

# Berwick Literary Festival

7-13 Oct  
2024



**Celebrating Words**  
Written | Spoken | Performed

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## Director's Welcome

Welcome to the Programme for the 2024 Berwick Literary Festival.

This has been a great year for Berwick, celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Old Bridge over the Tweed, such a symbolic moment in Anglo-Scottish relations, chequered as they have been throughout history. We decided early on that we wanted to support the celebrations by adopting a theme for the Festival.

In a world so challenged by human divisions, the search for ways to build peace and reconciliation, to cross apparently unbridgeable chasms in our relationships is urgent and universal. *Bridging the Divide* echoes the 17<sup>th</sup> century bridge-building adventures of James VIth and I<sup>st</sup>, but also grasps the challenge of the present, and a number of those who have accepted invitations to speak this year have welcomed the theme.

So enjoy the programme! And book your tickets! You will find well-known names, some who are just starting out on their published writing careers, some who are local and some not! Poetry, art, music join history, fiction and science ... and much more – even comedy! Details of the schools' programme are included for the first time so everyone can see how much our young people are involved, and we have a 'Festival Fringe' too! We warmly welcome everyone to Berwick-upon-Tweed, audiences or performers and hope you will find this, our 11<sup>th</sup> Festival, as energizing, challenging and entertaining as every one of the previous ten!

**Andrew Deuchar** Festival Director



**Over the Hills and Far Away:  
My Life as a Teletubby • Nikky Smedley**

Tuesday 8 October, 7:30–8:30pm  
Berwick Baptist Church • £9

You remember Teletubbies don't you? Perhaps you grew up with the show or were a long-suffering parent/carer driven mad by having to watch 'Again, Again!'. Did you ever wonder what it was like behind the scenes? Discover the truth with the original LaaLaa as she spills the beans on what it took to become one of the world's most famous giant yellow puppets. Join Nikky Smedley as she shares stories from her best-selling memoir *Over The Hills And Far Away*, revealing the human story behind a truly global television phenomenon.



**Cabaret of Words**

Wednesday 9 October, 7 for 7:30pm  
Flinders Wine Bar • free, booking required

Come and listen to local writers, poets and performers sharing their creative efforts. This is a friendly, informal event where contributors can read or perform their original poetry or other writing. We also have space for some singing (solo or duo, unplugged). Songs, original or covers, should celebrate fine words. Relax with a drink while you enjoy the performance. To take part, you must book a ten-minute slot in advance at [blfcabaret@gmail.com](mailto:blfcabaret@gmail.com).



**The White Rose of Gask: The Life and Songs  
of Carolina Oliphant, Lady Nairne**

Freeland Barbour & Gerda Stevenson  
Wednesday 9 October, 7:30–8:30pm  
St Andrew's Church • £9

Carolina Oliphant, a contemporary of Robert Burns, wrote over ninety songs, some of which enjoyed huge world-wide popularity. But she shunned publicity and her authorship was never publicly known during her lifetime. Freeland Barbour, a direct descendant of Lady Nairne's eldest sister, has written a long-overdue biography and reassessment of her life and work, much of it based on his own family's papers. Extracts will be read by Gerda Stevenson, a multi-talented presence in the Scottish arts world and beyond.



**Martins The Tours • Martins The Printers**  
Thursday 10 and Fri 11 October, 9am & 10am\*  
Martins The Printers, Seaview Works, Spittal • £9

Martins the Printers is an independent family-owned book printers, which has been operating from Berwick-upon-Tweed since 1892. In the beginning, Martins was a general commercial printer with its own local newspaper *The Mercury*, produced until 1945. In the 1950s the company started to concentrate on book publishing and has remained dedicated to book printing ever since. Today Martins is one of the few remaining book printers and binders left in the UK. The event includes a tour round the working factory. \*10am tours have wheelchair access



**The Elegy: Poems for the Lost & Missing  
Poetry Writing Workshop • Anne Ryland**

Thursday 10 October, 10am–12:30pm  
YHA, The Granary • £18

One of the great classical forms, the elegy may be written to express grief not just for a loved person, but for a relationship, identity, place, way of life or for losses in the natural world. How do we articulate our sorrows – whether personal, communal or universal – in a clear, measured way that bears the weight of such emotion? While infused with melancholy, the elegy can also be vibrant, imparting warmth, humour and hope. We'll read contemporary elegies for inspiration and follow experiments to generate our own poems.



**Poyums • Len Pennie**  
Thursday 10 October, 7:30–8:30pm  
Maltings Cinema at Berwick Barracks • £9 • Age 16+

Join *Sunday Times* bestselling poet and TikTok star Len Pennie, for a discussion about her powerful debut collection, *Poyums*. Known for her 'Scots Word of the Day' videos, Len writes passionately about the promotion of minority languages, survivors of domestic abuse and the stigmatisation of mental illness. Whether she's writing letters to her younger self, advocating for women's rights or adapting fairy tales to process an abusive relationship, Len's voice is bold, unashamedly frank and unmistakably hers. The poems in this collection, both funny and fiercely feminist, announce a formidable new talent.





