



**Creative  
Folkestone  
Book Festival**

**Creative Folkestone Book Festival 2024**

**Thursday 14 – Sunday 24 Nov**

**Large Print Programme**

Your essential guide to Folkestone's festival of ideas and literary  
inspiration.

## **Welcome to Creative Folkestone Book Festival 2024**

When I took on the role of curator of the book festival with Creative Folkestone earlier this year, the first thing on my to-do list was to listen. I wanted to know what would get you excited - what would make your eyes widen, inspire you to book tickets and tell your friends, turn up in autumn and have the best possible time. I heard from people in the community, past curators, those running the book clubs, as well as people who'd never been before and didn't think a festival like this was for them.

What I discovered has been laced into this year's programme. Some of you wanted a return to high literature - so we brought Ali Smith, Alan Hollinghurst, John Boyne and Tessa Hadley to the table. Some of you wanted to see on stage authors whose stories have gripped a nation - and I was delighted when the likes of David Nicholls (the Netflix adaptation of his book *One Day* may have moved you to tears) and Steven Mofat (screenwriter extraordinaire for *Sherlock* and *Dr Who*) made time in their busy schedules to join us in November.

Some of you wanted drama, intrigue and scandal - that wasn't hard to find, with Roberto Sendoya Escobar flying over to share his gripping story about living in the shadow of the notorious

Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar; and Lucia Osborne-Crowley reporting her intimate tales from the trial of Ghislaine Maxwell.

Over the eleven days of the Creative Folkestone Book Festival, there will be events discussing football and food, art and AI, comedy and class, mudlarking and mid-life, pets and power struggles, burnout and brotherhood. I hope you'll agree, there's something for everyone. Please take a chance on authors you've not heard of before, and on topics that may be outside your interest. I've selected emerging writers who I feel will be ones to watch in years to come, and topics I believe will surprise you, scratch beneath the surface, and spark conversation.

In the process of securing more than 60 authors, one thing really stood out to me: Folkestone is on the map. Everyone was keen to say 'yes' because they'd heard so many great things about our seaside town and wanted their chance to be part of the magic. That's thanks to you and our incredible community, which keeps on evolving. I'm so proud to be part of it.

Many thanks to our sponsors for their continued belief in sharing stories and for making this a reality.

So please accept my advance gratitude for attending and championing the festival this year, and for bringing energy and

enthusiasm into the Quarterhouse. I'm so looking forward to sharing it with you.

Sophie Haydock, Creative Folkestone

## **Tickets and Booking**

Folkestone Book Festival is our annual celebration of books, ideas, reading and writing, in its many magical forms. This year's festival has been curated by local resident, the award-winning author and journalist Sophie Haydock.

As always, this festival is for everyone. We're committed to making it possible for more people than ever before to be able to enjoy as many of our events as you fancy. To make this a reality, we've kept our £5 cost-of-living ticket. This is a no-questions-asked ticket for those who may be struggling to afford to come otherwise. All other tickets are priced at £12 (or £8 concessions) unless otherwise stated.

Or grab a festival pass and enjoy the whole festival for just £140. To avoid disappointment, please remember to still reserve seats early for the events you'd like to attend.

Tickets are selling fast, so do book yours online, in person or by phone: [creativefolkestone.org.uk](http://creativefolkestone.org.uk) / 01303 760 740

Visit our official bookseller, Canterbury Christ Church University Book Shop at [www.bookshop.canterbury.ac.uk](http://www.bookshop.canterbury.ac.uk) and enjoy some exclusive offers. Or visit the bookshop at Quarterhouse during the festival.

## **Events**

### **Opening Night:**

#### **Tracy Chevalier**

**Thu 14 Nov, 7pm**

Join us for the launch of Folkestone Book Festival 2024 with acclaimed author Tracy Chevalier. Celebrate 25 years since *Girl With A Pearl Earring* and discover the inspirations behind her new novel, *The Glassmaker*. Introduced by Creative Folkestone Chief Executive Alastair Upton, this evening promises captivating insights into 15th-century Venice, storytelling magic and much more. A real treat for any fan of historical fiction.

