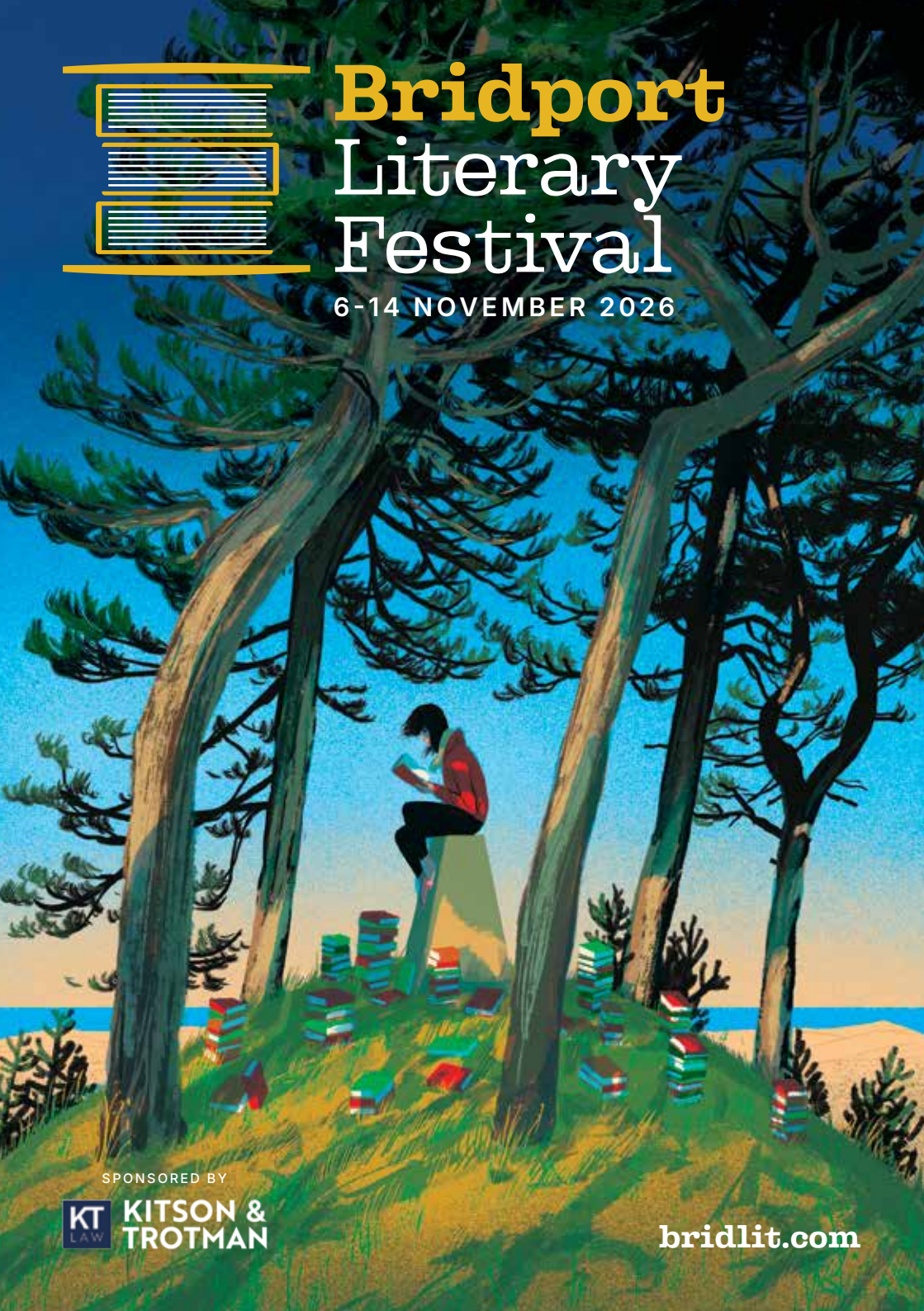




Bridport Literary Festival

6-14 NOVEMBER 2026



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Bridport Literary Festival's Trustees and staff would like to thank all the sponsors and supporters, including those who have given anonymously, for their generosity in supporting this year's event. We are also grateful to the members of the festival Friends scheme and to the stewards and volunteers who so kindly give their time and skills. Without this support, the festival would not exist.

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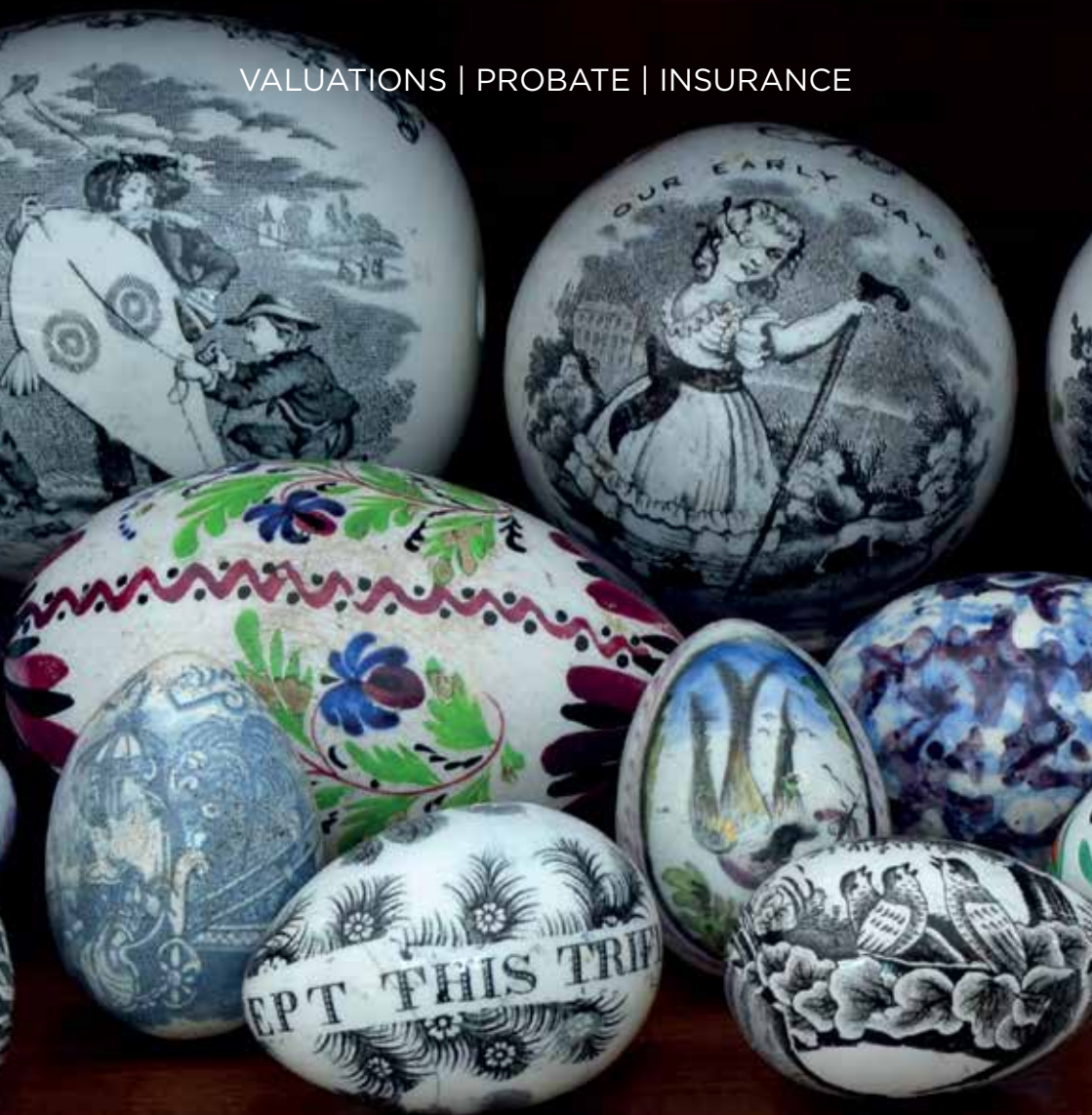
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A new chapter

Welcome to the 2026 Bridport Literary Festival

EVEN A NEWCOMER to West Dorset, like me, knows the power of Colmer's Hill, our cover star. The sense of being above the fray. What better metaphor for a book festival, where we raise our eyes from daily cares and look at the horizon?

A festival is more than just a string of events. It's a community, locals and visitors united by their love of reading. In Tanya Bruce-Lockhart, we've lost a key member of that band. I hope she'd have appreciated the ambition of this year's festival, which builds on her vision. BridLit 2026 may be a new chapter, but it's part of a wonderful long-running story.

Adrian Turpin, Festival Director

MORE AUTHORS, more venues, a dedicated children's programme – a new chapter begins. On behalf of the trustees, I'd like to thank all our supporters who have given in various ways. Without you the festival would not happen. We hope you enjoy turning the page.

Stuart Rock, Chair of Trustees

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Tickets

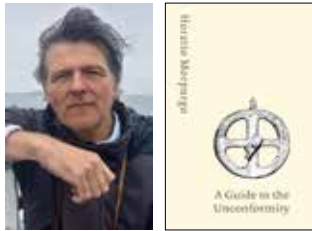
Box Office – Bridport TIC
The Town Hall,
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Tel: 01308 424 901
www.bridlit.com

 **Bridport**
Literary
Festival CHARITY NO: 1147075

Friday 6 Nov

EVENT 1

HISTORY



HORATIO MORPURGO The Port Bredy Lecture

Port Bredy was the name Thomas Hardy gave Bridport. The annual Port Bredy Lecture aims to celebrate Hardy and other writers with connections to West Dorset.

Beginning with Hardy's Bridport-set tale 'Fellow-Townsmen', which reaches its fateful conclusion at the Bull Hotel, Horatio Morpurgo considers how the author understood a rural society turned upside down by the coming of the railways, one in which the "outside world" was both an opportunity and a threat.

What lessons might Dorset's greatest writer have for the 21st century's Wessex-dwellers as they also deal with a fast-changing world?

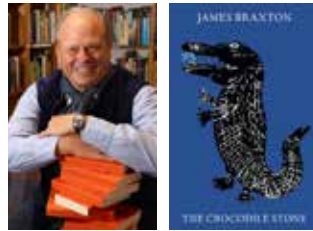
Horatio Morpurgo is an activist and writer on the environment. His new book is *A Guide to the Unconformity*.

