

# YORK

LITERATURE FESTIVAL

March 2026

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



Including...



Laura Bates



Susanna Clarke



Rónán Hession



Nikkitha Bakshani

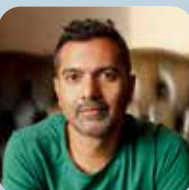


Isabella Dorta

And many more...



Francis Spufford



Manish Chauhan



Mark Webber



Elly Griffiths

Sponsored by

Est.  
1841

YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

 @YorkLitFest

 York Literature Festival



# 50 acres of green campus *in the heart of York*



**Find out more about what  
makes St Peter's unique**

**[www.stpetersyork.org.uk](http://www.stpetersyork.org.uk)**

2-18 years | Co-educational | Bursaries available from 11+

## Welcome to the 2026 York Literature Festival

The team is grateful to York St John University for sponsoring the York Literature Festival, allowing it to continue to provide a wide range of events for the community. York is a city with a well-established literary heritage, and York Literature Festival continues to support and promote local writers, groups, and performers, as well as provide the general public with an annual programme of engaging literary events.

Our thanks go to those people and organisations that have supported us this year, such as York St John University, St Peter's School, York Theatre Royal, and Explore York Libraries and Archives. In 2026, York Literature

Festival is excited to deliver our first-ever Festival of Hauntology, this year focusing on Folk Horror and the Urban Wyrld; a series of workshops designed to compliment York's vibrant writing community; and two new additions to our list of venues: The Merchant Adventurer's Hall and SPARK York.

We are extremely proud of this year's programme and we hope that you will join us at our events taking place this March across our wonderful city!

**[York Literature Festival Board of Trustees](#)**

## Ticket Information

To book tickets and for more information about all the events and full author bios, please visit  
**[www.yorkliteraturefestival.co.uk](http://www.yorkliteraturefestival.co.uk)**

The York Theatre Royal box office and website is selling tickets to some of the events, and they can be contacted on **01904 623568** or online at  
**[www.yorktheatroyal.co.uk](http://www.yorktheatroyal.co.uk)**

Some tickets may be available from other venues or sources. Please see each event description for more information.

If our events have a specific running time, this will be stated in the event information. If not, running time will usually be between 1.5 and 2 hours in total depending on book signing.

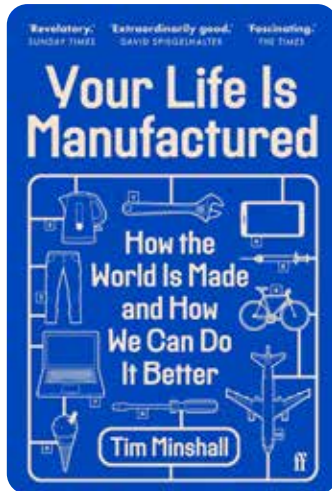
## Your Life is Manufactured: Tim Minshall in Conversation

Saturday 28th February, doors at 6.30pm for a 7pm start

Non-fiction

St. Peter's School, Clifton, York, YO30 6AB

£12 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Join Tim Minshall, Professor at the University of Cambridge's Institute for Manufacturing, on an illuminating journey through the world of manufacturing and its transformational influence on our lives – and the world around us. Tim will be in conversation discussing the things around us and how they impact our world, be it the thousands of litres of water it takes to make a single pair of jeans or our smart phones that travel the world six times to reach us.

## The Sleepwalkers: Scarlett Thomas in Conversation

Wednesday 4th March, 7pm

Fiction

Merchant Adventurer's Hall, Fossgate, York, YO19XD

£12 – York Literature Festival Website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



A Waterstones Book of the Month in 2025, join us to celebrate Scarlett Thomas's unconventional novel *The Sleepwalkers*. With prose constructed of diary entries, letters and unreliable character narration, Thomas' novel reads like a literary fever dream and confronts the boundaries of what we expect from literary fiction. Thomas will be in conversation with Professor of Creative Writing, Vybarr Cregan-Reid about her writing process, how writing *The Sleepwalkers* surprised her, and what we could possibly expect next.

## Let's Get Philosophical: Writing Philosophical Fiction with Rachel Handley

Friday 6th March, 2-4pm

Writing Workshop

York Medical Society, Stonegate, York, YO1 8AW

£8 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Participants will produce several pieces of flash fiction during this two hour workshop. Designed for adults, the course introduces key philosophical themes found in different parts of both literature and philosophy and guides participants in writing in response to those themes. We will look at themes such as betrayal, awe, oppression, and more. Writers at any level are welcome to join, and there will be occasions throughout the workshop for participants to read out their work and get brief feedback.

Rachel is a lecturer in philosophy, a science fiction author, and a poet. Their debut short story collection, *Possible Worlds and Other Stories*, was published in 2022. In 2023 their short story, *The Sound*, was longlisted for the British Science Fiction Awards. In 2022 their poem, *Dear Daughter*, was shortlisted for the Dublin South Libraries Poetry Prize. Alongside their teaching in philosophy, they often teach creative writing. Most recently they taught a course for the Irish Writers Centre on philosophical fiction.

## Climate Sci-Fi Fiction Panel with Fly on the Wall Press

Friday 6th March, 6pm

Panel Talk

York Medical Society, Stonegate, York, YO1 8AW

£12 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.

Join us for an innovative panel discussion with Isabelle Keynon, CEO of Fly on the Wall Press. Isabelle will be joined by two of her authors, Amy Lilwall and John Ironmonger to discuss Cli-Fi as an emerging genre and writing in response to the current climate crisis.