**How AI Ate The World • Chris Stokel-Walker**  
 Friday 11 October, 10:30–11:30am  
 Berwick Baptist Church • £9

Chris Stokel-Walker is a freelance journalist, specialising in technology. He regularly contributes to the BBC, *Washington Post*, *New York Times* and other publications, and appears on the BBC, Sky News, CNN amongst other TV channels and radio stations. In his talk, Chris will outline key areas of concern and promise from his latest book, *How AI Ate the World*, including the impact generative AI and ChatGPT will have on our lives, our jobs – and our environment. *This event is kindly sponsored by Longridge Towers School and is also suitable for high school students.*



**Wait for Her • Sabrin Hasbun**  
**and Launch of Berwick Writers' Forum**  
 Friday 11 October, 10:30am–12:30pm  
 St Aidan's Hall • £12

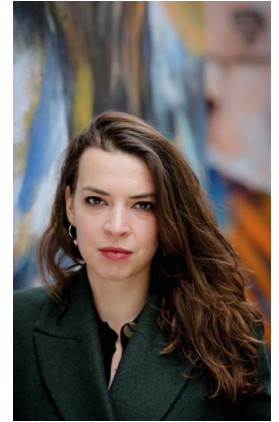
Are you drawn towards writing? Would you welcome meeting up with others following a similar path? Berwick is richly blessed with accomplished and well-known writers and poets. We know there are many others working their way towards the same goal, and yet more people thinking about it. The formation of a Berwick Writers' Forum is a simple way to make sure that support, information, opportunities to learn (and maybe even the odd social event) are available and known about. Whatever stage you are at, we are offering this event as an opportunity to discuss what would work for you. It will be what its members make it. And the Literary Festival will offer support, and an annual place in the Festival for forum members to promote an event of their choice.

The second half of the event will introduce Sabrin Hasbun, who has just completed her first book, *Wait for Her*, a memoir about the love story between her Palestinian father and Italian mother across histories and languages. Writing her family's story, Sabrin looks at her Palestinian background within a wider context of stories about displacement, transnationality, struggles for freedom and activism. *Wait for Her* won the first Footnote x Counterpoints Writing Prize and will be published in 2025.



**Hold Back the Night • Jessica Moor**  
 Friday 11 October, 2–3pm  
 Berwick Baptist Church • £9

Novelist Jessica Moor discusses her heart wrenching new novel *Hold Back the Night*, which delves into one nurse's experience of the little-known history of conversion therapy and the heart-breaking betrayal of the AIDS crisis. Jessica studied English at Cambridge before completing a Creative Writing MA at Manchester University. She was selected as one of the *Observer's* debut novelists of 2020, and her first novel, *Keeper* was chosen by the *Sunday Times*, *Independent* and *Cosmopolitan* as one of their top debuts of the year. *Hold Back the Night* is her third novel.  
 “Moor is a new young writer I believe in” *Jeanette Winterson*



**Iran • Ali Ansari**  
 Friday 11 October, 4:30–5:30pm  
 Berwick Baptist Church • £9

Both revolutionary and reactionary, the Islamic Republic of Iran has long been a conundrum for Western observers. In his new book, Ali Ansari takes readers on a journey through Iran's turbulent history. Beginning with the country's fall from grace as a Great Power in the nineteenth century, he explores its repeated attempts to modernize in a series of revolutionary movements and in so doing, he reveals how the experience of history and Iran's encounter with 'modernity' have come to define it. Ali Ansari is Professor of Iranian History at the University of St Andrews.



**Understorey • Anna Chapman Parker**  
 Friday 11 October, 5–6pm  
 Maltings Cinema at Berwick Barracks • £9

In *Understorey*, artist and writer Anna Chapman Parker records in prose and drawings a year spent looking closely at weeds, our most ubiquitous and accessible plants. What exactly are these vaguely familiar shapes that accompany our every step, yet pass beneath our notice? How and when do they emerge, bloom and subside, and what would it mean to notice them? Meditating too on how they appear in other artists' work, from a 6<sup>th</sup> century manuscript to an installation in contemporary Frankfurt, Anna explores the art of paying attention even to the smallest things.





### **Not That I'm Bitter** • Helen Lederer

Friday 11 October, 7:30pm

The Maltings, Main House • £20 • Age 16+

What was it like as one of a handful of women at the heart of the right-on alternative comedy scene in the 1980s? Helen Lederer was a regular on the stand-up circuit and new-wave sketch shows in the decade that launched the careers of today's comedy household names and national treasures. From the iconic *Absolutely Fabulous*, to *Bottom*, *Happy Families*, *Naked Video*, *French and Saunders*, and *Girls on Top*; it is difficult to think of a comedy show that Helen wasn't a part of. So, plain sailing then? Well, not really. *Not That I'm Bitter* is a powerful, frank, moving and characteristically funny memoir, revealing exactly how choppy the waters could be. Helen will be in conversation with Gerry Foley.

“ Her progression through the comedy swamp of the eighties is fascinating, poignant and laugh-out-loudy” *Jo Brand*

### **The Craftivist Collective Handbook**

Sarah Corbett

Saturday 12 October, 9:30 - 10:30am

Berwick Salvation Army • £9



Award-winning activist, author and Ashoka Fellow Sarah P Corbett was born in Everton, the fourth most deprived ward in the UK. She was Activism Manager for Oxfam GB and founded the global Craftivist Collective to help people deliver what she coined 'Gentle Protest'. Corbett's pioneering work has helped change hearts, minds, policies and laws around the world. WWF used Corbett's 10-point manifesto to create their own successful craftivism campaign that led to a change in law protecting migrating birds. Learn more about how handicrafts can affect the maker, decision maker and society.

