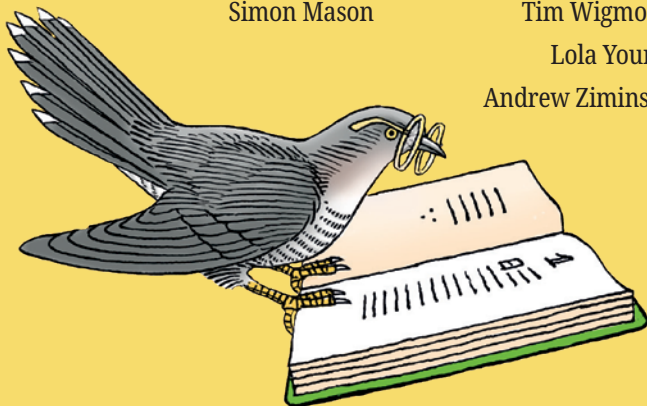


October  
3rd-5th

# CUCKFIELD BOOKFEST

Queen's Hall, High Street, Cuckfield, RH17 5EL

Annette Badland	Emma Healey	Roy McFarlane
Vernon Bogdanor	Lucy Hughes-Hallett	Roger Morgan-Grenville
Jessica Bull	Mick Jackson	Tiffany Murray
Ciar Byrne	Emma Kelly	Steve Richards
Rory Cellan-Jones	Helen Lederer	Anne Sebba
Claire Clark	Steven Lenton	Kadija Sesay
Phil Craig	Marisa Linton	Ray Shell
Iain Dale	Isabel Losada	Lucy Strange
Jane Dalton	Andrew Lownie	Jonathan Sumption
Gabriel Gatehouse	Jenna Macciochi	Helen Taylor
Sonia Grant	Iain Maclean	Michael Taylor
	Lucy Mangan	Benji Waterhouse
	Simon Mason	Tim Wigmore
		Lola Young
		Andrew Ziminski





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# Welcome to Cuckfield Bookfest 2025

'I declare, after all, there is no enjoyment like reading!' says Caroline Bingley in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Cuckfield Book Festival brings together writers of many different genres and we hope their books will provide lots of opportunities for visitors to enjoy further reading. There are several anniversaries in 2025 and we have selected five authors with connections to them.

On January 25th 1945, Auschwitz was liberated and Anne Sebba's *The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz* is a harrowing and important account of solidarity and survival.

2025 is the 250th anniversary of the birth of Jane Austen and Jessica Bull's *A Fortune Most Fatal* imagines Jane as an amateur literary sleuth.

James Baldwin was born in 1925 and *Encounters with Baldwin* is an anthology of short essays, reflections, interviews and poetry that demonstrates Baldwin's significant legacy.

Written to mark the 80th anniversary of the ending of WWII, Phil Craig's *1945: The Reckoning* focuses on the fate of India and the imperial possessions of Britain, France and Holland in the Far East.

And finally, 2025 marks the 200th anniversary of the confirmation of Gideon Mantell's discovery of the fossils of the *Iguanodon* dinosaurs in Cuckfield. Michael Taylor's *Impossible Monsters* is the riveting account of how this revolutionised our understanding of the world.

As usual, we hope that the books featured will provoke plenty of debate and discussion, with politics on the agenda and also medicine, history, the environment, sport, poetry and entertainment – and more besides. The young people also have three sessions covering different age groups.

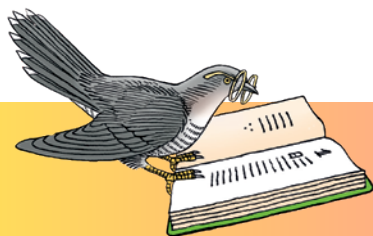
We are very grateful indeed to our sponsors whose support is indispensable to the running of Cuckfield Book Festival. As a Community Interest Company, we are entirely funded by the sale of tickets and sponsorship. Benefactors and Friends are also invaluable and there are benefits to joining us in this capacity – do go to the website for more information.

Every year, we receive many plaudits from authors, moderators and visitors about our volunteers – their warmth, friendliness and efficiency make everything run so smoothly. We are grateful to them all.

This year sees the official opening of the Queen's Hall Nature Garden. This hidden gem is in memory of Angela Fox of the theatrical family, who lived in Cuckfield most of her life. It's the perfect place to relax between sessions and enjoy the attractive plantings and the beautifully hand-crafted water feature.

Booking opens to Benefactors and Friends on 16th August and to the public on 23rd August. We look forward to welcoming you again for the ninth Cuckfield Book Festival.

**Sheila Mortimer**  
**Head of Programming**



## Follow us!



# At a Glance

## Friday 26th September

7.30pm for 8pm

Literary Quiz

Upstairs at The Talbot, Cuckfield

## Friday 3rd October

7pm for 7.30pm

Supper

Ockenden Manor, Cuckfield

## Saturday 4th October

10am (Holy Trinity Church)

Emma Kelly

Debutots **(for Children)**

10am

Iain Dale

Margaret Thatcher

10am (Upstairs)

Benji Waterhouse

You Don't Have to be Mad to Work Here

10.30am (The Talbot)

Gavin Jamieson

Local Authors

11.15am (Holy Trinity Church)

Steven Lenton

Drawing Workshop **(for Children)**

11.30am

Gabriel Gatehouse

The Coming Storm

11.30am (Upstairs)

Jessica Bull

A Fortune Most Fatal

Ciar Byrne

A Lethal Cocktail

12pm (The Talbot)

Claire Clark

Social Media Workshop

1pm (Holy Trinity Church)

Andrew Ziminski

Church Going

1pm

Steve Richards

Tony Blair

2pm (The Talbot)

Mick Jackson

Creative Writing Workshop

2.30pm

Lord Jonathan Sumption

The Challenges of Democracy

2.30pm (Upstairs)