## Smith & Waugh's Satirical Voyage: From Jonathan Swift to H. G. Wells.

Saturday 7 March, 2pm

Lecture/Talk

The Creative Centre, York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO31 7EX

**Free** - please book a ticket via York Literature Festival website or the York St John University Eventbrite page.



Join Dr Jo Waugh and Dr Adam James Smith, co-hosts of the Smith & Waugh Talk About Satire podcast and co-directors of the York Research Unit for the Study of Satire, for an exploration of fantastic voyages in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature. From Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* to H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, they'll examine how writers use other worlds to reflect, critique, and reimagine their own. The event also uncovers some delightfully odd and overlooked works, including Peter Wilkins's *The Life and Adventures of*

*Robert Paltock* (1751) and Humphrey Lunatic's York-printed *A Trip to the Moon* (1764), and invites lively discussion about the promise of other worlds and the vexing realities of our own.

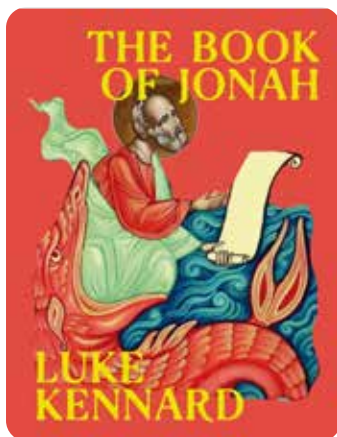
## The Book of Jonah: Luke Kennard in Conversation with Caleb Klaces

Saturday 7 March, 6pm

Poetry

The Creative Centre, York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO31 7EX

**Free** - please book a ticket via York Literature Festival website or the York St John University Eventbrite page.



What does it mean to be a prophet, or false prophet, in the year 2025? Winner of the Forward Prize for Best Collection in 2021, and author

of *The Book of Jonah* (2025), Luke Kennard joins York St John University poet and lecturer Caleb Klaces to discuss contemporary poetry, the prose poem and Kennard's impressive body of work. Both poets who have recently published prose projects, Kennard and Klaces join forces to reflect on form and how poetics might inform their general writing practice.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY POETRY



## Writing Women in York: A Poetry Workshop with Janine Bradbury

Sunday 8 March, 1pm

Writing Workshop

The Gilpin Room, Theatre @ 41, 41 Monkgate, York, YO31 7PB

**£10** - York Literature Festival website or Theatre@41 website directly.



A poetry workshop led by Janine Bradbury, BBC New Generation Thinker and Senior Lecturer in Contemporary Writing and Culture at the University of York. In this poet-led session, participants will be invited to consider poetic practice and how this relates to absences in historical archives.

Janine Bradbury works across a number of forms, including poetry, non-fiction, and radio, with a particular focus on popular culture and books. Her writing has been published by *The Guardian*, Bloomsbury, Palgrave Macmillan, Routledge, and others. Her debut poetry collection, *Sometimes Real Love Comes Quick & Easy*, is a nostalgia-filled exploration of love, sentimentality, and pop culture. It was a Poetry Book Society Pamphlet Choice.

## The International Women's Day Poetry Showcase

Sunday 8 March, 7.30pm

Poetry Performance

Theatre@41, 41 Monkgate, York, YO31 7PB

**£12** - York Literature Festival website or Theatre@41 website directly.

For the third year running, join local poet Chloe Hanks in welcoming four vibrant voices from the local and surrounding poetry scene in celebration of International Women's Day. This year, we will be joined by York based poet Kayleigh Campbell, author of *Sailor's Blue* from Broken Sleep Books, spoken-word poet Minal Sukumar, Bloomsbury author of *An Interesting Detail*, Kimberly Campanello and Bloodaxe's Helen Ivory with *Constructing a Witch*.



## Beyond the Walls, Student Showcase

Monday 9 March, 7pm

Performance

The Creative Centre, York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO317EX

**Free** - please book a ticket via York Literature Festival website or the York St John University Eventbrite page.



Join us for exciting readings of creative pieces written by the talented students and staff of York St John University. The event is celebrating the annual Beyond the Walls anthology project and is hosted and organised by York St John University creative writing students.

## Writing with Water, Hydro-poetics Workshop with Becca Drake

Wednesday 11 March, 6pm

Writing Workshop

Spark SHOW, Spark, 17-21 Piccadilly, York, North Yorkshire, YO19PB

**£8** - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



In this two hour workshop, join poet Becca Drake to explore ways of writing with water. From drifting fragments of poetry in a paddling pool, to letting water intervene on the written page (and a detour through the best 'blue' poetry being written now), we will work together with water to co-compose our poems. Suitable for all ages and levels of experience, this is the perfect workshop to jump in if you are new to poetry, or if you want to try writing poetry in unexpected ways!

Becca Drake (she/they) is a poet and researcher based in York. Her book *Unstill Landscapes* (Guillemot Press, 2025) was BBC Radio 4 Poetry Extra Book of the Month. She has

taught English Literature and Creative Writing for the University of York, as well as for Hull Museums Trust, Yorkshire Museums Trust, and grassroots arts and heritage organisations across Yorkshire. Her critical research explores lived landscapes of the medieval sea, the blue humanities, and medieval poetry as a tool for exploring affective relationships with landscapes of contemporary water crisis. Becca edits and prints experimental letterpress poetry pamphlets under the name Little Hirundine.