### **Creative Quarter Christmas Lights Switch On**

**Fri 15 Nov, 5.30pm**

FREE, Just turn up

Meet outside Objectables It's that time of year again! As is the tradition of the festival, we invite one and all to come to the Creative Quarter to enjoy the annual Christmas Lights Switch On. Put on your tackiest festive jumper and meet us on the Old High Street as our celebrity guest, the comedian Helen Lederer, officially welcomes in the festive season with plenty of cheer.

**Helen Lederer:**

**Getting Merry**

**Fri 15 Nov, 7pm**

Actress, comedian and wine enthusiast Helen Lederer, known for her role in *Absolutely Fabulous*, hosts an evening of wit and humour, blending festive cheer with anecdotes from her new memoir, *Not That I'm Bitter*. Expect plenty of laughs as she reflects on life's absurdities, with her unique take on the chaotic and cut-throat world of the British comedy scene.

**Susie Chan and Rob Hobson:**

**Run Strong, Eat Well**

**Sat 16 Nov, 12pm**

Celebrated endurance runner Susie Chan (who will reveal the secrets of her incredible record-breaking races around the world), and renowned nutritionist Rob Hobson are teaming up to share their knowledge on optimising your health. Learn how to best fuel your body for fitness, reduce ultra-processed foods from your diet, and incorporate healthy habits.

**Rory Cellan-Jones:**

**Dogs Can Change Your Life**

**Sat 16 Nov, 2pm**

Dog lover and former BBC News technology correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones discusses his journey with his world-famous rescue dog, Sophie from Romania, revealing how pets can transform our lives and improve our well-being, hosted by Kent-based vet and author Dr Christopher Little.

**Ali Smith:**

**Hidden Stories**

**Sat 16 Nov, 4pm**

Join the acclaimed author Ali Smith, described as “Scotland's Nobel laureate-in-waiting”, as she discusses her new novel, *Gliff* - the title taken from a Scottish word meaning “a transient moment, a shock, a faint glimpse”. The novel explores how and why we endeavour to make a mark on the world. Not to be missed!

**Alan Hollinghurst:**

**Literary Luminary**

**Sat 16 Nov, 6pm**

Booker Prize-winning author Alan Hollinghurst reflects on his distinguished career. Known for his explorations of identity, history and society, Hollinghurst will discuss *The Line of Beauty* and his new novel, *Our Evenings*, and share insights into his creative process and the themes that drive his writing.



**Sally Abé:**

**Chef's Table**

**Sat 16 Nov, 8pm**

Renowned chef Sally Abé made a name for herself in London's most demanding kitchens, including The Savoy, The Ledbury and under Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's. Don't miss your chance to hear her wild stories of surviving the brutal, male-dominated world of professional cooking, fresh from a rising star of the restaurant world.

**Family Time with Sheena Dempsey:**

**Pablo and Splash**

**Sun 17 Nov, 10.30am**

Local illustrator Sheena Dempsey leads a fun session for children aged 6-9, centred around the time-travelling penguins of her popular children's book, Pablo and Splash. This event will capture young imaginations, with time for a Q&A session, where children can ask Sheena about her book, characters and the creative process.

**Dan Evans, Vicky Spratt, and Yvonne Singh:**

**Class, Power, and the Rise of the Far Right**

**Sun 17 Nov, 4pm**

Dan Evans, who writes on the working class and the bourgeoisie, Vicky Spratt, whose work centres on Britain's housing crisis, and Yvonne Singh, who looks at the struggle for a Black and minority ethnic press in the UK, explore the socio-political dynamics driving the rise of the far right. This promises to be a thought-provoking discussion.

### **Irenosen Okojie and Elizabeth Macneal:**

#### **Mysticism and Mystery**

**Sun 17 Nov, 12pm**

Best-selling authors Irenosen Okojie and Elizabeth Macneal come together to discuss the darker themes in their respective new novels, *Curandera*, set in the mountainous town of Gethsemane, in 17th-century Cape Verde, and *The Burial Plot*, a Gothic thriller set in London, 1839. They'll touch on myth, the macabre, murder and manipulation.

