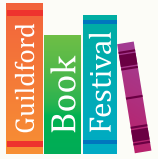


Guildford Book Festival



Opening Books. Inspiring Minds.

**3 — 18 OCTOBER
2026**

WELL-KNOWN
AUTHORS

WORKSHOPS
& TALKS

FAMILY
EVENTS





Exceptional developments for nearly 50 years

Welcome

Now in its 37th year, the Guildford Book Festival returns this autumn with an exciting programme of events celebrating books, ideas and conversation, with something to inspire readers of every age.

We're delighted to welcome some of today's most acclaimed novelists, including Sebastian Faulks, Victoria Hislop and Elif Shafak, to Guildford Baptist Church, while our ever-popular Readers' Day returns to the beautiful setting of West Horsley Place.

This year also sees the launch of our new State of the World Day, bringing together some of Britain's leading thinkers to explore the defining issues shaping our lives today.

Younger readers are in for a treat too, with the return of the hugely popular Rob Biddulph, joined by M.G. Leonard and Jack Meggitt-Phillips. We're also thrilled to welcome familiar faces including Caroline Quentin and Johnny Ball, who will be sharing their latest books, alongside historians Alison Weir, Amy Jeffs and Peter Ricketts.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute to our founder and President, Patricia Grayburn MBE DL, who sadly died in February. Pat established the Guildford Book Festival with extraordinary vision, energy and determination. She believed passionately that books and ideas should be celebrated at the heart of the community, and her dedication created a Festival that has brought thousands of writers, thinkers and readers together over nearly four decades. Her legacy lives on in every event we present, and she will be greatly missed.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Festival this autumn.

**Alex Andrews, Director
Guildford Book Festival**



FESTIVAL TEAM:

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Paper Moon Bookshop
Haslemere Bookshop

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

All the volunteers who give their time so generously and make the Festival possible.

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guildfordbookfestival.co.uk

Events will sell out quickly -
book early to avoid disappointment

Classic Characters. Remarkable People.

YA YVONNE
ARNAUD
THEATRE

**TUE 3 -
SAT 7 NOV**



Oscar Wilde's

The Picture of Dorian Gray

A bold new adaptation of the classic novel

**TUE 9 -
SAT 13 FEB**



Price and Prejudice* (*sort of)

The Olivier Award-winning retelling of Jane Austen's iconic love story

**SAT
17 OCT**



An Evening with Sir Derek Jacobi and Richard Clifford

Insight, Shakespeare and a lifetime in theatre

**SUN
25 OCT**



Tracy Borman OBE: Tudors On Tour

A thrilling theatrical journey through England's most notorious dynasty

YVONNE-ARNAUD.CO.UK | 01483 44 00 00

Millbrook, Guildford, GU1 3UX

Thank you

Guildford Book Festival is a registered charity and we rely on the generous support of our sponsors, partners and donors to bring the Festival to life each year.

We are extremely grateful to those below for their support and commitment.

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PRE-FESTIVAL EVENTS



SUNDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

Readers' Day

West Horsley Place 10:30am – 4:30pm £49 Adult



Rebecca
Bainbridge



Alex
Hay



Charlotte
Edwardes



Veronica
Henry



Ellie
Levenson

Spend the day in the company of some of Britain's best-loved authors as they share their stories, experiences, inspirations and latest projects.

West Horsley Place is a medieval manor house set in 400 acres of beautiful Surrey countryside. It provides the perfect setting for a day of ideas, conversation and connection.

- Opportunity to meet the authors and have books signed
- Option to add-on a tour of the house or light lunch
- Free access to the extensive grounds during breaks
- Free parking
- Goody bag included



PRESENTED BY **Patricia Nicol**

A regular book reviewer for *The Sunday Times* and author of the acclaimed non-fiction book *Sucking Eggs: What Your Wartime Granny Could Teach You About Diet, Thrift and Going Green*, she is also a familiar face at Readers' Day. Originally from Scotland and now based in south-east London, she studied in Bramley and Godalming, making it a particular pleasure to return to Surrey each year to welcome fellow book lovers.

Rebecca Bainbridge – *The Pool Party*

New to the village of Fletching, Kate befriends glamorous Melody, whose seemingly perfect life hides dark secrets. Their friendship deepens until a devastating accident at Melody's summer party threatens to expose buried truths, forcing both women to confront what they've been hiding — and who is truly to blame.



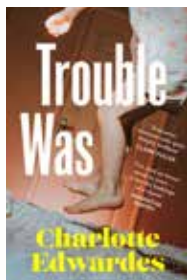
Alex Hay – *The Midnight Guests*

Diana Gold opens the luxurious Hotel Artemis, welcoming royalty, film stars and millionaires. But two dangerous midnight guests from her past arrive, and a murder soon shatters the glittering opening night. Over the next 24 hours, staff and guests uncover the hotel's deadly secrets — and why they are really there.



Charlotte Edwardes – *Trouble Was*

In 1976, nine-year-old Frank moves with his family to North Devon, where hostility, buried secrets and a drifting mother force him to grow up fast. As summer intensifies, long-hidden truths erupt, testing love, resilience and imagination in this moving coming-of-age story of betrayal, survival and family.