## Writing the Environment in Poetry & Prose: Wendy Pratt

Tuesday 10 March, 6pm

Talk

The Creative Centre, York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO317EX

**Free** - please book a ticket via York Literature Festival website or the York St John University Eventbrite page.



Author of *The Ghost Lake* (The Borough Press, 2024) and *Blackbird Singing at Dusk* (Nine Arches, 2024), Wendy Pratt joins us in conversation to reflect on the environment as stimulus for personal and creative research. Pratt's work explores themes of landscape and belonging and both publications sit in intertextual discourse with each other, challenging ideas of identity, womanhood and inheritance in relation to the environments we occupy.

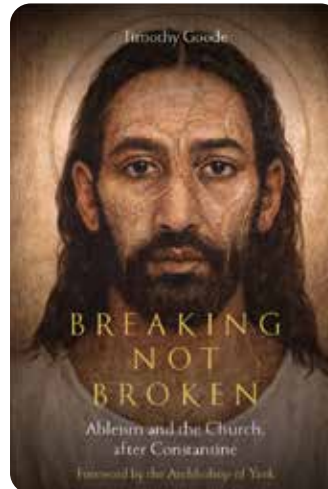
## Breaking Not Broken: Ableism and the Church after Constantine with Timothy Goode & Stephen Cottrell

Wednesday 11 March, 6.30pm

Talk

York Minster, Minster Yard, York, North Yorkshire, YO17JN

This is an unticketed event, please look out for York Minster's events programme for more details.



Canon Timothy Goode joins Stephen Cottrell to discuss the important issue of perfectionism and disability in the church. Drawing on Tim's own lived experience of disability, the pair will weigh in on the Church's attitude to these issues, considering how and where there is potential for change.

**Please note that parking is limited at this venue.**

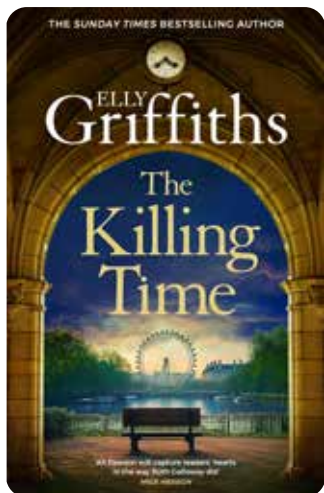
## Elly Griffiths Launches *The Killing Time*

Thursday 12 March, 7pm

Literature

Merchant Adventurer's Hall, Fossgate, York, YO1 9XD

£15 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Join us at Merchant Adventurer's Hall, an atmospheric and historic space in the centre of York, to hear bestselling author Elly Griffiths detail what is next for detective Ali Dawson. When Ali notices that evening that her cat, Terry, has gone missing, she decides to go back in time just long enough to prevent Terry from escaping through his open cat flap. A dangerous plan which backfires, and she finds herself once more in Victorian London, where she meets Jones, as well as Power, and the darkly mysterious Cain Templeton with whom Ali has unfinished business from her previous visit to the past.

## Unwritten: The Literary Improv Show

Thursday 12 March, doors 7.30, show begins at 8.30pm

Performance

The Bluebird Bakery, Acomb, 201 Acomb Road, YO24 4HD

£8 - tickets will be available directly through Eventbrite and York Literature Festival website.



The Bluffs take classic short-form improv games and infuse them with storytelling flair. Every show is completely unique, shaped by audience suggestions and spontaneous creativity.

Last time, amongst other things, we visited an Agatha Christie themed restaurant, saw Dr Jekyll in his new job as a clown, found out the truth about Goldilocks in a podcast retelling and heard a love song between Dracula and Winnie the Pooh. Who knows where this evening will take us. Expect an evening of laughter, surprises, and plot twists!

## The Poets Behind the Press

Friday 13 March, 7.30pm

Poetry Performance

Theatre@41, 41 Monkgate, York, YO31 7PB

£12 - York Literature Festival website or Theatre@41 website directly.

At a time when independent publishing is innovating the market, join us for a unique panel discussion that puts the poet at the centre of their publishing journey. Join Becca Drake of Little Hirundine Press, Paul Whelan of Acid Bath Publishing and Scarlett Ward of Fawn Press, a three poet panel all of whom have taken the industry by storm by establishing their own presses. Each poet will perform some of their work whilst presenting their publishing efforts, followed by a discursive panel and opportunity for the audience to ask their pressing publishing questions.



## Francis Spufford in Conversation: Celebrating *Nonesuch*

Friday 13 March, 7pm

Literature

Joseph Rowntree School, Haxby Rd, New Earswick, York, YO32 4BZ

£12 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



It's the summer of 1939. London is on the brink of catastrophic war. Join us for an evening with Francis Spufford as he introduces us to his newest protagonist, Iris Hawkins, an ambitious young woman in the stuffy world of City finance set during the terrors of the London Blitz.

What was supposed to be one night of abandon draws her instead into an adventure of otherworldly pursuit – into a reality where time bends, spirits can be summoned, and history hangs by a thread. Soon there are Nazi planes overhead. But Iris has more to contend with than the terrors of the Blitz. Over the rooftops of burning London, in the twisted passages between past and present, a fascist fanatic is travelling with a gun in her hand.

## A DAY AT YORK EXPLORE

### Poetry for all the Family, a Workshop with Olivia Mulligan

Saturday 14 March, 9.30am

Children's Literature

York Explore, Library Square, Museum St, York, YO17DS

£1 - York Literature Festival website or York Theatre Royal website or box office



Join poet & children's author Olivia Mulligan for a family friendly poetry workshop. Expect a welcoming, fun and playful session. Suitable for 4-10 year olds, parents can join in too!