Helen Taylor

Childless By Choice

2.30pm (Holy Trinity Church)

James Baldwin

Encounters with James Baldwin

4pm

Vernon Bogdanor

Making The Weather

4pm (Upstairs)

Baroness Lola Young

Eight Weeks

5.30pm

Isabel Losada

The Joyful Environmentalist

5.30pm (Upstairs)

Simon Mason

The Woman Who Laughed

7pm

Helen Lederer

Not That I'm Bitter

## Sunday 5th October

10am

Andrew Lownie

Entitled

10am (Upstairs)

Phil Craig

1945: The Reckoning

11.30am

Lucy Mangan

Bookish

11.30am (Upstairs)

Roger Morgan-Grenville

The Restless Coast

1pm

Michael Taylor

Impossible Monsters

1pm (Upstairs)

Dr Jenna Macciochi

Immune To Age

2.30pm

Lucy Hughes-Hallett

The Scapegoat

2.30pm (Upstairs)

Lucy Strange

Lockett & Wilde's Dreadfully

Haunting Mysteries **(for Children)**

4pm (Ockenden Manor)

Annette Badland

Poetry & Tea

4pm

Anne Sebba

The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz

4pm (Upstairs)

Tiffany Murray

My Family and Other Rock Stars

5.30pm

Tim Wigmore

Test Cricket: a History

5.30pm (Upstairs)

Rory Cellan-Jones

Sophie From Romania

7pm

Emma Healey

Big Book Club: Sweat

## LITERARY QUIZ

7.30 for 8pm

### The Hayloft at The Talbot

**£14 per person, to include a glass of wine**

The quiz is a week before the festival weekend. Tables are for six people but we can allocate tables to anyone who wishes to join individually. If you do want to come as a party of six, please be sure to make it clear when you book and to give us the names of your party.

We hope that people attending the quiz will also buy tickets for at least one other Bookfest event.



## Supper at Ockenden Manor, Cuckfield with Steve Richards

7pm for 7.30pm

**£75.00 per ticket**

Tickets include a glass of sparkling wine at the welcoming reception. A two-course meal with four bottles of wine per table of ten people will be served.

When Steve Richards came to the Book Festival supper three years ago he had his audience enthralled with his amusing and pertinent session. Once again, he will be delighting us as he shares political gossip, reveals the plots and intrigues, and throws in a few choice impressions along the way.

Tickets go on sale at 9am on 16th August for Benefactors and for everyone else on 23rd August at 9am:

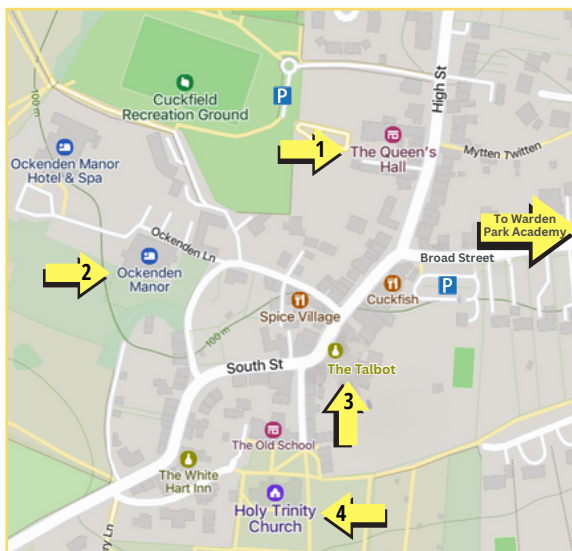
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/cuckfieldbookfest](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cuckfieldbookfest)

Early application for tickets is advised as there are only 70 tickets available.

## The four venues for Cuckfield Bookfest 2025 are:

- 1) The Queen's Hall
- 2) Ockenden Manor
- 3) The Talbot
- 4) Holy Trinity Church

Cuckfield is a small village, and easily walkable. The walk from the Queen's Hall to Holy Trinity Church takes only a few minutes. Attendees of Bookfest are welcome to park at Warden Park Academy if other (limited) car parking options are full - vehicles parked in nearby streets are parked at owners' risk.



**Please note that all events are held at the Queen's Hall, unless otherwise stated**



# Children's Events



## Saturday 4th October

## Sunday 5th October

**Emma Kelly**

**Debutots**

**10.00am - 10.45am**

**Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield**

**2-4 years**

**Tickets £8 each, regardless of age**

Bring your little ones to the church for a lively, story-themed session with *Debutots* performer, Emma Kelly who uses story to spark connection and curiosity.

*Debutots* is all about stories, along with dramatic play, music, games and wrap-around sensory activities helping children exercise their imaginations, develop their confidence, problem solve and, above all, do all this while having lots of fun!

**Children must be accompanied by an adult**



**Steven Lenton**

**How to Grow**

**11.15am - 12.15pm**

**Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield**

**4+ years**

**Tickets £8 each, regardless of age**

Join the multi award-winning illustrator Steven Lenton for a magical time with the *How To Grow* series of picture books! Learn how Sarah and Mr Pottifer grow unicorns and dragons in the latest book *Mermaids!* There will be lots of fun, storytelling, a draw-along and you will help Steven to create a UNIQUE magical creature!

Drawing materials will be provided.