Friday 6 Nov
 5.00pm
 £12
 Bull Ballroom

Saturday 7 Nov

EVENT 2

WALK



JAMES BRAXTON Antiques Ramble 1

Meet outside The Woodman Pub, 61 South Street

Join TV antiques expert and author James Braxton for a walking tour around Bridport's celebrated vintage market and antiques shops.

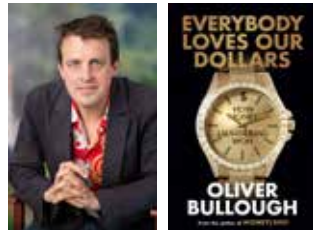
Best known for BBC flagship shows like *Bargain Hunt* and *Antiques Road Trip*, Braxton is a seasoned auctioneer and author of antiquarian mystery fiction, including *Barty: A Tale of a Stolen Bronze*.

With over forty years of experience in the antiques trade, Braxton brings a practised eye for provenance, history, and craftsmanship to all he finds. Will he spot a genuine bargain along the way, or merely uncover the fascinating histories hidden behind everyday objects? Repeated on Sunday 8 Nov, 12 noon (Event 12).

Saturday 7 Nov
 10.00am
 £14
 The Woodman

EVENT 3

NON FICTION



OLIVER BULLOUGH Everybody Loves Our Dollars

How Money Laundering Won

Why is the world flooded with illicit cash and how did Britain become ground zero for laundering it? In *Everybody Loves Our Dollars*, acclaimed investigative reporter Oliver Bullough reveals why multi-billion-dollar efforts to prevent financial crime have failed.

In conversation with festival chair **Stuart Rock**, Bullough demonstrates how organised crime groups and kleptocrats routinely exploit legal loopholes and regulatory blindspots.

Following his bestselling exposés *Moneyland* and *Butler to the World*, Bullough delivers an eye-opening exploration of the shady areas of global finance, showing why, for the worst bad actors, cash remains king.

Sponsored by James and Emma Farquharson

Saturday 7 Nov
 10.30am
 £16.50
 Electric Palace

EVENT 4

HISTORY



SARAH CLEGG Perilous Enchantment

The True History of Faeries

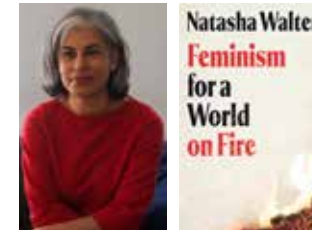
We often picture fairies as harmless, pastel-clad creatures, but the true history of the fae is far darker and more complex. In *Perilous Enchantment*, historian Sarah Clegg strips away the Victorian glitter to uncover the capricious nature of these otherworldly beings.

Following the runaway success of her *Sunday Times* bestseller *The Dead of Winter*, Clegg traces how local nature spirits evolved into tricksters, demonic accomplices in witch trials and modern "romantasy" figures. Travelling from ancient Greek nymph caves to Icelandic elf fires, Clegg reveals how shifting fairy myths mirror humanity's deepest wishes and anxieties. Chaired by historian **Eleanor Barraclough**.

Saturday 7 Nov
 12noon
 £14
 Bridport Arts Centre

EVENT 5

NON FICTION



NATASHA WALTER Feminism for a World on Fire

Join us for an inspiring conversation with acclaimed author and campaigner Natasha Walter about building a more connected and hopeful future. Introducing her powerful new book *Feminism for a World on Fire*, she talks to **Samantha Knights** KC about how the challenges facing women today – from inequality and online misogyny to climate change – are interconnected and why our responses should be, too.

She offers a vision of feminism rooted in community, imagining how women's liberation can sit alongside movements for equality, justice and environmental protection.

Natasha Walter's books include *The New Feminism* and *Living Dolls*. She is the founder of the charity Women for Refugee Women.

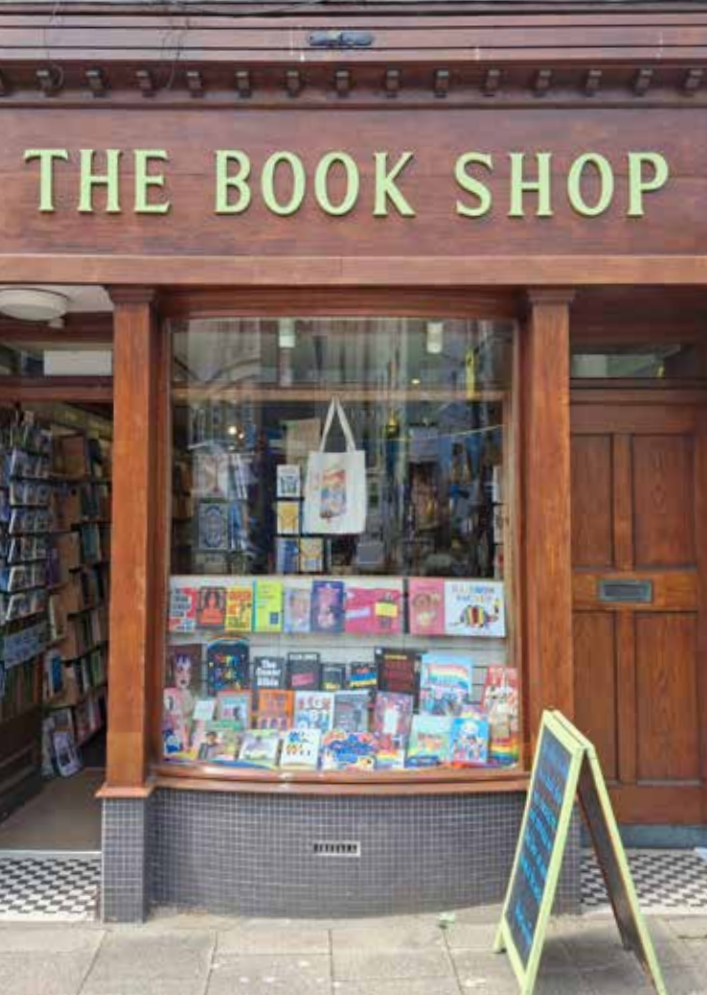
Saturday 7 Nov
 1.30pm
 £14
 Bridport Arts Centre

KidLit Children's Festival

Taking place on Saturday 7 November at the Lyric Theatre, KidLit is our new festival within a festival for children. This year's programme starts with storytelling for tiny readers and ends with a high-adrenaline "draw-off" between authors and illustrators.

There will be drop-in puppet workshops from the Lyric's resident puppeteer Holly Miller and appearances from some of Britain's most-celebrated children's writers, illustrator Laurence Anholt, Costa-award winner Jasbinder Bilan, Roald Dahl award-winner Philip Ardagh and Vivian French MBE. Tickets are just £3 with day family day passes for £20. For full listings, see page 41. We will also be delivering events in selected local schools around the festival.





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Saturday 7 Nov

EVENT 6

NON FICTION



ROBIN NIBLETT *After America*

The End of the Old Order and the Future of Geopolitics

After eighty years of Western dominance, what next? In *After America*, Sir Robin Niblett, former Director of Chatham House, examines the collapse of American global leadership and the rise of transactional imperial power politics driven by the US, China and Russia.

Rather than assuming the old West can simply regroup, Niblett explores how smaller nations and middle powers can navigate this fractured landscape to build a stable future.

He is joined by former BBC North America editor **Gavin Esler** to dissect what this dramatic geopolitical shift means for global stability and diplomacy.

Sponsored by
Martin & Lindsay Bowdery

 **Saturday 7 Nov**
 **3.00pm**
 £16.50
 Electric Palace

EVENT 7

NATURE



HANNAH BOURNE-TAYLOR *Nature Needs You*

Join author and environmental campaigner Hannah Bourne-Taylor for a candid conversation about finding your voice and fighting for the natural world, the subject of her book *Nature Needs You*.

Alongside discussing her grassroots crusade to save the UK's plummeting swift population – from high-profile campaigning to demanding mandatory swift bricks in new builds – she will dive into her life as an activist and her experiences behind the scenes on *Clarkson's Farm*.

A frank discussion about rural life, battling bureaucracy and why protecting our wildlife requires radical resistance. She talks to writer and conservationist **Keggie Carew**.

Sponsored by
Rob & Alex Appleby

 **Saturday 7 Nov**
 **4.30pm**
 £14
 Bridport Arts Centre

EVENT 8

HISTORY



IAIN MACGREGOR *Battle*

The Moments that Transformed Warfare from Ancient Greece to Ukraine

How did leaders like Alexander the Great, Robert the Bruce and Horatio Nelson change the course of history? Join bestselling historian Iain MacGregor for a thrilling journey through 3,000 years of conflict. From the shield walls of ancient Greece to the drone warfare of modern Ukraine, this fascinating talk explores the five forces that have shaped victory and defeat throughout history: Morale, Leadership, Innovation, Subterfuge, Timing & Numbers.

Travel from Marathon to the Spanish Armada, Stalingrad and Kyiv, discovering the dramatic moments when battles changed not just wars, but the course of civilisation itself.

Sponsored by
Church House Investments

 **Saturday 7 Nov**
 **4.30pm**
 £14
 Bull Ballroom

EVENT 9

HISTORY



KATJA HOYER *Weimar*

Life on the Edge of Catastrophe

Between the collapse of the German Empire and the rise of the Third Reich, the Weimar Republic endured 14 years of artistic brilliance, political violence and hyperinflation. Historian Katja Hoyer – author of the bestseller *Beyond the Wall* – talks to the novelist **Boris Starling** about how democracy unravelled into tyranny.

Central to her narrative are personal accounts from the time, including the diary of a local stationer, Carl Weirich. The result is a remarkably vivid portrait of ordinary citizens trying to navigate a chaotic and frightening world. A gripping new insight into one of the most fascinating periods in German history.

Sponsored by
Sarah Gordon Wild

 **Saturday 7 Nov**
 **6.00pm**
 £14
 Bridport Arts Centre

EVENT 10 NON FICTION



SARAH O'CONNOR **We Are Not Machines**

The Fight for the Future of Work

We're told that a tsunami of change is sweeping the economy as AI replaces humans in the workplace. But when Sarah O'Connor ventured into the front line of this new industrial revolution, she found that employees weren't generally losing their jobs to machines, they were losing their humanity. Work was becoming lonelier, less creative and highly controlled. We were at risk of turning ourselves into robots.

Drawing on stories from 19th-century English cotton mills to 21st-century Swedish mines, the prize-winning *Financial Times* journalist tackles one of our age's most important questions: how can we shape technology before it shapes us? She talks to **Boris Starling**.