Veronica Henry – *The Invitation*

London, 1953. Clementine's romance with Alfie Arbutus draws her to Foxwood Manor, where Stella and Elizabeth are each burdened by love, loss and family secrets. As a glittering Snow Ball approaches, past and present collide, forcing the Arbutus family to confront heartbreak, hidden truths and the possibility of healing.



Ellie Levenson – *Room 706*

Nobody knows Kate is in Room 706. Trapped in a hotel under siege while secretly meeting her lover, she faces impossible choices as her hidden affair threatens to destroy everything. If she survives, she must confront the consequences of the decisions that brought her there in this gripping, suspenseful debut thriller.



Event kindly sponsored by Margot & John Walshe

PRE-FESTIVAL EVENTS



SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

FAMILY

Jonny Lambert – Butterfly Workshop

Leith Hill Place 11 – 12noon Free All ages

When Buttons spots a beautiful blue butterfly, he wants everyone to stop and share the moment – but in the bustle of busy streets and the chitter-chatter of cafés, the world just rushes by.

Join renowned author and illustrator, Jonny Lambert for an enchanting butterfly workshop and give your little ones the chance to slow down, look closely, and discover the magic of the natural world – one small, wonderful wing at a time.



FAMILY

Amanda Wood – The Wizard’s Guide to Magical Experiments

Leith Hill Place 2 – 3pm £8/£28 Family 6+

Spark wonder and curiosity with our wonderful event for wizards-in-training. Kids will discover the thrill of the real-life magic of chemistry with hands-on experiments from the creator of the bestselling *Ology* books, and *First Class Wizard*.

Shortlisted for Children's Non-Fiction Book of the Year.



MAGIC CAT PUBLISHING
Open a book. Open a mind.



ART & HISTORY

The Art of Illustration with Emma Dodd

 Paper Moon Bookshop  6:30 – 7:30pm  £3  16+

A Guildford local, Emma Dodd has published 200 plus children's books and had her work translated into more than 20 languages in a career that spans three decades. An early adopter of digital illustration, Emma will talk about the changes which have taken place during her time in publishing and the journey by which she became an established children's author and illustrator. Emma will also offer a sneak peek of her forthcoming book, published by Walker Books and discuss what inspires her most. For any budding authors or illustrators out there, or those curious about what it's like to make a living out of drawing bears, bunnies, and puppies!

In partnership with Guildford Festival of the Arts.

For tickets visit www.guildfordfestivalofthearts.co.uk or the Paper Moon Bookshop.



The National Year of Reading 2026

In partnership with

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AGENCY

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IN.



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Events will sell out quickly -
book early to avoid disappointment



SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER

State of the World Day

Guildford Baptist Church 10:30am – 4:30pm £49 Adult

Introducing State of the World Day – a brand-new addition to this year's Festival programme.

Join bestselling authors and leading thinkers in conversation with Dr Simon Curtis as they explore the defining issues of our time.

Through engaging discussions on global business, international politics, and the historical forces that continue to shape our world, these thought-provoking sessions will offer fresh perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing society today.



Oliver
Sweet



Stephen
Sackur



Anthony
Seldon



Simon
Sebag Montefiore



PRESENTED BY **Dr Simon Curtis**

We are delighted to welcome **Dr Simon Curtis** as host for the day's programme. Dr Curtis is Senior Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Surrey and is a leading expert on global politics, cities and international order. He is the author of *Global Cities and Global Order* (Oxford University Press), which was awarded the 2018 Hedley Bull Prize by the European Consortium for Political Research, and *The Belt and Road City* (Yale University Press, 2024).

Oliver Sweet – *The Rules That Make Us*

Oliver Sweet is one of the world's leading business anthropologists. In *The Rules That Make Us*, he reveals how invisible cultural rules shape what we think, buy and believe. Drawing on research in 35 countries, Sweet offers a new way to understand consumers, communities and ourselves – through the lens of culture.



Stephen Sackur – *Hard Truth: Investigations That Shook the World*

For nearly two decades, Stephen Sackur has been one of the UK's leading political journalists, renowned for his incisive interviews with world leaders, revolutionaries, thinkers and artists. As the presenter of BBC *HARDtalk*, he built an international reputation for holding power to account with clarity, rigour and integrity. His interviewees have included Bill Clinton, Malala Yousafzai, Hugo Chávez and Richard Dawkins.



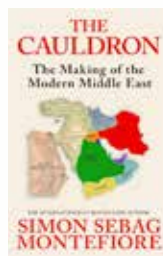
Anthony Seldon – *The Brexit Effect*

Britain's decision to leave the European Union was one of the defining moments of modern British politics. In his new book, *The Brexit Effect*, Anthony Seldon brings together an exceptional range of Brexit insiders and commentators from across the political spectrum to examine why the referendum happened, how Brexit became law, and its lasting impact on British politics, society and the economy. The book concludes by exploring the opportunities and challenges facing the UK in the years ahead.



Simon Sebag Montefiore – *The Cauldron*

The Middle East has long shaped the course of world history, yet its extraordinary diversity and complexity are often overlooked. In *The Cauldron*, Simon Sebag Montefiore offers a sweeping history of the region from 1900 to the present day, charting the rise and fall of empires, the forces of faith and conflict, and the lives of the leaders, revolutionaries, artists and peacemakers who have defined its modern story. Spanning Morocco to Iran and the final years of the Ottoman Empire to the present day, this is a compelling exploration of one of the world's most influential regions.