**Children must be accompanied by an adult**



**Lucy Strange**

**Lockett & Wilde's  
Dreadfully Haunting  
Mysteries: The  
Ghosts of London**

**2.30pm - 3.30pm**

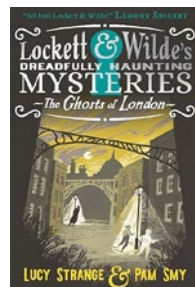
**Upstairs at Bookfest**

**8-11 years**

**Tickets £8 each, regardless of age**

Join Waterstones Prize-shortlisted author Lucy Strange as she welcomes you into her spookiest stories! In this interactive author event we'll follow Lucy's writing journey and get a sneaky peek into her creative process – including the inspiration behind her ghostly new series *Lockett & Wilde's Dreadfully Haunting Mysteries*. There'll be plenty of storytelling secrets along the way, so bring your imaginations as you'll be coming up with ideas for your very own GHOST STORY! Lucy has also kindly agreed to present the prizes to the winners of the Creative Writing Competition.

**Children must be accompanied by an adult**



**Hurst College – Platinum Sponsor**

"Books open minds and we believe in the power of stories to bring people together. Cuckfield Bookfest is a superb example of how literature can inspire, educate and unite a community. Hurst is extremely proud to have been involved in the festival since its inception."



**Dominic Mott, Head of College**

**Cumnor House Sussex – Gold Sponsor**

"We're thrilled to be supporting Cuckfield BookFest again this year — celebrating the joy of stories and the chance for young people to see their favourite books come to life.

At Cumnor, we've long cherished this event for the way it brings young readers, families, and the wider community together through a shared love of books."

**Fergus Llewellyn, Headmaster**



**Holy Trinity, Cuckfield – Supporter**



## CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION 2025

Open to 5-11 year olds

To tie in with Lucy Strange's gothic-inspired books, we invite writers to submit a description of an eerie, isolated setting. Entries should be written in English, up to 150 words.

Email entries to [cuckfieldbookfest@outlook.com](mailto:cuckfieldbookfest@outlook.com) with your name, school, year group and contact details (please ensure you have permission from a parent or guardian to send these details). Please see our website for full details.

The winners will be announced during Lucy Strange's session on Sunday 5th October.

**DEADLINE: 17TH SEPTEMBER 2025.**



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in Every Child*

## Iain Dale

with Gerry Foley

### *Margaret Thatcher*

10am - 11am

Across British politics – from Rachel Reeves to Kemi Badenoch – people are laying claim to Margaret Thatcher's legacy.

But what is that legacy?

No Brits under 53 today will have even been old enough to vote while Thatcher was in power.

In *Margaret Thatcher* Iain Dale aims to introduce a new generation to the Iron Lady – exploding many myths along the way.

Iain Dale presents his own daily LBC show and several podcasts. He is a regular on radio and television programmes and a columnist for the *Daily Telegraph*.

Daniel Finkelstein called the book: 'A compelling account ... admiring but always fair minded, and a masterpiece of compression and readability.'

As chief political correspondent for *TV-am*, Gerry Foley covered every twist and turn of her dramatic downfall.



## Dr Benji Waterhouse

with Peter Guttridge

### *You Don't have to be Mad to Work Here*

### *A Psychiatrist's Life*

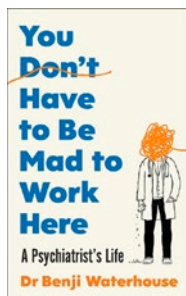
10am - 11am

### Upstairs at Bookfest

Benji Waterhouse is a front-line NHS doctor specialising in psychiatry. In this, his first book, he unlocks the doors to the psychiatric ward and provides a fascinating fly-on-the-padded-wall account of medicine's most mysterious and controversial speciality.

Why would anyone in their right mind choose to be a psychiatrist? Are the solutions to people's messy lives really within medical school textbooks? And how can vulnerable patients receive the care they need when psychiatry lacks staff, hospital beds and any actual cures?

Benji is an award-winning stand-up comedian who performs sell-out shows at the Edinburgh Festival and will be in conversation with Peter Guttridge, chairperson at many festivals.



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## The Challenges of Publishing

with Gavin Jamieson

10.30am – 11.30am

### The Hayloft at The Talbot

Three local authors will discuss the challenges, the opportunities and the preparation of writing, publishing and promoting their books. Aspiring authors will be offered advice on the writing process and a route to publication that is best for them. There will be plenty of opportunities for questions.

## Gabriel Gatehouse

with Alan Judd

### The Coming Storm

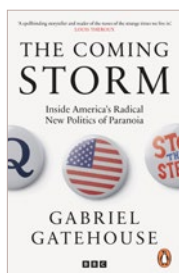
11.30am – 12.30pm

*The Coming Storm* is Gabriel Gatehouse's exploration of how conspiracy theories became weaponised and used as wrecking balls to the liberal world order. As Donald Trump lays siege to the institutions of the American state, Gatehouse traces the roots of a radical new political movement.

From the early years of the Clinton administration to the 6 January storming of the US Capitol and beyond, *The Coming Storm* reveals a loose alliance of tech bros, internet trolls and white supremacists preparing the ground for a period of epochal change. Democracy is becoming a thing of the past.

Gabriel Gatehouse is a journalist and broadcaster and the former international editor of *Newsnight*.

He will be in conversation with Alan Judd, well known to Cuckfield Book Festival audiences and a writer of spy thrillers – his most recent book is *No. 2 Whitehall Court*.



Marisa Linton is a professor of history and a prize-winning novelist. Her Young Adult fantasy book *The Binding Spell* was published in 2025. Iain Maclean is the author of *TJ's War*, a historical novel inspired by his father's life as an MI6 agent during WWII. Jane Dalton is an award-winning journalist, and her first novel *With Love from the Afterlife* is a contemporary suspense story.

Gavin Jamieson, publisher and board member of Cuckfield Book Festival will lead the discussion. *Water's Gleaming Gold*, his non-fiction memoir of the Olympian, Hugh Edwards, was published in 2023.

