh ideas and get to grips with the building blocks of story: compelling characters, sparkling dialogue and gripping plots.

Whether you're just starting out, returning to writing after a break, or simply want to experiment with new techniques, this workshop will boost your confidence and allow you to explore the realms of storytelling.

WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER

**84. Plotting Short Stories with Emily Devane****Church House
6.30–8.30pm
£25/22 concessions**

Is your notebook filled with ideas for short stories, but you're not sure where to go next? Let writer, editor and The Grove Bookshop bookseller **Emily Devane** show you the way.

In this short fiction masterclass, Devane will show you how to find the potential in your early drafts, recognise where your story lies and shape it into a satisfying plot that will linger in the reader's mind long after they've finished the final sentence.

18 OCTOBER & 20 OCTOBER



John Whale © Paul Maddern

85. Poetry one-to-one with John Whale**40-minute sessions available
18 October, All Saints' Church:
10am, 11am, 12pm
20 October, Online: 7pm, 8pm
£50 per session**

An incredible opportunity to receive a one-to-one session with poet **John Whale** – editor of *Stand* magazine and Director of the University of Leeds Poetry Centre – who will offer you personalised feedback and editorial advice on your work. You will be asked to provide your poems in advance of the session. Limited availability. One 40-minute session per person. A maximum of three poems with a combined length of no more than 150 lines can be considered within a session.



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER



Peter Sansom © Steve Dearden
Ann Sansom © Charlie Hedley

86. Writing Poems with Ann & Peter Sansom

Church House
10am–12pm

£25/22 concessions

Begin new poems and explore your writing practice in a warm and supportive environment with two of the country's best-loved poets and tutors, **Ann and Peter Sansom**, co-Directors of The Poetry Business.

Whether a seasoned poet or new to verse, you'll learn a great deal from this entertaining writing workshop. Working from inspirational poems, you will get started on several new pieces and move your practice on.



Antony Dunn © Sarah Underwood

87. Pushing the Poem with Antony Dunn

Ilkley Arts Studio
10am–12pm

£25/22 concessions

In this fun and informal – but gently provocative – poetry workshop, you'll explore ways of knowing when the time is right to push your poem out into the world.

Guided by former ILF Poet in Residence **Antony Dunn**, you'll create a new piece of poetry through a series of conversation, reading and writing games before shaping it using a range of guided editing techniques. Discover how to challenge your first instincts, chase your poem into unexpected places and find out what happens when you share it with the world.



Stephen May © Jonathan Ring

88. Find Your Voice with Stephen May

Ilkley Grammar School
10am–12pm

£25/22 concessions

Join award-winning novelist **Stephen May** for this stimulating workshop aimed at the experienced writer and shy beginner alike.

May is the author of six novels, including *Life! Death! Prizes!* which was shortlisted for the Costa Novel Award and the *Guardian's* Not the Booker Prize. With May, you'll explore how to depict characters, relationships, and dialogue as well as how to structure your stories. Together, you will develop techniques to make your unique voice sing on the page.



WRITING WORKSHOPS

SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER



89. Building a World in Poetry with Charlotte Eichler

Church House
12.30–2.30pm
£25/22 concessions

How do you go about creating vivid, tangible places and atmospheres that invite the reader into your poems? And how do you make readers want to come back to explore your poems again and again, taking something new away with them each time?

Join Seamus Heaney Prize-shortlisted poet **Charlotte Eichler** as she shows you how to build worlds through your poetry. Using practical writing exercises in a calm, relaxed environment, Eichler will guide you as you create and explore your own poetic worlds.



90. Migrating Objects and their Stories with Maia Elsner

Ilkley Arts Studio
12.30–2.30pm
£25/22 concessions

Objects carry with them rich histories as they pass from hand to hand, sometimes gifted, sometimes lost, thrown away, discarded, abandoned, picked up, found, coveted, rediscovered.