FESTIVAL EVENTS



SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER

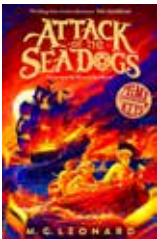
FAMILY

M.G. Leonard – *Attack of the Sea Dogs*

📖 Guildford Baptist Church ⌚ 5:30 – 6:30pm 💷 £8/£28 Family 👤 7+

Join bestselling and multi award-winning author, M.G. Leonard and travel back in time to the year 1587 with her new fast-paced book *The Attack of the Sea Dogs*. Follow Sim and his friends, Jeopardy and Nelson as they find themselves in very dangerous territory aboard Sir Francis Drake's ship the Elizabeth Bonaventure.

Listen to a reading from the book which combines swashbuckling adventure with exciting time travel. Find out new facts about Tudor times to share with your friends and family! This interactive and fascinating event is perfect for adventure enthusiasts, budding historians and time travellers alike.



SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER

FAMILY

Read & Draw with Emma Dodd

📖 Paper Moon Bookshop ⌚ 10:00 – 11:00am 💷 Free 👤 5+

Come along and meet award-winning children's author and illustrator, Emma Dodd. A Guildford local, Emma has written and illustrated many best-selling books for young children. Emma will be reading from her popular series of *Love You* books and drawing live. You will also be the first to get a sneak peek of her forthcoming book, *Pudding, The Christmas Puppy*, published by Walker Books to begin get you into the festive mood! Sunday fun for children and their families.

In partnership with Guildford Festival of the Arts.

Visit www.guildfordfestivalofthearts.co.uk to reserve your free space.



MEMOIR

Dr Maggie Aderin – *Starchild*

 Guildford High School
  7 – 8pm
  £18.50
  Adult

Join award-winning space scientist, broadcaster and author Maggie Aderin as she talks about her inspiring new memoir, *Starchild*. Reflecting on her groundbreaking career, she will discuss her extraordinary life journey and her enduring fascination with the night sky. From her childhood in Camden to working on projects including the James Webb Space Telescope, Maggie has combined scientific innovation with a commitment to making space accessible to everyone. Best known to many as a presenter of *The Sky at Night*, she continues to inspire audiences through her broadcasting, public speaking and STEM outreach. *Starchild* is an uplifting and deeply personal story of ambition, resilience, science and discovery, told with her trademark warmth and enthusiasm.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



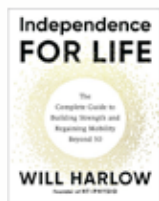
HEALTH & FITNESS IN CONVERSATION

Will Harlow & Kate Rowe-Ham – Health and Fitness in Midlife and Beyond

 Guildford High School
  8:30 – 9:30pm
  £18.50
  Adult

Are you ready to start using exercise to enable the life you actually want to live in midlife and beyond? Join us for an empowering and practical event aimed at men and women navigating midlife and beyond. Discover how to build strength, improve bone and joint health, boost energy and delay the most common problems for the elderly like arthritis, osteoporosis and everyday pain.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



FESTIVAL EVENTS



WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER

ART & HISTORY

Wey Poets Open Afternoon

Friends' Meeting House 2 – 4:30pm £5

A warm welcome again to an informal afternoon of poetry. Wey Poets will be reading some of their own poems for feedback, and visitors are invited to bring their own poems too if wished - or a favourite poem to share.

Copies of our 50th Anniversary anthology, *Horizons*, will be on sale.

With Guildford Library closed for refurbishment from October, we cannot hold our usual poetry display there. But we will offer a free handout of sample poems to visitors to our Open Afternoon.

Price includes tea or coffee. Please pay on the door - cash only.



THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER

FICTION

Literary Lunch with Jonn Elledge – 31 Inventions That Built Our World

Guildford County Club 11:30am – 2:30pm £49 Adult

Enjoy a two-course lunch and glass of wine in the company of bestselling author, Jonn Elledge as he takes diners for a fascinating journey through the ideas and innovations that shaped the modern world.

For more than 10,000 years, humanity has transformed its environment in the pursuit of progress, evolving from hunter-gatherers into the urban societies we know today. But what were the breakthroughs that made this remarkable journey possible?

With his trademark wit and infectious curiosity, Jonn explores the overlooked inventions and everyday innovations that underpin modern life. From elevators and electric lighting to street numbering and sewer systems, discover the extraordinary stories behind the essential infrastructure we often take for granted – and gain a fresh perspective on the history of civilisation itself.

Event kindly sponsored by David Hughes at Move To Residential.



