FOOD VILLAGE · BOOKSHOP · BAR · LIVE MUSIC · FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

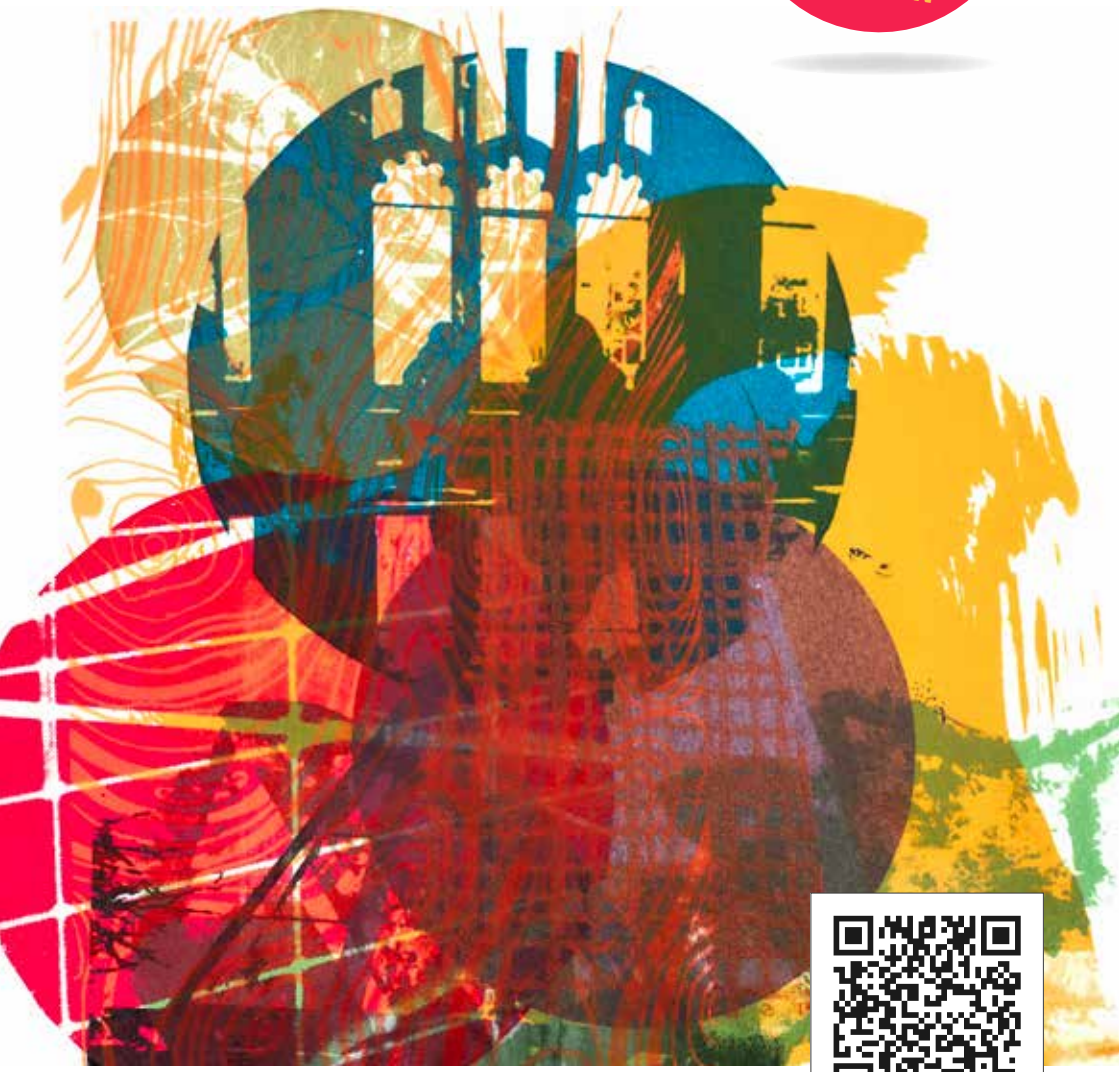
BordersBook Festival

where words come alive!

12-15 JUNE · 2025

HARMONY GARDEN · MELROSE · SCOTTISH BORDERS

INCLUDING The FAMILY BOOK FESTIVAL
Sponsored by Blackport Investments
SAT & SUN



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Booking Information

Tickets available online, by phone, or in person.

Online

www.bordersbookfestival.org

Telephone

Citizen Ticket: 0131 290 2112

Lines open Monday - Friday, 10am - 4pm
(closed on bank holidays)

This is a callback service. Just leave your name and number, and we'll get back to you.
For general festival enquiries, call 01896 822644.

In Person

Our on-site box office will be open during the festival (12–15 June): Harmony Garden, St Mary's Road, Melrose, TD6 9LJ

Concession tickets (C) are available for students, under-16s, Young Scot cardholders, registered disabled (plus one companion), and those registered unemployed. Please bring proof of entitlement.

Companion tickets are free for those who require a support person – see accessibility info on page 9.

Eco-conscious ticketing
We're proud to run a paperless ticketing system in partnership with Citizen Ticket. Each ticket sold supports reforestation; for every ticket purchased, a donation will go towards planting a tree right here in the UK.

Learn more at: www.citizenticket.co.uk/trees

Event Information

Events last one hour unless otherwise stated. Seating is unreserved.

Arrive on time: Events begin promptly. Late arrivals may not be admitted.

Event listings are accurate at the time of print, but changes can happen. We reserve the right to amend or cancel events. Tickets are non-refundable unless the event is cancelled. Check our website for updates and additions.

Accessibility info is on page 9.

Dogs: Well-behaved dogs on leads are welcome in the Orchard and Harmony Garden, but not in the fruit and vegetable garden (clearly signposted).

Please clean up after your dog. Only **assistance dogs** are allowed inside event venues.

Borders Book Festival is a Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Scotland Reg. No. SC296476 Scottish Charity No. SC037347

Join us on Social Media

Special thanks to

Honorary Patrons: Catherine Hamilton, Rory Bremner, James Naughtie, Eleanor Updale

Benefactors: Paul and Clare Rooney, The Blackport Family, Richard and Catherine Burns, The Marquis of Stafford Charitable Trust, James and Alice Pringle, Scott and Lucy Nisbet

Patrons: The Duke of Buccleuch, The De Gier Family, Fiona & Ian Russell, Alistair and Debbie Hall

Supporters: Sue and Rob Moffat, Ann and Maurice White, Gale Martin, Catherine Spark, Marion Livingston, Marjie Moffat, Sir Alexander and Lady McCall Smith



Cover Illustration

This year's festival artwork has been created by artist and printmaker Georgie Fay. Look out for her work in our programme, on posters, across our social media channels and various branded materials. **To see more on her amazing work visit: www.georgiefay.com**

Festival 25 Site Map



Harmony Garden

- **A** Harmony Marquee
- **B** Cullen Kilshaw Marquee
- **C** Buccleuch Marquee
- **D** David Young Festival Bookshop
- **E** Harmony Bar
- ▲ Luckie Beans Coffee
- ▲ Over Langshaw Farmhouse Ice Cream

The Orchard

- **F** JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee
- **G** Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent
- **H** Orchard Bar
- **I** Creative Hub
- **J** David Young Signing Tent
- △ Abbotsford Tent
- △ Information Stands

Food Village includes:

- ▲ SIPS Event Bars
- ▲ With a Cherry On Top
- ▲ Pizza Geeks
- ▲ Wild at Heart Street Food
- ▲ Greek Street Food
- ▲ Alandas Scottish Seafood
- ▲ Smash Burgers
- ▲ Luckie Beans Coffee

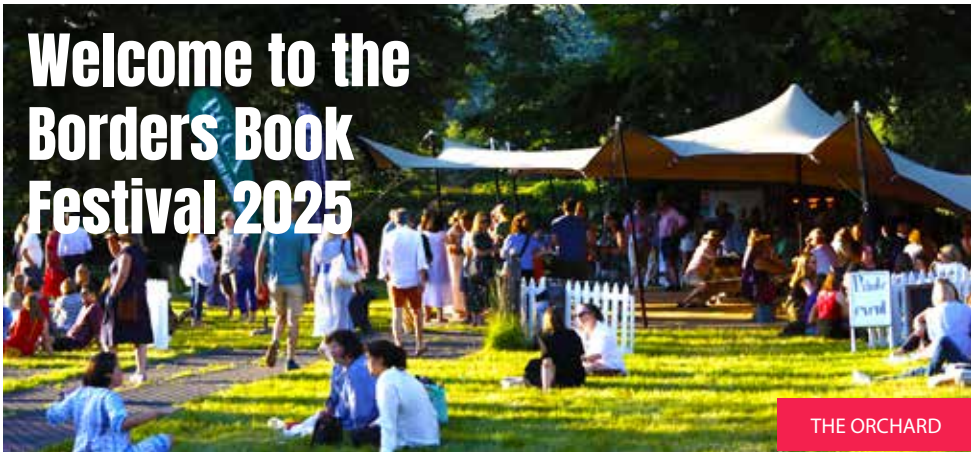
St Mary's Road

▭ Heartland Market (Sat & Sun only)

PARKING: Visitors are advised to park in Melrose town centre where the parking is in easy reach of the festival venues. There is also very limited parking for festivalgoers at the edge of the rugby pitch at Annay Road. This parking is weather dependent.

Although we do have some limited, disabled parking for Blue Badge holders only, we highly recommend using the drop-off point on Annay Road, where assistance from a member of the book festival team will be available. Restrictions will be in place on St Mary's Road from Monday 9 June to Monday 16 June and a diversion route from Abbey Street to Newstead will be in operation.

Welcome to the Borders Book Festival 2025



THE ORCHARD



Well, it has been quite a year already and we are only reaching the midpoint. No wonder you have made the wise choice to join us at the Borders Book Festival, where you can either escape from it all, or be part of trying to make sense of it. Whichever it is, we are delighted to welcome you – either for the first time, or back for another fun and stimulating weekend!