Poet and novelist **Maia Elsner** will show you how to use objects and images as inspiration for new poems, and as a pathway into memory and imagination. Elsner is the winner of a Somerset Maugham Award, a Vivian Shipley Award and an Erica Gregory Award.

COMING SOON



New Northern Poet Workshops

Online
Dates be announced in Autumn

Hone your poetic craft in a series of online writing workshops with three of Word Up North's New Northern Poets, **Nóra Blascsó**, **Vanessa Napolitano** and **Nigeen Dara**.

Sign up to our mailing list and keep an eye on wordupnorth.org.uk for dates.



OTHER LOCAL EVENTS

SATURDAY 9 AUGUST –
SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

Lifted: friendship – community – support

Ilkley Manor House, LS29 9DT
Weekends, 11–4pm
FREE

Local photographer Charlie Swinbourne was invited to meet, witness, and document the people at the heart of Ilkley & District Good Neighbours' work. In this photo exhibition, share glimpses of the joy, resilience, and ongoing vitality of the amazing people involved with and supported by this charity, who promote ageing positively in Ilkley.

FRIDAY 5 SEPTEMBER –
SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER

People, Environment and Faith in Times of Peril

**Ben Rhydding Methodist
Church, Ben Rhydding Drive,
Ilkley, LS29 8AY**
**Opening times available
at [ywmethodist.org.uk/
bradford2025/](http://ywmethodist.org.uk/bradford2025/)**
FREE

As part of Bradford City of Culture 2025, five venues in the District are exhibiting artworks held in the Methodist Modern Art Collection (MMAC), enabling conversations around faith, hidden or overlooked histories, and diverse and marginalised heritage. Explore how faith, creativity and positive action can help us all during turbulent times.

THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER

Moor Words: Spoken Word Night

**Upstairs at Vitello Lounge,
Ilkley**
7.30–10.30pm
**£5 on the door (or can be
booked via Moor Words
Eventbrite)**

Join The Grove Bookshop Writing Group and friends for an evening of spoken word: poetry, memoir, short fiction and sketches at Ilkley's Vitello Lounge. Contact Emily at moorwordsilkley@gmail.com for more details. Book a 5-minute reading slot or come along to watch. Everyone welcome!

SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER

Totally Typewriters

Clarke Foley Centre
10am–4pm
FREE

An interactive celebration of the marvellous machines that changed the world. See and try out over 100 machines from the 1900s to the 1980s and enter the Typewriter Trail Quiz to win a typewriter. There's also a creative craft workshop, amazing typewriter art and technical advice from a professional expert. Plus, ask acclaimed poet, Ralph Dartford to write you a short poem on a vintage typewriter.

SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

Haiku A Day is Nature's Way

**The shelter on the Lower Tarn,
Ilkley Moor**
**(what3words location:
october.nurse.amaze)**
11am–3pm
Free

Experience the beauty and serenity of Ilkley's very own 'Little Moor' on the lower slopes of Ilkley Moor as you join in Haiku-writing exercises and a nature walk. In this unique and inspiring journey, you'll immerse yourself in the natural landscape and learn how to compose your own haiku within the tranquil, calm space that is the Little Moor, a natural hidden gem.





BECOME A FRIEND OF THE FESTIVAL



© Karol Wyszynski 2019

The Ilkley Literature Festival is run by Word Up North, a registered charity (wordupnorth.org.uk). We rely on the generous support of book lovers like you to be able to continue our work with children and young people, supporting new and emerging writers and providing opportunities to communities where cultural provision is lacking. Our Friends of the Festival are vitally important to us and our ability to keep developing our work. While we gratefully receive funding from Arts Council England, the level of this support has not increased since 2012, while our costs rise every year.

An annual subscription costs just £25, or £35 for a joint membership. Becoming a Friend is the best way to give a little extra support whilst enjoying the range of benefits on offer, including:

- A special priority booking period before tickets for the annual Ilkley Lit Fest go on sale
- Invitations to two free Friends events during the year
- Friends exclusive newsletters throughout the year

If the Festival has enriched your love of literature, please help support our work by becoming a Friend. Every contribution, big or small, makes all the difference.