### **Lev Parikian and Oliver Smith:**

#### **A Journey Through the Sacred and the Natural**

**Sun 17 Nov, 2pm**

Writer, birdwatcher and conductor Lev Parikian and award-winning travel journalist Oliver Smith explore sacred spaces and the natural world in their new books. Join them as they discuss the epic journeys of birds in flight and humans on foot for

pilgrimages across the British Isles - reflecting on how the environmental and spiritual intersect.

**Anna Bogutskaya and Andrew Michael Hurley:**

**The Horrors That Haunt Us**

**Sun 17 Nov, 6pm**

Dive into the world of horror with film critic and podcaster Anna Bogutskaya, author of *Feeding the Monster*, a collection of essays about horror film and culture, and the award-winning Andrew Michael Hurley, whose new book *Barrowbeck* blends folklore, horror and the supernatural, as they explore the psychological and cultural underpinnings of the genre.

**John Boyne:**

**Fire**

**Sun 17 Nov, 8pm**

Acclaimed Irish novelist John Boyne (author of *Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and *The Heart's Invisible Furies*) discusses his latest novel, *Fire*, which tackles themes of family, conflict and redemption. Set against a backdrop of historical events, Boyne examines whether the harrowing experiences of youth shape the people we become.

**Lucy Caldwell, Naomi Wood, and Yan Ge:  
Stories of Motherhood and Mayhem**

**Mon 18 Nov, 6pm**

Award-winning short story writers Lucy Caldwell, Naomi Wood and Yan Ge discuss their work, which often explores the complexities and chaos of motherhood and family life, among other attention-grabbing themes. They will discuss their inspirations, writing processes and how being a mother isn't always what it seems.

**Damian Collins and Lucy Hughes-Hallett:**

**Power Games**

**Mon 18 Nov, 8pm**

Former MP Damian Collins and historian and biographer Lucy Hughes-Hallett discuss the dynamics of power in politics from the perspective of influential figures in history. Collins' new book looks at Lloyd George, the 'first modern Prime Minister,' while Hughes-Hallett charts the meteoric rise and fall of George Villiers, the first Duke of Buckingham.

**Lucia Osborne-Crowley and Sam McAlister:**

**Rogues and Royalty**

**Tue 19 Nov, 6pm**

Journalist Lucia Osborne- Crowley, who had intimate access to the sex-trafficking trial of Ghislaine Maxwell, and Sam McAlister, who was immortalised in the Netflix drama Scoop for securing the BBC interview with Prince Andrew, delve into the world of rogues and royalty, exploring the intersections of scandal, power, and privilege.

**Jo Hamya and Rebecca Watson:**

**Family, Identity, and the Struggles of a Generation**

**Tue 19 Nov, 8pm**

Rising-star authors Jo Hamya (*The Hypocrite*) and Rebecca Watson (*I Will Crash*) discuss the challenges faced by their generation, from navigating family dynamics to grappling with identity and societal expectations. Both received huge critical-acclaim for their debut novels and are writers to watch.

**Baroness Lola Young:**

**Inside the House of Lords**

**Wed 20 Nov, 6pm**

Baroness Lola Young became one of the first Black Women members of the House of Lords. But from the age of eight weeks to eighteen years, she was moved between foster care placements and children's homes in North London. She discusses

her new memoir, *Eight Weeks*, and how her childhood galvanised her.

**Maria Balshaw and Bob and Roberta Smith:**

**Art and Legacy**

**Wed 20 Nov, 8pm**

Maria Balshaw, director of The Tate and author of *Gathering of Strangers: Why Museums Matter*, and the Ramsgate artist Bob and Roberta Smith, who painted the iconic Folkestone is an Art School, explore the impact and legacy of art, the role of artists in society, and the importance of preserving artistic heritage.

**Lauren Elkin and Will Gompertz:**

**Unleashing the Art Monsters**

**Thu 21 Nov, 4.30pm**

Lauren Elkin, author of *Art Monsters: Unruly Bodies in Feminist Art*, and Will Gompertz, director of Sir John Soane's Museum, explore the intersections of art, gender and politics, and how these forces converge to create the “art monsters”, figures that defy conventions and push the boundaries of creativity.