At this point 80 years ago the second of two devastating world wars was coming to an end, if ever we needed a reminder of how dangerous things can be. That is a big theme for us in Melrose this year, as we reflect with **Andrew Marr** and **James Holland** on what that moment meant, and the legacy it left behind, and **Alistair Moffat** will be looking at a fascinating aspect of the home front in the Borders.

We also have a special focus on the extraordinary careers of long-time festival friends **Kirsty Wark** and **Sally Magnusson**. Adventurers **Jessica Hepburn** and **Mollie Hughes** will offer a slightly different take on life, as will **Stacey Dooley**, and, from their sporting angles, **Rebecca Achieng Ajulu-Bushell**, **Sammi Kinghorn** and **Tanni Grey-Thompson**.

This year may have become more uncertain than most, but in truth it has been a rollercoaster decade in the UK. **Michael Gove**, **John Swinney** and **Jeremy Hunt** will offer reflections from the political front line and insights into what inspires and drives them on.

Meantime, our great festival pal, **Jim Naughtie**, will make sense of the world of Trump. Or as close as anyone is going to get.

If some of this makes you wonder if reality has indeed become stranger than fiction, you will be delighted to see that **Ian Rankin** and others are with us to show that great fiction is alive and kicking and not worrying about reality making it obsolete.

Elsewhere, please take a look at the **Family Book Festival**, which, thanks to **Blackport Investments**, has reached genuine 'bumper' status! And there's more - creative workshops, a bit of music, wellbeing workshops and, of course, unrivalled food and drink options. You don't need to go anywhere else this weekend.

As ever, we need a special blend of support to make this festival happen. So, our thanks to funders **Scottish Borders Council** and **Creative Scotland**, a welcome to new sponsors **David Young** and **Graham & Sibbald** and a big thank you to the roster of returning sponsors including **Adam & Company** and **JRW Hogg & Thorburn** whose presence you can see throughout this programme.

Year after year we are proud that this festival is 'where words come alive'. Our creative directors, **Alistair Moffat** and **Paula Ogilvie**, and the brilliant team working with them, are the key to that. Thanks to them – and to you for coming along to complete the party. Enjoy!

Michael Moore
Chairman, Borders Book Festival



THE BOOKSHOP

Major Sponsors

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LOTTERY FUNDED

Transport Partner

Local Media Partners

Main Sponsors

Sponsors, Supporters and Partners

Thanks also to: The Border Studio, Craig & Tania Paterson, Dr David Summers Charitable Trust, Dynamite Initiatives, Fauhope Country House, HR Creswick Charitable Trust, The Hawthornden Foundation, Hugh Fraser Foundation, Johnston Montgomery, Lloyd Smith Photography & Video, The Mainstreet Trading Company, St Mary's School, Scottish Book Trust, StonehillSalt PR, Super Power Agency, The Turtleton Charitable Trust and all our amazing festival volunteers.

Harmony Garden

The David Young Festival Bookshop

Browse, buy, and get books signed! There's a cosy kids' corner for young readers too.

Open from 3pm Thursday & Friday, 9am Saturday, and 10am Sunday - closing late every night.

All proceeds support the festival and our outreach work.



Author Signings

Most authors sign books after their events at the bookshop. No booking needed - just join the queue. Books are available to buy on site.

Scan code to join our mailing list

Drinking Water

We've installed a public refill station in Harmony Garden - bring a reusable bottle to top up your water!

Many shops in Melrose display "Free Tap Water Available Here" refill stickers - keep an eye out!

All the Fun of the Festival

Entry to Harmony Garden & Orchard is FREE!

Events for All Ages

Thanks to **Blackport Investments**, our Family Book Festival is packed with brilliant events for children, teens, and young adults. YA events are marked in the children's programme.

Some adult events are also suitable for younger audiences - check the programme for guidance.



Explore Melrose Abbey

This year, we're thrilled to host two unique events at Melrose Abbey, **The Scribble and Scrawl Abbey Crawl** and **Scottish Borders Folk Tales** with **James Spence** - see our programme for details.

In addition, explore the Abbey grounds for free during the festival and enjoy a weekend of living history re-enactors, family activities, tours, and talks.

Visit hes.scot/melrose-abbey for more information.





The Orchard

New for 2025: The David Young Signing Tent

Enjoy a more relaxed book signing experience in the new Signing Tent, located in the Orchard.

Authors from the **JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee**, **Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent**, and **Creative Hub** will be signing here. Books for the just-finished events will be available at the tent. No booking needed - just join the queue.

And more good news!

We've put in a special order for endless sunshine over the festival weekend, but in case of the occasional episode of 'refreshing weather', our new vast transparent canopy will keep you (and your food and drinks!) dry.

Food and Drink

From Borders favourites to global flavours, our food and drink line-up is a feast.

Sips Events returns under our giant stretch tent with superb wines, craft gins, and beers.

This year's foodies will be spoiled for choice with the finest Scottish seafood from **Alandas**, a taste of Italy from **Pizza Geeks**, an array of classic fast cuisine from **Wild at Heart** and **Smash Burgers**, also with sensational Greek wraps, gyros and halloumi fries from **Greek Street Food**.

Also on site is a mouth-watering selection of waffles, crepes, ice creams and sorbets served by **With a Cherry on Top** and **Over Langshaw Farmhouse Ice Cream**.

If you are short on time between events, in Harmony Garden you can enjoy great artisan coffee from **Luckie Beans**, as well as alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks from the **Harmony Bar**.

Check the website for the full list of delicious options. **www.bordersbookfestival.org**

All the Fun of the Festival



THE ORCHARD BAR



The Heartland Market is back on Saturday and Sunday during the festival.

The market was established to celebrate the artisan makers and shakers of Galashiels and the surrounding area and offers shoppers a unique experience to buy directly from local creative artisan producers.

For more: www.theheartlandmarket.uk

Getting to the Festival

By Car
Melrose is just minutes from the A68 and A7. For directions and parking info, see page 3.

Car Charging
Rapid chargers are at Buccleuch Street car park. Additional points are nearby at Tweedbank Service Station (TD1 3DJ). Check national sites for more locations.

Cycling
Bike racks are available at the festival. More info on our website.

By Train or Bus
Trains from Edinburgh Waverley to Tweedbank take under an hour, running every 30 minutes at peak times.

From Tweedbank, it's a 1.5-mile walk to the site (festival signs will guide you), or hop on a local bus to Melrose.

Full travel info and timetables can be found under 'Festival Info' on our website.



Media

Lights, camera…festival!
TV crews and microphones might be spotted on site - you could end up on the news!

Event Recordings
Some events will be recorded and available to watch on demand. Details are on the website and via our mailing list.

Photography & Video
Our media team will be capturing the action throughout the weekend.

Bloom Media Project
We're thrilled to continue this initiative for age 16+ creatives keen to explore media production and storytelling. Look out for our youth production team at the festival.

Accessibility Information

From seating to parking - all the accessibility info you need in one place.



HARMONY GARDEN

Sound enhancement in venues
We have a hearing loop system in our three largest venues: Harmony Marquee, Cullen Kilshaw Marquee and JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee. Simply set your hearing aid to 'T' for access.

Wheelchair access
All venues have wheelchair access. There is also extensive tracking across the festival site to ensure access is as smooth and level as possible.

Seating requests
If you have a wheelchair, or you need to sit in a specific area (aisle, etc), we can reserve seats for you. At least two days in advance, please complete and submit the request form which can be found in the seating requests section of the accessibility page on our website. Due to limited space and high demand, we are unable to reserve seats for others in your group – we want to ensure our accessible seats are available for those who most need them.

Companion tickets
If you need a support person or aide to attend events, they are entitled to a free companion ticket. These tickets should be booked at the same time you buy your own tickets.

BSL interpreted events
A selection of events will have a BSL interpreter. Look out for the BSL icon under events in the programme or online. If you are a deaf person and find your chosen BSL event has sold out, please email us at info@bordersbookfestival.org to enquire about ticket availability.

Toilets
We have toilets for everyone, including gender neutral and wheelchair accessible toilets plus baby changing facilities.

Assistance dogs
Assistance dogs are welcome to attend events. If you do need an assistance dog, please complete the request form in the assistance dog section of the accessibility page on our website at least two days before your event so that we can reserve appropriate seating.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower
Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard discreetly indicates to our trained staff that you may need additional support or help as you navigate the festival site and attend events. Lanyards are available at the box office.

Accessibility parking
Although we do have some limited disabled parking for Blue Badge holders, we highly recommend using the drop-off point on Annay Road, where assistance from a member of the festival team will be available.

Mobility scooters
A small number of mobility scooters will be available to borrow on a first come, first served basis. The collection point is located next to the box office. If you wish to book these in advance, please complete the request form which can be found in the mobility scooters section of the accessibility page on our website at least two days before your planned visit.