EVENT 11 NON FICTION



CHARLOTTE HIGGINS **Ukrainian Lessons**

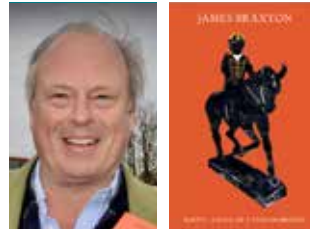
Art in a Time of War

Guardian chief culture writer Charlotte Higgins never imagined reporting on a war. In autumn 2022, she travelled to a book festival in Ukraine to discover how artists were reflecting the conflict in their work. It would change her life.

During a war that threatens the very existence of Ukrainian culture, art has become literally a matter of life and death. Based on three years of reporting, *Ukrainian Lessons* is an urgent and unforgettable book about what artists are prepared to risk – and why culture is worth fighting for. In conversation with the writer **Philip Ardagh**.

"The most beautifully written, moving book I can ever remember reading", Philippa Perry.
Sponsored by Carol Hammick & Adam Tindall

EVENT 12 WALK



JAMES BRAXTON **Antiques Ramble 2**

Meet outside The Woodman Pub, 61 South Street

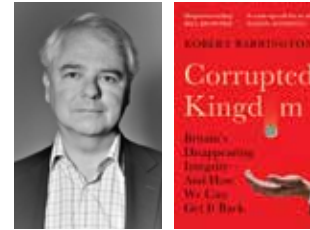
Join the television antiques expert and author James Braxton for a walking tour of Bridport's celebrated vintage market and antiques shops.

Best known for BBC flagship shows like *Bargain Hunt* and *Antiques Road Trip*, Braxton is a seasoned auctioneer and author of antiquarian mystery fiction, including *Barty: A Tale of a Stolen Bronze*.

With over forty years of experience in the art and antiques trade, Braxton brings a practised eye for provenance, history and craftsmanship to all he finds.

Will he spot a genuine bargain along the way, or merely uncover the fascinating histories hidden behind everyday objects?

EVENT 13 POLITICS



ROBERT BARRINGTON **Corrupted Kingdom**

Britain's Disappearing Integrity – And How We Can Get It Back

Britain has long prided itself on fairness, but is that reputation still deserved? Robert Barrington believes not: the UK is losing the battle against graft.

In *Corrupted Kingdom*, the world-leading corruption expert makes the case that complacency has undermined our national institutions, from parliament and the NHS to the monarchy and the police. Barrington traces this decline back to the end of empire and identifies steps we might take to restore trust. We need to act now, he argues, to stop the rot. Professor Barrington is joined by the broadcaster **Gavin Esler**, author of *Britain Is Better Than This*.

Sponsored by Ann Thimont

EVENT 14 HISTORY



LAUREN WORKING **A Golden World**

How the Americas Transformed Tudor and Stuart England

From rumours of Amazonian gold to silver-veined mountains, dreams of enormous wealth fuelled Tudor imperial fantasies. But how did the peoples of the Americas really influence English art, fashion and literature – and at what cost?

In *A Golden World*, historian Lauren Working shows how objects from across the Atlantic – such as tobacco leaves strewn in playhouses and courtly pearls – became central to 16th-century culture.

Uncovering stories of Raleigh's privateers and the indigenous craftsmanship that fed Renaissance splendour, Working presents a glittering new history of Tudor ambition. She talks to historian **Eleanor Barraclough**.
Sponsored by Tina Graham

EVENT 15 BIOGRAPHY



MATTHEW SWEET **The Great Dictator**

A Life of Barbara Cartland

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

Making use of unprecedented access to Cartland's archives, broadcaster Matthew Sweet's wickedly funny biography reveals the woman behind the mascara.

After 49 proposals, she chose the wrong man; what followed was a life stranger than any novel, including terrorist plots, seances, plagiarism battles, and even a surprise turn as a campaigner for Romany rights. Chaired by **Vivian French**.
Sponsored by Susan Bradbury

Sunday 8 Nov
 10.00am
 £12
 Bull Ballroom

Sunday 8 Nov
 11.30am
 £12
 Bull Ballroom

Sunday 8 Nov
 12noon
 £14
 The Woodman

Sunday 8 Nov
 1.00pm
 £14
 Bridport Arts Centre

Sunday 8 Nov
 1.00pm
 £12
 Bull Ballroom

Sunday 8 Nov
 2.30pm
 £16.50
 Electric Palace

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Sunday 8 Nov

EVENT 16

VISUAL ARTS



LACHLAN GOUDIE The Secrets of Painting

The Hidden Art of
the Masterpiece from
Prehistory to Today

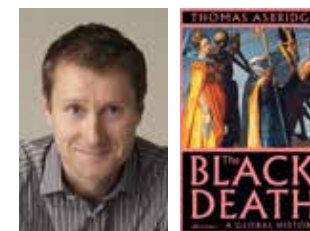
How do you paint a masterpiece?
Artist and broadcaster Lachlan
Goudie returns to Bridport to
explore how 20 of the greatest
paintings in human history were
created, from a blank surface to
the finishing brushstroke.

From 36,000-year-old cave
paintings to the digital art of
David Hockney, he interrogates
each artist's individual methods
and techniques. And there's a
bigger picture: this is the story
of how the evolution of painting
materials – from spit, bone
marrow and blood to digital
image-making – has changed
the course of human creativity.
"Stupendous ... a wonderful gift
to the world of art lovers" Simon
Schama.

Sponsored by Buffy Sacher

EVENT 17

HISTORY



THOMAS ASBRIDGE The Black Death

A Global History

The Black Death is remembered
as one of Europe's great
catastrophes, but it swept far
beyond the continent's borders,
transforming societies from
Cairo to Central Asia.

Thomas Asbridge reveals the
pandemic's forgotten history,
showing how one disease
tragically affected empires,
religions and millions of
everyday lives.

One of our leading medieval
historians and the mind behind
landmark BBC TV series, *The
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research and evocative parallels
to our own times, his new book
illuminates the human capacity
for compassion and resilience in
the face of unimaginable crises.

Sponsored by
Paul & Sybella Zisman

EVENT 18

SPOKEN WORD



BANK OF DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES Resonate

Resonate is a free creative
writing and spoken word
project for young people aged
15–19 whose voices might not
normally be heard.

Over two workshop weekends
this autumn, participants work
with poet **Cecilia Knapp** to
explore identity and what it
means to be them, finding
language for stories they've
rarely had the chance to
tell. Cecilia also hosts this
culminating event, where the
group reads and performs the
work they've created together.

As one past participant put it,
describing the moment she first
read her work aloud: "I felt real
pride and unfiltered joy for the
first time in about 3 years."

The Bank of Dreams and
Nightmares is a Bridport-based
charity that supports creative
writing for young people 7–18.

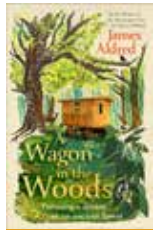
Sunday 8 Nov
 4.30pm
 £16.50
 Electric Palace

Sunday 8 Nov
 6.00pm
 £12
 Bull Ballroom

Sunday 8 Nov
 7.00pm
 £8 free for under 19s
 Bridport Arts Centre

EVENT 19

MEMOIR



JAMES ALDRED *A Wagon in the Woods*

When James Aldred found the decaying horse-drawn wagon he had played in as a child, buried beneath New Forest brambles, he found himself transported in time.

Rebuilding the vehicle became a way to re-examine the forest itself. Aldred retraces the paths of his youth, exploring a landscape shaped as much by royal history and Romany heritage as by its otters and goshawks.

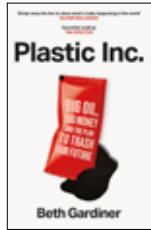
A Wagon in the Woods offers a portrait of one of the UK's most cherished landscapes and considers the deep roots that bind us to place. Chaired by writer and editor **Jon Woolcott**.

James Aldred is an award-winning wildlife cameraman who has worked on many landmark natural history programmes with Sir David Attenborough.

Sponsored by
Francesca Radcliffe

EVENT 20

POLITICS



BETH GARDINER *Plastic Inc*

Big Oil, Big Money and the Plan to Trash Our Future

In her new book journalist Beth Gardiner looks at our love-hate relationship with one of the world's most ubiquitous materials. Praised by the *New York Times* as "a compelling true-crime story", Gardiner's deep dive exposes how petrochemical giants have turned to plastic as a financial lifeline, plotting to double production even as individuals are encouraged to use less.

Gardiner reveals how corporate litter campaigns cleverly shifted guilt onto consumers, and why the "myth" of recycling plastic effectively has been promoted despite industry knowledge that it can't work at scale. Author and green campaigner **Julia Hailes** chairs a revelatory discussion.

Sponsored by Julia Hailes

EVENT 21

WORKSHOP



CECILIA KNAPP *Writing Workshop*

When Poetry Meets Prose

Poet and novelist Cecilia Knapp brings a relaxed, exploratory workshop to Bridport, looking at work from some of the most exciting contemporary poets who work across both poetry and prose.

Through close reading, discussion and playful, exercises, she will encourage you to seek inspiration from these dynamic writers and create not just your own poetry, but also prose, enriched by these findings.

Cecilia Knapp was Young People's Poet Laureate for London in 2021 and was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for best single poem in 2022. Her debut poetry collection *Peach Pig* was published in 2022. Her latest novel is *Lack*.

EVENT 22

POLITICS



JEREMY HUNT *Can We Be Rich Again?*

The Surprising Potential of Britain's Economy

Stagnant growth, oppressive national debt and record tax burdens have convinced many that Britain's economic best days are behind it. In *Can We Be Rich Again?*, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt offers an urgent riposte to widespread doom-mongering.

Drawing on decades in government, Hunt outlines a roadmap to reignite prosperity. From uncorking the potential of the United Kingdom's world-leading tech and financial sectors to reforming stagnant state machinery, he argues that low growth is a solvable crisis.

Join us for a compelling discussion on how Britain can change its financial fortunes.

Sponsored by
Tim & Sara Clarke

EVENT 23

VISUAL ARTS



JENNIFER POTTER *Looking for Mr Schwitters*

Modern art circles revere Kurt Schwitters as an "artist's artist", leader of the Dada movement and pioneer of pop art. But he ended his days as an exile, working in post-war Cumbria.

Writer and artist Jennifer Potter follows the traces left after Schwitters was dismissed as a "degenerate" by the Nazis and forced into exile. Potter blends biography, memoir and art history in an attempt to understand Schwitters' mysterious influence on her own life and writing.