## Jessica Bull

### A Fortune Most Fatal

Ciar Byrne

### A Lethal Cocktail

with Melanie Whitehouse

11.30am – 12.30pm

### Upstairs at Bookfest

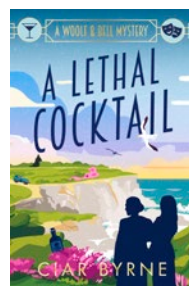
**It is a truth universally acknowledged, that every good mystery is in need of a brilliant sleuth.**

In the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth, Jessica Bull has written a delightful series featuring Jane as an amateur literary sleuth.

She is preparing to spend the summer with her estranged brother Neddy. She soon realises that he is in need of her help. Can Jane solve the mystery and save her brother and herself?

Ciar Byrne's second book in her Woolf and Bell Mystery series is centred on Tudor Close Hotel, Rottingdean where the sisters are drawn into a new case. But Virginia and Vanessa would be far happier at home. However, there is a meticulously planned murder to solve.

Both authors will be talking to Melanie Whitehouse about what drew them to writing about literary sleuths. Melanie set up the Book Lovers' Supper Club in Sussex in 2012.



Have you signed up to the  
**NEWSLETTER?**

Be the first to know all the Bookfest news and gossip!

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## Social Media Workshop

with Claire Clark

12pm – 1.30pm

**The Hayloft at The Talbot**

**£20.00 per person**

If you're an author or a small business owner, you've got something to share – but knowing what to post on social media can feel overwhelming.

In this friendly, practical workshop, you'll learn how to better connect with your audience, grow your following, and gently drive sales – without feeling pushy.

Whether you're selling books, products, or services, this session will help you show up online with confidence and ease. You'll walk away with real examples, a 2-week content plan, and fresh ideas you can start using straight away.

Claire is a professional social media manager and runs Juniper Bloom Social Media. There are only eight places on the workshop, so lots of individual attention.

## Steve Richards

**Tony Blair**

1pm – 2pm

In 1997, the Labour party came to power after a landslide victory. Its leader was Tony Blair and during the years that followed, the Blair government secured peace in Northern Ireland, introduced a minimum



wage, improved the NHS, began the long task of abolishing child poverty, established civil partnerships and imposed a smoking ban. The list could go on.

But how enduring was that legacy? How long was the shadow cast by the Iraq war? And who is the real Tony Blair? In this provocative, short biography, Steve Richards casts new light on the man and his legacy.

Presenter Steve Richards, a regular on *The Week in Westminster* on BBC Radio 4 and Sky News, also writes for several national newspapers including the *Guardian*, *Independent* and *Financial Times*.

## Andrew Ziminski

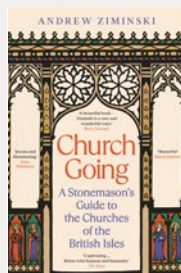
with David Thunder

**Church Going**

**A Stonemason's Guide to the Churches of the British Isles**

1pm – 2pm

**Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield**



*Church Going* is Andrew Ziminski's handbook to the medieval churches of the British Isles, in which he reveals their fascinating histories, features and furnishings, from flying buttresses to rood screens, lichgates to chancels. It is a celebration of the architectural history of the British Isles.

'A beautiful book - in which curiosity, hand-skill and creativity combine in a hymn to craftsmanship, and vernacular and sacred architecture. Ziminski is a rare and wonderful voice' – Rory Stewart

Andrew is in conversation with David Thunder, who has run church youth groups, edited parish magazines, been a Churchwarden, a Bishop's industrial advisor, and general secretary of a national church educational trust.

## Getting Started

**A Creative Writing Workshop with Mick Jackson**

2pm – 4pm

**The Hayloft at The Talbot**

**£25.00 per person**

In this workshop you'll be introduced to the basic elements of prose fiction and ways of identifying which ideas have potential and how to go about developing them. The workshop will consist of exercises and discussion of extracts from published texts in a supportive environment.

Mick Jackson is a Booker-nominated author. He teaches Creative Writing at Faber Academy and is a visiting lecturer at Goldsmiths University and West Dean College. Numbers will be limited.

## Jonathan Sumption

with Gerry Foley

### *The Challenges of Democracy and the Rule of Law*

2.30pm - 3.30pm

Across the globe, democracy is in crisis - in the UK alone, it has been rocked by Brexit, the pandemic and successive attempts by governments to bypass legal norms. But how did this happen, and where might we go from here?

Jonathan Sumption cuts through the political noise with acute analysis of the state of democracy today, addressing everything from the complexities of human rights legislation to the defence of freedom of speech.

*The Challenges of Democracy* applies the brilliance of 'the cleverest man in Britain' to the most urgent and far-reaching political issue of our day.

The *Times* said '... a timely red alert that democratic values cannot be taken for granted'

Lord Jonathan Sumption is a British judge and a historian. He will be in conversation with Gerry Foley, a regular chair at literary festivals.



## Helen Taylor

with Kate Harris

### *Childless by Choice*

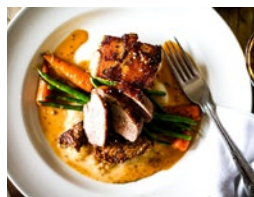
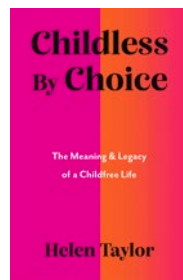
2.30pm - 3.30pm

### Upstairs at Bookfest

Drawing on a lifetime of experience as a feminist academic who chose not to have children, Helen Taylor examines the joys and complexities of her path less travelled. She traces how attitudes towards childlessness have evolved - and sometimes haven't. With unflinching honesty, she confronts the challenges of ageing without children while celebrating the freedom and opportunities her choice has provided.

Through interviews with other women, analysis of cultural attitudes and examination of literature and media, Taylor weaves a rich tapestry of what it means to live outside traditional family structures. She explores thorny questions about legacy, purpose and belonging in a world that often defines women through motherhood.