Festival at a Glance
12-15 JUNE 2025

FAMILY EVENTS YOUNG ADULT EVENTS **

THURSDAY 12 JUNE

Time	Event	Location	Page
5.00pm	**Gordon Buchanan: In the Hide**	Harmony Marquee	13
5.00pm	**The Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	13
5.00pm	**Rob Cowen: The North Road**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	14
5.00pm	**Jen Stout: Night Train to Odesa**	Buccleuch Marquee	14
5.00pm	**Jess Elliott Dennison: Midweek Dinners**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	14
6.45pm	**Kirsty Wark & Sally Magnusson**	Harmony Marquee	15
6.45pm	**James Holland: Victory '45**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	15
6.45pm	**Robin Ince: Normally Weird, and Weirdly Normal**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	16
6.45pm	**Ghillie Basan: Food, Whisky, Life**	Buccleuch Marquee	16
6.45pm	**Borders Writers Forum: Select Readings from 2025**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	16
8.30pm	**Michael Palin: There and Back**	Harmony Marquee	17
8.30pm	**Jeremy Hunt: Can We Be Great Again?**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	18
8.30pm	**Mollie Hughes: Life Lessons**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	18
8.30pm	**Douglas Jackson: Blood Sacrifice**	Buccleuch Marquee	18

FRIDAY 13 JUNE

5.00pm	**Andrew Marr & James Holland**	Harmony Marquee	19
5.00pm	**Andrew O'Hagan**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	19
5.00pm	**A Room of One's Own**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	20
5.00pm	**Mo Wilde: Free Food**	Buccleuch Marquee	21
5.00pm	**Walter Scott's Favourite Comedian**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	21
5.00pm -7.00pm	**Printing the Tweed: Workshop**	Creative Hub	21
6.45pm	**Gavin Esler: Britain is Better Than This**	Harmony Marquee	22
6.45pm	**Philippa Langley: The Missing Princes**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	22
6.45pm	**Rebecca Achieng Ajulu-Bushell**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	22
6.45pm	**Women of Whisky**	Buccleuch Marquee	23
6.45pm	**The Heartbeat of a Good Story**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	23
8.30pm	**Larry Lamb: All Wrapped Up**	Harmony Marquee	23
8.30pm	**Tim Bouverie: Allies at War**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	24
8.30pm	**Lin Anderson & Alex Gray**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	24
8.30pm	**Don Paterson: Toy Fights**	Buccleuch Marquee	25
8.30pm	**Weaving Together Tales of the Tweed**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	25

SATURDAY 14 JUNE

Time	Event	Location	Page
9.45am	**Robots and Oranges with Alan Windram**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	44
9.45am	**Chanté Timothy: Meet Supa Nova!**	Buccleuch Marquee	44
9.45am	**Storytelling the Super Power Agency Way!**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	44
9.45am -10.10am	**Bookbug Rhyme Session**	Creative Hub	45
10.00am -3.30pm	**Miniature Masterpieces**	Abbotsford Tent	45
10.15am	**Breathy Somatic Yogic Movement**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	26
10.30am -10.55am	**Bookbug Rhyme Session**	Creative Hub	45
11.15am	**Yussef Rafik: Don't Squish a Slug!**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	45
11.15am	**300 Words Story Writing Competition Awards**	Buccleuch Marquee	46
11.15am	**Vivian French: Chick, Chick,Chick, Chick, Chicken!**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	46
11.30am	**Lego Club**	Creative Hub	46
12.15pm	**Michael Gove: A Life of Writing**	Harmony Marquee	26
12.15pm	**Beaty Rubens & James Naughtie**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	26
12.45pm	**Simon Chapman: Rivers**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	47
12.45pm	**Mike Nicholson: My Granny Went to Scotland**	Buccleuch Marquee	47
12.45pm	**Fiona Carswell: Making Sense of Our Senses**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	47
1.15pm -3.15pm	**Family Printmaking Workshop**	Creative Hub	48
2.00pm	**Jim Swire & Peter Biddulph: Lockerbie**	Harmony Marquee	27
2.00pm	**Coinneach MacLeod: The Hebridean Baker**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	27
2.15pm	**Catherine Rayner**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	48
2.15pm	**Elle McNicoll: Wish You Were Her ****	Buccleuch Marquee	48
2.15pm	**The Notwitches with Gary Panton & Dotty Sutton**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	49
2.15pm -3.45pm	**The Scribble and Scrawl Abbey Crawl**	Melrose Abbey	49
3.45pm	**Marr, Magnusson & Moffat**	Harmony Marquee	27
3.45pm	**Quintin Lake: The Perimeter**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	28
3.45pm	**Dr Emily Leeming: Genius Gut**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	28
3.45pm	**Peter MacQueen: The Art of Hutting**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	28
3.45pm	**Ed James: Fear of Any Kind**	Buccleuch Marquee	28
4.00pm -5.30pm	**How to Write a Song - archie**	Creative Hub	29
5.30pm	**Alison Steadman**	Harmony Marquee	29
5.30pm	**Alistair Moffat: To See Ourselves**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	30
5.30pm	**Ambrose Parry: The Death of Shame**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	30
5.30pm	**Iain MacGregor: The Hiroshima Men**	Buccleuch Marquee	30
5.30pm	**Kerri Andrews: Pathfinding**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	31
7.15pm	**Ian Rankin**	Harmony Marquee	31
7.15pm	**Rory Cellan-Jones: Sophie from Romania**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	32
7.15pm	**Helen McGinn: Fine Wine and Fun**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	32
7.15pm	**Jason Allen-Paisant**	Buccleuch Marquee	32
7.15pm	**Rosi Lister: 900 Days**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	33
9.00pm	**Stacey Dooley**	Harmony Marquee	33
9.00pm	**Kathy Lette: The Revenge Club**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	34
9.00pm -10.15pm	**Live Music: archie**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	34
9.00pm	**Mairi Kidd: The Specimens**	Buccleuch Marquee	34

SUNDAY 15 JUNE

Time	Event	Location	Page
11.00am	**Guided Meditation with Spiritual Expression**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	35
11.00am	**Kjartan Poskitt: Runaway Pea**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	50
11.00am	**Coorie Doon with Jill Calder**	Buccleuch Marquee	50
11.00am	**Josh Silver: Step into TRAUMALAND - if you dare ****	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	50
11.00am	**Sunny Sensory Stories**	Creative Hub	51
11.00am -3.30pm	**Miniature Masterpieces**	Abbotsford Tent	51
12.45pm	**James Naughtie**	Harmony Marquee	35
12.45pm	**Christopher Lloyd: We Are All Animals**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	51
12.45pm	**The Batch Lady Rapid Dinners**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	35
12.45pm	**Joseph Coelho: Make Magic with Words!**	Buccleuch Marquee	52
12.45pm	**Colouring In Fun with Eilidh Muldoon**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	52
12.45pm -2.15pm	**Graphic Novel Builder Workshop with Edward Ross**	Creative Hub	53
2.15pm	**When Tanni Met Sammi - and Louise**	Harmony Marquee	36
2.15pm	**Tom Heap: Landsmart**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	36
2.15pm	**Vivian French & Tom Morgan-Jones**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	53
2.15pm	**Mairi Kidd: Scottish Fairy Tales, Myths & Legends**	Buccleuch Marquee	53
2.15pm	**Alastair Chisholm: One Cheeky Octopus**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	54
2.15pm	**Scottish Borders Folk Tales with James Spence**	Melrose Abbey	36
2.45pm	**Reading is Caring**	Creative Hub	37
4.00pm	**John Swinney: A Life in Books**	Harmony Marquee	37
4.00pm	**Jessica Hepburn: Save Me from the Waves**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	38
4.00pm	**Dacre Stoker & Ellie Zeegen: The Origins of Dracula**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	38
4.00pm	**Kjartan Poskitt's Mega Maths Maze**	Buccleuch Marquee	54
4.00pm	**Vivian French: Oliver's Vegetables**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	54
4.30pm -6.00pm	**Poetry Workshop with Craig Aitchison**	Creative Hub	38
5.45pm	**Louise Minchin: Isolation Island**	Harmony Marquee	39
5.45pm	**Adam Hart: Operation Pimento**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	39
5.45pm	**Rosemary Goring: Mary Queen of Scots**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	40
5.45pm	**The Secret Listeners**	Buccleuch Marquee	40
5.45pm	**Dr Clara Doran: Heads Up**	Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent	40
7.30pm	**Si King: The Return of the Hairy Biker**	Harmony Marquee	41
7.30pm	**Claire Mitchell & Zoe Venditozzi: How to Kill a Witch**	Cullen Kilshaw Marquee	41
7.30pm-9.00pm	**The Hot Club of Halifax**	JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee	41



THE ORCHARD

THURSDAY 12 JUNE

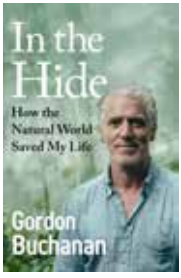
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Gordon Buchanan: In the Hide

HARMONY MARQUEE | 5.00PM | £16, £14

From the award-winning presenter and wildlife cameraman comes a candid and powerful memoir, in which he explains *How the Natural World Saved My Life*. For the first time he shares his raw account of a difficult childhood in Glasgow and on Mull, writing of the escape and solace he found in the natural world around him. His close encounters with the leopards in Mumbai, the wild snow wolf packs of the Arctic and polar bears on Svalbard made him famous, but behind the spectacular photography lies an inspiring story of resilience in the face of hardship.



The Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction

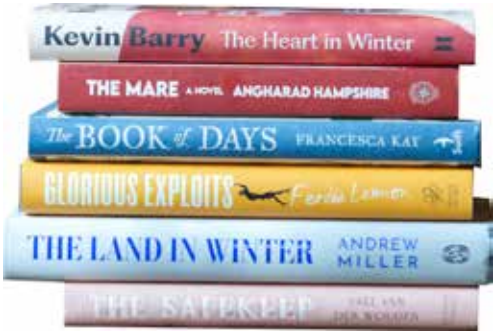
CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE | 5.00PM | £8, £6

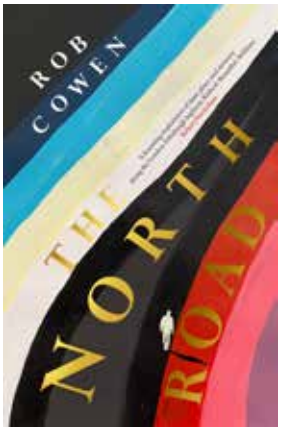
For sixteen years the £25,000 Walter Scott Prize has been a mainstay of the festival, bringing a touch of literary glitz and drama as the winner is revealed. Now managed by the home of great historical fiction, Abbotsford, the prize celebrates this year's six shortlisted authors – **Kevin Barry**, **Angharad Hampshire**, **Francesca Kay**, **Ferdia Lennon**, **Andrew Miller** and **Yael van der Wouden** – in this opening gala. Expect exceptional fiction read aloud, and a celebration of storytelling, fine writing and originality. While you await the event, why not whet your literary tastebuds with a visit to Abbotsford, Walter Scott's "romance in stone and mortar", to see where it all started.



ABBOTSFORD
THE HOME OF Sir Walter Scott

THE WALTER SCOTT PRIZE FOR HISTORICAL FICTION





Rob Cowen: The North Road

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 5.00PM | £14, £12

At the heart of Rob Cowen's book is a highway and its history, *The A1; The Great North Road*. Four hundred miles of ancient trackway, Roman road, pilgrim path, coach route and motorway that has run like a backbone through Britain for the last 2,000 years. In this profoundly personal book, Cowen follows this ghost road from beginning to end through history, place, people, and time. It is an epic, magisterial piece of writing, hard-won and beautifully expressed as the story of the great road comes vividly to life.