## Could you volunteer?

BLF is organised by a hard-working team of unpaid volunteers, supported by our festival manager. This team plans the speaker programme, the schools events, and the publicity; organises the details of the venues and door stewards; and manages all those technical details without which nothing would run. We are very thankful for all their work; but inevitably people do move on, so we are always glad to receive new offers of help. Please contact us through the website: [berwickliteraryfestival.com](http://berwickliteraryfestival.com)

### **Progress and Its Discontents: A Woman's War Against Progress** • Allan Cameron

Saturday 12 October, 10–11am

Berwick Baptist Church • £9

The Surelikud are a minority people living near or in the Siberian Forest, and Rahväema becomes involved in the struggle to maintain this culture in the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia. Her career alienates her from her family and even from the people for whom she is fighting. Allan Cameron's recent book is much more than a political novel; themes include minority languages everywhere, political activism, its sacrifices, its perilous nature and its tendency in success to corrupt and undermine an activist's sense of self. Russian history (1917–2017) makes for an intriguing backdrop.

Allan, who has written a wide range of books and articles, will be in conversation with fellow novelist, James Robertson, who has written of the book, "... the readership [of] *A Woman's War against Progress* ... will find their minds stretched, challenged and enlarged by the experience. It's a remarkable achievement" (*Scottish Review*)



### **The Remembered Dead: Poetry, Memory and the First World War**

Sally Minogue & Andrew Palmer with Linda Bankier

Saturday 12 October, 10–11:30am

Berwick Parish Centre • £9

Rupert Brooke's Sonnets of 1914, including 'If I should die ...', were the most famous poems of the First World War, offering consolation in response to countless deaths. His fellow poets pushed back with a range of challenging responses. In this talk Sally and Andrew discuss poetic representations of death in WWI and the way these bridge the divide between consolation and brutal truth.

Sally Minogue is a retired academic who is still writing. On retirement she was Principal Lecturer in English Literature at Canterbury Christ Church University. Andrew Palmer is a Principal Lecturer in modern literature at Canterbury Christ Church University. He has also published work on Virginia Woolf, Edward Thomas, Bruce Chatwin and Ray Davies. Berwick Archivist Linda Bankier will add observations on Thomas Grey, the Tweedmouth poet, and there will be an exhibition relating to Berwick in the First World War in the venue. To mark the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.





### **Adventure Babies Sensory Storytelling**

**Saturday 12 October, 10:30–11:30am & 12–1pm**  
**Berwick Library • Free but booking essential**

Join Ashleigh from Adventure Babies as she takes your little ones on a storytelling adventure! Ashleigh will use interactive puppets and props, music, sensory play, lights and bespoke parachutes to bring the book *Room on the Broom* to life. Sessions are suitable from birth to 3 years old. *Free but booking is essential. Children must be accompanied by an adult.*



### **To the Heart of Difficult Conversations: Book Launch** • Chris Adriaanse

**Saturday 12 October, 11am–12:30pm**  
**The Maltings, Henry Travers Studio • £5/students free**

In a collaboration with Berwick Literary Festival, Create Berwick and students at Berwick Academy, local storyteller and writer Chris Adriaanse presents a new book collection of wonderful stories and writings from pupils about the nature of difficult conversations – all inspired by a piece of Berwick history – or is it mythology – and a king full of ambition. *Please see the Schools' Programme for further information. There are a limited number of tickets available to the public for this event.*



### **Andaza: A Memoir of Food, Flavour & Freedom in the Pakistani Kitchen**

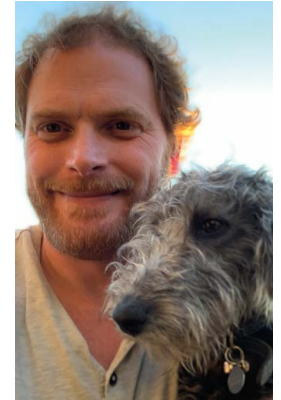
**Sumayya Usmani**  
**Saturday 12 October, 11:30am–12:30pm**  
**Berwick Salvation Army • £9**

Sumayya was born in Karachi, Pakistan in 1973. She travelled the world on merchant ships with her parents until the age of nine and her family finally settled down in Karachi, where she then grew up. *Andaza* is Sumayya's first narrative food writing and a story of how food helped her navigate her childhood and young adult years. Fitting with this year's theme, Sumayya is keen to discuss Pakistan cuisine and how this has developed since the divide between Pakistan and India. Sumayya is now settled in Glasgow, Scotland. *This event is kindly sponsored by Berwick Slow Food.*

### **Footmarks: A Journey into Our Restless Past** • Jim Leary

**Saturday 12 October, 12–1pm**  
**Guildhall • £9**

We think of the past as static, 'frozen in time', but it was never still, as archaeologist Jim Leary of the University of York reveals in this fascinating talk based on his most recent book. Embark on a captivating journey through time, where footprints transform into pathways and then into roads. Discover humanity's perpetual movements as we explore fossilised footprints, prehistoric trackways, holloways, and droveways. *This event is kindly sponsored by Border Archaeological Society.*



### **Bloodaxe Poetry: Niall Campbell, Sarah Holland-Batt and Katrina Porteous**

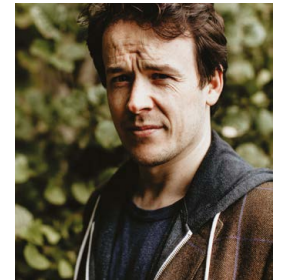
**Saturday 12 October, 12–1:15pm**  
**Berwick Baptist Church • £9**

Bloodaxe Books is one of Britain's foremost poetry publishers, founded in 1978 and based in Northumberland for the past 25 years. The international range of its programme is always evident in its annual showcase of new poetry at Berwick, this year featuring poets from Australia, Scotland and Northumberland writing on islands and bridges, folk tales and fossil fish, personal loss and global extinction.