FRIENDS, BOOK YOUR TICKETS EARLY!

Friends Priority Booking opens **Wednesday 20 August** and sales open to the general public **Tuesday 26 August**.

If you are interested in becoming a Friend of the Festival, you can find out more information online: ilkleylitfest.org.uk

By phone: 01943 816714

Email: boxoffice@ilkleylitfest.org.uk



FESTIVAL INFO: VENUES & MAP

This year events will take place at **All Saints' Church, Church House, Ilkley Grammar School, Ilkley Playhouse, King's Hall, Ilkley Arts Studio, and The Wheatley Arms.**



- 1 Ilkley Playhouse, Weston Road LS29 8DW
- 2 All Saints' Church and Church House LS29 9DS
- 3 Ilkley Arts Studio, 4 Castle Yard LS29 9DT
- 4 Central Car Park and Toilets LS29 8AF
- 5 The Grove Bookshop, 10 The Grove LS29 9EG

- 6 King's Hall, Station Road LS29 8HB
- 7 Ilkley Grammar School, Cowpasture Road LS29 8TR
- The Wheatley Arms, Wheatley Lane, Ben Rhydding LS29 8PW

TRAVEL LINKS

There are regular buses and trains from Ilkley to Leeds and Bradford. Ilkley lies on the A65 between Leeds and Skipton. For more information, please visit our website. Please note, Ilkley Grammar School is a short but steep uphill walk from Ilkley train station.

PARKING

For venues in Ilkley town centre, use the Central Car Park or on-street parking.


For Ilkley Grammar School, there is some limited parking at the school and on-street parking nearby on Cowpasture Road.



FESTIVAL INFO: LIVE STREAMED EVENTS & ONLINE WORKSHOPS



Live Streamed

Most events taking place at All Saints' Church will also be live streamed, enabling you to watch from the comfort of your own home. Look out for the live streamed symbol in the event listings: 

When purchasing your ticket online or via phone, please make sure you select the live streamed event listing. Bookers will be sent further information about how to access the live streamed events after purchasing their ticket.

Unless stated otherwise, all online events will be available to view for 72 hours after the event has finished.

Online Event Ticket Prices:

- Individual Ticket: £5
- Household Ticket: £10 (recommended for two or more viewers)

For more information about our online events, visit our website

ilkleylitfest.org.uk



Online Workshops

We hold online workshops throughout the year via Zoom. When booking onto these events, please ensure you have access to a computer, tablet or mobile and a Zoom account.

Sign up to our mailing list and keep an eye on our website to be the first to hear about our online workshops.



FESTIVAL INFO: BOOKING TICKETS

Please read the information below to ensure your booking experience is as smooth as possible.

Reserved Seating

Reserved seating is in place at the majority of venues. You will be able to select your seats when booking and the seat number will appear on your ticket and in your confirmation email.

Accessible Seating

If you require an accessible seat – such as a wheelchair space, an aisle seat, or a complimentary essential companion ticket – please call the Box Office on 01943 816714 so we can reserve you an appropriate seat.

Door Sales

It will be possible to purchase tickets on the door at events, subject to availability. Please check the website to see if tickets remain available before travelling to the venue to avoid disappointment.

No Booking Fees

There are no booking fees charged on Ilkley Literature Festival tickets. If you can, please consider making a donation instead via our website: ilkleylitfest.org.uk.

Ticket Delivery

As part of our efforts to reduce the number of paper tickets we print, we encourage bookers to opt for e-tickets. If you are not able to use e-tickets, we can post your tickets for £2.50. Tickets booked within 7 days of the event will automatically be sent as e-tickets.

Refunds & Returned Tickets

Tickets will not be refunded unless an event is cancelled. We can only accept returned tickets for sold out events. Any returned tickets will be made available for resale online and/or on the door at venues, though there is no guarantee of resale. Refunds for all returned tickets will be processed after the festival has ended and are subject to a 10% handling fee.