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FESTIVAL EVENT GUIDE



AUTHOR	EVENT		VENUE	TIME	PG
SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER					
Various	Readers' Day	●	West Horsley Place	10:30 – 16:30	6
SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER					
Jonny Lambert	Butterfly Workshop	●	Leith Hill Place	11:00 - 12:00	8
Amanda Wood	<i>The Wizard's Guide to Magical Experiments</i>	●	Leith Hill Place	14:00 - 15:00	8
FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER					
Emma Dodd	The Art of Illustration	●	Paper Moon Bookshop	18:30 – 19:30	9
SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER					
Various	State of the World Day	●	Guildford Baptist Church	10:30 – 16:30	10
M.G. Leonard	<i>The Attack of the Sea Dogs</i>	●	Guildford Baptist Church	17:30 – 18:30	12
SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER					
Emma Dodd	Read & Draw	●	Paper Moon Bookshop	10:00 – 11:00	12
TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER					
Maggie Aderin	<i>Starchild</i>	●	Guildford High School	19:00 – 20:00	13
Will Harlow & Kate Rowe-Ham	Health and Fitness in Midlife and Beyond	●	Guildford High School	20:30 – 21:30	13
WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER					
Wey Poets	Open Afternoon	●	Friends' Meeting House	14:00 – 16:30	14
THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER					
Jonn Elledge	Literary Lunch	●	Guildford County Club	11:30 – 14:30	14
Lewis Carroll	Afternoon Walk	●	Revealed on booking	14:00 – 15:30	19
Victoria Hislop & Elizabeth Buchan	<i>The Wine-Dark Sea</i>	●	Guildford High School	19:00 – 20:00	19
FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER					
Peter Ricketts	<i>Peace Makers</i>	●	Guildford Guildhall	18:30 – 19:30	20
SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER					
Jack Meggitt-Phillips	<i>Jekyll vs Hyde: The Potion of Doom</i>	●	Yvonne Arnaud Theatre	14:00 – 15:00	20
SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER					
Sam Stephens	<i>The Joy of Games</i>	●	Hatchlands Park	11:00 – 12:00	20
Johnny Ball	<i>My Previous Life in Comedy</i>	●	Guildford Guildhall	18:30 – 19:45	21
Carrie Dunn	<i>Flying the Flag</i>	●	Guildford Guildhall	20:15 – 21:15	21
MONDAY 12 OCTOBER					
Creative Writing	Day 1: Getting Started	●	Online via Zoom	18:00 – 20:00	22

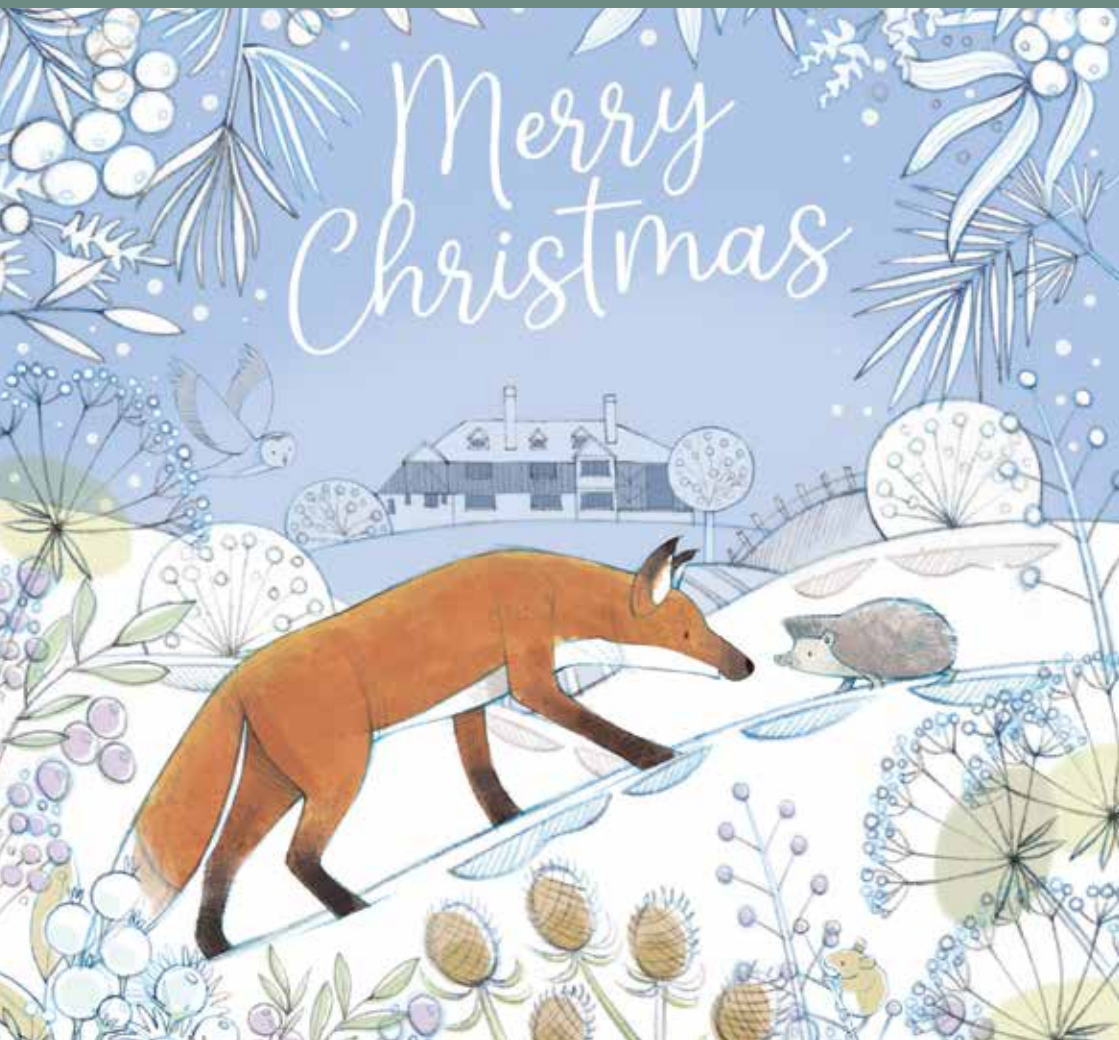
AUTHOR	EVENT		VENUE	TIME	PG
TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER					
Creative Writing	Day 2: Character	●	Online via Zoom	18:00 – 20:00	22
Elif Shafak & Stephanie Merritt	<i>In One Brief Moment All Eternity</i>	●	Guildford Baptist Church	19:00 – 20:00	23
Jim Al-Khalili & Dr Noelia Noel	<i>On Time</i>	●	Guildford Baptist Church	20:30 – 21:30	23
WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER					
Creative Writing	Day 3: Writing Dialogue	●	Online via Zoom	18:00 – 20:00	22
Arthur Snell in conversation	<i>Elemental</i>	●	Guildford High School	18:30 – 19:30	24
George E. Osborn in conversation	<i>Power Play</i>	●	Guildford High School	20:00 – 21:00	24
THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER					
Creative Writing	Day 4: How to Plot	●	Online via Zoom	18:00 – 20:00	22
Mary Portas & Rosie Nixon	<i>I Shop, Therefore I Am</i>	●	Guildford College	19:30 – 20:30	25
FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER					
Creative Writing	Day 5: Editing/Publishing	●	Online via Zoom	18:00 – 20:00	22
SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER					
Amy Jeffs & Ana Sampson	Arthur: A New Life	●	Watts Gallery	10:30 – 11:30	26
Rob Biddulph	<i>The Last Wolf</i>	●	Guildford Baptist Church	15:00 – 16:00	26
Sebastian Faulks & Patrica Nicol	<i>Farewell to Eden</i>	●	Guildford Baptist Church	18:00 – 19:00	26
SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER					
Caroline Quentin & Kate Bradbury	<i>Drawn to Nature</i>	●	Clandon Wood	14:00 – 15:00	27
Jeremy Wade in conversation	<i>River Monsters</i>	●	Clandon Wood	16:00 – 17:00	27
Alison Weir	<i>The Boleyn Secret</i>	●	Guildford Guildhall	18:30 – 19:30	28
Melita Thomas	Tudor Women	●	Guildford Guildhall	20:00 – 21:00	28