Exploring his revolutionary collages as well as an unfinished masterpiece hidden in the Langdale Valley, Potter reflects on exile and what it means to leave a mark on a place. Chaired by festival director, **Adrian Turpin**.
Sponsored by Jim Bartos

EVENT 24

HISTORY



JAMES HOLLAND *The Visionaries*

Leading second world war historian James Holland discusses his new book *The Visionaries* with the novelist **Boris Starling**. Holland explores how architects of peace – spearheaded by Franklin D Roosevelt and Harry S Truman – had begun to think seriously about the 20th-century post-war world order long before the carnage had ended. Through bold initiatives such as the Marshall Plan, these leaders chose cooperation over retribution, laying the foundations for eight decades of Western peace and prosperity.

Holland argues that global stability is never an accident: it is designed. What lessons are there for today's leaders?" And will anyone step up to be a visionary for the 21st century?

Sponsored by
Guy & Clare Schwinge

Monday 9 Nov
10.30am
£12
Bull Ballroom

Monday 9 Nov
12 noon
£14
Bridport Arts Centre

Monday 9 Nov
12 noon - 2pm
£50
Human Nature

Monday 9 Nov
2.00pm
£16.50
Electric Palace

Monday 9 Nov
3.30pm
£12
Bull Ballroom

Monday 9 Nov
5.00pm
£14
Bridport Arts Centre

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wessexprivategp.co.uk

Monday 9 Nov

EVENT 25

FICTION



CECILIA KNAPP
Lack

Novelist and poet Cecilia Knapp joins **Anna Whittham** to discuss *Lack*, her sharp and lyrical novel about a thirtysomething woman caught between her superficially glamorous life and a growing sense of panic.

Knapp looks directly at the challenges of leaving one's twenties, as career pressure and a desire to have fun collide with the search for meaning. In the lonely hours of the middle of the night, a woman scrolls social media on her phone. Babies are everywhere. All her friends seem to have one. But how can she consider bringing a new life into the world when that world is burning?

Cecilia Knapp was Young People's Laureate for London 2020-2021. She was shortlisted for the 2022 Forward Prize for best single poem.

EVENT 26

MEMOIR



GREG DORAN
Walking Shadow

Love, Loss and Shakespeare

Following the loss of his husband, Sir Antony Sher, former RSC Artistic Director Greg Doran set out on an extraordinary quest: to track down as many surviving copies of Shakespeare's First Folio as possible.

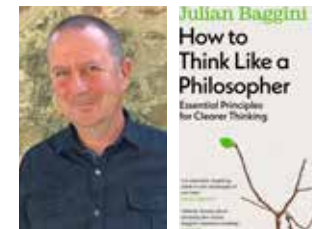
He weaves a moving account of Sher's final illness together with a captivating travelogue spanning four continents. Seeking out more than two hundred Folios – from Tokyo to South Africa – Doran slowly uncovers their unique histories.

Part love story, part literary detective story, *Walking Shadow* explores how he faced down deep personal grief with the inspiration of the world's greatest playwright. Chaired by author **Vivian French**.

Sponsored by
David & Angela Neuberger

EVENT 27

PHILOSOPHY



JULIAN BAGGINI
Philosophy in Pubs

How To Think Like a Philosopher

For the first time, Bridport Literary Festival is teaming up with Bridport's regular Philosophy in Pubs night for an evening of ideas-driven conversation.

Co-founder of the *Philosophers' Magazine*, Julian Baggini, will kick off a discussion inspired by his book *How To Think Like a Philosopher*, as he encourages us to think for ourselves, not by ourselves.

Julian is a prominent English philosopher and journalist who has authored over 20 books bringing philosophy to the general public, including the bestselling *The Pig That Wants To Be Eaten* and *How the World Thinks*.

Chaired by **Kelvin Clayton**.
With special thanks to The Woodman pub for hosting.

Monday 9 Nov

5.00pm

£10

Goose and Badger

Monday 9 Nov

7.00pm

£16.50

Electric Palace

Monday 9 Nov

8.30pm

£8

The Woodman

EVENT 28

TOUR



JULIE MONTAGU *Secrets of an English Country House*

Julie Montagu, Countess of Sandwich, invites you inside Mapperton, one of England's finest manor houses. Julie offers a rare insight into the 900-year-old Dorset estate she and her husband, Luke, have been restoring, rewinding and breathing new life into since 2016.

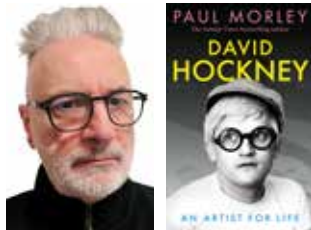
Drawing on her book *Secrets of an English Country House: A Year at Mapperton*, she will share the hidden stories behind its historic doors. A captivating conversation celebrating the enduring spirit of a much-loved country house.

Coffee and cake included. This event includes the opportunity to tour the house (at either 10.15am or 12.15pm). Please see our website for details.

Sponsored by
Caspar & Kate Rock

EVENT 29

VISUAL ARTS



PAUL MORLEY *On Hockney* An Artist for Life

The late David Hockney remains one of Britain's most recognisable artists. His career spanned decades of constant reinvention, taking him from post-war Bradford and Swinging London to Los Angeles, Paris, Normandy and the Yorkshire Wolds.

In *David Hockney: An Artist for Life*, writer and broadcaster Paul Morley explores how these locations shaped the painter's vision. Morley traces Hockney's key friendships and artistic influences showing how he repeatedly renewed his creative practice while remaining unmistakably himself.

The result is a celebration of a restless, resourceful and deeply optimistic figure whose life and work mirrored broader changes in society and altered how a nation sees itself and understands the world.

EVENT 30

NON FICTION



FRANK TALLIS *Wise* A History of Wisdom

Renowned clinical psychologist and author of the *Vienna Blood* novels Frank Tallis addresses the art of growing old.

Chaired by philosopher **Julian Baggini**, this event explores how to maintain psychological health and purpose despite the daunting realities of later life, loss, physical decline and accumulated regrets.

Making use of decades of psychotherapeutic practice as well as insights from Stoicism, Jungian psychology and neuroscience, Tallis argues that living well requires reconciling all aspects of our past and present self. He'll be talking about how we can embrace our mortality, make peace with time's inevitable passage and cultivate true happiness in our later years. "Transformative and deeply insightful", *Guardian*.

EVENT 31

NON FICTION



JULIET NICOLSON *The Book of Revelations*

Research shows that the average person is keeping thirteen secrets at any one time, five of which they've never shared with a soul.

The Book of Revelations, by the bestselling social historian Juliet Nicolson, is specifically about the secrets women hold. Told through a blend of first-person stories, family history and memoir, Nicolson's compelling account moves from the "silent generation" of the 1950s to the influencers of the 2020s. What does the changing nature of the secrets women keep tell us about our world and what makes any of us hide or reveal ourselves? In conversation with the novelist and television producer **Daisy Goodwin**. "Utterly engrossing and timely", *India Knight*.

Sponsored by Ros & John Senior

EVENT 32

PANEL



SARAH CHURCHWELL & JON LEE ANDERSON *America's Stories*

The United States is defined by the tales it tells about itself, a land of freedom, opportunity, self-sufficiency and equality. But, as America marks its 250th year, these foundational myths have never looked more fragile.

Bridport-based *New Yorker* writer Jon Lee Anderson and Sarah Churchwell, professor of American Literature and Public Understanding at the University of London, discuss how these narratives have found expression through history, and whether they remain fit for purpose.

Jon Lee Anderson's latest publication is *To Lose a War*. Sarah Churchwell's books include studies of *Gone with the Wind* and *The Great Gatsby*.
Sponsored by
Diana & Robert Clarke

EVENT 33

FICTION



FRANCIS SPUFFORD *Nonesuch*

Lauded by the *Times* as "one of the finest prose stylists of his generation", the author of *Golden Hill* and *Light Perpetual* talks to fellow author **Raffaella Barker** about his fantastical new novel, *Nonesuch*.

It's the summer of 1939. London is on the brink of war. Iris Hawkins, an ambitious young woman working in the City, has a chance encounter with Geoff, a technical whizz at the BBC's new TV unit. But what was supposed to be one night of abandon leads her instead into a netherworld where time bends and spirits can be summoned.

London will soon be burning. But Iris has more to worry about than the Blitz. A fascist fanatic is at large with a gun in her hand. And only Iris can stop her from altering the course of history.

Tuesday 10 Nov
10.00am
£25
Mapperton House

Tuesday 10 Nov
10.30am
£12
Bull Ballroom

Tuesday 10 Nov
12noon
£12
Bull Ballroom

Tuesday 10 Nov
1.30pm
£12
Bull Ballroom

Tuesday 10 Nov
3.00pm
£14
Electric Palace

Tuesday 10 Nov
4.30pm
£12
Bull Ballroom

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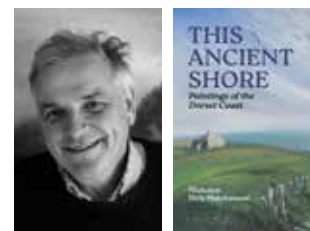
 **PROUD SUPPORTERS OF** 
BRIDPORT'S CREATIVE COMMUNITY



Tuesday
10 Nov

EVENT 34

VISUAL ARTS



NICHOLAS HELY HUTCHINSON
This Ancient Shore

Paintings of the Dorset Coast

In 1993, the artist Nicholas Hely Hutchinson moved to Dorset. First walking to the ancient chapel of St Adhelm's overlooking the sea, he was captivated by the coast. From that moment, he has walked and painted the coast path time and time again, often in the company of his dogs.

The book follows his travels west from Studland to Lyme Regis. In this work, which is accompanied by short essays, Nicholas perfectly recreates the drama in the landscape and seascape, its nature, farmland, the forgotten lanes and distant fields. His Dorset paintings will delight residents and visitors alike.

Sponsored by
Rachel & Allan James

EVENT 35

FICTION



THE BOOKERY WITH ANGELA TOMASKI
Home

Bridport's regular literary pop-up presents an evening of readings on the theme of "Home". A trio of Dorset authors is led by Angela Tomaski whose "exquisitely gothic and darkly comedic" *The Infamous Gilberts* was shortlisted for the 2026 Waterstones Debut Fiction Prize. The five eccentric protagonists of Tomaski's novel are a romantic, a traditionalist, a dreamer, a diva and an explorer. As their crumbling stately home is handed over to a chain of luxury hotels, these five fatherless siblings are cast adrift on the troubled shores of the 20th-century.