Niall Campbell was born and raised on South Uist in the Outer Hebrides, which features in his third collection, *The Island in the Sound* (2024). His debut *Moontide* (2014) won the Saltire First Book Award while *Noctuary* (2019) was shortlisted for the Forward Prize. He is Poetry Editor of *Poetry London*.

Sarah Holland-Batt is an award-winning Australian poet, editor and critic, the author of three award-winning collections. Her UK retrospective, *The Jaguar: Selected Poems*, is published by Bloodaxe in 2024. She is a Professor at Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane.

Katrina Porteous has lived on the Northumberland coast since 1987. She has published four books with Bloodaxe: *The Lost Music* (1996), *Two Countries* (2014), *Edge* (2019) and *Rhizodont* (2024). She has collaborated with both musicians and scientists, including on many radio projects on BBC Radio 3 and 4.





### **In Her Nature: How Women Fight for Freedom in Outdoor Sport** • Rachel Hewitt

Saturday 12 October, 2–3pm  
Berwick Baptist Church • £9

It is often claimed that women have only started participating in outdoor sport in the last 60 years, but Rachel will reveal a hidden history of female adventurers, who were scaling mountains and running across moors right from the birth of outdoor leisure. And she'll account for why these pioneering women have been forgotten. At the turn of the twentieth century, men took revenge against women's burgeoning political rights by comprehensively driving them out of sport and claiming it for men alone. Rachel will argue that we are still living in the shadow of that ostracisation.



### **Between Britain: Walking the History of England and Scotland** • Alistair Moffat

Saturday 12 October, 2–3pm  
Guildhall • £9

Alistair Moffat is a life-long borderer, a prolific author and the ideal guide on this one-hundred-mile journey. We begin just north of the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed and from here we will head west as our tour travels backwards and forwards through history. In all, we will walk through eight centuries before we reach our journey's end at the mouth of the River Sark. *Between Britain* is a history book, a travelogue, a personal reminiscence and a gently prodding examination of national identity. But above all it is a celebration of a place and the people who live there.



### **Winter of Shadows** • Clare Grant

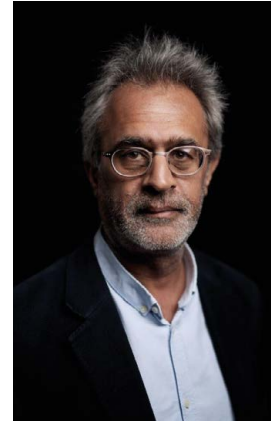
Saturday 12 October, 3:30–4:30pm  
Berwick Parish Centre • £9

Journey back in time to the dark side of 19<sup>th</sup> century York through the lens of the country's one and only crime scene photographer. Ada Fawkes is a photographer of the dead and in the 1860s this is a dangerous job for a woman. It arouses acrimony and accusations of witchcraft – no wonder Ada longs for a new life. But three women die in mysterious circumstances and Scotland Yard needs Ada's skills. Clare is an award-winning journalist who grew up in the Yorkshire Dales and now lives in Northumberland.

### **Confronting Nativist Nationalism** • Ash Amin

Saturday 12 October, 4–5pm  
Berwick Baptist Church • £9

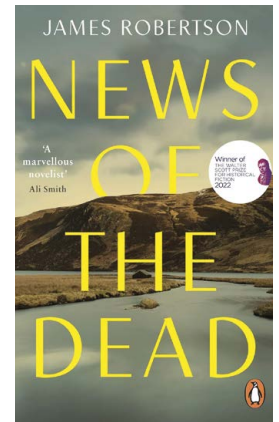
Around the world, including close at home, nationalism is on the rise, close to power, wreaking havoc on migrants, minorities, liberals, professionals, difference in general. Liberal and social democracy have been disarmed by the populist appeal of draw-bridge politics. Is there a counternarrative of belonging that could push back? Ash Amin argues for progressive interest in street-level conviviality; the public sphere as a space of genuine interaction; science, expertise and governance as arenas of participation; cause for the common and shared global challenges and art of belonging that disclose the interconnections that make the world tick.



### **A Writing Life** • James Robertson

Saturday 12 October, 4–5pm  
Guildhall • £9

James Robertson is a novelist, editor, poet and publisher. He studied History at Edinburgh University and worked as a bookseller before becoming a full-time author. His novels include *Joseph Knight* (Scottish Book of the Year, 2003), *The Testament of Gideon Mack* (long-listed for the Man Booker Prize, 2006), *And the Land Lay Still* (Scottish Book of the Year, 2010), and *News of the Dead* (winner of the Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction, 2022). He is also a co-founder of Itchy Coo, an imprint specialising in books in the Scots language for young readers, and will also be contributing to our new schools' programme with Eyemouth High School.



## **Rotary Short Story Competition**

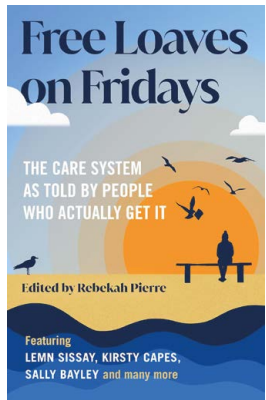
Since the very first Festival in 2014, Berwick Rotary has invited all pupils attending the local schools to submit a Short Story on a different theme each year. The hundreds of entries are read and the shortlisted pupils invited to an Award Ceremony in the Guildhall where pupils or readers perform excerpts from the stories and the prize winners are announced. Attendance at the event is so high from pupils and parents that it is not possible to accommodate members of the public.