Scan code to join our mailing list

Jen Stout: Night Train to Odesa

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE
5.00PM | £10, £8

Covering the Human Cost of Russia's War is the subtitle of Jen Stout's remarkable account of the conflict that is reshaping world politics and reordering the priorities of the western democracies - including Britain's. Jen has covered the war in Ukraine from the very beginning as millions of people began to flee across its western borders. Reporting from the front line, she told stories from night trains, from bunkers, birthday parties and military hospitals. This is a visceral, honest and intelligent account – reporting at its finest.

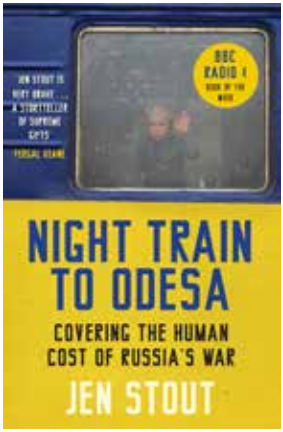




Image: Andrew Cawley

Jess Elliott Dennison: Midweek Dinners

DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART STORYTELLING TENT
5.00PM | £10, £8

Join us for an inspiring event with Jess Elliott Dennison, author of *Tin Can Magic* and *Lazy Baking*, as she shares her latest gem: *Midweek Recipes*. Written, tested, photographed and published from Elliott's, her studio in Edinburgh, this beautifully personal book is packed with effortless, joy-filled meals, perfect for Monday through to Friday. From crispy kimchi cheddar fritters to lemon-cream linguine and a decadent self-saucing chocolate pudding, Jess offers something for every level of cook. Come along to hear how she created this inspiring collection - and maybe even get a few scribble-worthy tips of your own!







Kirsty Wark & Sally Magnusson

HARMONY MARQUEE | 6.45PM | £16, £14

Last year the reign of the Queen of Newsnight came to an end and in April, the Queen of Reporting Scotland abdicated. In an event unique to the Borders Book Festival Kirsty and Sally talk about their decades at the helm of two long running news and current affairs programmes. Prime Ministers and First Ministers came and went while these two superb broadcasters chronicled the politics and culture of Britain and Scotland. What went wrong, what went right – and what are their feelings looking back on a period of unparalleled change? An unmissable event.

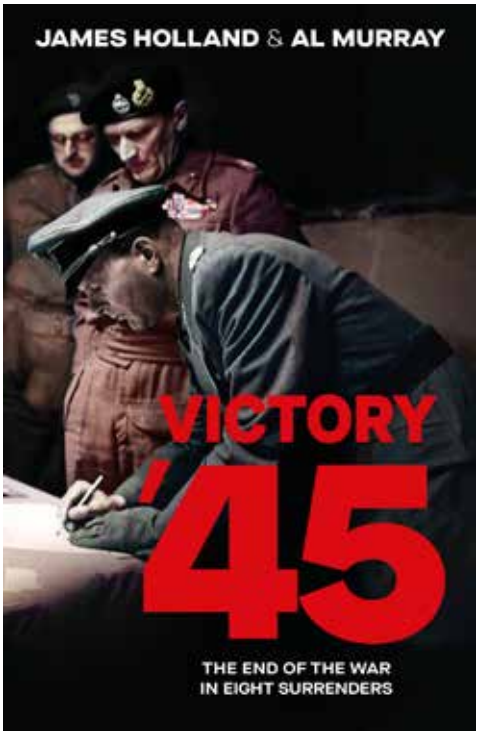


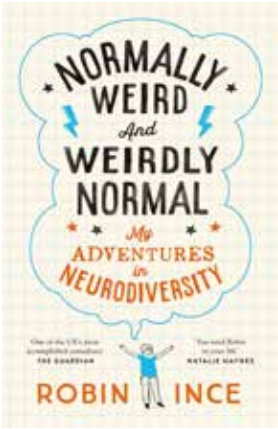


Image: Mike Lawn

James Holland: Victory '45

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE | 6.45PM | £14, £12

This is the first collaboration between James Holland and Al Murray. Marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, it tells the story of the extraordinary summer when the greatest conflagration the world had ever known came to an end after six surrenders in Europe and two in Japan. It shows how these moments – with Montgomery at Luneburg Heath, Eisenhower in Reims, Zhukov in Berlin and MacArthur aboard the USS Missouri – had profound consequences. Rich in drama, this book reveals untold stories and fresh perspectives. James will be in conversation with Alistair Moffat.



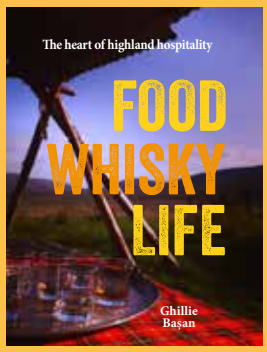


Robin Ince: Normally Weird, and Weirdly Normal

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 6.45PM | £14, £12

For more than 30 years the award-winning broadcaster and comedian has entertained hundreds of thousands, even though under the surface a whirlwind blew - a struggle with sadness, concentration, self-doubt and anxiety. But after his ADHD diagnosis, it all started to make sense. In *Normally Weird and Weirdly Normal*, Robin uses his own experience to explore the fascinating landscape of neurodiversity in a quirky and witty dive into the world of neuroscience and human behaviour.





Ghillie Başan: Food, Whisky, Life

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE | 6.45PM | £14, £12

Step into the wild world of award-winning writer, broadcaster and food anthropologist Ghillie Başan, the 'original spice girl' and one of Scotland's most inspiring culinary voices. In *Food Whisky Life*, she shares rich stories of her remote Highland life, pairing wild food and spices with whisky in unforgettable ways. With over 50 books and a global following through her Spirit & Spice experiences, Ghillie brings nature, flavour and hospitality to life. Join her for a fascinating event full of tales and **whisky tasting** in celebration of soulful Highland living. Attendees must be of legal drinking age.

Sponsored by Lochcarron of Scotland

LOCHCARRON of SCOTLAND

Borders Writers' Forum: Select Readings from Anthology 2025

DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART STORYTELLING TENT | 6.45PM | £10, £8

The Borders Writers' Forum invites you to join in this year's written celebration of Border life. Our talented local writers will entertain you with readings from their superbly crafted stories, prose and poems on topics ranging through history, crime, romance, metaphorical text, psychological drama, fantasy and even some time travel. Come along and perhaps you'll be inspired by this, their eighth anthology, to expand your own writing - or even to try for the first time.

Michael Palin: There and Back

HARMONY MARQUEE
8.30PM | £16, £14

We are delighted to welcome back a national treasure to the festival. Together we can celebrate the hotly-anticipated fourth volume of diaries chronicling the life of Michael Palin, covering the years 1999 - 2009. In that decade, he made his blockbuster travel series, Sahara, Himalaya, New Europe and Hemingway Adventure, and, like us all, navigated the shocks of 9/11, the 7/7 bombings in London and the global financial crash. Then he embarked on his greatest adventure yet: becoming a besotted grandfather.



Knight Frank

Sponsored by Knight Frank

Image: Alamy



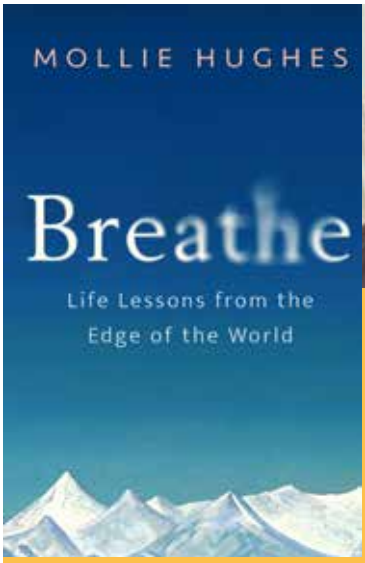
Jeremy Hunt: Can We Be Great Again?

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
8.30PM | £14, £12

Long-time cabinet minister, Jeremy Hunt, who served as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Foreign Secretary, asks what Britain's place in the world will be in the century that lies ahead. As the world order changes with dizzying speed after the election of President Trump, the answer to that question matters deeply. Pessimism abounds, but Jeremy is ready to challenge the orthodoxies and map out a route for Britain that puts it at the heart of a changed world order. In conversation with Michael Moore.

Image: Johnny Piper







Scan code to join our mailing list

Mollie Hughes: Life Lessons from the Edge of the World

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 8.30PM | £14, £12

Mollie has climbed Everest from both sides, skied solo from the edge of the Antarctic 700 miles to the South Pole through storm-force winds, 8-day whiteouts and temperatures as low as -45. Part memoir, part manifesto, her new book, *Breathe*, shows how Mollie's experiences of extremes can help us cope with everyday issues, problems and dilemmas. The book also challenges stereotypes in interviews with outstanding women adventurers and delivers life lessons from the edge of the world to us all.

Douglas Jackson: Blood Sacrifice

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE | 8.30PM | £10, £8

It's a homecoming for Jedburgh born Doug, whose eleven Roman novels established him as one of Britain's most popular and original historical novelists. But the brilliant *Blood Sacrifice* takes us instead to Warsaw. In January 1943 it's a city of the dead. In the ghetto the last 50,000 Jews await their fate but – they are prepared to fight to the end. Jan Kalisz, a Kripo investigator and Resistance double agent, has promised to supply them with weapons. Against all the odds, how can he possibly fulfill his vow? This is historical crime fiction at its pacy best.



FRIDAY 13 JUNE

WWW.BORDERSBOOKFESTIVAL.ORG





Andrew Marr & James Holland: The Great Generation

HARMONY MARQUEE | 5.00PM | £16, £14

Andrew and James talk to Alistair Moffat about the Great Generation who won the Second World War. We celebrate the 80th anniversary of its end by celebrating them, their sacrifices, their grit, determination and dogged willingness both to defeat a manifest evil in the shape of Nazism, whatever the cost, and also to rebuild a fairer society in Britain. From the heroism of the Lancaster bomber crews who flew even though their chances of survival were less than 50% to the people of London, Coventry, Liverpool and Clydebank who carried on during periods of appalling destruction, the Great Generation should never be forgotten.