Angela is supported by Ros Huxley whose novel *Kendal Acts Up*, is published by local imprint WriteSideLeft, while Lesley Gillilan, shares her work-in-progress, *Creatures of Habit*. Two hours, with interval.

BECOME A FRIEND

Be part of our story

The Friends of Bridport Literary Festival are vital in supporting the Festival's work, helping to bring an inspiring and diverse programme of writers, thinkers and storytellers to West Dorset.

Enjoy the benefits

- The festival brochure sent direct to your door
- A priority early booking window before tickets are released to the general public
- Free postal booking with no additional fees
- Invitations to exclusive Friends events and gatherings
- An annual Friends celebration
- Regular Festival news and updates
- Opportunities to become more involved and support the festival

How to join

Annual Friends membership are available for individuals (£20) and couples (£30). To sign up, go to **bridlit.com**.



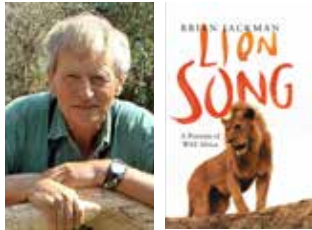
 **Tuesday 10 Nov**
 **6.30pm**
 **£12|£30 2 course supper**
 **Sladers Yard**

 **Tuesday 10 Nov**
 **7.00pm**
 **£10**
 **Bull Ballroom**

Wednesday 11 Nov

EVENT 36

MEMOIR



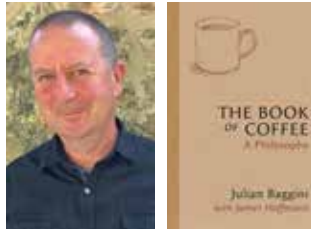
BRIAN JACKMAN *Lion Song*

For over five decades, Brian Jackman has reported from the front lines of African wildlife conservation. In *Lion Song*, Britain's foremost safari writer reflects on a lifetime tracking the continent's megafauna, from his first encounter with a roaring lion in the Maasai Mara to the famous Marsh Lions, which he documented for the BBC's *Big Cat Diary*. Blending vivid field reporting with reverence for the natural world, Jackman chronicles Africa's changing wilderness through meetings with legendary naturalists like George Adamson and firsthand accounts of the war against poaching.

Part memoir and part call to action, this narrative charts the retreat of wild spaces while celebrating a continent where, for now at least, the rulers of the savanna are still free to greet the dawn. Chaired by **Sam Rose**.

EVENT 37

FOOD & DRINK



JULIAN BAGGINI *The Book of Coffee* A Philosophy

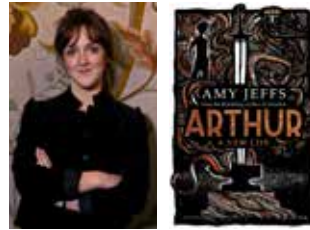
Julian Baggini has long been fascinated by the philosophical ideas behind how we eat and drink. The chance discovery in Tokyo of a copy of *The Book of Tea* by Kakuzō Okakura (published in 1906) led him on a journey to explore our relationship with coffee.

In *The Book of Coffee* (co-authored with James Hoffmann), Baggini considers how a humble bean transformed global commerce and fuelled the European Enlightenment, continuing to influence the way we work and socialise. What can the world's favourite hot drink teach us about the art of living?

Ticket price includes a freshly brewed cup of hot coffee and a *biscotto*, served within the delightfully informal setting of Mercato Italiano.

EVENT 38

FOLKLORE



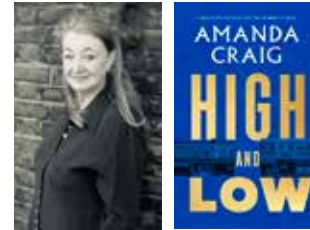
AMY JEFFS *Arthur* A New Life

Historian, artist, musician and author of the *Sunday Times* bestsellers *Storyland* and *Wild*, Dr Amy Jeffs turns her focus to Britain's most enduring legend. Known for bringing ancient folklore to life through meticulous research and her own beautifully bold line drawings, Jeffs gives fresh form to a story we only think we know.

Drawing from early medieval Welsh, Latin and French sources, she strips away Victorian romanticism to resurrect an earlier, earthier Arthur: a warlord raised by fairies, leader of the Wild Hunt and monster-slayer. Journeying from deep forests to the underworld, Jeffs explores how these ancient stories were continually reshaped to serve the political needs of their day. In conversation with the writer **James Crowden**.

EVENT 39

FICTION



AMANDA CRAIG *High and Low*

Few novelists capture the "state of the nation" better than Amanda Craig, who we're delighted to welcome back to the festival.

High and Low is the latest in her gripping and eagle-eyed depictions of Britain today. Set in a six-hour timeframe, a small group of writers, bakers and shopkeepers are under siege from an armed mob. Inside a café, they have nothing but books and flour to defend not just themselves, but a child being hunted by a gang.

This is a fascinating novel about moral choices made in extreme situations. What do we owe strangers, neighbours or even our enemies? Amanda Craig is the author of 10 novels, including *A Vicious Circle*, *The Three Graces*, *Hearts and Minds* and *The Lie of the Land*.

EVENT 40

VISUAL ARTS



JUDITH MACKRELL *Artists, Siblings, Visionaries*

The Lives and Loves of Gwen and Augustus John

Acclaimed biographer and former *Guardian* critic Judith Mackrell examines the entwined lives of two artistic giants. While Augustus achieved early fame as a bohemian prodigy, his reclusive sister Gwen combined a devotion to her subtle portraits with a series of obsessive romantic affairs in Paris.

Shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Non-Fiction, Mackrell's exceptional dual biography explores their fierce sibling rivalry, shared obsession with absolute creative freedom and complex private lives. She reveals how two strikingly different personalities, reshaped British art. Chaired by **Gill Pyrah**.

Sponsored by Bettina & Michael Pescod

EVENT 41

POLITICS



TOBIAS ELLWOOD *Ten Steps to Prevent World War Three*

Putin's Russia at the throat of Ukraine. War across the Middle East. China seeking leadership of the Global South. Nuclear-armed rogue states. The world is closer than it ever has been to midnight on the Doomsday Clock. So how worried should we be?

In conversation with former BBC correspondent **Andrew Cassell**, politician and military veteran Tobias Ellwood introduces his book *Ten Steps to Prevent World War Three*.

Drawing on his frontline service in the Royal Green Jackets and his experience as a defence minister and chair of the House of Commons Defence Select Committee, Ellwood and asks what the west can do to avert the unthinkable.

Sponsored by Barry Mawhinney Helen & Andrew Carless

📅 Wednesday 11 Nov
🕒 10.30am
💷 £12
📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Wednesday 11 Nov
🕒 10.30am
💷 £15
📍 Mercato Italiano

📅 Wednesday 11 Nov
🕒 12noon
💷 £12
📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Wednesday 11 Nov
🕒 1.30pm
💷 £12
📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Wednesday 11 Nov
🕒 3.00pm
💷 £14
📍 Bridport Arts Centre

📅 Wednesday 11 Nov
🕒 4.30pm
💷 £16.50
📍 Electric Palace



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Wednesday 11 Nov

EVENT 42

MEMOIR



DEBBIE MCGEE A Magical Life

Famously, and cruelly, the comedian Caroline Aherne asked Debbie McGee: "What attracted you to the millionaire Paul Daniels?" But the ultimate magician's "assistant" has had the last laugh.

Her self-described "first and only" memoir depicts a rich and varied life. A dancer by trade, she spent time at the Royal Ballet School before joining Iran's national ballet – having to flee the country during the revolution. While she is universally recognised as Daniels' wife, few people know she was the first woman to be admitted to the Magic Circle.

One of the great showbiz survivors talks to journalist **Teddy Jamieson** about her life on and off stage, facing breast cancer, coping with the public loss of her husband, and finding a new fanbase through *Strictly*.

EVENT 43

FOLKLORE



MARTIN MAUDSLEY Common Threads

Storyteller and writer Martin Maudsley weaves together a performance piece specially commissioned for the festival, mixing folklore, oral history and personal experience.

Since moving to Dorset in 2013, Martin has been researching, recording and re-imagining stories about Bridport and its surrounding landscapes. Drawing on many of these colourful strands, *Common Threads* is a spoken word tapestry of living voices and traditional heritage, delivered for the first time in the newly renovated workshop space of Oxenbury's Yard. A passionate praise-song to town and country, people and place. "Martin is a master craftsman, telling old tales with new resonance", Aberystwyth Storytelling Festival.

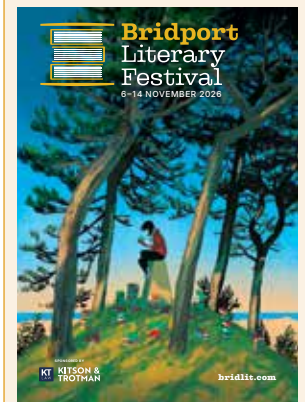
DESIGN NOTES

Our logo

The festival's new logo is designed by Krista Robertson. It takes inspiration from Bridport's rope and yarn-making history and the spools used to store and ship yarn. The typeface is Queensbury which Krista describes as "classic with just a hint of quirkiness".

Our cover

This year's specially commissioned cover illustration is by the Bridport-based artist Paul Blow, and is inspired by the view from Colmer's Hill and the idea of reading and nature as a haven. Paul is an award-winning illustrator working for a wide variety of clients including the *Guardian*, Nike, and the New York Times. His bold conceptual illustrations mix contemporary themes with a healthy sense of the absurd. In 2024, he was awarded the V&A Illustration Award for Advertising and Commercial. paulblow.com



Wednesday 11 Nov
6.30pm
£15
Electric Palace

Wednesday 11 Nov
8.00pm
£10
Oxenbury's Yard

EVENT 44

FOLKLORE



JON WOOLCOTT *The Tattooed Hills*

Journeys to Chalk Figures

Across the downlands of Britain, giant white horses, warriors and regimental badges are etched into the chalk. These landmarks have captured the human imagination for centuries, permanently altering the contours of our countryside.

In *The Tattooed Hills*, Dorset-based writer and publisher Jon Woolcott explores iconic sites – from the Cerne Abbas Giant to the Uffington White Horse – tracing how each generation has reinterpreted, maintained and even fabricated these hill figures. Blending travelogue, folklore and cultural history, Woolcott examines how these carvings reflect our relationship with the land. Are they timeless symbols of local identity or mirror images of our changing anxieties?