**Women I have Loved • Christopher Biggins**

Saturday 12 October, 7:30pm  
The Maltings, Main House • £20

Join us for a no-holds-barred evening with the multi-talented actor, humourist, writer and national treasure, Christopher Biggins as he brings his own inimitable sense of humour and warmth to the subject of the women he has loved, including his mother, Liza Minnelli, Joan Collins, Angela Lansbury, Cilla Black, Chita Rivera, Hillary Clinton, Maggie Thatcher and many more. He will tell all!



**Free Loaves on Fridays: The Care System**

**As Told By People Who Actually Get It**

Rebekah Pierre, Nicola Lewis & Sam Upton  
Sunday 13 October, 9:30–11am  
The Maltings, Henry Travers Studio • £9

Edited by Rebekah Pierre, *Free Loaves on Fridays* is an anthology of stories, poems, reflections and letters by more than 100 care-experienced people, which aims to challenge worn-out stereotypes. This event will be a discussion with three of the contributors, hosted by Helen Sutherland and is supported by TACT Connect.

Rebekah Pierre is a care-experienced author, journalist and social worker – she has written extensively about the care system, featuring in publications such as *The Guardian*, on BBC Radio 4, in academic journals and books. Nicola Lewis is a community leader who supports young people and adults across the UK. Nicola is passionate about empowering others and opening up an honest dialogue about the diverse experiences of life in and beyond care. Sam Upton is an activist and consultant from Glasgow. Her work focuses on amplifying the care-experienced community.

“Please do read *Free Loaves on Fridays*, it’s an emotional journey that will make you cry and laugh. But most of all understand the reality of our care system and why it absolutely must change”  
*Emma Lewell-Buck, MP for South Shields and former social worker*

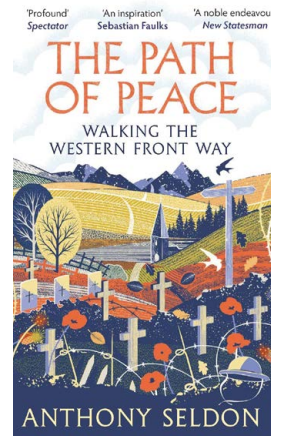
BOOK YOUR TICKETS: [berwickliteraryfestival.com](http://berwickliteraryfestival.com)

**The Path of Peace • Anthony Seldon**

Sunday 13 October, 10–11am  
Guildhall • £9

Without a permanent home, a wife or a job, and with no clear sense of where his life was going, Anthony Seldon set out on a 35-day pilgrimage from the French-Swiss border to the English Channel. The route of his journey was inspired by a young British soldier of the First World War, Alexander Douglas Gillespie, who dreamed of creating a ‘Via Sacra’ to honour the fallen. Touching on grief, loss and the legacy of war, *The Path of Peace* is the extraordinary story of Anthony’s epic walk. Anthony is author or editor of over forty books on contemporary history, politics and education.

To mark the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War  
“an inspiration to younger generations” *Sebastian Faulks*



**Broken Threads: My Family From Empire to Independence • Mishal Husain**

Sunday 13 October, 12 noon  
The Maltings, Main House • £20

Mishal Husain always knew that the lives of her four grandparents changed forever in 1947, as the new nation states of India and Pakistan were born. But what she had was a partial story. Decades later Mishal traced how those four lives were shaped by the Raj, a world war, independence and partition.

Mishal is a broadcaster, journalist and interviewer whose work has taken her from elections and royal events to refugee camps and filming documentaries. She presents BBC Radio 4’s *Today Programme* and *Today Debates*, as well as the TV news on BBC1.



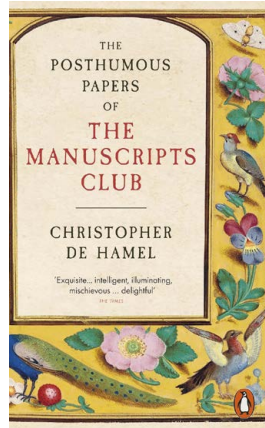
**The Salt Flats • Rachele Atalla**

Sunday 13 October, 12–1pm  
Guildhall • £9

Martha and Finn join a group of privileged tourists on a pilgrimage to The Salt Centre, a mysterious retreat nestled deep within the Bolivian salt flats. United by a shared quest for spiritual enlightenment and healing, the group embark on a journey guided by an elusive shaman. But when the final ceremony descends into a nightmare, they are met with an ultimatum. Rachele Atalla is a Scottish-Egyptian writer and screenwriter based in Glasgow.







**A Life among Medieval Manuscripts**

Christopher de Hamel

Sunday 13 October, 12:30–1:30pm  
Berwick Parish Centre • £9

Christopher de Hamel has spent his life immersed in medieval illuminated manuscripts. He ran Sotheby's illuminated manuscripts department for decades, and was appointed a fellow librarian of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, holding many of Britain's finest examples. His books include *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts* and *The Posthumous Papers of the Manuscripts Club*. His copiously-illustrated talk will examine those who throughout history strived to make, hunt and possess manuscripts, to protect and share them, even to forge them ...



**Lions of the Red Rose • Duke of Northumberland**

Sunday 13 October, 2–3pm  
Guildhall • £9

Ralph Percy, 12<sup>th</sup> Duke of Northumberland began his research into his Percy ancestors as a lockdown project, which has culminated in the publication of his new book *Lions of the Red Rose*. Amid a bloody feud, four warrior brothers seek vengeance for the brutal assassination of their father during the Wars of the Roses, a blood-soaked struggle for survival between two Royal English dynasties. It is not hard to appreciate why this period in British history became the inspiration for George RR Martin's *Game of Thrones*.