- ART & HISTORY
- BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR
- FAMILY EVENTS
- FICTION
- HEALTH & FITNESS
- NATURE & OUTDOORS
- ONLINE WORKSHOP
- POLITICS & GLOBAL AFFAIRS
- SCIENCE



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ART & HISTORY

Lewis Carroll Afternoon Walk

📖 Revealed on Booking ⌚ 2 – 3:30pm 💷 £14 👤 Adult

Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, visited Guildford regularly for over 30 years after his sisters settled here in 1868. Join Lewis Carroll Society trustee Mark Davies on this insightful walk to discover some of the town's key Carrollian locations. Marking 150 years since the publication of *The Hunting of the Snark* — Carroll's celebrated nonsense poem with Guildford origins — this walk offers a unique insight into the author's enduring connection with the town.

Please note that this tour is best suited to reasonably fit walkers as the route is steep in places. At the end of the main tour, there will be an optional long ascent to see Carroll's grave.



FICTION IN CONVERSATION

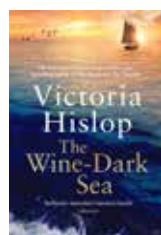
Victoria Hislop & Elizabeth Buchan

📖 Guildford High School ⌚ 7 – 8pm 💷 £18.50 👤 Adult

Join bestselling novelist Victoria Hislop in conversation with acclaimed author Elizabeth Buchan as she discusses *The Wine-Dark Sea*, a powerful and deeply moving novel set against the backdrop of post-war Greece.

Inspired by the little-known human stories of the Greek Civil War, the novel follows a mother's desperate search for her two missing children — her daughter, taken behind the Iron Curtain, and her son, unknowingly sold for adoption. Rich in historical detail and emotional depth, *The Wine-Dark Sea* is an unforgettable story of love, loss, resilience and hope that will captivate readers who loved *The Island* and *The Figurine*.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



Honouring the memory
of Patricia Grayburn

FESTIVAL EVENTS



FRIDAY 9 OCTOBER

ART & HISTORY

Peter Ricketts – *Peace Makers*

Guildhall 6:30 – 7:30pm £18.50 Adult

Join former Head of the Diplomatic Service and the UK's National Security Adviser, Peter Ricketts, to discover how Foreign Office men and women in WWII helped shape post-war order.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER

FAMILY

Jack Meggitt-Phillips – *Jekyll vs Hyde: The Potion of DOOM*

Yvonne Arnaud Theatre 2 – 3pm £8/£28 Family 7+

Welcome to the laboratory of Jack Meggitt-Phillips – a laugh out loud carnival of chaos, where young readers create their own monstrously funny stories. In this highly interactive event, Jack introduces his new book, *Jekyll vs Hyde: The Potion of Doom*.



SUNDAY 11 OCTOBER

FAMILY

Sam Stephens – *The Joy of Games*

Hatchlands Park 11 – 12pm £8/£28 Family 5+

Join games enthusiast and author Sam Stephens as he shares how playing games can bring people together beyond the screen. Discover fresh takes on family favourites, timeless classics and exciting new games from *The Joy of Games*. Expect interactive fun, practical inspiration and plenty of ideas to make every gathering more playful, social and memorable.



AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Johnny Ball – *My Previous Life in Comedy and Stories that Must Be Told*

📖 Guildhall ⌚ 6:30 – 7:45pm 💷 £18.50 👤 Adult

Johnny Ball, at 88, is extremely fit and still skis! He created 20 BBC TV Series followed by 5 Educational Stage Musicals which toured major UK theatres. He will talk on 2 recent auto-biographies, *My Previous Life in Comedy* and *Stories that Must Be Told* and his acclaimed maths history book, *Wonders Beyond Numbers*.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



HEALTH & FITNESS

Carrie Dunn – *Flying the Flag*

📖 Guildhall ⌚ 8:15 – 9:15pm 💷 £18.50 👤 12+

Carrie Dunn is a football writer. Her most recent book is *Flying the Flag: The Footballing Heroines of the Home Nations Who Made History Abroad* (Hero Press, 2025), shortlisted for the 2026 Vikki Orville Award for Women's Sports Writing.

Her previous books include *Unsuitable for Females: The Rise of the Lionesses and Women's Football in England* (Arena Sport, 2022), nominated for Football Book of the Year.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



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Events will sell out quickly -
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FESTIVAL EVENTS



MONDAY 12 OCTOBER

ONLINE WORKSHOP

Creative Writing Workshop with Rachel Marsh

 Via Zoom  Daily 6 – 8pm  £48 for 5 days  Adult

If you have always wanted to write but are not sure where to start, then join us on our Creative Writing course being held over five weekday evenings during the Festival.

Run by Rachel Marsh each lesson will focus on a different aspect of the writing process. The classes will be held via Zoom but will be practical and interactive. Open to all levels, each class is a mixture of lecture, discussion, and applied writing and can be tailored to your own goals.

Mon 12th: Getting Started

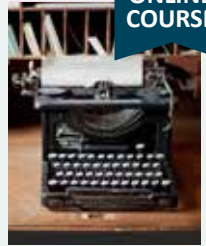
Tue 13th: Character Development

Wed 14th: Writing Dialogue

Thu 15th: The Plot

Fri 16th: Getting Published

5 DAY
ONLINE
COURSE



“Your course was so inspiring and gave me the confidence to believe I could write. Since then, my first short story won a competition, my second was longlisted, and even my 100-word flash fiction made the longlist of finalists. I honestly don’t think I would have achieved any of this without your encouragement and guidance. Thank you!”

— Natalie

Would you like to partner with us in 2027?

Every year, companies, organisations, and individuals help us champion a love of books and reading across Guildford. Donations supporting our school events and festival typically start at £500. We would love to discuss how we can partner together for 2027.

Please contact alexandrews@guildfordbookfestival.co.uk



FICTION IN CONVERSATION

Elif Shafak & Stephanie Merritt

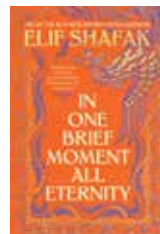
– *In One Brief Moment All Eternity*

 Guildford Baptist Church
  7 – 8pm
  £16
  Adult

Join global bestselling author and acclaimed activist Elif Shafak in conversation with novelist and critic Stephanie Merritt. Elif will discuss her celebrated novels, including *The Island of Missing Trees* and *There Are Rivers in the Sky*, exploring themes of identity, feminism, migration, spirituality, and the tensions between East and West.

An award-winning British-Turkish writer, Shafak has published twenty-one books translated into fifty-seven languages.

Stephanie Merritt, also known as bestselling historical crime author S. J. Parris, is an award-winning novelist, memoirist and literary critic.



“One of the best writers in the world today — Hanif Kueishi

A unique and powerful voice in world literature — Ian McEwan”

SCIENCE IN CONVERSATION

Jim Al-Khalili & Dr Noelia Noel

– *On Time*

 Guildford Baptist Church
  8:30 – 9:30pm
  £16
  Adult

Time shapes every moment of our lives, yet it remains one of the greatest mysteries in science. In this fascinating conversation, acclaimed physicist and broadcaster Jim Al-Khalili explores the profound questions that have puzzled philosophers and scientists for more than 2,500 years. Does time really flow? What is the elusive "now" that separates the past from the future? Did time itself have a beginning, and could it one day come to an end?

Drawing on the ideas from his latest book, Jim offers an illuminating journey through physics, philosophy and cosmology, challenging our understanding of the universe and revealing why time may be far stranger than we imagine.



Dedicated to the memory of Patricia Grayburn, in recognition of her strong and lasting connection with the University of Surrey



WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER

POLITICS & GLOBAL AFFAIRS IN CONVERSATION

The Geopolitics of Climate Change with Arthur Snell

– *Elemental*

📖 Guildford High School ⌚ 6:30 – 7:30pm 💷 £18.50 👤 Adult

How will climate change reshape our world? In *Elemental*, former diplomat Arthur Snell explores how extreme weather and resource scarcity will transform global politics, economies and power.

Join him in conversation as he discusses the geopolitical consequences of a warming planet, the opportunities for innovation, and the choices we must make to build a more resilient future.