Andrew O'Hagan

BSL

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
5.00PM | £14, £12

With no less than three Booker Prize nominations to his name, Andrew is the genius behind the magnificent novel and smash TV drama *Mayflies*. His new book, *Caledonian Road*, is equally profound, revealing through masterful storytelling how the ever-increasing chasm between rich and poor in today's society is underpinned. Meet Campbell Flynn, celebrated member of the glitterati and witness how his connections from tycoons to traffickers play a part in his spectacular fall from grace. Voted a best book of 2024 in the Sunday Times, the Spectator, the New York Times, the Scotsman and the Independent, the epic *Caledonian Road* is rumoured to be the next big thing on our screens.



Image: Christina Jansen



A Room of One's Own

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 5.00PM | £14, £12

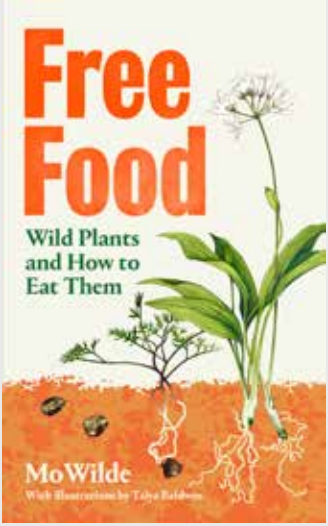
Since its premier at Duns PlayFest, *A Room of One's Own*, Firebrand Theatre Company's new adaptation from the writings of Virginia Woolf, has toured to great acclaim throughout Scotland including Pitlochry Festival Theatre's Winter Words Festival. Performed in the round by Ellie Zeegen and directed by Richard Baron, this inventive one-woman show, featuring a host of historical characters from Jane Austen to Shakespeare's sister, engagingly showcases why Virginia Woolf's brilliant, funny and rich exploration of freedom and identity, written almost one hundred years ago, has become one of the most significant feminist manifestos of its time, and any time. "Spellbinding" "Mesmerising" *The best piece of theatre I've ever seen".

Duration: 50 mins

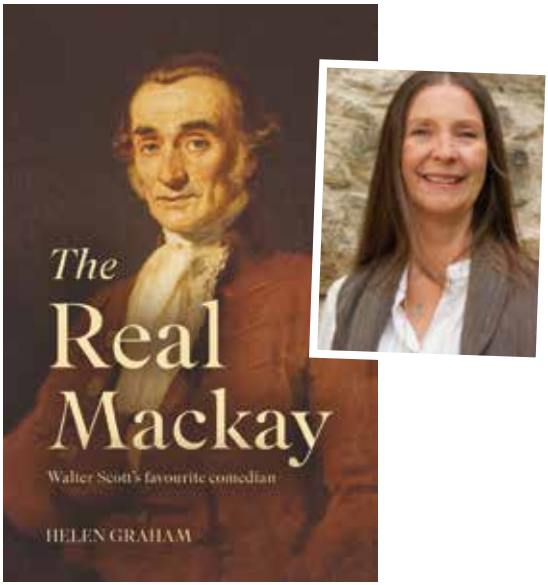
Mo Wilde: Free Food

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE
5.00PM | £10, £8

The definitive guide from a distinguished ethnobotanist, research herbalist and forager, who lived a full year on food scavenged only from the wild. Learn how to identify the plants, seaweeds, nuts and spices that are safe (and delicious) to eat. Whether you live in the city or in the countryside, a world of amazing, diverse wild food is on your doorstep. Not only is it free and sustainable; it is also packed with nutrients and flavour beyond anything you will find in a supermarket. Beautifully and expertly illustrated, *Free Food* will have you heading out with a trug to channel your inner hunter-gatherer.







The Real Mackay: Walter Scott's Favourite Comedian

DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART STORYTELLING TENT
5.00PM | £10, £8

Join author Helen Graham as she brings to life the story of Charles Mackay - the man who had Edinburgh's Theatre Royal buzzing night after night. In her compelling historical novel *The Real Mackay*, Graham paints a vivid portrait of Walter Scott's favourite comedian and the golden age of Scottish national drama. Meticulously researched and rich with period detail, the novel explores Mackay's dazzling success on stage and the deep personal tragedies behind the laughter. Discover a lost legend of Scottish theatre and the likely origin of the phrase "the real McCoy".

Supported by the Dr David Summers Charitable Trust



Printing the Tweed: Workshop

CREATIVE HUB
5.00PM – 7.00PM | £20

Join artist and printmaker **Georgie Fay** for a morning/afternoon of play and experiment using gelli plates and monoprints to create your own works of art inspired by the River Tweed and the setting of Borders Book Festival. Whatever your ability, Georgie will take you through the process and teach you various different printmaking techniques before giving you time to explore and create your own masterpiece.

All materials and equipment will be provided but be warned - ink will be involved!

Image: Danny Burrows

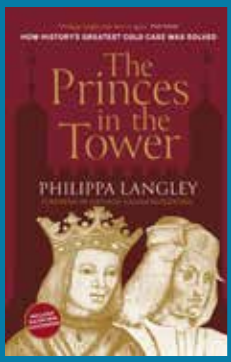




Gavin Esler: Britain is Better Than This

HARMONY MARQUEE
6.45PM | £16, £14

The distinguished former BBC correspondent has shed the need for impartiality and produced an urgent and timely exploration of a British political system in peril. He's also suggested what we need to do to save it. Will Hutton wrote: "The most compelling, lacerating description of the Muppet Show that is British public life…from the corners of the House of Lords to the playing fields of Eton. You laugh out loud while violently agreeing- we are better than this."





Philippa Langley: Final Findings - Richard III & the Fate of the Missing Princes

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE | 6.45PM | £14, £12

Philippa returns to the festival following a sell-out appearance in 2024. After ten years of robust forensic research, The Missing Princes Project is now concluded and her updated edition of *The Princes in the Tower: How History's Greatest Cold Case Was Solved* presents the final findings. Using a forensic, police-style approach never before applied to a centuries-old historical enigma, Langley and her team uncover remarkable archival material that challenges long-held assumptions and reveals a compelling untold story. This is a rare opportunity to hear first-hand how a mystery that has captivated historians for over 500 years may finally be laid to rest. A must-see for history lovers and true crime enthusiasts alike.

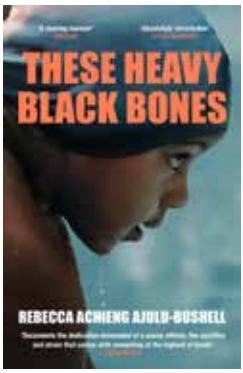
Image: Karis Beaumont



Rebecca Achieng Ajulu-Bushell: These Heavy Black Bones

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 6.45PM | £14, £12

This is a remarkable, very different account of the achievement of sporting excellence. Rebecca was a double British swimming champion and the first Black woman ever to swim for Great Britain. As her body and mind are sharpened through gruelling training, press scrutiny and the trials of adolescence, Rebecca charts the rise of her career and her love of the water before explaining why she walked away from it all. Cathy Rentzenbrink wrote that it 'reads with the tension of a thriller, illuminating the world of elite sport'.
In conversation with Michael Moore.



Women of Whisky

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE | 6.45PM | £20

Now in its third year, The Borders Distillery's 'Women of Whisky' is a panel discussion, with the aim of challenging the cultural perception that the Scotch Whisky industry is all about men. What better than getting women of the whisky trade to talk every year to a new audience with an opportunity to have these perceptions challenged in the best way possible; a conversation over a dram.

Ticket includes 3 Scotch Whisky cocktails, chosen by the panellists. Attendees must be of legal drinking age.

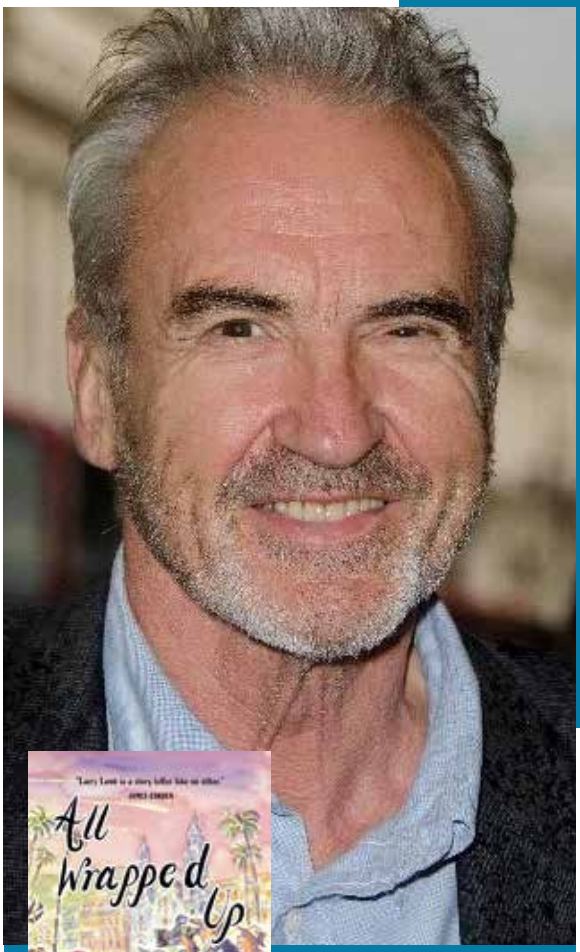
Sponsored by The Borders Distillery THE BORDERS DISTILLERY



Compelling Characters...The Heartbeat of a Good Story

DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART STORYTELLING TENT | 6.45PM | £10, £8

Characters make a story. But where do they come from? How real are they? Four local Society of Authors writers of adult, young adult and children's fiction, **Iona Carroll**, **Margaret Skea**, **Peter Bromley** and **Oliver Eade**, who share a number of national and international awards for their writing, will talk about how they find their characters and make them real.