**Art: I know what I like and I like what I know**

Martin Newth & John Morrison

Sunday 13 October, 2–3pm  
Maltings Cinema at Berwick Barracks • £9

To mark the closure of the *Lowry and the Sea* exhibition at The Granary, Martin Newth and John Morrison will discuss definitions of 'good art'. How does the popularity of an artwork play into the ideas of what we might or might not value? Martin is an artist primarily using photography, video and installation, and Head of the School of Fine Art at the Glasgow School of Art. John Morrison is an art historian, formerly Head of the School of Divinity, History and Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen and Head of the School of History and Heritage at the University of Lincoln.



**The Secrets of Blythwood Square**

Sara Sheridan

Sunday 13 October, 2–3pm  
Berwick Baptist Church • £9

Sara Sheridan has a fascination with uncovering forgotten stories. In 2018 she remapped Scotland according to women's history in *Where are the Women? The Fair Botanists*. Set in Edinburgh in 1822, it was Waterstones Scottish Book of the Year 2022. Her latest novel, set in Victorian Glasgow, examines the early female gaze and the nature of shame, uncovering scandal in what was, at the time, Britain's second city of Empire. Sara will take us on a whistlestop tour of unheard stories and why they are important today.



**The Edge of Solitude • Katie Hale**

Sunday 13 October, 3:30–4:30pm  
Berwick Parish Centre • £9

A lone ship journeys south, heading for the furthest reaches of Antarctica. It belongs to Sky, the billionaire behind a groundbreaking project to salvage the region. On board is disgraced environmental activist Ivy Cunningham, lending her expertise in the hope that it might rescue her reputation and perhaps even mend her relationship with her son. *The Edge of Solitude* is a story of climate emergency and human fallibility, and of the clash of ambition and principle.

“ Powerful, authoritative, atmospheric and wise” *Joanne Harris*



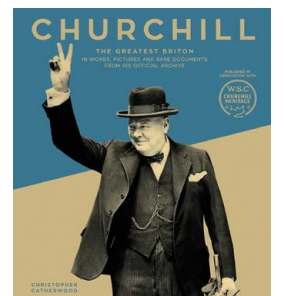
**Was Churchill Right After All?**

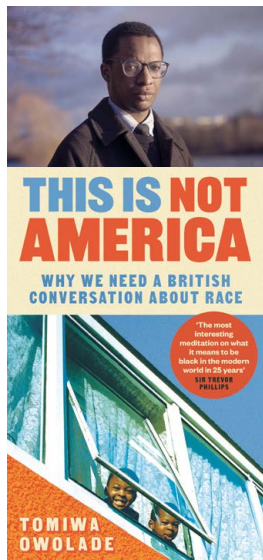
Christopher Catherwood

Sunday 13 October, 4–5pm  
Guildhall • £9

In the midst of a long, distinguished and not uncontroversial career, 1940 stands out as Churchill's finest hour, for which this nation and much of the world granted him the status of Hero. And today, he is still quoted widely, not least in the debate on our relationship with the continent and the EU – by both sides! What did he really argue for, and was he right?

Christopher Catherwood is an historian and writer based in Cambridge, who has written many books on Churchill over the past 20 years. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society. To mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Churchill's birth





**This Is Not America: Why We Need a British Conversation about Race • Tomiwa Owolade**

Sunday 13 October, 4–5pm  
Berwick Baptist Church • £9

Across the West, racial injustice has become one of the most divisive issues of our age. In the rush to address inequality and prejudice, and to understand concerns around identity, immigration and colonial history, Britain has followed the lead of the world’s dominant power: America. But what if we’re looking in the wrong place?

Journalist and author Tomiwa Owolade presents a bold new framework for understanding race in Britain, arguing that we must acknowledge the specific history, challenges and achievements of black populations in Britain, rather than viewing things through the prism of American ideas.

“The most interesting meditation on what it means to be black in the modern world in 25 years” *Sir Trevor Phillips*

**Lyrics and Lyricists**

**Liz Robertson**

Sunday 13 October, 7:30pm  
The Maltings, Main House • £20



If you love your musicals, this is the evening for you! Liz will bring all the glamour and vibrancy of the West End stage to Berwick to close our Festival. Liz Robertson is an Olivier Award nominated actress whose numerous West End credits include; *A Little Night Music*, *My Fair Lady*, *Phantom of the Opera* and *Hairspray*. In America she has been seen in productions on Broadway and as Anna in the US tour of *The King and I*. Liz has just completed a successful run as Miss Andrew in the West End production of *Mary Poppins*. She will be accompanied by pianist Simon Beck as she performs well-known songs from some of your favourite shows.

BOOK YOUR TICKETS: [berwickliteraryfestival.com](http://berwickliteraryfestival.com)

See full booking details on page 23

**Fringe Events**

**Petticoat Tales**

Sunday 6 October, 7:30pm  
Fogo Church, Mount Pleasant, Duns • £10

Roddy Johnston on small pipes, Seonaid Lynn singing and Nancy Marshall as narrator present *Petticoat Tales*, a programme which tells stories of women in the past from the Borders and beyond. It gives a glimpse into their lives and provides a snapshot of the land and the people who depended upon it. **Booking:** [ticketsource.co.uk](http://ticketsource.co.uk)



**Curious & Connected: Sketchbook Workshop**

Tuesday 8 October, 10am–1pm  
The Straw Yard, Parade TD15 1DF • £5–£30

Sketchbooks are playgrounds for soul-informed ideas and creative thinking. Join Berwick Contemplative Arts and artist/educator Alison Mountain for a workshop that aims to capture this spirit, offering practical strategies and looking at how sketchbooks support and enrich creativity. Participants will make a simple sketchbook, using prompts to stimulate ideas and overcome fears about how and where to start. **Booking:** [berwickcontemplativearts.org](http://berwickcontemplativearts.org)