Kindly sponsored by Angus Stovold.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



POLITICS & GLOBAL AFFAIRS IN CONVERSATION

George E. Osborn – *Power Play*

📖 Guildford High School ⌚ 8 – 9pm 💷 £18.50 👤 Adult

Video games connect billions of people worldwide, making them a powerful cultural and political force. In *Power Play: Video Games, Politics and the Battle for Global Influence*, gaming industry expert George E. Osborn explores how authoritarian regimes, extremists and populists are using games and gaming communities to spread influence.

Join him in conversation as he examines the intersection of gaming, geopolitics and the growing politicisation of one of the world's most popular pastimes.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER

MEMOIR IN CONVERSATION

Mary Portas & Rosie Nixon – *I Shop, Therefore I Am*

📖 Guildford College ⌚ 7:30 – 8:30pm 🎫 £18.50 👤 Adult

Mary Portas revisits the remarkable story behind the reinvention of Harvey Nichols in the 1990s in conversation with former *HELLO!* Magazine Editor-in-Chief Rosie Nixon. Against the backdrop of Britpop, supermodels and a rapidly changing fashion scene, Mary reveals how she transformed the once-traditional department store into a cultural icon. Drawing on her memoir *I Shop, Therefore I Am*, she reflects on creativity, leadership, resilience and the bold decisions that redefined British retail and shaped her extraordinary career.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



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FESTIVAL EVENTS



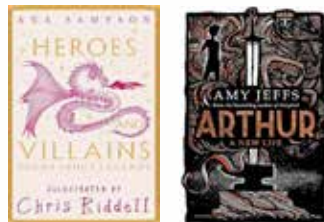
SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER

ART & HISTORY IN CONVERSATION

Amy Jeffs & Ana Sampson – Arthur: A New Life

📖 Watts Gallery ⌚ 10:30 – 11:30am 💷 £16 👤 14+

Join bestselling historian and author Amy Jeffs in conversation with writer Ana Sampson as they explore the enduring legend of King Arthur through the earliest medieval sources. Uncover a fascinating and unexpected Arthur — far removed from the familiar tales of Camelot. Meet a ferocious warlord, a hero raised by fairies, a leader of the Wild Hunt, a monster-slayer and even an Emperor of Rome, as Amy Jeffs reveals the rich, ancient stories that have shaped one of Britain's greatest myths.

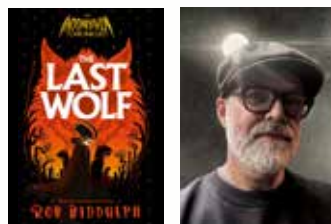


FAMILY

Rob Biddulph – *The Last Wolf*

📖 Guildford Baptist Church ⌚ 3 – 4pm 💷 £8/£28 Family 👤 5+

Join multi award-winning author-illustrator Rob Biddulph for a fun-filled family event. Enjoy a live *Draw with Rob* and get an exclusive introduction to *The Last Wolf*, the thrilling first book in *The Moonhaven Chronicles*. Plus, celebrate Rob's brand-new picture book *South* with a special musical performance, and mark the 10th anniversary of the much-loved *Odd Dog Out*.



FICTION IN CONVERSATION

Sebastian Faulks & Patrica Nicol – *Farewell to Eden*

📖 Guildford Baptist Church ⌚ 6 – 7pm 💷 £16 👤 Adult

Sebastian Faulks is one of Britain's best-loved novelists, celebrated for bestselling novels including *Birdsong*, *Charlotte Gray*, *Human Traces* and *Engleby*. Join Sebastian as he talks to *Sunday Times* columnist Patrica Nicol about *Farewell to Eden*, a powerful story of faith, war and love set in the turbulent aftermath of the Second World War.



NATURE & OUTDOORS IN CONVERSATION

Caroline Quentin & Kate Bradbury – *Drawn to Nature*

📖 Clandon Wood Pavilion ⌚ 2 – 3pm 🏠 £16 👤 Adult

Join Caroline Quentin in conversation with award-winning wildlife gardening writer Kate Bradbury as she celebrates *Drawn to Nature* – an uplifting journey into the restorative power of the outdoors. Blending heartfelt reflections with stories from her life, Caroline introduces the people, places and gardens that have shaped her lifelong love of nature, from the landscapes of Devon and Somerset to the many corners of the world her career has taken her. Featuring her own charming illustrations throughout, this is a joyful reminder that beauty can be found in every space.



NATURE & OUTDOORS IN CONVERSATION

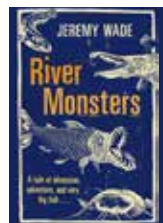
Jeremy Wade – *River Monsters*

📖 Clandon Wood Pavilion ⌚ 4 – 5pm 🏠 £16 👤 Adult

As a child growing up in England, Jeremy Wade was fascinated by fishing. But as the rivers became more crowded and the legendary catches seemed to disappear, his dream began to fade.

Everything changed in his twenties when a magazine article about the mighty mahseer – a giant golden-scaled fish found in the fast-flowing rivers of India – rekindled his passion. With just £200 in his pocket and a fishing rod in hand, Jeremy set off in pursuit of the world's most extraordinary freshwater fish. More than two decades later, that journey has taken him to some of the most remote and remarkable rivers on Earth.

Best known as the presenter of the global hit TV series *River Monsters*, Jeremy has captivated audiences with his thrilling mix of adventure, natural history and detective work. Join him in conversation as he shares the stories behind his extraordinary expeditions, unforgettable encounters and remarkable career.