### The Wildsmith Workshop with Liz Flanagan

Saturday 14 March, 11am

Children's Literature

York Explore, Library Square, Museum St, York, YO17DS

£1 - York Literature Festival website or York Theatre Royal website or box office



Join Liz Flanagan, a novelist from Hebden Bridge as we explore the stories of Rowan the Wildsmith! Encounter dragons, witches and all manner of mythical beings throughout this exciting storybook workshop.

Children will be encouraged and inspired to write their own stories using inspiration from their own lives!

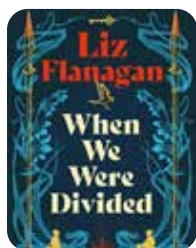
### When We Were Divided, Book Launch with Liz Flanagan

Saturday 14 March, 2pm

Fiction

York Explore, Library Square, Museum St, York, YO17DS

£5 - York Literature Festival website or York Theatre Royal website or box office



Set in Yorkshire, 1643, *When We Were Divided* is the story of how three people's lives are transformed by conflict.

Three women's lives are woven together - and transformed - when the English Civil War comes to the puritanical Yorkshire clothing towns. While tested to their limits, each finds that war brings a chance to break free of the narrow paths laid out for them. Estranged sisters will hold the life of the other in their hands: will they reconcile or destroy each other entirely?

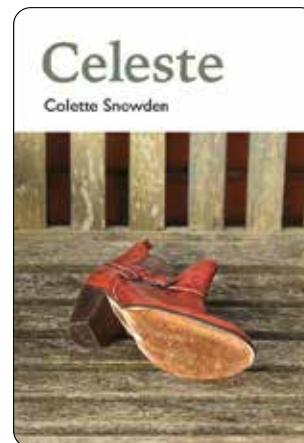
### Colette Snowden: Celebrating *Celeste*

Saturday 14 March, 2pm

Literature/Talk

The Creative Centre, York St John University, Lord Mayor's Walk, York, YO31 7EX

**Free** - please book a ticket via York Literature Festival website or the York St John University Eventbrite page.



When *Celeste* stops to take a stone out of her shoe one night, she's just minutes from home. Her mother drinks tea the next morning, assuming *Celeste* is asleep upstairs. But *Celeste* hasn't made it home. Join Colette Snowden in discussion on writing the female experience, contemporary women's fiction and women's writing in the North.

### Rónán Hession in Conversation

Saturday 14 March, 7pm

Fiction

St. Peter's School, Clifton, York, YO30 6AB

£12 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Following the success of *Leonard and Hungry Paul* (2019) and the 2025 BBC Series, join us as we welcome Rónán Hession and Colette Snowden for an inspirational talk about writing, adaptation and Hession's recent novel *Ghost Mountain* (2024).

## Ghost Chilli: Nikkitha Bakshani in Conversation

Sunday 15 March, 1pm

Fiction

York Explore, Library Square, Museum St, York, YO17DS

£5 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Recipient of a Cosmopolitan Book Award and finalist for the 2025 New Adult Book Prize, Nikkitha Bakshani joins us to celebrate the success of *Ghost Chilli*, her electrifying debut novel, and reflect on her writing practice. The author talk will be followed by the opportunity for audience questions and to have your book signed by Nikkitha!

## Writing Crime: a Creative Writing Workshop with Katie Collom

Sunday 15 March, 3pm

Writing Workshop

Spark SHOW, Spark, 17-21 Piccadilly, York, North Yorkshire, YO19PB

£8 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Join local crime author, Katie Collom, for an activity based session on 'Writing Crime'. Collom will reflect on writing her celebrated novel, *Peter Miles Has to Die*, whilst journeying participants through some writerly approaches to crafting a mystery, building suspense and constructing character.

Katie Collom grew up in Mazatlan, Mexico, and is a life-long expat and world traveler. She spent four years in Texas, where she attended the University of Texas at Austin. Currently, she resides in York, England, with her husband and three literary cats.

## Can You Solve the Murder?

Monday 16 March, 7pm

Interactive (Crime)

The Crescent Community Venue, 8 the Crescent, York, YO24 1AW

£12 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Join us for an unforgettable murder mystery evening with Antony Johnston, author of *Can You Solve the Murder?* Unleash your inner detective in a captivating, interactive experience designed specifically for literary events. Work in teams to uncover hidden clues, interrogate suspects, and piece together the puzzle to identify the culprit. Will you be the one to crack the case? Don't miss this unique opportunity to immerse yourself in a live, mystery-solving adventure that promises to be both thrilling and unforgettable.

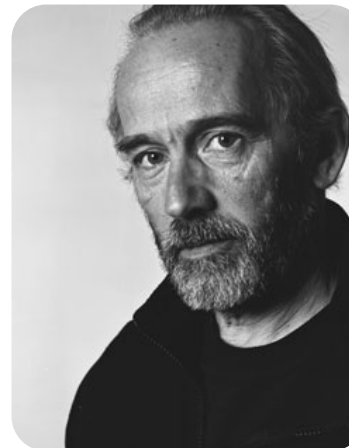
## An Evening with Jasper Fforde

Tuesday 17 March, 6pm

Literature

Tang Hall Explore Library, The Centre @ Burnholme, Mossdale Avenue, York, YO31 0HA

£8 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



"Libraries, as we all know, are vitally important and need our full support"

- Jasper Fforde, via his personal blog 2025

Join Jasper Fforde as he delivers a talk about writing, being published and his advice for aspiring writers. Suitable for writers or readers at any stage of their journey. Fforde is a bestselling British author known for his unique blend of comedy, science fiction, and satire, which often plays with literary conventions. Before becoming a full-time author, he worked for two decades in the film industry as a focus puller. His first novel, *The Eyre Affair*, launched his career in 2001 and introduced the literary detective Thursday Next, the protagonist of his most famous series.