Sponsored by David & Sue Orr

EVENT 45

FOOD & DRINK



HUGH FEARNLEY-WHITTINGSTALL *High Fibre Heroes*

Join the broadcaster, writer and food campaigner Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall for a feast of an event. Best known for his *River Cottage* TV series, bestselling books and his passion for food focused on local, seasonal and ethically produced ingredients, Hugh has reshaped the conversation around how we eat.

Now he's determined to help us all eat more fibre, conjuring 100 recipes from 12 of the most versatile and readily available vegetables. He'll be chewing things over with the journalist **Teddy Jamieson**.

"Only Hugh could take on a subject like fibre and transform it into something interesting, desirable and delicious," Meera Sodha.

Sponsored by
Pippa & Hugo James

EVENT 46

BIOGRAPHY



LUCY HUGHES-HALLETT *Cleopatra*

Histories, Dreams and Distortions

For two thousand years, Cleopatra has been continually reinvented: medieval emblem of wifely devotion, Renaissance beauty, Romantic *femme fatale* and Hollywood temptress. Yet these archetypes tell us less about Egypt's last pharaoh than about the preoccupations, racial politics and erotic fantasies of the cultures that constructed them.

Samuel Johnson Prize-winning biographer Lucy Hughes-Hallett examines the historical monarch alongside her legion of imaginary counterparts. From hostile Roman propaganda to modern pop culture, Hughes-Hallett disentangles the astute political strategist from centuries of myth-making. "Brilliant and discursive", Antonia Fraser.

Sponsored by Flora Hood

EVENT 47

MEMOIR



ED DAVEY *Why I Care*

And Why Care Matters

Care is the thread that runs through Sir Ed Davey's life. At four, he lost his father. When his mother also became ill with cancer, Ed and his brothers nursed her until she died when Ed was just 15, and that experience was one of his main inspirations to enter politics. Now he and his wife care for their son, who has severe physical and learning disabilities.

In *Why I Care*, the Liberal Democrat Leader reveals his deeply moving personal story. Shedding light on the often invisible, he calls for society and government to lift up the silent carers who form the backbone of our communities. He talks about his experiences with former BBC correspondent **Andrew Cassell**.

Sponsored by Fenella Wynford

EVENT 48

POLITICS



STEVE CRAWSHAW *Prosecuting the Powerful*

War Crimes and the Battle for Justice

Putting a ruling dictator in the dock once seemed unthinkable. Today, as international warrants for world leaders mount, that is changing.

Author and human rights advocate Steve Crawshaw introduces his book *Prosecuting the Powerful*. Drawing on his career as a foreign correspondent for the Independent and senior director at both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, Crawshaw offers a front-row seat to the fight against state impunity. From the Nuremberg trials to today's investigations in Gaza, he brings to life the prosecutors, whistleblowers and survivors challenging political crimes. Is the era of immunity for despots coming to an end?

EVENT 49

BIOGRAPHY



SARA WHEELER *Jan Morris*

A Life

Jan Morris led a life as vast as her literary output. A pioneering journalist who scooped the 1953 Everest ascent, covered the Eichmann trial and authored acclaimed works on Venice and the British Empire, Morris was equally famed for her 1970s gender transition, a groundbreaking journey documented in her classic memoir, *Conundrum*.

Award-winning biographer Sara Wheeler discusses her authorised life of the literary icon. Granted unrestricted access to Morris's personal diaries and archives, Wheeler moves beyond the public persona to explore a brilliant, contradictory figure: a Welsh nationalist who wasn't Welsh, an intrepid traveller who sought the meaning of home, and an unyielding romantic.

Sponsored by Felicity Fairbairn

📅 Thursday 12 Nov
🕒 10.00am
💷 £12
📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Thursday 12 Nov
🕒 11.30am
💷 £14
📍 Bridport Arts Centre

📅 Thursday 12 Nov
🕒 1.00pm
💷 £12
📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Thursday 12 Nov
🕒 2.30pm
💷 £16.50
📍 Electric Palace

📅 Thursday 12 Nov
🕒 4.00pm
💷 £12
📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Thursday 12 Nov
🕒 5.30pm
💷 £14
📍 Bridport Arts Centre



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Thursday 12 Nov

EVENT 50

FICTION



IMANI THOMPSON *Honey*

Yrsa doesn't mean to kill the first time, when she knocks a bee into her hated professor's Sanpellegrino. But it's a delicious feeling finally having some control. So who's next?

Imani Thompson's novel about a bored graduate student who murders "bad men" in the name of feminism provoked a 10-way auction between publishers, drawing comparisons with *My Sister*, *the Serial Killer*, *Butter* and *Yellowface*.

She talks about why a darkly comic thriller is the ideal vehicle to talk about race and misogyny – and why she's the most unlikely creator of a serial killer imaginable.

Raised in Dorset, Imani Thompson is a British writer of Scottish, Irish and Jamaican heritage. After studying Sociology at Cambridge University, she worked as a bookseller. "Wow, basically", Harriet Tyce.

Thursday 12 Nov
 7.00pm
 £8
 Bull Ballroom

EVENT 51

HISTORY



LITERARY DINNER TIM BOUVERIE *Allies at War*

We are delighted to welcome prize-winning historian Tim Bouverie as our guest speaker at this year's George Millar Literary Dinner. Tim will be speaking about his latest book *Allies at War: The Rivals who Defeated Hitler*.

This compelling and timely piece of scholarship from the author of the bestselling *Appeasing Hitler* tells the story of the coalition of nations that produced victory in 1945, but also the start of a new global rivalry still being felt today.

Winner of this year's Pol Roger Duff Cooper Prize, *Allies at War* is a fast-paced narrative history that uses vivid, first-hand accounts, unpublished diaries and material drawn from over a hundred archives to produce a blow-by-blow account of the high-stakes diplomacy that was every bit as

vital in securing victory as the battles fought and won in the field. The result is a novel and illuminating way to tell the story of the second world war.

The ticket price includes welcome drinks and a three-course dinner from the kitchens of Symondsburys Estate.

Sponsored by
Johnnie & Sophie Boden

LITERARY DINNER

George Millar DSO MC, Croix de Guerre and Legion d'Honneur

The Literary Dinner is held every year in memory of George Millar (*above right*) who for 50 years lived in West Dorset until his death in 2005. His war memoirs and his books on sailing continue to be enjoyed by readers of all ages.



EVENT 52

BIOGRAPHY



PETER STANFORD *Gaudi*

God's Architect

Today Antoni Gaudí's unfinished basilica, La Sagrada Família, welcomes five million visitors a year. Yet its creator died in a pauper's hospital after he was hit by a tram and mistaken for a tramp. What led him to this fate?

Even in the centenary year of his death, much about this unworldly genius remains a mystery. *Telegraph* writer Peter Stanford tries to make sense of it, treading in the great man's footsteps from the Catalan countryside to industrial Barcelona, a city in which Gaudí was at once a loner and a celebrity.

This revelatory biography explores how the tragedies and triumphs of Gaudí's life connect, and how the architect's work drew on his religious faith. He talks to broadcaster **Gill Pyrah**.

EVENT 53

HISTORY



LUKE PEPERA *Motherland*

A Journey Through 5,000 Years of African History

For centuries, Africa's kaleidoscopic history has been viewed through a narrow, often colonial lens – but its true heritage spans an astonishing 500,000 years.

Join historian, archaeologist, and broadcaster Luke Pepera as he discusses his groundbreaking book, *Motherland*. A brilliant presenter of his subject, Pepera brings to life a remarkable cast of characters, from the wealthiest rulers of the ancient world to fierce warrior queens who defeated the Romans.

Moving effortlessly between ancient empires and modern pop culture, he reveals how African history shapes our world today. "Wonderful and illuminating ... an essential read", Simon Sebag Montefiore.

EVENT 54

FOOD & DRINK



MARY BERRY *Mary All in One*

Join broadcaster and cook Dame Mary Berry in conversation with the author and food writer **Lucy Brazier**.

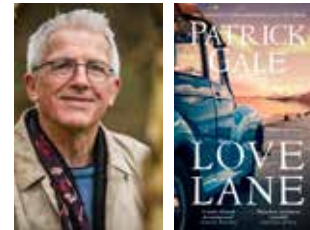
This event marks the publication of *Mary: All in One*, a collection celebrating effortless, one-dish cooking. Alongside these new recipes, from chicken tartiflette to strawberry and white chocolate cheesecake, the discussion will trace Mary's journey from her classic Cordon Bleu training in Paris during the 1950s to her decades spent teaching Britain how to cook and her time as a judge on *The Great British Bake Off*.

An intimate and lively hour in the company of a woman who for over half a century has helped shape the way the nation gathers round the table and made us all aware of our "soggy bottoms".

Sponsored by
Symonds & Sampson

EVENT 55

FICTION



PATRICK GALE *Love Lane*

One of Britain's best-loved storytellers returns to Bridport Literary Festival to talk about his beguiling new work of fiction, an epic portrait of what it means to make a home spanning three generations of one family.

Although it's a standalone novel, *Love Lane* features one of Gale's most memorable characters, Canadian farmer Harry Cane, protagonist of the Costa Award-shortlisted *A Place Called Winter*. Forced to sell up on the prairies and return to a Britain transformed by two world wars, he receives a mixed reception from his family. Can Harry make a new life for himself or will he be cast out again?

Patrick talks with fellow novelist **Raffaella Barker**. "A tender, delicately devastating novel", Sarah Waters.

Sponsored by
Maggie & John Mills

EVENT 56

PSYCHOLOGY



CATHERINE CARR *Who's the Favourite?*

The loving, messy realities of sibling relationships

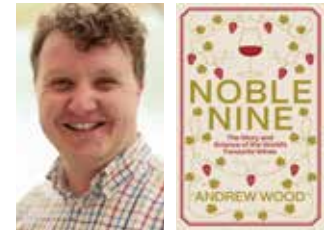
Ever wondered if parents really do have a favourite child? BBC radio presenter, podcaster and producer Catherine Carr unpacks one of family life's last remaining taboos. Stripping away the guilt and secrecy surrounding the subject, she'll be diving into the dynamics of parental bias.

Carr explores why favouritism happens, how it affects both the chosen and the sidelined child, and the unexpected ways these early dynamics dictate our romantic relationships and even career choices as adults. It promises to be an eye-opening, hilarious and perhaps liberating hour. Chaired by **Mary Morris**.