Larry Lamb: All Wrapped Up

HARMONY MARQUEE
8.30PM | £16, £14

Whether best known to us as Eastenders' Archie Mitchell or Gavin and Stacey's Mick Shipman, Larry Lamb is a screen icon. He is also a supreme storyteller; to quote James Corden: "…one of the best." In this, his debut novel, Larry weaves an irresistible tale of the turmoil of film-making on a Caribbean island as the first assistant director deals with an impossible lead actor, the disappearance of a crew member and a production that is falling apart. Full of insight, fun and tension, the novel is a page-turner that reeks of authenticity.

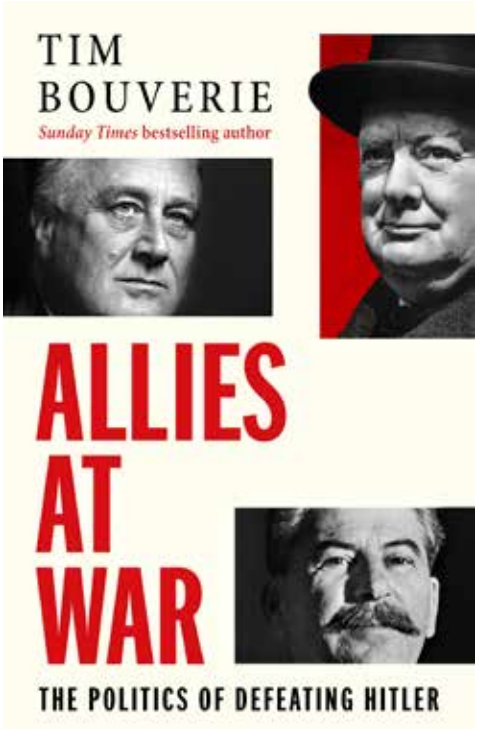


Image: Urszula Soltys



Tim Bouverie: Allies at War

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE | 8.30PM
£14, £12

Subtitled *The Politics of Defeating Hitler*, Tim Bouverie has written a landmark history of the alliance that won the war. Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt were partners in the fight to defeat Hitler, yet they were also rivals who disagreed on strategy, imperialism and the future shape of liberated Europe. Using vivid, first-hand accounts and unpublished diaries, Tim Bouverie puts the reader in the room where critical decisions were made. This fast-paced compelling narrative is part of our celebration of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two.

Lin Anderson & Alex Gray

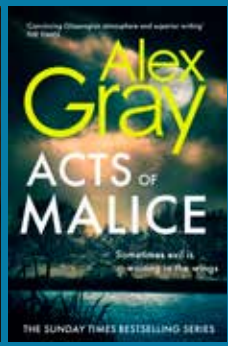
JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 8.30PM | £14, £12

Few know as much about crime writing as Lin Anderson and Alex Gray. Not only do they write two of Scotland's best-loved crime series, but they are also the founders of the immensely popular crime festival Bloody Scotland, held in Stirling. Lin's protagonist, forensic scientist Rhona MacLeod, works all over the country but her most recent novel *Whispers in the Dark* sees her back in Glasgow on the trail of a missing movie star. Could the clue to his whereabouts be in the film script itself? *Acts of Malice* is the 22nd in Alex's series and there's a drama at the heart of this novel too, as DSI Lorimer and team find that the finest actors are those with the darkest secrets to hide.







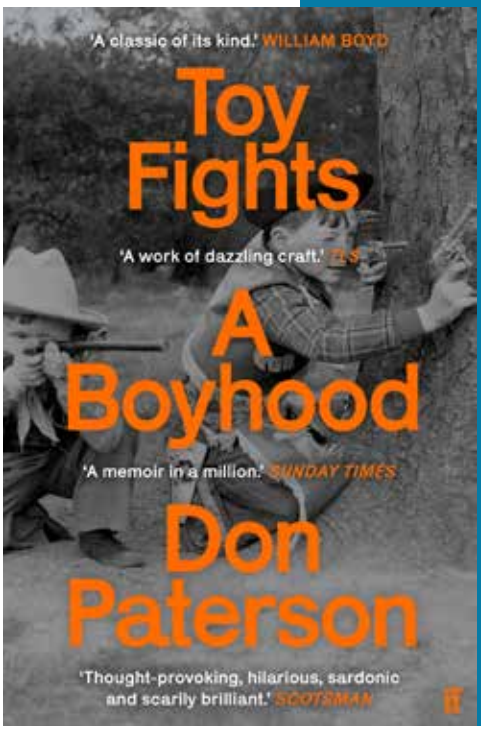




Don Paterson: Toy Fights

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE
8.30PM | £10, £8

Toy Fights: A Boyhood is the best memoir of growing up on a Scottish council estate, the best evocation of a troubled adolescence, of how a love of music can be completely absorbing, but also the most chilling evocation of what a breakdown is like, from the inside. Don Paterson is one of Britain's most gifted poets, having won the Forward Prize, the T. S. Eliot Prize and the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 2009. The Financial Times wrote about Toy Fights as 'a book that swan-dives into the filthy waters of growing up and resurfaces clear-eyed, bearing pearls'. It does indeed; a superb piece of writing.









Weaving Together Tales of the Tweed

DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART STORYTELLING TENT | 8.30PM | £10, £8

The River Tweed has many tales to tell – of myth and murder, romance and revenge. Craig Aitchison's poem, 'Tweed', blends Border Scots and English to create a picture of a river which continues to attract visitors, fascinate environmentalists and ecologists and inspire artists and historians. He has blended research and personal observation with stories shared by those whose lives have been shaped by the Tweed, richly illustrated with unique prints made in response to his words. Craig will be joined by artist Georgie Fay and book maker Rosemary Everett to talk about the allure of the river and the power of collaboration. Chaired by Genevieve Fay.

SATURDAY 14 JUNE

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Breathy Somatic Yogic Movement

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
10.15AM | £15

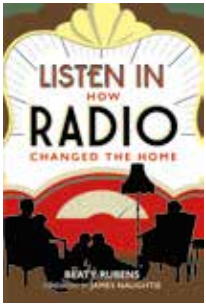
Led by **Yoga Ganesh's Braxton**, this is a practice of conscious breathing with movement. Braxton will guide you through a yogic session with focus on the Somatic experience - and with specific anchoring on calisthenics, balance and strength, using our breath. Suitable for all levels. Mat, water and suitable loose clothing required.

Beaty Rubens & James Naughtie: How Radio Changed the Home

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
12.15PM | £14, £12

Beaty's book *Listen In* offers a compelling insight into the early history of radio, focusing on the profound impact it had on domestic life in Britain. In 1922 only 150,000 were listening, but by 1939 that number had exploded to 34 million. It was one of the most rapid technological and social shifts in modern history, on a par with the internet revolution of the 21st century. Joining Beaty on stage is legendary presenter, Jim Naughtie, voted radio's "best voice to wake up to" and who also wrote the foreword to the book.







Michael Gove: A Life of Writing

HARMONY MARQUEE | 12.15PM | £16, £14

The editor of The Spectator, Michael Gove, has been a prolific writer and author throughout his life. Since his early days in Aberdeen, he has combined writing with a knack for being at the heart of the public debate on the biggest issues of the day. After a high-profile career as a journalist and broadcaster, Michael served almost continuously as a cabinet minister under four Prime Ministers from 2010 until last summer. Why is writing so important to him, and as an editor what kind of writing inspires him? In this revealing event, he will talk to Michael Moore about life, politics – and the books that have shaped him and his thinking.

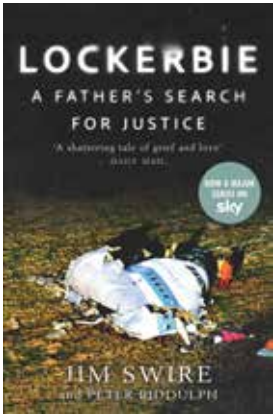




Image: Chris Floyd

Jim Swire & Peter Biddulph: Lockerbie - A Father's Search for Justice

HARMONY MARQUEE | 2.00PM | £16, £14

The mid-air destruction of Pan Am Flight 103 over a small town in the south of Scotland remains one of the world's most shocking terrorist attacks. For over three decades and across several continents, Jim Swire has searched for the truth behind the murder of his daughter Flora, the 258 other passengers, as well as 11 people on the ground. Breaking the news of the disaster and its aftermath, was journalist Allan Little. Allan joins Jim Swire and author Peter Biddulph to expose discredited evidence, bribery and cover-ups, reveal what really happened, and ensure this tragedy is never forgotten.





Image: Susie Lowe

Coinneach MacLeod: The Hebridean Baker BSL

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
2.00PM | £14, £12

Failte! Welcome to a fourth title in the Hebridean Baker series. *The Scottish Cookbook* contains more essential, timeless recipes from the islands. Far more than just perfecting shortbread, scones and clootie dumplings, this is a celebration of Scotland's timeless culinary traditions mixed with stories, people and memories, one delicious bite at a time. Coinneach's aim is to bring the best of the Scottish islands to a worldwide audience and with 400,000 followers on social media, he is getting there. Thigibh a-staigh! Come and join us!

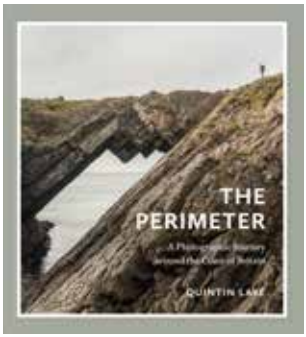


Marr, Magnusson & Moffat

HARMONY MARQUEE | 3.45PM | £16, £14

Our Trade: How journalism has changed out of all recognition in the last 40 years. This is not a book, but an important discussion of one of the most vital facets of democracy and how the coming of the internet, and the massive reach of platforms like Facebook and X have overwhelmed traditional news outlets, and their traditional values. Andrew, Sally and Alistair will talk about the increasingly minor role that balance, objective truth, untampered statistics and common sense seem to play. And perhaps all three will discuss how to navigate a way through what might be news, and what might not.