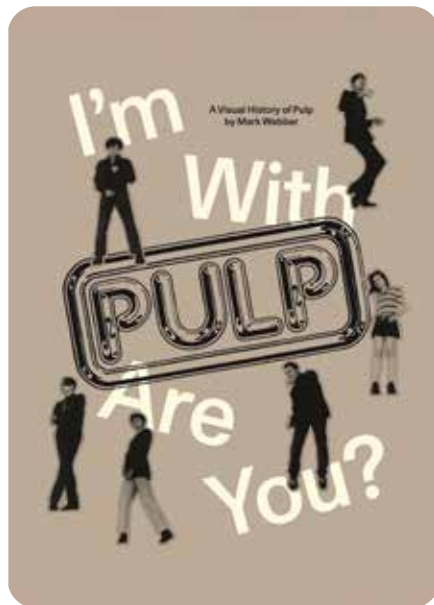
## I'm With Pulp, Are You? An Evening with Mark Webber

Tuesday 17 March, 7pm

Music Memoir

The Crescent Community Venue, 8 the Crescent, York, YO24 1AW

£15 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Mark Webber, guitarist from Pulp, joins us to discuss *I'm With Pulp, are You?* The book is a visually rich chronicle of the band's history from the perspective of a fan turned manager turned guitarist. 40 years of archived material comes to life on the pages of a unique and highly anticipated music memoir.

Mark Webber was born in Chesterfield in 1970. He grew up listening to chart music

before discovering David Bowie and The Velvet Underground, and becoming fascinated with Andy Warhol and the counterculture. Having told his school careers officer that he was going to be a pop star (not entirely seriously), Mark began to write fanzines and organise concerts from the age of 15. He has been a member of Pulp since 1995 and appears on the Pulp albums *Different Class*, *This is Hardcore*, *We Love Life* and more. Away from music, Mark has devoted much of his time to curating avant-garde film and has published several books on the subject.



## Writing Children's Fiction, a Workshop with Camilla Cassidy

Wednesday 18 March, 6pm

Writing Workshop

Spark SHOW, Spark, 17-21 Piccadilly, York, North Yorkshire, YO1 9PB

£8 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Recipient of a Hachette Children's Novel Award from New Writing North in 2025, Camilla Cassidy joins us to deliver a bespoke workshop on writing Children's fiction. Enjoy structured writing activities with the opportunity to hear Cassidy discuss her writing practice.

Camilla's first manuscript won the Hachette New Writing North Children's Novel Award 2025. Her work has appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement*, *The London Magazine*, *The Spectator*, *Apollo Magazine* and *The Telegraph*, among others. Her creative nonfiction book, *The Ground Beneath Our Feet*, won a Society of Authors K Blundell Award and is forthcoming from Reaktion Books.

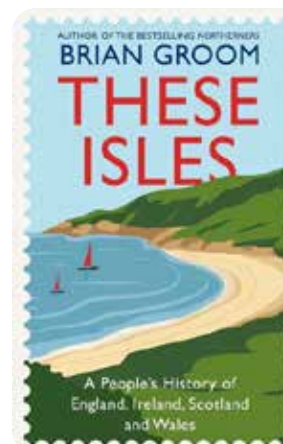
## These Isles: A People's History of England, Ireland, Scotland & Wales: Brian Groom in Conversation

Wednesday 18 March, 6pm

Non-fiction

York Explore, Library Square, Museum St, York, YO1 7DS

£5 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Brian, author of bestselling *Northerners*, will talk about the colourful and often-contested story of Celts, Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Normans and others who have occupied these islands, along with their culture, languages and passions. From 800,000-year-old footprints on a Norfolk beach to the changing fortunes of the early 21st Century, he offers a uniquely rich and kaleidoscopic vision of shared stories of people across Britain and Ireland - past and present.

He will be in conversation with Professor Gweno Williams from the Norwegian Study Centre at the University of York, who is also Emeritus Professor of English at York St John.

## Laura Bates - *The New Age of Sexism: How the AI Revolution is Reinventing Misogyny*

Wednesday 18 March, doors 6.30pm for a 7pm start **Talk**

St. Peter's School, Clifton, York, YO30 6AB

£12 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Activist, writer, speaker and journalist Laura Bates joins us at St Peter's Memorial Hall to deliver an eye-opening keynote showcasing the subject of her latest bestseller, *The New Age of Sexism: How the AI Revolution is Reinventing Misogyny*. Covering topics such as workplace sexual harassment to school sexism, women in tech to online abuse, Bates' is an urgent and captivating voice against gender inequality. Do not miss this talk where Bates' will present her stance on AI and what she deems sexism in "a new age".

Laura Bates is a best-selling author, keynote speaker and founder of the Everyday Sexism Project. Her books include *Everyday Sexism*, *Girl Up* and *Fix the System, Not the Women*. Laura writes regularly for the *New York Times*, *The Guardian* and others, and is a frequent media commentator and consultant for TV productions tackling issues around gender inequality.