Helen Taylor and Kate Harris will be discussing this fascinating territory that has for too long been overshadowed by judgement and misconception.



## Lunch & Dinner

Set in the heart of Cuckfield village, The Talbot has a wonderful range of Lunch, Bar & Dinner Menus & of course our traditional Sunday Lunch. Add to this our extensive Wine List, regional Ales & relaxed atmosphere & there is no better place to entertain friends, family or colleagues.



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Cuckfield

## **Sonia Grant, Ray Shell and Roy McFarlane**

with Kadija Sesay

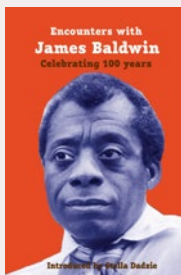
### ***Encounters with James Baldwin***

#### ***Celebrating 100 Years***

**2.30pm - 3.30pm**

### **Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield**

In this literary anthology, Sonia Grant, Ray Shell and Roy McFarlane reveal the influence of



Baldwin's thought, speech and writing on their personal journeys and their awareness of the need for social justice.

Celebrating the centenary of the birth of the trailblazing African American author, *Encounters with James Baldwin* is a wide-ranging volume of short essays, reflections, interviews and poetry. This moving collection demonstrates the significant legacy of the writer and activist who spoke truth to power during the era of the fight for Black civil liberties in the US, and after.

Kadija Sesay is a scholar-activist and co-editor of *Encounters with James Baldwin*. She has edited several other anthologies of writers of African descent, particularly of Black British writers.

## **Vernon Bogdanor**

with Fergus Llewellyn

### ***Making the Weather***

#### ***Six Politicians Who Changed Modern Britain***

**4pm - 5pm**

This is the story of six post-war politicians, all of whom exerted an outsized influence on the political life of the UK: an influence greater than that of most prime ministers. Vernon Bogdanor's cast includes three from the political Left – Aneurin 'Nye' Bevan, Roy Jenkins, and Tony Benn – and three from the Right – Enoch Powell, Keith Joseph, and Nigel Farage. Each study is a fascinating analysis that examines how these men achieved such prominence and influence and how, though very different figures in many ways, they came to dominate the political landscape, often for a period of years.

From immigration to Europe, from the NHS to devolution, the issues and causes that brought these men to prominence are still of considerable contemporary relevance.

Vernon Bogdanor is professor of government at the Institute of Contemporary History, King's College, London and was for many years professor of government at Oxford University. He is a frequent contributor to tv, radio and the press.

Fergus Llewellyn, Head of Cumnor House Sussex will be in conversation with Vernon.



## **Baroness Lola Young**

with Steven Gale

### ***Eight Weeks***

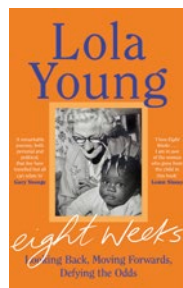
**4pm - 5pm**

#### ***Upstairs at Bookfest***

Lola Young has been an actress, an academic, an activist and campaigner for social justice, and a crossbench peer. But from the age of eight weeks to 18 years, she was moved between foster care placements and children's homes in North London.

In *Eight Weeks*, Lola assembles the pieces of her past into a portrait of a childhood in a system that often made her feel invisible and unwanted. It tells the story of her determination to defy the odds and is a spirited, eye-opening and beautifully written account of being a child in care and a Black child in a white family. It is a vital part of contemporary Black British history.

Baroness Lola Young will be talking about her life with Steven Gale who works at literary festivals all over the world.



Our Virtual Book Club, means you can catch up with authors throughout the year! Join festival favourites Helen Fry & Alan Judd discussing the SIS on Thursday 18th September.



## Isabel Losada

### *The Joyful Environmentalist*

5.30pm – 6.30pm

Finally! A book about saving our planet that is fast, funny, and inspiring.

With humour, heart, and heaps of practicality, Isabel delves into every corner of modern life – how we live and work, travel, shop, eat, drink, dress, vote, volunteer, bank – everything.



From digital decluttering to how we can use the law to protect our local environment, Isabel takes the reader on a journey of environmental action. She even goes to Knepp to question rewilding.

By the end, both narrator and reader are armed with the tools to become part of the solution.

Isabel has worked as an actress, researcher, TV producer, broadcaster, public speaker and comedian. She remains firmly committed to narrative non-fiction and swimming against the tide.

The *Guardian* says of her: 'Isabel Losada is a climate hero.'

## Simon Mason

with Lucy Atkins

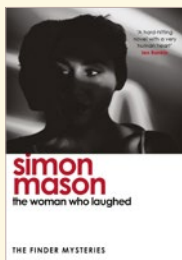
### *The Woman Who Laughed*

5.30pm – 6.30pm

#### Upstairs at Bookfest

*The Woman Who Laughed* explores a city where the past and present merge, where cameras close in on the people and streets, and where the lost and the found can coexist.

Early in 2020, there was a spate of murders in



northern cities. Five years later, another sex worker is murdered in the same district.

South Yorkshire police call in the Finder: a specialist brought in by police services but free of police department politics. So begins a search that takes the Finder back to the strange days of the pandemic.

Simon Mason says: 'Missing persons have long fascinated me. We want to know why such people disappeared. What are the emotional ramifications of a disappearance.'

Lucy Atkins, herself a writer whose most recent book *Windmill Hill* is set in Sussex, will be discussing Simon's detective fiction with him.

## Helen Lederer

with Steven Gale

### *Not That I'm Bitter*

7pm – 8pm

*Not That I'm Bitter* tells the story of Helen's journey from being what her mother called a 'show-off' to becoming a trailblazer in the male-dominated world of Alternative Comedy.