FESTIVAL EVENTS



SUNDAY 18 OCTOBER

HISTORY

Alison Weir – *The Boleyn Secret*

📖 Guildford Guildhall ⌚ 6:30 – 7:30pm 💷 £18.50 👤 Adult

At twelve, Kate Carey watches her aunt, Queen Anne Boleyn, go to the scaffold, a traumatic event that shapes the rest of her life. Raised alongside her cousin, the young Lady Elizabeth, the girls become as close as sisters until love, ambition and long-buried family secrets drive them apart. As England is torn apart by religion and politics, Kate must fight for survival at home and abroad, returning only when Elizabeth becomes queen. But some betrayals can never be forgotten.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



HISTORY

Melita Thomas – *Tudor Women*

📖 Guildford Guildhall ⌚ 8 – 9pm 💷 £18.50 👤 Adult

Shaping their own destiny or blindly obedient? The life and times of Tudor women unveiled. Historian and author, Dr. Melita Thomas, delves into her acclaimed book, *1000 Tudor People*, to reveal fascinating insights into the lives of Tudor women.

What were the social, legal, political, and economic problems that they had to deal with? Were their lives really as constrained as we are led to believe? Join Melita to discover more about the joys and perils of sixteenth century life. And how intrepid women could forge their own paths against the odds.

Price includes a glass of wine or soft drink



Schools Programme

When you buy tickets for any of our events you are supporting our Schools Programme.

Over the course of the year we bring some of the very best children's authors and illustrators from all over the world into local schools and donate hundreds of books.

HERE ARE JUST SOME OF THE WONDERFUL AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS THAT
HAVE SPOKEN AT OUR EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS IN THE PAST YEAR:



Ally Sherrick
Pari Thomson
Catherine Cawthorne
Clare Pollard
Truly Johnston
Jonny Lambert
Katie Hickey
Jack Meggitt-Phillips
Lucy Reynolds
Lindsay Galvin
Tia Fisher
Olivia Wakeford
Fidan Meikle
Yuval Zommer



Our aim is to encourage a love of books, words and reading, and engage and inspire people of all backgrounds and ages to explore new ideas and expand their horizons.

**By the end of this year we will have seen around 5,000 students,
hopefully inspiring the authors and illustrators of the future.**

Home-schooled children are welcome to join in these sessions.

Please contact AlexAndrews@guildfordbookfestival.co.uk for more information.

We would like to give special thanks to **Old Dungate Press** for all their support of our Schools Programme.

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Events will sell out quickly -
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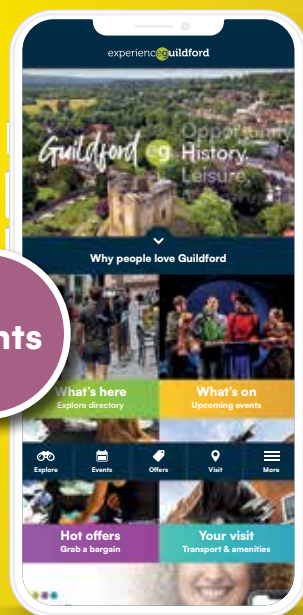
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experience**guildford**

Booking and Ticket Information



We recommend booking early to avoid disappointment as events can sell out quickly.



ONLINE BOOKING

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/guildfordbookfestival>

Online tickets are available through TicketTailor. You can purchase them directly or via the Guildford Book Festival website www.guildfordbookfestival.co.uk

When you book online you will receive your tickets via a confirmation email. This can be shown on arrival via a mobile phone or tablet, or printed at home.



BOOKING IN PERSON

Address: Guildford House Gallery, 155 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3AJ.

Tickets are available from the Guildford Tourist Information Centre (TIC), located on the High Street opposite Sainsbury's. The team are available to help from 10:00 to 16:30 from Tuesday to Saturday.



CHILD POLICY

To help everyone enjoy the Festival, we kindly ask that babies in arms are only brought to events where this is specifically indicated.

Thank you for your understanding and support.



GENERAL

All details are correct at the time of going to press. We reserve the right to change the programme. The view and opinions expressed in any of the books or at any of the Festival events are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Guildford Book Festival.



BOOK ONLINE

guildfordbookfestival.co.uk

Events will sell out quickly -
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Festival Venues



1. **Leith Hill Place**
Leith Hill Lane, Dorking, RH5 6LY
2. **Hatchlands Park**
East Clandon, Guildford, GU4 7RT
3. **West Horsley Place**
Epsom Rd, West Horsley, KT24 6AN
4. **Guildford County Club**
158 High Street, Guildford, GU1 3HJ
5. **Guildford College**
Stoke Rd, Guildford, GU1 1EZ
6. **Yvonne Arnaud Theatre**
Millbrook, Guildford GU1 3UX
7. **Watts Gallery**
Down Ln, Guildford, GU3 1DQ
8. **Guildford Baptist Church**
Millmead, Guildford, GU2 4BE
9. **Clandon Wood Pavillion**
Epsom Rd, West Clandon, GU4 7FN
10. **Friends' Meeting House**
9 North Street, Guildford, GU1 4AF
11. **The Guildhall**
High Street, Guildford, GU1 3AA
12. **Guildford High School**
London Rd, Guildford, GU1 1SJ
13. **Paper Moon Bookshop**
13 Jeffries Passage, Guildford
GU1 4AP



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