She works closely with government, schools, businesses, police forces and bodies from the United Nations to the Council of Europe on sexism and inequality.

In recognition of Laura's work surrounding sexism and gender inequality, she was awarded a British Empire Medal in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours List and has been named Woman of the Year by *Cosmopolitan*, *Red Magazine* and *The Sunday Times Magazine*. She is also an Honorary Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

**Please note that this talk will contain references to emotionally challenging material.**

## Inter-Uni Poetry Slam: Uni of York & York St John University

Thursday 19 March, 7.30pm **Poetry Performance**

Theatre@41, 41 Monkgate, York, YO31 7PB

£5 - York Literature Festival website and Theatre@41 Website directly.



Students from the Dead Poets Society at York St John University and the Slam Soc at the University of York come together in a battle of poetry and spoken word. Hosted by York's Say Owt crew, each poet has three minutes to impress the judges and win fame and glory for their University!

Plus special guest: Bradley Taylor. Bradley is an award-winning poet born and based in Birmingham. In 2024 he won the Roundhouse Poetry Slam, the biggest poetry slam in history. In 2025 he released his debut collection *You Missed The Best Part* before embarking on a nationwide tour. On BBC Radio 6 Music, Craig Charles described him as 'a brand new voice and a fresh perspective on the art of poetry and performance'.

## Susanna Clarke in Conversation

Friday 20 March, doors at 6.30pm for a 7pm start **Literature/Fiction**

St. Peter's School, Clifton, York, YO30 6AB

£12 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Eighteen months after receiving her honorary Doctor of Letters from York St John

University, bestselling author of *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell* and other works, Susanna Clarke will join festival chair Rob O'Connor in conversation on genre, writing and her fantasy titles which are much loved across York and beyond. Her most recent novel, *Piranesi*, was published in 2020 and was awarded the Women's Prize for Fiction in 2021. Her short story, "The Wood at Midwinter", broadcast by BBC Radio 4 on Boxing Day in 2022, was published by Bloomsbury as an illustrated book in October 2024.

# Folk Horror and the Urban Wyrd

Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 March.

Join us for a weekend of events celebrating Folk Horror and the Urban Wyrd in collaboration with the Hauntology and Spectrality Research Group.

Additional details, including venue and event times can be found on the York Literature Festival website <https://yorkliteraturefestival.co.uk/> and on <https://blog.yorksja.ac.uk/hauntology>



Professor Robert Edgar and Dr Wayne Johnson are academics and writers based at York St John University and editors of *The Routledge Companion to Folk Horror*. Join them for an introduction to folk horror and the urban wyrd.



Dr Adam Smith is an Associate Professor at York St John university and is a key member of the Hauntology and Spectrality research group and will be discussing spectral York.

Dan Coxon is an award-winning editor and writer based in London. He has been a finalist for the Shirley Jackson Awards and the British Fantasy Awards (six times), with *Writing the Uncanny* winning the British Fantasy Award for Best Non-Fiction 2022. His latest fiction anthology as editor is *Unquiet Guests*. His latest collection as author is *Come Sing for the Harrowing*.

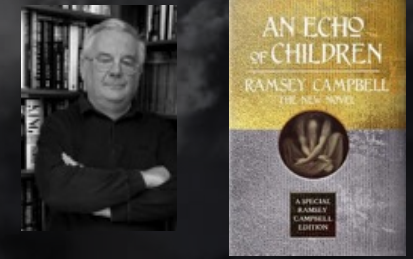


Join Lowen Frampton-Thorburn and the York Society of Hauntologists for a special meeting of their reading group to discuss Robert Aickman's 'The Hospice' and join Alex Bestwick who will be hosting a special folk horror short fiction event.

The Hospice can be found online: <https://xpressenglish.com/our-stories/hospice>



Ramsey Campbell is a highly acclaimed horror writer, editor, and critic, called "Britain's most respected living horror writer." He is known for his psychological, subtle, and often unsettling tales, moving from Lovecraftian roots to unique, slow-burn supernatural fiction set in his native Merseyside, earning numerous awards like World Fantasy and Bram Stoker Awards.



Andrew Michael Hurley is a celebrated British gothic/folk horror author known for atmospheric prose, including *The Loney*, *Devil's Day*, *Starve Acre*, and *Barrowbeck*. *Starve Acre* was adapted as a film and released in 2023. *The Loney*, was a Costa First Novel Award winner, establishing him as a significant voice in contemporary British fiction, with his latest novel *Saltwash* released in October 2025.



Lucie McKnight Hardy is a writer of novels and short stories. Her novels include *Water Shall Refuse Them* (Dead Ink Books, 2019), which was shortlisted for the Mslexia Novel Competition 2017 and longlisted for the Caledonia Novel Award 2018, *Dead Relatives* and her forthcoming novel, *Night Babies*.



Lucy Rose is a *Sunday Times* Bestselling author. Her short fiction and nonfiction have been published in *Dread Central*, *Mslexia*, *The Observer*, *The Nerd Daily* and more. Lucy's debut novel, *The Lamb* is published by W&N Books (UK) and Harper (US). It was selected for Foyles Book of the Month, named best debut novel of 2025 by Cosmopolitan and Spotify



Amy Jane Stewart is an award winning writer of novels and short fiction, including the Northern Writers Award and the Mairtin Crawford Award. In addition to writing Amy is completing a PhD. Amy's first novel *Hex House*, published by Titan in 2026, is a feminist folk horror/fairy tale.