Her memoir is a mix of joy, sadness, hilarity and startling self-revelation – woven together with a witty narrative that delivers real punch.

The child of a Czech wartime refugee, Helen



was never part of the mainstream. Her memoir is bursting with big laughs and poignant moments.

'This wildly entertaining ride through Helen's fabulous life is funny, adorable, and thought-provoking in equal measure, rather like the dazzling author herself.' Joanna Lumley

Helen will be in conversation with Steven Gale, who will encourage her to reveal stories of comedy in the eighties.



There is still time to  
**SUPPORT US**

Could you be a Friend, a Benefactor, a Sponsor or a volunteer?

Please see the website for more details



## Andrew Lownie

### Entitled

#### *The Rise and Fall of the House of York*

10am – 11am

Packed full of extraordinary revelations, *Entitled* is the first joint biography of the Duke and Duchess of York, revealing how their lives are still deeply



entwined. Andrew Lownie traces the lives of the late Queen's second son and his ex-wife through their childhoods, courtship, marriage, divorce, careers and royal and charitable activities.

The picture that emerges is of a spoilt prince unable to connect and a duchess pushed by her insecurities into a desperate need to maintain the attention her 'royal' status brought.

Andrew Lownie is President of the Biographers' Club and is a Trustee of the Campaign for Freedom of Information and since 1988 has run his own literary agency. His recent books *The Mountbattens* and *Traitor King* were *Sunday Times* bestsellers.

## Phil Craig

with Gavin Mortimer

### 1945: The Reckoning

10am – 11am

#### Upstairs at Bookfest

Written to mark the 80th anniversary of the ending of the WWII, *1945: The Reckoning* is the final volume of Phil Craig's bestselling *Finest Hour* trilogy. It focuses on the fate of India and the imperial possessions of Britain, France and Holland in the Far East.

Phil has unearthed some surprising and confronting stories of what he calls 'imperial muscle memory':

moments when the public war aims of the British state – liberation and self determination for all peoples – were set aside in favour of colonial power games.

Many uncomfortable truths emerge. James Holland said of the book: 'Ambitious, deeply thought-provoking ... and compellingly told'.

Phil will be in conversation with author and military historian, Gavin Mortimer.



## Lucy Mangan

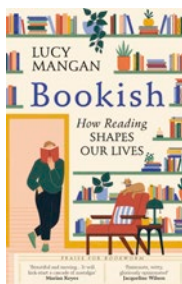
with Ana McLaughlin

### Bookish

#### *How Reading Shapes Our Lives*

11.30am – 12.30pm

*Bookish* is a coming-of-age in books. It's an ode to our



favourite bookish spaces – from the smallest second-hand bookstalls to libraries, glorious big bookshops and our very own book rooms – and a love story to how books not only shelter our souls through hard times and help us find ourselves when we feel lost, but also help us connect with the people we love through shared stories.

Lucy Mangan is the TV critic for the *Guardian*, and a columnist, features writer and reviewer. She will be in conversation with Ana McLaughlin who has worked in publishing for many years.

## Roger Morgan-Grenville

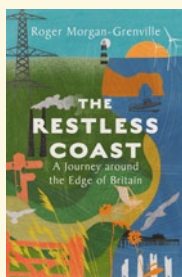
with Ruth Pavey

### *The Restless Coast* *A Journey Around the Edge of Britain*

11.30am – 12.30pm

#### Upstairs at Bookfest

The island of Britain has over 10,000 miles of coastline, steeped in history and constantly



shifting, changing, adapting and providing.

*The Restless Coast* is a moving account of a journey around this coastline during which the author travels its length and breadth.

At once delightful travelogue and passionate defence, it is informative, angry and funny and a very personal love letter to our island edge.

Roger Morgan-Grenville was a soldier from 1978-86. In 2007, he helped to set up the charity Help for Heroes, and in 2020 he was a founding member of the conservation charity, Curlew Action. He lives in West Sussex.

Roger will be in conversation with Ruth Pavey, a writer and journalist.

**Michael Taylor**  
with Hermione Cockburn

## *Impossible Monsters*

*How the Discovery of  
Dinosaurs Changed the World*

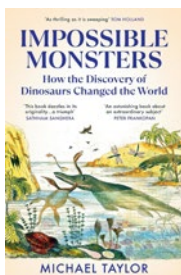
1pm – 2pm

2025 marks the 200th anniversary of the confirmation of Gideon Mantell's discovery of the fossils of the Iguanodon dinosaurs in Cuckfield.

*Impossible Monsters* takes us into the lives and minds of the extraordinary men and women whose discovery of the dinosaurs revolutionised our understanding of the world, as well as those who resisted them. It is the riveting story of a group of people who dared to think impossible things and then showed them to be true.

Sathnam Sanghera said of *Impossible Monsters* '... it dazzles in its originality ... a triumph.'

Michael lectures in Modern British History at Balliol College, Oxford. He will be in discussion with Dr Hermione Cockburn who was brought up in Cuckfield and until recently was Scientific Director of Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh.



**Dr Jenna Macciochi**  
with Jo Durrant

## *Immune to Age*

*The Game-Changing  
Science of Immune  
Health*

1pm – 2pm

### Upstairs at Bookfest

Immunologist Dr Jenna Macciochi explores the crucial role our immune system plays in longevity and reveals why understanding its impact on our health and how we age is the key to living longer, better.

*Immune to Age* is the ultimate preventative care framework that equips readers with the knowledge and tools to reclaim control over their health and ensure every year is a good one.

An immunologist specialising in nutrition, movement and lifestyle, Dr Macciochi is a senior lecturer at the University of Sussex. She will be in conversation with Jo Durrant, who often appears as an event chair at literary and science festivals across the country.