**David Nicholls:**

**Exploring Life's Crossroads**

**Thu 21 Nov, 6pm**

David Nicholls, best-selling author of *One Day*, which was adapted into a hit Netflix series this year, reflects on life's pivotal moments. Discussing his new novel, *You Are Here*, Nicholls explores themes of love, loss, and how the choices we make shape our destinies and the stories we tell about ourselves.

**David Holmes:**

**Harry Potter's Double**

**Thu 21 Nov, 8pm**

Stuntman David Holmes worked as Daniel Radcliffe's double in the Harry Potter films from the age of 11 until 25. Tragedy struck on his seventh film, leaving David paralysed. David will discuss his new memoir, *The Boy Who Lived*, and how his spirit remains unbroken. Chaired by journalist and commentator Kat Brown.

**Suzy Wrack and John McNicoll:**

**The Beautiful Game - Past, Present, and Future**

**Fri 22 Nov, 4.30pm**

Guardian journalist Suzy Wrack, author of *A Woman's Game: The Rise, Fall, and Rise Again of Women's Football* and local author John McNicoll, who wrote *It's Coming Home (Probably)*, delve into the evolution of the world's most popular sport, from its origins to its global impact and the challenges it still must tackle.

## **Asad Qureshi and Christiana Spens: Surviving the Taliban**

**Fri 22 Nov, 6pm**

British filmmaker Asad Qureshi - author of 165 Days: Prisoner of the Taliban - is one of the only people to be held hostage by the Taliban and live to tell the tale. He joins writer and academic Christiana Spens, whose work explores how Western media shapes public perceptions of terrorism.

## **Roberto Sendoya Escobar:**

### **My Story**

**Fri 22 Nov, 8pm**

Be part of a wild and unforgettable evening with Roberto Sendoya Escobar, now an artist living in Majorca and author of First Born, who will talk about living in the shadow of the infamous Pablo Escobar, the billionaire Colombian cocaine baron, who was Roberto Sendoya the founder and sole leader of the Medellín Cartel. In this high-octane event, Roberto will share his harrowing experiences of surviving a traumatic childhood, including the brutal death of his 14-year old mother in Colombia, as well as the impact of the Narcos legacy (which went on to become a hit Netflix series), and what it means to bear the weight of infamy passed down from the tyrannical narcoterrorist Pablo Escobar.



Through candid storytelling and personal reflections, Roberto will delve into the dark realities of his unconventional upbringing, as well as the violent world of the drug trade, and his journey towards finding peace and purpose. Chaired by Lara Johnson-Wheeler.

## **Create Your Own Masterpiece:**

### **Art Inspiration for Kids with Ruth Millington**

**Sat 23 Nov, 10.30am**

Learn about the world's greatest artists, such as Henri Matisse or Hilma af Klint, with art historian Ruth Millington, whose book, *This Book Will Make You an Artist* is an inspiring introduction to 25 artists from around the world. Aimed at children aged 6-12, this event will encourage them to explore their artistic talents.

## **Jason Sandy and Nigel Richardson:**

### **Hidden Treasures**

**Sat 23 Nov, 12pm**

Expert mudlark Jason Sandy, author of *Mudlarks: Treasures from the Thames*, will be joined by travel writer and metal detectorist, Nigel Richardson - author of *The Accidental Detectorist: Uncovering an Underground Obsession*. Chaired by Dr Lindsay Banfield of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, who leads digs in Folkestone at East Wear Bay.

**Emma Gannon & Anna Schaffner:**

**Navigating Modern Exhaustion**

**Sat 23 Nov, 2pm**

Join best-selling author Emma Gannon and burnout coach Anna Schaffner as they tackle modern exhaustion. Emma will share her personal journey, as detailed in her new book, *A Year of Nothing*. Anna Schaffner, author of *Exhausted: An A-Z for the Weary*, has a background in psychology and offers practical strategies for renewal.

**Sinéad Gleeson, Kathryn Tann, and Robin Laurance:**

**How the Sea Permeates the Page**

**Sat 23 Nov, 3.30pm**

Writers Sinéad Gleeson, Kathryn Tann and Robin Laurance explore the influence of the sea on literature - from historical tales of the English Channel to the poetic allure of seaglass and mystical stories of hagstones, they'll discuss how the ocean serves as a metaphor in their work, reflecting on its potential for destruction and transformation.