### Literary Walk, with David Holt

Saturday 21 March, 11am

Tour

Museum Gardens, Museum Street entrance. | **£10** – Pay the guide on arrival in cash.



Join Blue Badge Guide for Yorkshire David Holt on a literary themed tour of York. David has outstanding knowledge of York and Yorkshire as well as having taught History for almost 30 years. Advanced bookings are encouraged by contacting David on 07803 605037 or [greatyorkshiretours@gmail.com](mailto:greatyorkshiretours@gmail.com).

### Pen to Paper

Saturday 21 March, 6-9pm

Performance

Spark SHOW, Spark, 17-21 Piccadilly, York, North Yorkshire, YO1 9PB

**£8** - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



York Literature Festival is delighted to partner with Pen to Paper for a two and a half hour showcase co-ordinated by Lizzi Linklater. The evening will consist of performances from 14 local writers across various genres and forms with a musical interval midway through. This will be a vigorous, atmospheric and diverse celebration of the written and spoken word.

### Isabella Dorta - *I Don't Think I'm Straight:* Queer Poems to Celebrate You

Sunday 22 March, 6pm

Performance

Spark SHOW, Spark, 17-21 Piccadilly, York, North Yorkshire, YO1 9PB

**£15** - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Much loved touring spoken word poet, Isabella Dorta, is back in York to celebrate her newest book, *I Don't Think I'm Straight*. Join us as we enjoy a vibrant and emotive performance and take advantage of the opportunity to leave with a signed copy. This collection will guide you on an empowering journey to explore sexuality with courage and understanding.



Lisa Stonehouse Photography

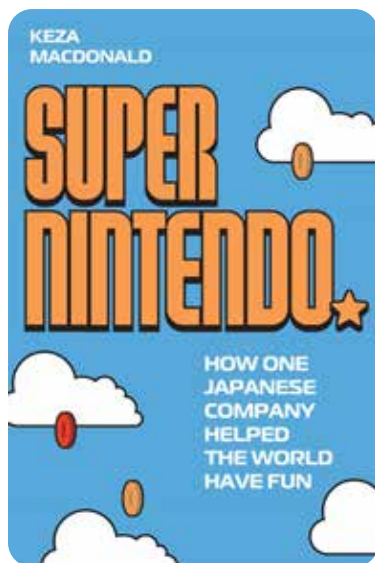
## Super Nintendo: Why Do We Game?

Monday 23 March, 7pm

Non-fiction

The Crescent Community Venue, 8 the Crescent, York, YO24 1AW

£12 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Join us at the Crescent Community Venue to welcome Keza MacDonald, video games

editor at *The Guardian*, with her first full-length book, *Super Nintendo*, an innovative exploration of Nintendo's history, stitched together with consideration of why people love gaming so much.

## The Little Apple bookshop quiz

Tuesday 24, 7pm

Interactive (Quiz)

The Black Swan, 23 Peasholme Green, York, YO17PR

£2 - tickets available via [www.littleapplebookshop.co.uk](http://www.littleapplebookshop.co.uk)



### The famous little apple bookshop quiz is back by popular demand!

Well known to bamboozle and frustrate it is a book quiz like no other (there may well be a good reason for that). Last year we flummoxed everyone asking questions on Lily Collins' Moomin podcast, Salman Rushdie's appearance in *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, Sally Rooney's connection to Gaelic Football, a whole host of anagrams, a true or false round, spelling questions, a slightly controversial Maths round and a lot more.

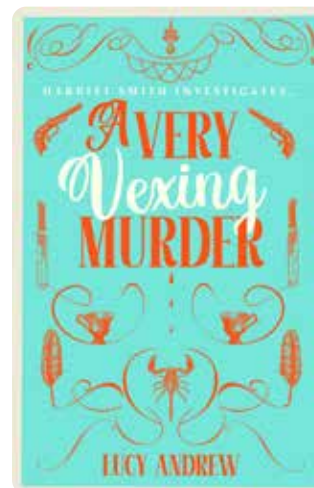
## Lucy Andrew Launches *A Very Vexing Murder*

Tuesday 24 March, 6pm

Fiction

York Explore, Library Square, Museum St, York, YO1 7DS

£5 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Lucy Andrew is a crime writer and crime fiction scholar with an unhealthy fixation with Jane Austen. Join us to celebrate the launch of her debut novel, *A Very Vexing Murder*, where we meet the tyrannical Mrs Churchill who is convinced someone is trying to kill her...

## Wilson, Blair and Starmer: Leading Labour into Government

Tuesday 24 March, 7pm

Politics

St. Peter's School, Clifton, York, YO30 6AB

£10 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Alan Johnson, author of *Harold Wilson*, a biography of one of the most successful politicians of the twentieth century, sits down with Steve Richards, author of *Tony Blair*, a provocative short biography from a leading political journalist. The pair will be discussing political legacies, politics throughout the twentieth century and how it has influenced politics today.



## Stu Hennigan Launches *Keshed*

Wednesday 25 March, 6pm **Fiction**

Spark SHOW, Spark, 17-21 Piccadilly, York, North Yorkshire, YO1 9PB  
 £8 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



We are delighted to welcome Stu Hennigan to celebrate the publication of *Keshed*, his debut novel. Hennigan's is a novel that will challenge contemporary discourse around masculinity, fatherhood and men's mental health as we read through the reflections of a dying man in the shell of his family home, haunted by the chain of events that led him there.