**Lucy Hughes-Hallett**

## *The Scapegoat*

*The Brilliant Brief Life of the Duke of Buckingham*

2.30pm – 3.30pm

As King James I's favourite, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham was the King's gatekeeper, right-hand man and lover. When Charles I succeeded his father, he was similarly enthralled and made Buckingham his best friend and first minister. Buckingham rapidly transformed the influence his beauty gave him into immense wealth and power.

Lucy Hughes-Hallett transports us into a courtly world of masques and dancing, the art of Rubens and Van Dyck, gender-fluidity, same-sex desire, and appallingly rudimentary medicine. Witch hunts coexisted with Francis Bacon's empiricism and public opinion was becoming a political force.

Buckingham came to represent everything that was wrong with the country. *The Scapegoat* navigates love, war-fever and pacifism in a society on the brink of cataclysmic change. In this richly compelling account, Hughes-Hallett summons an era that still resonates today.



## Anne Sebba

with Julian Worricker

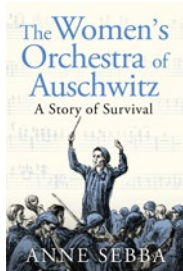
### *The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz*

4.00pm – 5.00pm

In 1943, German SS officers in charge of Auschwitz-Birkenau ordered that an orchestra should be formed among the female prisoners. What role could music play in a death camp? And how did it feel to be forced to provide solace to the perpetrators of a genocide that claimed the lives of their family and friends? In *The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz*, Anne Sebba traces these questions of moral complexity with sensitivity and care.

Drawing on meticulous archival research and first-hand accounts, Anne Sebba tells the full story of the orchestra, its members and the response of other prisoners for the first time.

Julian Worricker is back at Cuckfield talking to Anne as he did at the very first book festival in 2017 when they discussed *Les Parisiennes*.



## Tiffany Murray

with Peter Guttridge

### *My Family and Other Rock Stars*

4.00pm – 5.00pm

#### Upstairs at Bookfest

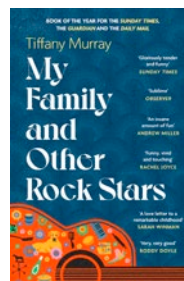
It's the late 1970s and Tiff lives with her mum, Joan, at Rockfield, the iconic recording studios. This place of legend, where some of the most famous rock albums of all time were recorded, is the background to a freewheeling whirlwind of a childhood.

*My Family and Other Rock Stars* is Tiff's remarkable story of growing up in a rural idyll, where the chances of bumping into Freddie Mercury playing piano, or even the hope of David Bowie appearing, were as normal as hopscotch and homework.

*The Independent* called it: 'Enchanting ... one of the Top Twenty Books of the Year.'

Tiffany has been a Hay Festival Fiction Fellow, a Fulbright scholar and she currently lives in a forest.

Peter Guttridge, frequent visitor to Cuckfield, will be talking to Tiffany about those far-off days.



## Poetry & Tea at Ockenden Manor

with Annette Badland

4pm – 5.30pm

Ockenden Manor

£20.00 per person

Sunday afternoon at Cuckfield Book Festival wouldn't be the same without Annette Badland introducing us to some poetry readings. This year, she has selected the American poet, Mary Oliver who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1984. She found inspiration for her work in nature and had a lifelong habit of solitary walks in the wild. Her poetry is characterised by wonderment at the natural environment, vivid imagery, and unadorned language.

As usual, Annette will be happy to talk about her work too – this year has been busy with a new series of *Ted Lasso* coming up, and more *Midsomer Murders*. She also starred in a double bill of Caryl Churchill plays at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester.

Tea and delicious cake will be served in the elegance of Ockenden Manor. Numbers are limited.



## Tim Wigmore

with Peter Guttridge

### **Test Cricket A History**

**5.30pm - 6.30pm**

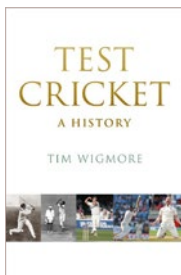
Test cricket is on the cusp of its 150th anniversary. *Test Cricket: A History* tells the story of the players and stories that have shaped the game's evolution since 1877.

Tim Wigmore brings to life both Test cricket on the pitch and the game's social significance around the world. This tour is illuminated by dozens of exclusive interviews with the game's greatest players.

From Bodyline to Bazball, the Golden Age to the rise of West Indies, and Shane Warne to Ian Botham, this is the perfect single volume history for any cricket fan.

Tim Wigmore is the award-winning *Daily Telegraph* cricket correspondent.

Peter Guttridge, himself a long-time cricket fan, will be talking to Tim.



## Rory Cellan-Jones

with Julian Worricker

### **Sophie From Romania**

**5.30pm - 6.30pm**

**Upstairs at Bookfest**

Adopting a pet can be challenging. Rory Cellan-Jones received the trembling Sophie in a van from Central Europe and thus began the process of growing together through love, kindness and a great deal of patience. *Sophie from Romania* follows the journey of her adoption – as Rory and his wife work with a dog trainer to win her trust, and navigate Rory's Parkinson's disease diagnosis.

Rory Cellan-Jones was the BBC's principal technology correspondent until 2021. He now writes an influential *Substack* column on medical innovation, tech and Sophie. Together with Jeremy Paxman and several others he has begun a new podcast on Parkinson's called *Movers and Shakers*.

Julian Worricker, frequent visitor to Cuckfield Bookfest, will be talking to Rory.



## The Big Book Group

## Emma Healey

with Jo Durrant

### **Sweat**

**7pm – 8pm**

All Liam ever wanted was to help Cassie reach her full potential; to push her body to new extremes. But one day he pushes Cassie too far and she walks out of their toxic relationship for good.

Two years on and Cassie is stronger, fitter and healthier than ever before. And then she sees Liam. But she holds the power now. It's Liam's turn to sweat.