**Tidekettle Papermaking Demonstrations**

Saturday 12 October, 10:30–11:30am & 2–3pm  
Tidekettle Paper, 16 Bridge Street TD15 1AQ • Free

In a whistlestop tour through the history of papermaking from its origins in East Asia to the state-of-the-art teabag machine at Chirnside papermill, Lucy Baxandall will demonstrate papermaking processes and bust a few myths along the way. Free of charge but **booking essential:** [lucybaxandall.com](http://lucybaxandall.com)



**Zine Making Workshop**

Saturday 12 October, 1:30–4:30pm  
Berwick Library • £5–£30 • Age guidance 18+

Zines are self-published books or pamphlets; printed in small editions often by artists and collectives, they can serve any purpose. In this workshop with Sam Stokes, participants will use found imagery and some basic bookbinding techniques to create an edition of collaborative zines. **Booking:** [berwickcontemplativearts.org](http://berwickcontemplativearts.org)

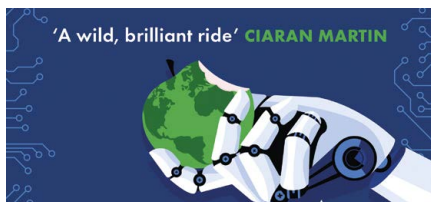


## Schools' & Young People's Programme

### A Literary Conversation

Students have chosen this title for an exciting project involving **Eyemouth High School** and **Berwick Academy**, in collaboration with **Berwick Library**. This project originated in one of the schools and involves students deciding which books they most want to recommend. Based on booksellers' practice, these recommendations will be printed on cards and then displayed in their own and the other libraries. Berwick Library will obtain all the recommended books. The aim is to share students' enthusiasm for reading, to encourage others and to enable positive local action.

### How AI Ate The World



**Chris Stokel-Walker** is a freelance journalist, specialising in technology and he regularly contributes to the BBC, and other broadcasters and publications. Chris will be visiting **Berwick Academy** to talk about his book *How AI Ate the World*, including the impact generative AI and ChatGPT will have on our lives, our jobs – and our environment. Chris will also be talking about his book at an event open to the public and high school students on Friday 11 October at 10:30 in Berwick Baptist Church.

### To the Heart of Difficult Conversations

Can you remember your last difficult conversation? Did it start out that way or veer off along the way? Perhaps you avoided it altogether. These difficult conversations shape our lives, and this is a celebration of those difficult conversations that are worth having. In a collaboration with **Berwick Literary Festival**, **Create Berwick** and students at **Berwick Academy**, local storyteller and writer **Chris Adriaanse** presents a new book collection of wonderful stories and writings from pupils about the nature of difficult conversations – all inspired by a piece of Berwick history and a king full of ambition.

### The Accidental Time Traveller



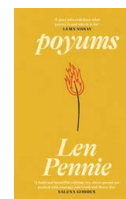
Where do ideas for stories come from? Award winning children's author, **Janis Mackay**, will be visiting the area's middle schools and sharing some of her inspiration. From sea shore to time travel Janis will share something of her own writing journey, read from her novel, answer questions and guide young writers in a little fun, imaginative story writing. Janis is both storyteller and writer, and enjoys the way one inspires the other. Janis won the Scottish Children's Book Awards with her novel, *The Accidental Time Traveller*.

### Jenny Valentine and James Robertson



This year the Festival is delighted to have events for students from **EOTAS (Education other than at School)** and **Eyemouth High School** included in our Schools' and Young People's programme. **Jenny Valentine** will be inviting students to think about lists: long lists, short lists, shopping lists, wish lists, missing lists, to-do lists. Everybody writes them, and our lists say more about us than we realise. Jenny will introduce her latest YA novel, *Us in the Before and After*, a tear-jerking, heartbreakingly beautiful read about the fallout of a sudden death, and the lifelong consequences of a single tragic act. **James Robertson** is a novelist, editor, poet and publisher, who will be visiting Eyemouth High School to talk to students about his writing life and offering exam tips. *The EOTAS event is kindly sponsored by The National Autism Society North Northumberland branch.*

### Poyums



TikTok star and bestselling poet **Len Pennie** will be discussing her powerful, approachable and affecting debut collection, *Poyums* at a special session for **Berwick's 6<sup>th</sup> formers** and **Eyemouth's advanced higher students**. Known for her 'Scots Word of the Day' videos, Len writes passionately about the promotion of

minority languages, survivors of domestic abuse and the destigmatisation of mental illness. Len's voice is bold, unashamedly frank and unmistakably hers.

### Storytelling: Nikky Smedley

**Nikky Smedley** played LaaLaa in the original *Teletubbies*. For the last twenty years, she has also been the creator of funny and fantastic rhyming children's stories, and this October is bringing her show to Berwick-upon-Tweed. Nikky will appear in the Guildhall to entertain our **first school children** and will also visit **The Grove Special School**. Each session is tailored to the audience and is a real storytelling treat, with plenty of opportunity for the children to join in.

### Own The Awkward with Simon James Green



This laugh-out-loud event includes comedy anecdotes from Simon's own (hapless) school days, and tackles all things writing, from inspiration, process and craft, to the key themes discussed in his books. Simon will talk about why funny books are important and should be celebrated; why LGBTQ+ teens need funny books more than ever and how 'owning the awkward' is the best approach for getting through secondary school (and life in general). He will also talk about being an author as a career and the journey of a book from first draft to publication.