**James Ball and Jesselyn Cook:**

**Exploring the Dark Corners of the Internet**

**Sat 23 Nov, 5pm**

Journalists James Ball and Jesselyn Cook delve into the hidden and often disturbing aspects of the internet. They'll explore the proliferation and influence of conspiracy theories, the far-right political movement QAnon and the rise of global digital trolling and what can be done to combat their growing influence.

### **Eleanor Mills and Fiona Lambert:**

#### **Age is Just a Number**

**Sat 23 Nov, 6.30pm**

Hear from two leading voices - Fiona Lambert, author of *Invincible Not Invisible*, and Eleanor Mills, founder of Noon, a platform dedicated to women over the age of 50, and author of *Much More to Come* - on the topic of living your best life as you get older.

### **Robin Ince:**

#### **Comedy, Curiosity, and the Power of Libraries**

**Sat 23 Nov, 8pm**

Get ready to laugh, by coming along to this headline event with the brilliant comedian and advocate for libraries, Robin Ince.

Known for his razor-sharp wit and insatiable curiosity, Robin will entertain and enlighten as he shares hilarious anecdotes from his career and discusses his new book *Bibliomaniac: An Obsessive's Tour of the Bookshops of Britain*.

**Joe Shute and Jonathan Hollins:**

**The Wild Side**

**Sun 24 Nov, 12pm**

Jonathan Hollins is a vet on the South Atlantic islands. He looks after the world's oldest living animal, Jonathan the Giant Tortoise. He'll be joined by nature writer Joe Shute, to discuss the marvellous and misunderstood creatures of the natural world, and the challenges of conservation.

**Viktoria Lloyd- Barlow and Helen Heckety:**

**Writing from Within**

**Sun 24 Nov, 2pm**

Viktoria Lloyd-Barlow, whose debut *All the Little Bird Hearts* was longlisted for the Booker Prize, will be joined by Helen Heckety, author of *Alter Ego*. This event will explore neurodivergent themes, and the journey of both authors writing authentically on disability from personal experience. Chaired by author and disability campaigner Chloe Timms.

**Tessa Hadley and Donal Ryan:**

**Tales of Life and Loss**

**Sun 24 Nov, 4pm**

Literary superstars Tessa Hadley (*After the Funeral* and *The*

Party) – “one of English's finest contemporary writers” - and Donal Ryan (Heart, Be at Peace) - described as “the king of the new wave of Irish writers” - discuss their latest works, which explore themes of life, loss, and the human condition. Through rich character studies and evocative settings, they explore the complexities of relationships, the impact of grief and missed opportunities, and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

**John Niven:**

**Brotherhood and Beyond**

**Sun 24 Nov, 6pm**

The acclaimed Scottish author John Niven (Kill Your Friends, The F\*ck- It List, Straight White Male) discusses his poignant new memoir, O Brother. Known for his generous humour and unflinching honesty, Niven delves deep into the complexities of family, grief and love in this deeply personal narrative. This event promises to be funny, moving and entertaining.

**Steven Moffat:**

**From Dr Who to Sherlock**

**Sun 24 Nov, 8pm**

Don't miss the festival's grand finale - with one of the most

acclaimed screenwriters of our time, Steven Moffat. Best known for his groundbreaking work on Doctor Who and Sherlock, Moffat has captivated audiences worldwide with his brilliant storytelling. Moffat will share insights into his short story featured in Collision and discuss his career in television, where he redefined iconic characters, bringing them to new generations of fans.

## About

Creative Folkestone Book Festival is an annual celebration of books, writing, and ideas. As one of the UK's longest-running literary festivals, it continues to evolve alongside the town, offering a space for discussion, debate, and a love of the written word.

Curated by award-winning author and journalist Sophie Haydock, this year's programme features a wide range of topics, from comedy and curiosity to motherhood and mayhem, life and loss to rogues and royalty, and everything in between. The festival provides an opportunity for people from Folkestone, across Kent, and beyond to gather and enjoy thought-provoking events in a welcoming atmosphere.