An Adam & Company Event



Quintin Lake: The Perimeter

CULLEN KILSHAW
MARQUEE
3.45PM | £14, £12

On Friday 17th April, 2015, Quintin Lake set off from the steps of St Paul's Cathedral on a five-year journey that would take him around the entire coastline of mainland Britain. Carrying 20 kilos of hiking and photography gear, he walked 11,000 kilometres in 454 days with one goal in mind: to produce a body of work that gets under the surface of the island nation we call home. The result is stunning and sure to be an instant classic.



Peter MacQueen: The Art of Hutting

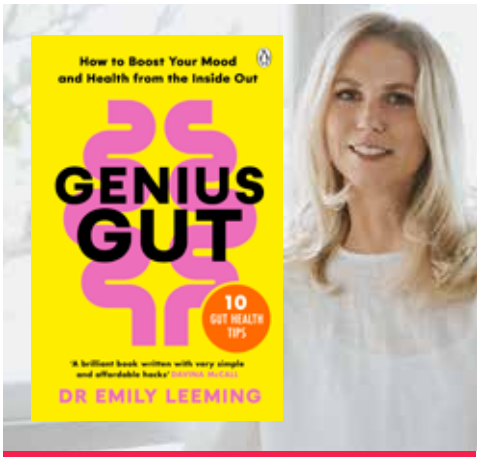
DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART STORYTELLING TENT | 3.45PM | £10, £8

Subtitled *Living Off-Grid with the Highland Hutter,* Peter MacQueen's wonderful book guides readers on how to build their own cosy hut in the wilds, disconnecting from whirlwind lifestyles as well as public utilities. Whether in the country or by the sea or near to home, huts are a glimpse into nature, encouraging us to slow down and enjoy the details of life's little things and create time for self-care, good health and a sustainable way of living. With cover-to-cover guidance on everything from fabrication to food for free, Peter turns the dream of a rural hideaway into a practical reality.

Sponsored by the BSW Group

BSW GROUP

Image: Breeana Dunbar



Dr Emily Leeming: Genius Gut

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE
3.45PM | £14, £12

Dr Emily Leeming unpacks the life-changing science of eating for your second brain. This remarkable book allows for the easy digestion of the latest ground-breaking scientific research about the powerful path between our gut and our brain, transforming how we eat to boost our health and mood. With 10 proven easy gut-brain hacks that you can mix and match, you will learn how and what to eat for peak emotional and physical well-being. Emily is a microbiome scientist, a registered dietitian, an excellent chef, and, with family here, a regular visitor to the Borders.



Ed James: Fear Of Any Kind

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE
3.45PM | £10, £8

When a 17-year-old boy is murdered in Hawick, DI Rob Marshall finds a community on edge. What seems like a straightforward case unravels into something far more sinister. With over 35 books to his name, Ed James is something of a serial crime writer. His often complex, always compelling characters - detectives from London, Edinburgh and Dundee - must delve into the murkiest of minds to bring criminals to justice. In this, the seventh mystery to be unravelled by DI Rob Marshall of the Scottish Borders police, we get under the skin of life in the towns and countryside of the most beautiful part of Britain. And the place Ed James now calls home.



How to Write a Song - from writing to mastering - and releasing!

CREATIVE HUB | 4.00PM - 5.30PM | £15

Calling all budding musicians and song lovers! In this highly interactive workshop, singer-songwriter Archie will take you through the process of songwriting - from coming up with the original concept to releasing it on all major streaming services. He will showcase a few potential songs in different styles - and you get the chance to choose which one to explore for a deep dive into its production story. Throughout the session, Archie will be answering your questions and sharing his knowledge and expertise.

For further information about archie, check out his event on page 34 or go to his YouTube page @archiecwmusic

Scan code to join our mailing list

Alison Steadman

HARMONY MARQUEE | 5.30PM | £16, £14

Out of Character is a superb memoir charting the long and wonderful journey from Abigail's Party to Gavin and Stacey with stops in between as Mrs Bennet in Pride and Prejudice and Betty in Fat Friends. Raised in working class Liverpool, Alison survived drama school and attacks of the giggles onstage to become a great and versatile actress. From the nervy Mrs Bennet to the robo-dancing Pam-el-aah, she has proved herself again and again to be a comic actress of genius. This is a must-read memoir of a life in and out of character.

BSL



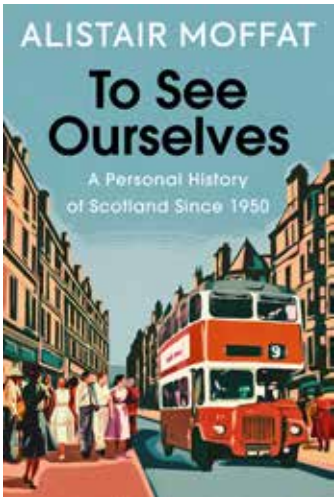




Image: Andrew Cawley

Alistair Moffat: To See Ourselves

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE | 5.30PM | £14, £12

Instead of delving far back into the darkness of the deep past, Alistair tells a story of the here and now, of how in his lifetime Scotland has changed out of all recognition, immeasurably faster than ever before. Most of them beginning in Kelso in the 1950s, chapters deal with the housing revolution, how changes in shopping habits changed lives, the decline of religion, amateur sport, newspapers, the loss of the British Empire, the coming of television and much else. For Alistair it is a new departure, a different sort of history: one in which we have all taken part.

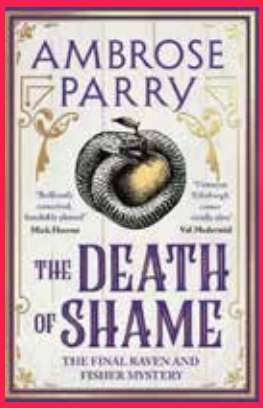




Image: Bob McDevitt Photography

Ambrose Parry: The Death of Shame

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE
5.30PM | £14, £12

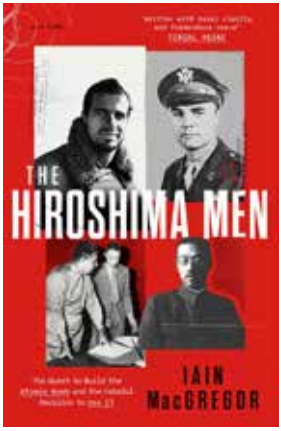
It is 1854 Edinburgh, and respectable faces hide private sins. Sarah Fisher is searching for Annabel Banks, promised a situation in a prestigious household – but she has completely disappeared. Sarah learns how young women are ensnared in Edinburgh's houses of assignation where they are deceived, trafficked and raped, leaving them ruined in the eyes of a society obsessed with moral purity. Based on true stories crafted by husband and wife team, Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman, this dark, compelling and shocking novel is the fifth and final of the series.

Iain MacGregor: The Hiroshima Men

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE
5.30PM | £10, £8

80 years ago this August, the world woke up to the horror of Hiroshima. 80,000 died immediately, with tens of thousands dying slowly in the months and years to come, from radiation poisoning. Using meticulous research to uncover stories yet untold, renowned historian Iain MacGregor takes us deep into the minds of those who designed and developed the first atomic bomb, those who made the momentous decision to drop it and those whose lives were lost or shattered on the day humanity was forever altered. With world politics today on knifepoint BBC correspondent Fergal Keane can think of "no more important book for our time" than *The Hiroshima Men*.





Kerri Andrews: Pathfinding

DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART
STORYTELLING TENT | 5.30PM | £10, £8

Kerri Andrews reveals the hidden histories and present-day pathways of walking, motherhood and freedom. The desire to walk is something that defines us as human beings, bringing joy and connection. In the wake of becoming a mother, Kerri undertakes a series of journeys on foot to understand what happened to her. Traversing urban, rural and mountainous landscapes in the North West and Scotland, Kerri includes three walks from across the Tweed Valley where she lives. She is joined by women whose experiences as mothers have also changed them, sometimes radically. Melding history, landscape-writing and memoir, *Pathfinding* is a deeply personal, brave and urgent exploration of motherhood.



Image: Joanna Coates

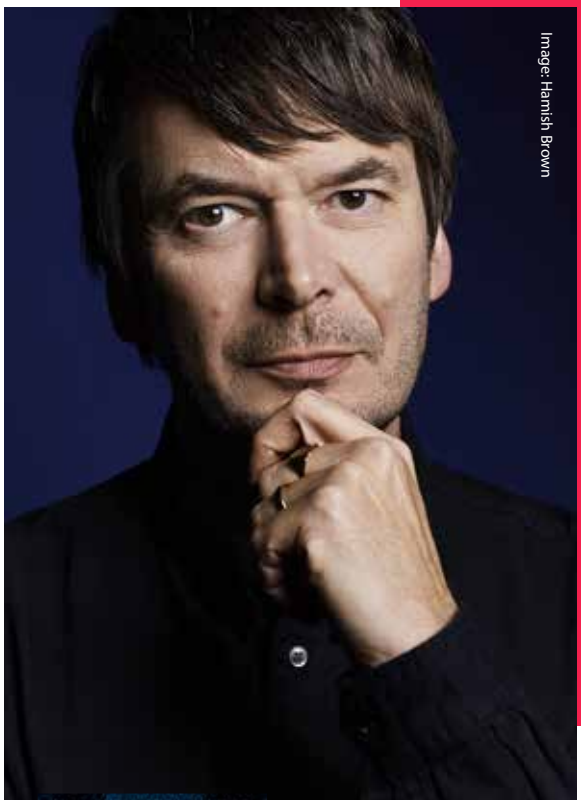


Image: Hamish Brown

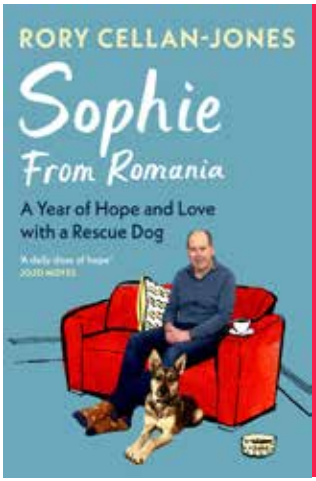


Ian Rankin

HARMONY MARQUEE
7.15PM | £16, £14

Britain's greatest crime writer returns to the Borders Book Festival to talk about his work, his plans and, of course, about John Rebus. This latest thriller now in paperback, went straight to number one and The Times said: "Rebus in jail and better than ever…Surprising, gripping and witty, Rankin has taken the police procedural and transformed it into an epic character study of a man and his city…Nobody does it better." No they don't. Need we say more about a great writer at the peak of his powers?