Photography

Please note that photography and/or filming will take place at ILF events and workshops. Photos and films may be used by Word Up North online and in print for press and marketing purposes. If you do not wish to appear in photographs or films, please inform a member of staff at the event.



FESTIVAL INFO: ACCESS

Box Office Dates & Times

Friends priority booking opens:

Wed 20 August, 10am

General ticket sales open:

Tue 26 August, 10am

Book online: ilkleylitfest.org.uk (24 hours)

Book by Phone: 01943 816714

● **Wed 20 August–Fri 3 October:**

Mon–Fri: 10am–4pm, Sat & Sun: closed

● **Sat 4–Sun 19 October:**

Mon–Fri: 12–4pm, Sat & Sun: 10am–12pm

Concessions

We offer concessionary tickets to young people and people in financial need. As such, concessions are available to the following people (proof of status will be required):

- Students in full-time education and people under 25.
- People in receipt of disability or health condition benefits, Universal Credit, Universal Pension Credit or Jobseekers Allowance from the UK government.
- People in receipt of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Relief from their Local Authority.

Concessionary prices are stated after the full price for each event, e.g. £12/9.

Bursary Tickets

Bursary places are available for selected events and writing workshops (limited places, subject to availability) to assist those who would otherwise not be able to participate. Please check the online listings for more details on how to apply.

Access Info

If you require an accessible seat, such as a wheelchair space reserving, an aisle seat or a complimentary Essential Companion ticket, please call the Box Office on 01943 816714 so

we can reserve you an appropriate seat.

- All ILF 2025 venues have level access routes and accessible toilets. Please note Ilkley Grammar School B-Hall is a short but steep uphill walk from Ilkley train station. Detailed venue access information is available on our website: ilkleylitfest.org.uk
- Hearing loops are available at the King's Hall, All Saints' Church and Ilkley Playhouse
- Selected events are BSL interpreted. Look for symbol in event listings
- Assistance dogs are welcome

Arrival Times & Latecomers

You will be advised of the time doors will open at the venue and when you should arrive on your booking confirmation email. We urge you to check event details and travel times before setting off to avoid disappointment. It may not be possible to seat you in your allocated seat once the event is underway. Latecomers will be seated in the first available seat.

Terms and Conditions of Sale

For full information on ticket booking for the 2025 festival and to read our terms and conditions, please visit: ilkleylitfest.org.uk

Privacy Policy

We are committed to protecting your personal information and being transparent about what information we hold about you. We use your information in accordance with all applicable laws concerning the protection of personal information. For full information on how we collect and process personal data, please visit: ilkleylitfest.org.uk/privacy-policy

All details in this brochure are correct at the time of going to press (July 2025). Word Up North Ltd is not liable for any subsequent changes. Keep up to date by visiting: ilkleylitfest.org.uk



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FESTIVAL DIARY AT A GLANCE

Your quick guide to what's on, where and when

Online events
 Workshop
 Live streamed events
 BSL Interpreter

Events last one hour unless otherwise stated. For how to book, see pages 53–54.