The town of Folkestone is integral to the festival's character. Known for its creative spirit, Folkestone provides a unique setting that enhances the literary experience. Creative Folkestone's dedication to making the town an inspiring place to live, work, and visit is reflected in this festival and its broader cultural projects.

Folkestone Book Festival is not just about literature; it is a celebration of our town's ongoing transformation and creativity. Discover more by exploring the festival and Creative Folkestone's many other projects across the town.

## **Getting Here**

### **WALKING OR CYCLING:**

Folkestone is a walkable town with scenic routes. From Folkestone Central Station, it's a 10-15-minute walk via Station Road and Bouverie Road West. Cyclists can enjoy a bike-friendly journey, with racks available near the Quarterhouse.

### **DRIVING:**

If you're driving, follow the M20 motorway and exit at Junction 13 towards Folkestone. Head towards the town centre via Cherry Garden Avenue. Use CT20 1BN if you are using Google maps or other sat-nav apps. Parking is available nearby at Payers Park Car Park (CT20 1AU) or at the Tram Road Car Park (CT20 1FL), both within a short walking distance.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORT:**

Folkestone is well-connected by train. From London St Pancras, take the high-speed Southeastern service to Folkestone Central, with a journey time of just under an hour. From Folkestone Central Station, it's a short walk or taxi ride to the Quarterhouse. Buses from the surrounding areas also stop in the town centre, a few minutes' walk from the venue.



**TAXIS:**

Folkestone Taxis: 01303 252 000

JJs Taxis: 01303 244 442

Premier Taxis: 01303 270 000

Channel Cars: 01303 252 252

Folkestone Quarterhouse is located in the heart of the Creative Quarter, close to local bars and restaurants, and the vibrant arts scene of Folkestone. If you need more help or have any additional access needs please contact us by calling 01303 760 740 or emailing [info@creativefolkestone.org.uk](mailto:info@creativefolkestone.org.uk).

## **Access**

Creative Folkestone Quarterhouse is committed to being accessible to all visitors. The main entrance is step-free, with automatic doors providing easy access. The building has accessible toilets on every floor. For those with limited mobility, there is lift access to all levels of the building, and designated wheelchair spaces are available in the auditorium. Assistance dogs are welcome throughout the venue.

If you're arriving by car, there are blue badge parking spaces nearby at Tram Road Car Park (CT20 1FL), which is approximately 350 metres from Quarterhouse. The surrounding pavements are wide and smooth, ensuring easy navigation for wheelchairs and mobility aids.

Quarterhouse also offers hearing assistance. An induction loop system is available in the auditorium. If you need assistance, staff members are available to help, and it's recommended to contact the venue in advance to discuss any specific needs. We are improving our access provision and welcome all feedback.

For more information and to plan your visit to Folkestone Book Festival visit [creativefolkestone.org.uk](http://creativefolkestone.org.uk), call 01303 760 740 or email

## **Become a Member today**

Join us as a Creative Folkestone Member and help support our Learning and Engagement Programme. Your membership goes a long way to supporting our growing learning programme which brings creativity into the lives of over 3,000 children, young people and adults every year. For as little as £30 a year your membership includes:

- Discounts on tickets to visit Prospect Cottage
- Discounts on tickets for Quarterhouse and Folkstone Book Festival events
- 10% off food and drink in The Clearing Café and bar at Quarterhouse
- Invitations to members-only events
- Exclusive access to tickets and news– and so much more.

Sign up today and help us to inspire future generations. For more information about how to become a Creative Folkestone Member visit our website or ask at the Box Office.

## **Thanks to our sponsors**

Creative Folkestone Book Festival is made possible thanks to the generous support of our funders and partners. We welcome the return of our Education Partner, Canterbury Christ Church University.

This year's festival is supported by Eurotunnel and Friends of the Folkestone Book Festival. Thank you to our wine sponsor, Terlingham Vineyard.

Creative Folkestone is also supported by Arts Council England, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, Kent County Council and The Roger De Haan Charitable Trust.

**Creative Folkestone**

**Quarterhouse**

**Mill Bay**

**Folkestone**

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