"Truly enlightening, charming and moving", Jane Garvey

EVENT 57

FOOD & DRINK



ANDREW WOOD *Noble Nine*

The Story and Science of the World's Favourite Wines

Join plant biologist and wine expert Dr Andrew Wood upstairs at Mercato Italiano for a fascinating look at the world's most popular drink. Andrew introduces his book *Noble Nine*, which explores the history and science behind the nine "noble" grape varieties that have traditionally dominated wine racks. He shares the human stories behind every bottle, from 18th-century French peasants discovering sweet Sauternes by accident, to how modern science is protecting our greatest vineyards from climate change.

This event will offer a fresh perspective on how botany, climate and culture intertwine in every glass. Tickets include a glass of wine or soft drink and table snacks.

📅 Friday 13 Nov

🕒 10.00am

💷 £12

📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Friday 13 Nov

🕒 11.30am

💷 £12

📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Friday 13 Nov

🕒 1.00pm

💷 £18

📍 Electric Palace

📅 Friday 13 Nov

🕒 3.00pm

💷 £16.50

📍 Electric Palace

📅 Friday 13 Nov

🕒 4.30pm

💷 £12

📍 Bull Ballroom

📅 Friday 13 Nov

🕒 5.00pm

💷 £20

📍 Mercato Italiano



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12-2/5.30-6.30pm



Friday 13 Nov

EVENT 58

NATURE



PANEL

Future Rural

Imagining Tomorrow's
Countryside

What might the countryside of
tomorrow look like? That's the
question asked in *Future Rural*,
a new collection of essays
published by Little Toller.

Roger Mortlock, Chief
Executive of the Campaign
to Protect Rural England, will
be joined by some of the
contributors including **Kim
Squirrel** and **Sophie Gregory**.
Together they will explore how
climate change, nature recovery,
housing needs, farming and,
above all, creative thinking are
reshaping rural Britain.

A lively and timely conversation
that celebrates the power of
writing to inspire change, offering
an optimistic, imaginative vision
of the landscapes, communities
and stories that will change
the countryside for future
generations.

Friday 13 Nov
 6.00pm
 £10
 Bull Ballroom

EVENT 59

MUSIC



LESLEY-ANN JONES The Tanya Bruce- Lockhart Event

David Bowie's
HunkyDory Live

Lesley-Ann Jones has a very
personal perspective on David
Bowie. As a schoolgirl, she first
came across him when he was
just Davie Jones. It was before
he was famous. But, in suburban
Beckenham, Kent, he was
already a local hero.

One day she and a friend
knocked on his door. He
answered in a dirty yellow
kimono and invited them in for
tea. She was charmed. While
Bowie would go on to global
stardom, she would become
one of the UK's leading music
journalists, her early experiences
informing her acclaimed
biography, *David Bowie: Hero*.

In this event, introduced by
Jamie Giles, Lesley-Ann will lead
the audience through Bowie's
iconic 1971 album *HunkyDory*

track by track, using each song to
offer insight into his life and work.

Having worked as a
showbusiness correspondent,
Lesley-Ann Jones became a
full-time author in 1997 and
has written more than twenty
books about the music industry,
including works on Freddie
Mercury, John Lennon and Marc
Bolan. This event will be followed
by a drinks reception for friends
of Tanya Bruce-Lockhart.

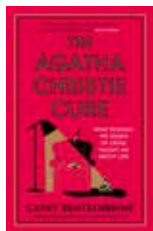
In association with
Clocktower Records

ABOUT THIS EVENT

The Tanya Bruce-Lockhart
event marks the life and
interests of BridLit's much-
missed co-founder. This
year we explore one of
Tanya's musical loves, David
Bowie, who she described
as: "Probably the most
intelligent man of popular
music I've had to interview
and spend time with."

Friday 13 Nov
 8.00pm
 £12
 Oxenbury's Yard

EVENT 60 NON FICTION



CATHY RENTZENBRINK *The Agatha Christie Cure*

What Reading the Queen of Crime Taught Me about Living

Cathy Rentzenbrink fell in love with Agatha Christie's novels aged nine, after her grandmother paid her 10p for every mystery she finished. It turned her into an avid reader, but soon she left the Queen of Crime behind.

Only when she was facing the end of her marriage, did she turn once more to Christie's books, discovering in them the comfort and emotional support she craved. She talks to **Lucy Brazier** about the healing power of our greatest crime writer.

Cathy Rentzenbrink worked as a bookseller and as an editor at the *Bookseller*, before becoming the bestselling author of *The Last Act of Love* and many other titles.

EVENT 61 MEMOIR



TONY PARSONS *Man and Dog*

A Love Story

"Nobody will ever love you like a dog": Tony Parsons wrote a newspaper column about the loss of his beloved spaniel, Stan, a bandy-legged bundle of joy, loyalty and bright red fur, the story went viral on the internet.

Now it has inspired this deeply affecting and very funny memoir. Set against the backdrop of Tony's life in Hampstead and daily walks across the Heath – with its rolling hills, ponds and cast of star-studded, dog-walking neighbours – *Man and Dog* brilliantly brings to life the eternal love affair between humans and their canine companions. He talks to **Jo Willett**. Tony Parsons is an award-winning journalist and bestselling novelist. His multi-million selling novel *Man and Boy* won the British Book of the Year prize in 2000.

EVENT 62 FICTION



REBECCA PERRY *May We Feed the King?*

Winner of the Waterstones Debut Fiction Prize 2026 and longlisted for the Booker Prize, Rebecca Perry is an impressively original new voice.

An intricate exploration of how we construct history, *May We Feed the King* tells the story of a 21st-century curator at a medieval palace who is drawn deeper and deeper into the life of its former occupants, a reluctant ruler and the courtiers who scheme to replace him.

Why is she turning to the past to hide from her present? And what drives a monarch to risk the future of their kingdom? This playful meditation on history and storytelling has become one of the most talked about novels of the year. Chaired by **Adrian Turpin**. Sponsored by **Deirdre & Howard Coates**

EVENT 63 NON FICTION



ZAKIA SEWELL *Finding Albion*

Myth, Folklore and the Quest for a Hidden Britain

Zakia Sewell is on a quest for another Britain. Criss-crossing our island, the acclaimed broadcaster is seeking out a story that transcends divisive national myths and symbols. It's to be found in otherworldly folk songs, ancient legends, Celtic rites and the stone circles punctuating our landscape.

Her journey begins at the spring equinox in Glastonbury, where she meets neopagans reclaiming pre-Christian traditions. At Notting Hill Carnival, she hears cultural echoes passed along the slave routes from the Caribbean, and in a Cornish winter she asks if today's new folk revival could unite a divided country. How might a mythical past inspire a brighter national future? Women's Prize longlisted.

EVENT 64 HISTORY



PAUL MASON *Reds*

A Global History of Communism

The former Channel 4 News reporter talks to journalist **Paul Lashmar** about the global history of communism.

Reds traces the history of communist ideas through the ancient world, and chronicles the rise of 19th-century anti-capitalist movements. Crucially, it asks how the idealism of millions led to mass murder and repression.

Using testimonies from perpetrators and victims, Mason offers a terrifying account of how a 20th-century political experiment became a totalitarian nightmare. He also has a warning for the present. Western democracies lack self-belief: millions in the global south see China's authoritarian development model as a viable alternative. Is history destined to repeat itself?

EVENT 65 GARDENING



SARAH RAVEN *A Year of Cut Flowers*

A Life of Growing and Arranging for All Seasons

Teacher, broadcaster and nurserywoman, Sarah Raven is a pioneer of productive, beautiful gardening. Drawing on decades of experimentation at Perch Hill, she has transformed how we think about growing flowers and food together.

Sarah shares the secrets behind year-round success, from sowing and selecting high-performing plants to designing gardens that overflow with scent, structure and seasonal interest. Join her for an inspiring and informative session that will change the way you garden, whether your patch is a windowsill or an acre – and send you home brimming with ideas. Sponsored by **Emily & Richard Cave**

Saturday 14 Nov
 10.30am
 £12
 Bull Ballroom

Saturday 14 Nov
 12 noon
 £16.50
 Electric Palace

Saturday 14 Nov
 12 noon
 £12
 Bull Ballroom

Saturday 14 Nov
 1.30pm
 £12
 Bridport Arts Centre

Saturday 14 Nov
 3.00pm
 £14
 Bridport Arts Centre

Saturday 14 Nov
 4.30pm
 £16.50
 Electric Palace



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Saturday 14 Nov

EVENT 66

FICTION



TOM COX **Everything Will Swallow You**

Eric and Carl live in Dorset in a small white cottage under the shadow of a cliff. Eric sells old records. Carl – who one might easily mistake for a dog – cooks, cleans and crochets. Tom Cox's third novel is the story of their friendship. Wandering through south-west England, they encounter local folklore and hints of a looming apocalypse. All the while, Carl's true nature remains a closely guarded secret.

One of our most original novelists talks to **Joanna Quinn** about landscape, love and the lore of the land. He'll also read from his new short-story collection.

Tom Cox's 16 books include *Villager*, the *Sunday Times* bestseller *The Good, The Bad and the Furry* and the Wainwright Prize-longlisted *21st-Century Yokel*.

Saturday 14 Nov
 4.30pm
 £12
 The Bull Ballroom

EVENT 67

HISTORY



JONATHAN FREEDLAND **The Traitors Circle**

The Rebels Against the Nazis and the Spy Who Betrayed Them

Berlin, 1943. A group of high-society anti-Nazi dissenters gather for a tea party one late summer afternoon. They form a circle of unlikely rebels, drawn from Germany's elite: two countesses, a diplomat, an intelligence officer and a pioneering headmistress. What they don't know is that someone at the table is poised to reveal their secrets to the Third Reich's most ruthless detective.

Award-winning author Jonathan Freedland discusses his remarkable study of heroism. He asks a timely question: what does it take to risk everything and stand up to tyranny?

Sponsored by
Andy & Deborah Gray

Saturday 14 Nov
 6.30pm
 £16.50
 Electric Palace

EVENT 68

MUSIC



THE BOOKSHOP BAND **Folklore (Not Taylor's Version)**

Join us for an end-of-festival celebration with Beth Porter and Ben Please of The Bookshop Band.

Since they began playing at Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights in Bath, the playful folk duo have released 13 book-inspired albums, collaborating with more than 100 authors including Philip Pullman, Rachel Joyce, Robert Macfarlane and Margaret Atwood, who has described their work as "an inspiration".