NO. TIME		EVENT	VENUE
FRIDAY 3 OCTOBER			
1	7pm	Nick Clegg: How to Save the Internet	King's Hall
SATURDAY 4 OCTOBER			
	2 11am	Dostoyevsky Reading Group 'White Nights'	Church House
	3 12pm	Gyles Brandreth: Somewhere, A Boy and A Bear	King's Hall
	4 12pm	James Bloodworth: A Personal Journey Through the Manosphere	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	5 12pm	James Payne: Great Art Explained	All Saints' Church
	6 1.30pm	Yvonne Singh: INK! From Empire to Black Power	Church House
	7 2.30pm	Stuart Maconie: With a Little Help From Their Friends	King's Hall
	8 2.30pm	Jamie Lafferty: An Inconvenience of Penguins	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	9 2.30pm	James Fox: Britain's Lost Arts and Vanishing Trades	All Saints' Church
	10 4pm	Gareth Heaton: Sharpening Skills	Church House
	11 5pm	Dr Kaitlyn Regehr: Smartphone Nation	All Saints' Church
	12 5pm	Lee Lawrence: The Colour of Injustice	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
 	13 7.30pm	Rachel Joyce & Esther Freud: Family Affairs	All Saints' Church
	14 7.30pm	Sabrina Ghayour: Persiana Easy	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER			
	15 12pm	Emily Herring: How Henri Bergson Brought Philosophy to the People	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	16 1.15pm	Anjana Khatwa: Whispers of Rock	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
	17 2.30pm	Thant Myint-U: Peacemaker	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	18 3.45pm	Gareth Russell: Queen James	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
	19 5pm	Ned Boulting: The Accidental Tour-ist	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	20 6.15pm	Simon Hall: Three Revolutions	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall



NO. TIME		EVENT	VENUE
21	7.30pm	Constructing the Material World of Austen & the Brontës	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
WEDNESDAY 8 OCTOBER			
22	7pm	The Big Book Quiz I: An Evening of Pies, Peas & Qs	The Wheatley Arms
23	7.30pm	Alan Davies: White Male Stand-Up	King's Hall
THURSDAY 9 OCTOBER			
24	7.30pm	Mary Portas: I Shop, Therefore I Am	King's Hall
FRIDAY 10 OCTOBER			
25	7.30pm	Simon Armitage: An Evening with the Poet Laureate	King's Hall
SATURDAY 11 OCTOBER			
26	11am	Dostoyevsky Reading Group: 'The Meek One'	Church House
27	12pm	Shelf Expression: How Do Books Shape Your Life?	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
83	12.30pm	Getting Started with Fiction with Rachel Bower	Ilkley Grammar School
 28	1.15pm	Vince Cable: Eclipsing the West	All Saints' Church
29	1.15pm	Tony Juniper: Just Earth	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
30	2.30pm	Stan Erraught: Rebel Notes	Church House
31	2.30pm	Georgina Sturge: A History of the UK in Data	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
 32	3.45pm	Lamorna Ash: A New Generation's Search for Religion	All Saints' Church
33	3.45pm	Ben Chu: Exile Economics	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
34	5pm	Emilia Hart & Rachel Bower: Folklore Fiction	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
35	5pm	Nir Arielli: A Living History of the Dead Sea	Church House
36	6.15pm	Gregory Radick: Darwin's Emotional Evolution	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
37	7pm	Claire Adam & Emma Nanami Strenner: Lost and Found	Church House
38	7.30pm	Steve Richards: Tony Blair	King's Hall
39	7.30pm	Dr Jill Liddington: Writing Women Up North	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER			
40	12pm	Valerie Waterhouse: Malachi Whitaker's Yorkshire	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
41	1.15pm	Sadiya Qureshi: An Unnatural History of Extinction	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
42	2.30pm	Jess Kitching & Hanna Thomas Uose: Life, Death & Love	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman



NO. TIME		EVENT	VENUE
43	3.45pm	John Harris: Maybe I'm Amazed	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
44	5pm	Louise Mullany: Polite	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
45	6.15pm	Fern Riddell: Victoria's Secret	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
46	7.30pm	Tony Harrison's 'V': Reimagined	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
MONDAY 13 OCTOBER			
47	7.30pm	Tim Spector: Ferment	King's Hall
TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER			
	48 6pm	Friends Reception with Graham Robb	All Saints' Church
	49 7.30pm	Edward Stourton: Confessions – Life Re-examined	King's Hall
	50 7.45pm	John Murray Press: Proofs & Prosecco Party	All Saints' Church
WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER			
	84 6.30pm	Plotting Short Stories with Emily Devane	Church House
	51 7pm	The Big Book Quiz II: An Evening of Pies, Peas & Qs	The Wheatley Arms
	52 7.30pm	Lady Hale: With the Law on Our Side	All Saints' Church
THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER			
	53 7.30pm	Jay Rayner: Nights Out At Home	King's Hall
	54 7.30pm	Sonia Purnell: Kingmaker	All Saints' Church
FRIDAY 17 OCTOBER			
	55 6.30pm	Mike Berners-Lee: A Climate of Truth	King's Hall
	56 8.30pm	Michael Palin: Venezuela	King's Hall
SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER			
	86 10am	Writing Poems with Ann & Peter Sansom	Church House
	87 10am	Pushing the Poem with Antony Dunn	Ilkley Arts Studio
	88 10am	Find Your Voice with Stephen May	Ilkley Grammar School
	57 12pm	The Working Class Library: Live Podcast	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	89 12.30pm	Building a World in Poetry with Charlotte Eichler	Church House
	90 12.30pm	Migrating Objects and their Stories with Maia Elsner	Ilkley Arts Studio
	58 1.15pm	Charlie English & Terry Stiastrny: Frontlines of Psychological Warfare	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall



	NO.	TIME	EVENT	VENUE
	59	1.15pm	Sara Barnes: The Cold Fix	All Saints' Church
	60	2.30pm	Sophie Haydock & Stephen May: Stranger than Fiction?	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	61	3.15pm	Poet's Corner Reading Group	Ilkley Arts Studio
	62	3.30pm	The Poems: 40 Years in the North	Church House
	63	3.45pm	Jo Hamilton: The Post Office Scandal and Me	All Saints' Church
	64	3.45pm	Jack Ashby: Behind the Scenes at the Natural History Museums	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
	65	5pm	Simon Hart: Ungovernable	King's Hall
	66	5pm	Mark Galeotti: How Crime Organises the World	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	67	5pm	University of Leeds Poetry Centre Showcase	Church House
	68	6.15pm	Jung Chang: Fly, Wild Swans	All Saints' Church
	69	6.15pm	Irvine Welsh: Men in Love	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
	70	6.45pm	New Northern Poets Showcase	Church House
	71	8pm	Informal Verse: A Poetry Networking Event	Church House
	72	7.30pm	Julie Beckett: The Archers Unseen	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	73	7.30pm	An Evening with Hugh Bonneville	King's Hall
SUNDAY 19 OCTOBER				
	74	12pm	Hugh Bonneville: Rory Sparkes and the Elephant in the Room	King's Hall
	75	12pm	Lorna Gibb: Rare Tongues	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	76	1.15pm	Patrick Maguire & Gabriel Pogrand: The Inside Story of Labour Under Starmer	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
	77	2.30pm	Sanam Mahloudji & Nussaibah Younis: Seriously Funny	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	78	2.30pm	Sir Tony Robinson: The House of Wolf	King's Hall
	79	3.45pm	Michael Sheridan: The Red Emperor	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
	80	5pm	Mark Radcliffe: Et tu, Cavapoo?	King's Hall
	81	5pm	Corinne Fowler & Jason Allen-Paisant: Roam and Reclaim	Ilkley Playhouse, Wildman
	82	6.15pm	Ruby Tandoh: All Consuming	Ilkley Grammar School, B Hall
SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER - MONDAY 20 OCTOBER				
	85		Poetry one-to-one with John Whale	
COMING SOON				
			New Northern Poet Workshops	



ilkley literature festival

FRI 3–SUN 19 OCTOBER 2025

Featuring:



Jo Hamilton Gyles Brandreth
Lee Lawrence Tim Spector
Sabrina Ghayour John Harris
Malika Booker Esther Freud
Corinne Fowler Mark Radcliffe
Sir Tony Robinson Ben Chu
Stuart Maconie Rachel Bower
Nussaibah Younis Lamorna Ash
Steve Richards Edward Stourton
Andrew McMillan Jo Clement
Jason Allen-Paisant Emilia Hart
Thant Myint-U Vince Cable
Sanam Mahloudji James Payne
Mike Berners-Lee

And many more!

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