Emma Healey explores obsession, revenge and control in this blend of wellness culture and a slow-burn feminist thriller.

*Elizabeth is Missing* by Emma won the Costa First Novel award in 2014.

Emma will be talking to Jo Durrant who worked for BBC Radio before becoming freelance. She now appears at many literary festivals as an event chair.



# Thanks

As usual, there are so many people who help us with running the festival and to whom we extend our thanks and gratitude.

Since we began in 2017, Hurstpierpoint College has been our Platinum sponsor and we thank them again this year. Cumnor House and Adelphi Holdings are Gold sponsors – thanks to them and to other sponsors whose categories are listed below.

We welcome new sponsors, both corporate and individual. For full details of sponsorship, please contact [sponsorship@cuckfieldbookfest.co.uk](mailto:sponsorship@cuckfieldbookfest.co.uk)

## Sponsors

### Educational Sponsors

**Platinum** - Hurst College

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### Sponsors

**Gold** - Adelphi Holdings

**Silver** - The Cockburn Charitable Trust, Ockenden Manor Hotel

**Bronze** - The Cadogan Clinic, Cuckfield Bathrooms, Mrs Maggie Kapff, P&S Gallagher

## Thanks also go to Supporters of the Festival:

Chez Fleur, Cuckfield Life, Cuckfield Society, Cuckfish, David Foord-Brown Antiques, Hamptons, Helme & Hallett Ltd, Independent State of Cuckfield, jojo Boutique, the Literary Quiz compilers, RH Uncovered, The Talbot, The Wheatsheaf Inn.

Our thanks also go to Cuckfield Dramatic Society, Cuckfield Museum, Louis Mackay, Parish Council staff and Waterstones.

(And apologies to anyone we have missed!)

## Benefactors

We would like to extend a warm thanks to our Benefactors for their very generous support:

Gwyn and Meg Price

Nicole Patterson

Carole Hayward

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Jeff Thompson

Marie Dormer

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Miranda and Richard Grainger

Elsbeth Chasser

Bridget Keates

David Mortimer

David and Patricia Butcher

Simon and Sandie Rothern

We are enormously grateful to all those who choose to support us as Friends or Benefactors of Cuckfield Bookfest. For information on how to sign up, please visit the Bookfest website.

## VOLUNTEERS

Cuckfield Bookfest would not take place without the energy and commitment of volunteers. We know from comments received from authors and visitors that our volunteers add greatly to the smooth running and the enjoyment of all those who come to the festival. Many thanks to everyone who helps.

If you would like to get involved, please contact [info@cuckfieldbookfest.co.uk](mailto:info@cuckfieldbookfest.co.uk). We would particularly welcome help on event days and putting up posters and banners in September.

**Management Team:** Claire-Louise Clark, Paul Davey, Miranda Grainger, Patricia Hegarty, Sally Nakajima, Jane Barker, Lesley-Anne Billis and Jenni Chance.

**Cuckfield Bookfest Board:** Shauna Bevan, Gavin Jamieson, Andrew Lownie, Sarah McConnell, Sheila Mortimer, Julia Webb, Allie Young and Carol Jarvest.



# How to Book

**Booking opens for Sponsors, Benefactors and Friends<sup>†</sup> at 9am on Saturday 16th August.**

**Booking opens to the public at 9am on Saturday 23rd August.**

**Booking for the Supper opens for Benefactors<sup>†</sup> at 9am on Saturday 16th August, and for everybody else at 9am on Saturday 23rd August.**

Booking for the Quiz will not open to anyone until 9am on Saturday 23rd August.

<sup>†</sup>The advance booking requires the password sent to the appropriate supporters.

## ONLINE BOOKINGS

You can buy all tickets, including supper, online with **NO EXTRA BOOKING FEE CHARGES** at:

**[www.ticketsource.co.uk/cuckfieldbookfest](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cuckfieldbookfest)**

or via the link on the website:

**[www.cuckfieldbookfest.co.uk](http://www.cuckfieldbookfest.co.uk)**

An automatic 10% discount will be applied (and shown before payment) when you buy tickets for 5 or more different £14 events (except for the Quiz).

Do apply for your tickets early as some events are expected to sell out quickly.

## IN PERSON

You can also buy tickets in person (cash or card) at jojo Boutique, 45 High Street, Cuckfield during normal office hours.

We welcome 12-24 year olds and invite you to pay at the door for half-price tickets for events priced at £14, providing space is available.

## ON THE DOOR

While we recommend advance booking for all events, if seats or cancellations are available, you can buy these at the door on the day (cash or card) at the Queen's Hall.

## INFORMATION

Tickets are non-refundable unless the event is cancelled.

Where possible we usually allow tickets to be exchanged for another event of equal value where this is ahead of the Bookfest weekend.

Unfortunately, for this festival, sessions held upstairs in the Queen's Hall and in the Hayloft at the Talbot are only accessible via stairs.

Cuckfield Bookfest retains the right to alter the location of sessions as necessary.

All events take place in the Queen's Hall, unless otherwise stated.

Attendees of Bookfest are welcome to park at Warden Park Academy if other car parking options are full – please note that vehicles are parked at owners' risk.

## REFRESHMENTS

There will be tea, coffee, wine and soft drinks available in the Queen's Hall, and the Sussex Coffee Truck will be stationed at the entrance.

## BOOK SALES

Once again, Waterstones will be at Queen's Hall selling books signed by the authors appearing at Cuckfield Bookfest.



Cuckfield's award-winning boutique is offering **10% off** any purchase to Cuckfield Bookfest ticket holders from October 3rd-5th. In return, jojo Boutique will give this 10% of the sale to the Festival. Simply present your festival ticket in the shop when you make your purchase.

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