Their most recent album, *Emerge, Return* and an EP of three songs about the infamous *Oz* magazine have been produced by Pete Townsend of The Who. They'll be loosely exploring one of the themes of this year's festival, our shared folklore. "Achingly good", *New York Times*. "Just delightful", BBC Radio 2.

Saturday 14 Nov
 8.00pm
 £15
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Out of festival Events

EVENT 69

POETRY



ALICE OSWALD

Rhapsody

A Manifesto

Join the brilliant Alice Oswald as she goes in search of poetry in its original, wildest form, before it was written down and belonged to any single voice.

Rhapsody: A Manifesto begins as an attempt to "interview" Homer and becomes a thrilling exploration of an anonymous tradition that brings together singers, storytellers, mourners, nightingales and rivers.

Oswald invites us to listen to the voices that shape us, and to recognise poetry as a communal and essential human inheritance. The result is a resounding manifesto for the oral tradition. Alice Oswald has been awarded the TS Eliot Prize, Forward Poetry Prize, Griffin Poetry Prize and Costa Poetry Award. She was Oxford Professor of Poetry 2019-2024.

EVENT 70

NON FICTION



SHAUN BYTHELL

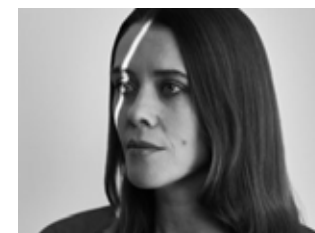
Diaries of a Bookseller

The Bookshop in Wigtown is a bookworm's paradise: Scotland's largest second-hand bookshop, a beautiful rural setting, miles of shelving and a log fire. You'd think that, after 25 years at the helm, its owner, Shaun Bythell, would be used to the customers. Don't get him wrong, there are some good ones among the porn-hunters, mystics, hagglers and drifters on day-release. But, it's fair to say, all human life is here.

After a four year absence, the *Sunday Times* bestselling diarist returns with the latest journal, described by Alan Bennett as "gentle, funny and soothing". He'll be talking about the joy of shooting Kindles and eavesdropping on customers, and why the sitcom *Black Books* is actually a documentary.

EVENT 71

WORKSHOP



ALI MILLAR

Arvon Workshop

From Life to Page

How do you begin to tell a story from life and make the personal universal? How do you keep going? Memrist and novelist Ali Millar (*The Last Days*) will teach you how to write your lived experience. Covering the mechanics of story – such as plot and character – and some of the knottier elements of life writing, including what is truth and the ethics of writing about other people. You'll leave the workshop enthused and with new perspectives. Suitable for all levels of writer.

Founded in 1968, Arvon is the UK's leading creative-writing charity, offering courses and events taught by acclaimed writers at its historic writing houses, online and, as here, in the community. Grants and concessions are available for its longer courses. 150 min.

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£10
Bull Ballroom

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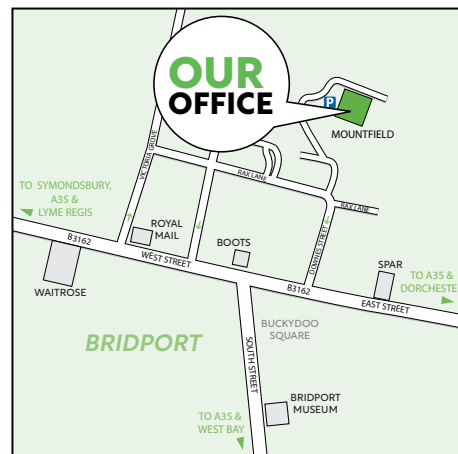


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KidLit Children's Festival

**Saturday
7 Nov**
LYRIC THEATRE

Events at the Lyric Theatre last 45 minutes unless stated. Adults attending are required to buy a ticket. Tickets are from Bridport Tourist Information Centre and online at bridlit.com.

9.30AM
Vivian French
Early Bird Stories

FREE | Ages 0-5
Start the day with stories and rhymes for pre-schoolers from Vivian French, author of the wildly popular Tales from the Five Kingdoms series among 300 other books! 30 min. Event C01.

10.15AM
Jasbinder Bilan
Girl with a Sabretooth Tiger
£3 | Ages 8+

Join the Costa Children's Book Award-winner on a magical quest through prehistoric



WORKSHOPS

10.30AM-12.30PM
Holly Miller
Puppet Making Drop-in
FREE

Create your own puppet with the Lyric Theatre's in-house puppet-maker Holly Miller. She'll help you make a rod puppet of your favourite character from a book. hollymillerartist.com

1PM-3PM
Illustration Drop-in
FREE
Develop your own drawing with an expert illustrator. Everyone is welcome because everyone can draw!



1PM
Vivian French
Trouble in OGREVILLE
£3 | Ages 6-11

A hilarious adventure packed with capers, chaos and chocolate cake. Monny the Ogre needs a favour from Good King Ogle, but there's trouble in the palace. Can he and the other village ogres sort it out? Event C04.

2.15PM
Laurence Anholt
Small Stories of Great Artists
£3 | Family event

One of our greatest children's illustrators presents his classic tales of the great artists and the real children who knew them – from Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo to Picasso and Leonardo. A joyous springboard into a lifetime's love of art. Event C05.

3.30PM
The Great KidLit Draw-Off
£3 | Family event

Two teams of illustrators and authors face off. Who will come up with the weirdest story based on your suggestions? Explosively funny and fast-paced. It could get messy. 60 min. Event C06.

England. When Swallow's baby sister falls ill, she begins a dangerous trek to find the cure: a precious jade stone. Her companion? A sabretooth tiger spirit animal. Perfect for fans of Kiran Millwood Hargrave and Katherine Rundell. Event C02

11.30AM
Philip Ardagh
Bunnies in a Rocket
£3 | Ages 3-5

The Sunny Town Bunnies have travelled by bus, in a boat, on Santa's sleigh and now, in their most epic adventure of all, they're going to the moon! What could possibly go wrong? The winner of the Roald Dahl Funny Prize brings his creation gloriously to life. Event C03



Visitor information

Box office

You can buy tickets in person from the Bridport Tourist Information Centre, Bucky Doo Square. Online tickets are available for all events. Please note that in some cases you may be redirected to third-party partners. Tickets are non-refundable. In the unfortunate event of cancellation, tickets will be refunded automatically.

Events and venues

Events are 60 minutes for adults and approximately 45 minutes for children, unless otherwise stated, with author signings taking place afterwards. For events outside central Bridport, postcode addresses are provided in listings. The three main venues – the Bull, Electric Palace and Bridport Arts Centre – are within short walking distance of one another. Most events have author signings afterwards.

Children's tickets

Thanks to generous support from the Dyers' Company, we

are able to keep ticket prices low for children's events. We ask that all accompanying adults buy a ticket. Alternatively, you can buy a day for all children's events for £20 a family (up to four people, adults and children.)

Concessions

Half-price tickets are available to people 25 and under on the door for events that are not sold out. Proof of age is required. Tickets for carers are available at half price through the Bridport Tourist information centre.

Parking

Bridport has several public car parks convenient for attending festival events, including on South St, East St and Rax Lane. Please be aware of parking restrictions on market days (Saturday and Wednesday).



Digital brochure download

Scan the QR code to download a PDF version of the BridLit 2026 brochure, which will include any additional events or changes to the printed brochure.

Accessibility

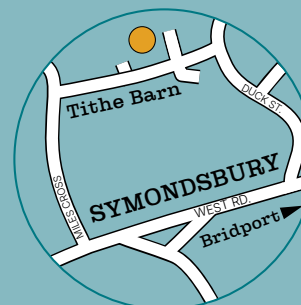
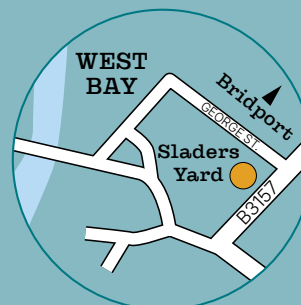
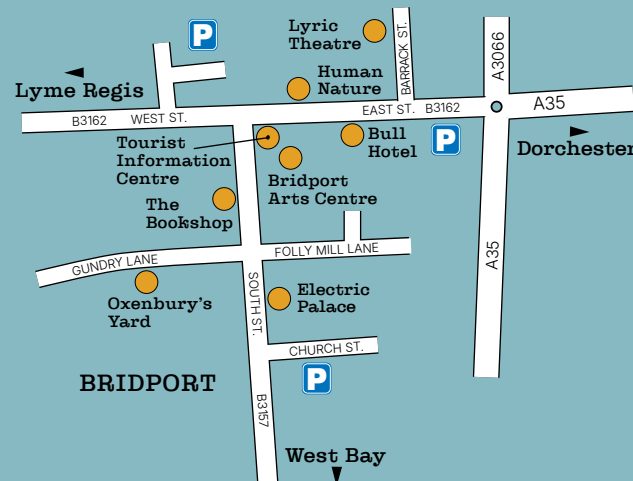
We are sorry that due to the historic nature of the venues events at The Bull and Human Nature are not fully accessible. For events at the Bull, please contact us and where possible we will provide video of events. Support dogs, such as guide dogs, are welcome in all venues. An accessibility guide is available to download on our website. We also recognise that all visitors are different: please feel free to contact us on contact@bridlit.com to discuss any individual access needs.

Contact us

Please feel free to contact our team about any aspect of your visit to the festival on contact@bridlit.com. We look forward to seeing you in Bridport. The Tourist Information Centre team will also be happy to answer questions.

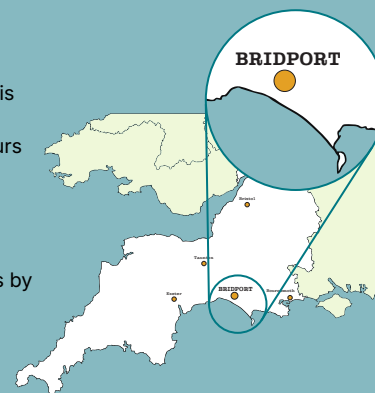
Festival map

Location & venue guide



Travel to Bridport

Situated on Dorset's Jurassic Coast, Bridport is approximately a 3.5 hour drive from London, 2 hours from Bristol and an hour from Exeter. The nearest stations are Dorchester South or West and Crewkerne, both 30 mins by road. Bus timetables are available online, or local taxi firm Voltz 08000 833 844.



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Festival Director
Adrian Turpin

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Adrien Munden
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