## Manish Chauhan - *Belgrave Road*

Thursday 26 March, 6pm **Fiction**

Spark SHOW, Spark, 17-21 Piccadilly, York, North Yorkshire, YO1 9PB  
 £8 - York Literature Festival website and York Theatre Royal website or box office.



Manish Chauhan joins us at SPARK, to discuss his debut novel. Described as a 'classic tale of star-crossed love,' *Belgrave Road* has potential to tug at the heart strings. This is a love story of two people working side by side but living worlds apart. Beyond their lunchtime encounters, Mira and Tahlilil couldn't lead more different lives: the duties that bind them, the homes they are trying to build threaten to subsume them. As Mira and Tahlilil navigate the deep and turbulent waters of their new worlds can they find a way to be together, and will finding each other set them free?

## Stu Freestone - *The Lights that Blur Between*: Book Launch

Monday 30 March, 7pm start **Poetry Performance**

The Crescent Community Venue, 8 the Crescent, York, YO24 1AW  
 £8 or £13 - York Literature Festival website or The Crescent Community Venue website.



An evening celebrating Stu's debut collection release, featuring two sets of poetry set to a live music backing. Stu is a York-based poet and Associate Artist of the gobby Say Owt collective. His collection explores the nostalgia of adolescence, relationships, loss and processing, as well as comedic themes of condiment addiction, festival trips gone wrong, cheese-monger battle raps and the perils of 'after work' drinking. An honest portrayal of life experiences, as Stu sees it.



Lisa Stonehouse Photography

Official Sponsor

Est.  
1841

YORK  
ST JOHN  
UNIVERSITY

[www.yorksja.ac.uk](http://www.yorksja.ac.uk)

Partners



Festival Team

Festival Director:

**Chloe Hanks**

Chair of the Board & Interim Co-Treasurer:

**Rob O'Connor**

Interim Co-Treasurer and Trustee:

**Sally O'Connor**

Secretary & Trustee:

**Angela Ranson**

Marketing Lead:

**Julia Edgar**

Marketing Support:

**Ellie Hart, Ethan Clark,  
Georgia Sanderson, Abbey McKenna,  
Ashleigh Stephenson,  
Aimee Turner-Hewitt, Courtney Birks,  
Luciana Medrano-Urioste**

Board of Trustees:

**Shelby Gibbs, Helen Walker and  
Vybarr Cregan-Reid (YSJ representative)**

Explore York programme:

**Sarah Garbacz and Gillian Holmes**

St Peter's School programme:

**Ben Fuller, Sarah Opie and the team.**

York St John University programme:

**Rob Edgar, Adam Smith, Jo Waugh and  
Caleb Klaces**

Brochure Design:

**Craig Walton | grafik.co.uk**

Website support:

**Craig Walton | grafik.co.uk**



**Thanks**

Our thanks go to the following organisations and individuals for their help and support:

- Fox Lane Books: **Kirstie Lount**
- Little Apple Bookshop: **Philippa Morris and Tim Curtis**
- Criminally Good Books: **Isla Coole**
- The Poetry Pharmacy York: **Deborah Alma**
- St Peter's School: **Jeremy Walker, Ali Fuller, Sara Burns and all in the ICT, catering, estates, office and housekeeping teams.**
- York St John University: **Dean Shakespeare and the events team**
- York Theatre Royal: **Vicky Biles, Emily Youngson, Matt Hague and the marketing and box office teams**
- The Crescent: **Joe Coates and the team**
- York Explore: **Sarah Garbacz and the team**
- Theatre@41: **Tom Bellerby and the team.**

Our final thanks go to all the agents, publishers, contributors and artists who have supported this year's festival. A special thanks go to our wonderful team of volunteers for who share their time in order to make this happen. Thanks also to everyone attending an event. You are why we do this!

# Read Meet Learn Imagine Create Belong explore

Libraries and Archives



**15 Libraries,  
7 Reading Cafes  
across York**

**24/7 E-library for free  
e-books and e-audio.**

**An Archive spanning 800  
years of York's history.**

**Libraries are free to  
join and free to use.**



## Finding the Words

**with poets Deborah Alma, Carole Bromley, Max Wallis and guests**

Finding the Words, Explore's relaxed and welcoming poetry event, celebrates 10 years on the York scene with a special live session during York Literature Festival.

**Saturday 21 March | 2pm**  
York Explore Library, Museum Street,  
York YO1 7DS



Scan QR code  
for tickets  
or visit

[www.tickettailor.com/events/  
explore/yorklibrariesandarchives](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/explore/yorklibrariesandarchives)



Be the first to  
hear what's  
on at Explore

[bit.ly/exploresupporternews](http://bit.ly/exploresupporternews)

Follow our story:



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**  
LOTTERY FUNDED



# York Centre for Writing

AT YORK ST JOHN UNIVERSITY

The York Centre for Writing is a hub for creative writing activities at York St John University and beyond. It is home to the established undergraduate and postgraduate degree courses in Creative Writing in the School of Humanities at York St John University. Come and be inspired by our team of published writers and visiting authors, editors and publishers.

## Our courses:

- Creative Writing BA (Hons)
- Creative Writing Joint Honours
- Creative Writing MA
- Publishing MA
- Publishing and Creative Writing MA
- Publishing and Contemporary Literature MA
- Creative Writing MFA
- Creative Writing PhD

---

[yorks.ac.uk/york-centre-for-writing](https://yorks.ac.uk/york-centre-for-writing)

---