## Our Venues

### Berwick Baptist Church

8 Golden Square, TD15 1BG

### Berwick Library

Walkergate, TD15 1DB

### Berwick Parish Church Centre

Parade, TD15 1DF

### Berwick Salvation Army

Church Street, TD15 1EE

### Flinders Wine Bar

West Street, TD15 1AS

### St Aidan's Hall

Church Street, TD15 1DX

### St Andrew's Church

Wallace Green, TD15 1EB

### The Guildhall

Marygate, TD15 1BN

### The Maltings (Main House & Henry Travers Studio)

Eastern Lane, TD15 1AJ

### Maltings Cinema at

Berwick Barracks, TD15 1DQ

### Martins the Printers

Seaview Works

Main St, Spittal, TD15 1RS

### YHA The Granary

Dewars Lane, TD15 1HJ

In the spirit of involving the town we use a variety of venues for different events. All are accessible for disabled people although arrangements must be made in advance with the custodian of the Guildhall (01289 330900). Warm thanks are given to all our hosts.

## More Information

### Bookselling

All books discussed will be for sale and author signing at each event and at our supportive bookseller Grieve's the Stationers, Church Street, Berwick TD15 1EG

Away from Berwick we encourage you to support the independent booksellers listed on our website.

### [visitberwick.com](http://visitberwick.com)

for more information about our town, where to park, where to eat and stay, and events locally, please visit this website.



## How to Book

All events can be booked online using links in the brochure on the Festival's website at [berwickliteraryfestival.com](http://berwickliteraryfestival.com)

Events at The Maltings can also be booked at The Maltings box office: by phone (01289 330999), in person, or online (from 12 Aug) at [maltingsberwick.co.uk](http://maltingsberwick.co.uk)

### Festival 'Box Office' @ Corner House Café

31 Church Street, TD15 1EE

We shall be selling tickets in the Corner House Café on

**Saturday 12 October, 10am – 4pm**

The cafe will also be open for refreshments on **Sunday 13 October, 11am – 3:30pm.**

Tickets may be available on the door but advance booking is strongly recommended. Note: Although the Cabaret of Words on 9 October and Adventure Babies on 12 October are free, spaces need to be reserved to ensure we do not exceed capacity.

**Festival refund policy:** in the event that an event is cancelled refunds will be offered, but no other exchanges or refunds are available. The Maltings has its own policy.

## Contact Us

### Berwick Literary Festival

Berwick Community Trust,  
56-58 Castlegate,  
Berwick-upon-Tweed,  
Northumberland TD15 1JT

[info@berwickliteraryfestival.com](mailto:info@berwickliteraryfestival.com)  
[berwickliteraryfestival.com](http://berwickliteraryfestival.com)



**berwicklitfest #berwicklitfest**

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## FESTIVAL DIARY

TUE 8	7:30pm	Berwick Baptist Church	Nikky Smedley
WED 9	7 for 7:30pm	Flinders Wine Bar	Cabaret of Words
OCT	7:30pm	St Andrew's Church	Barbour / Stevenson
THU 10	9am & 10am	Martins the Printers	Martins the Tour
OCT	10am	YHA, The Granary	The Elegy: Poetry workshop
	7:30pm	Maltings Cinema	Len Pennie
FRI 11	9am & 10am	Martins the Printers	Martins the Tour
OCT	10:30am	Berwick Baptist Church	Chris Stokel-Walker
	10:30am	St Aidan's Hall	Sabrin Hasbun / Writers' Forum
	2pm	Berwick Baptist Church	Jessica Moor
	4:30pm	Berwick Baptist Church	Ali Ansari
	5pm	Maltings Cinema	Anna Chapman Parker
	7:30pm	Maltings, Main House	Helen Lederer
SAT	9:30am	Guildhall	Rotary Awards Ceremony
12 OCT	9:30am	Salvation Army	Sarah Corbett
	10am	Berwick Baptist Church	Allan Cameron
	10am	Berwick Parish Centre	Minogue & Palmer
	10:30/noon	Berwick Library	Adventure Babies
	11am	Maltings, HT Studio	Difficult Conversations launch
	11:30am	Salvation Army	Sumayya Usmani
	12 noon	Guildhall	Jim Leary
	12 noon	Berwick Baptist Church	Bloodaxe Poetry
	2pm	Berwick Baptist Church	Rachel Hewitt
	2pm	Guildhall	Alistair Moffat
	3:30pm	Berwick Parish Centre	Clare Grant
	4pm	Berwick Baptist Church	Ash Amin
	4pm	Guildhall	James Robertson
	7:30pm	Maltings, Main House	Christopher Biggins
SUN	9:30am	Maltings, HT Studio	Free Loaves on Fridays
13 OCT	10am	Guildhall	Anthony Seldon
	12 noon	Maltings, Main House	Mishal Husain
	12 noon	Guildhall	Rachelle Atalla
	12:30pm	Berwick Parish Centre	Christopher de Hamel
	2pm	Guildhall	Duke of Northumberland
	2pm	Maltings Cinema	Newth & Morrison
	2pm	Berwick Baptist Church	Sara Sheridan
	3:30pm	Berwick Parish Centre	Katie Hale
	4pm	Guildhall	Christopher Catherwood
	4pm	Berwick Baptist Church	Tomiwa Owolade
	7:30pm	Maltings, Main House	Liz Robertson



**Book now:**

**[berwickliteraryfestival.com](http://berwickliteraryfestival.com)**