An Adam & Company Event





Rory Cellan-Jones: Sophie from Romania

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
7.15PM | £14, £12

The BBC's chief technology correspondent until 2021, Rory has written a beautiful, heartwarming account of adopting, befriending and learning to love Sophie, a shy rescue dog. After the loss of his elderly Collie cross in 2022 and missing the walks that had alleviated his Parkinson's Disease symptoms, Rory held the trembling new arrival in his arms. Little did he know that it would take a year to win her trust and in doing so, attract hundreds of thousands of SM followers from across the globe to her own page. This is a wonderful, moving story of growing together through love, kindness and patience.

Helen McGinn: Fine Wine and Fun with Corney & Barrow

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 7.15PM | £20

She's back! Author & TV wine expert Helen McGinn returns once again to the Borders Book Festival and as ever she's bringing wine. Helen's wine book *The Knackered Mother's Wine Guide* is based on her award-winning blog and aims to steer you through the wine aisle with confidence. She'll have a selection of wines to taste whilst talking about the secret to picking a good bottle every time. She's also written five novels and her latest, *Under A Riviera Moon*, is set in Provence (spoiler alert: contains wine). Expect an evening of great wine and chat as she revisits her favourite book festival (her words, not ours).

Ticket includes wine samples. Sponsored by Corney & Barrow

CORNEY& BARROW



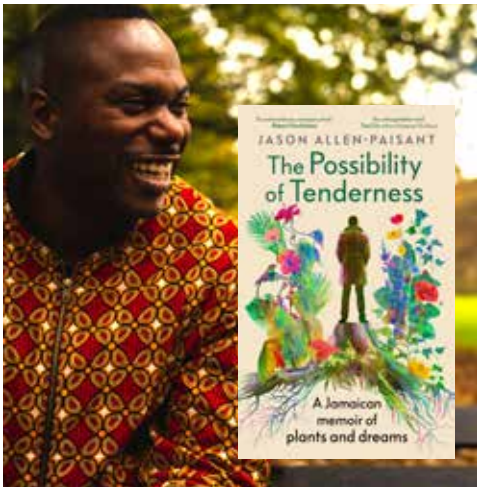


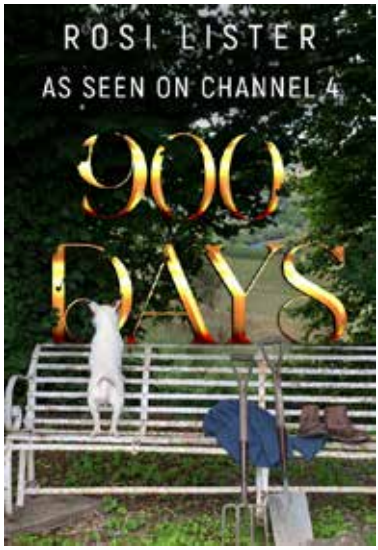
Image: Ndrika Anyika

Jason Allen-Paisant: A Jamaican Memoir of Plants and Dreams

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE | 7.15PM | £10, £8

From his childhood in Manchester Jamaica, to his professorship at Manchester University UK, this unique memoir traces the history of scholar, poet and thinker Jason Allen-Paisant. Winner of the T.S. Eliot Prize and the Forward Prize for Poetry with *Self-Portrait As Othello*, Jason's first non-fiction work, *The Possibility of Tenderness*, is a fierce reclamation of a link with the land. Coincidently, there is cross pollination with Harmony House and Garden, built by the owner of the Melrose Plantation, which exists in Manchester, Jamaica to this day. Now in the care of the National Trust for Scotland, Harmony has also been reclaimed for us all to enjoy.





Rosi Lister: 900 Days

DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART STORYTELLING TENT | 7.15PM | £10, £8

Rosi Lister's story is the result of two and a half years of searching the length and breadth of Britain for a dream renovation project. It is also a search for a new beginning. At the age of fifty-seven, as a result of a number of life-changing events, Rosi gave up a thirty-year career in art and design education and heritage management to start again, to embrace a life of creative freedom and to make some unconventional choices. She and her partner, Ant, chased their dreams and finally found a run-down Georgian property they could transform – in the Scottish Borders.

Stacey Dooley: Conversations with Remarkable Mothers

HARMONY MARQUEE | 9.00PM | £16, £14

Stacey Dooley returns to the festival brimming with enthusiasm and empathy, the trademarks that created one of the most respected TV documentary makers of our time. She's also a best-selling author. Her new book *Dear Minnie* is dedicated to her daughter, a first child with Kevin Clifton, her partner in life and in Strictly Come Dancing. Using letters written by mothers to their children in diverse and extraordinary circumstances, Stacey has written a frank, honest and sometimes amusing enquiry that moves from pregnancy to birth and beyond. She talks to Sally Magnusson about the different emotional journeys mothers make, as well as the common bonds they share.







Kathy Lette: The Revenge Club

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
9.00PM | £14, £12

Life-enhancing, brilliant and irreverent, Kathy has written a glorious new novel with bestseller written all over it. *The Revenge Club* is the story of Matilda, Jo, Penny and Cressy, all women at the top of their game who find themselves pushed aside by less qualified men. Society might think these women are past their amuse-by dates, but the Revenge Club has other plans. Why go to bed angry when you could be up all night plotting diabolical retribution? Let the games begin! "Deliciously rude and darkly funny", said Nicole Kidman.







Live Music: archie

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE
9.00PM – 10.15PM | £14, £12

Wrap up your Saturday night with a feel-good live set from rising Scottish star archie. At just 21, this gifted singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist is turning heads with his soulful voice, infectious jazz-infused pop and heartfelt storytelling. A classically trained musician and natural performer, archie has already lit up stages across the UK and racked up over 20 million streams online. His mix of timeless melody and modern flair - blending the warmth of vintage soul with the spark of contemporary pop - offers something for everyone. From toe-tapping originals like Chasing Daisies and Colourblind to crowd-pleasing covers, expect a fabulous show that'll have you humming all the way home. One to watch - and a joy to experience live!

Mairi Kidd: The Specimens

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE
9.00PM | £10, £8

Mairi's new novel is a bold retelling of Burke and Hare's crimes from the point of view of the women closest to the gruesome truth. Set in Edinburgh in 1828 two women, one rich, one poor, must navigate life against a frenzied backdrop of medical discovery, mob mayhem and murder. This is a very different account of the notorious serial killings of Burke and Hare, told for the first time through the eyes of two women from different backgrounds whose stories explore the depths of the human heart in a perilous, vulnerable world.

Supported by the Dr David Summers Charitable Trust

SUNDAY 15 JUNE

WWW.BORDERSBOOKFESTIVAL.ORG



Guided Meditation with Spiritual Expression

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
11.00AM | £15

Led by Yoga Ganesh's Braxton, we will move through and past the physical body, our prana, and learn how to flow from the external to the internal world of mindfulness and meditation. Braxton will guide you through this experience - exposing you to and through the inner bridge and on to the peaceful awareness and observation of the authentic self. Suitable for all levels. Mat, water, eye mask and thick cosy blanket or sleeping bag required.



James Naughtie

HARMONY MARQUEE | 12.45PM | £16, £14

In an event unique to the Borders Book Festival, Jim will present his annual roundup of world affairs. Few have such an informed and profound grasp of the complexities of American politics, and goodness knows what will have happened by the time we get to Sunday June 15th. Whatever the antics of the occupants of the White House, Jim will look behind the torrent of so-called news, what they call 'flooding the zone' and will present a characteristically acute and astute analysis of what direction the careening chariot of time and events is taking us all.



Suzanne Mulholland: The Batch Lady Rapid Dinners

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 12.45PM | £14, £12

Suzanne has teamed up with Joe Swash in Batch From Scratch, a brand-new money and time-saving mealtime TV series for Channel 4. Now, in her new book *Rapid Dinners* Suzanne will talk about her methods, how much fun cooking is and how she has built a global audience for her bestselling work. And, she will show the festival audience how it is done with a demonstration. Lots to enjoy – on every level! In conversation with food writer Jess Elliott Dennison.



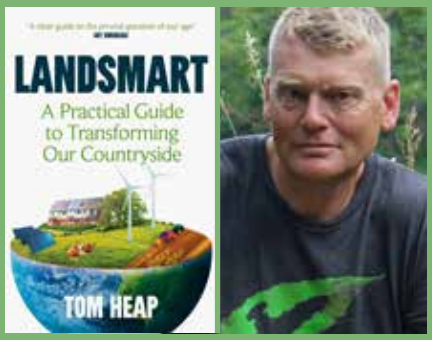


When Tanni Met Sammi - and Louise

BSL

HARMONY MARQUEE | 2.15PM | £16, £14

A powerhouse trio takes the stage in this inspiring and unmissable event. Paralympic legend and political trailblazer Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson joins forces with Sammi Kinghorn MBE, the dynamic record-breaking world champion and 2024 Paralympic gold medallist, in conversation with broadcaster and endurance athlete Louise Minchin. Together, Tanni and Sammi will share the challenges, triumphs and determination that shaped their journeys - on and off the track. From childhood dreams to global podiums this event offers rare insight into resilience, ambition and the power of sport to change lives. An extraordinary meeting of generations, perspectives and unstoppable spirit - unique to this festival and not to be missed.

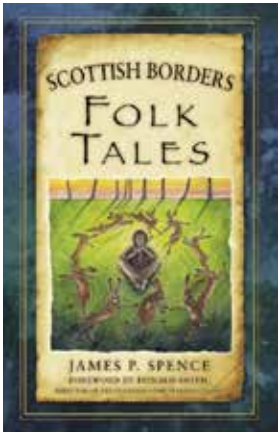


Tom Heap: Landsmart

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE | 2.15PM | £14, £12

With approximately 85% of the land in the Borders used for farming, agriculture is our bread and butter. However, BBC and Sky journalist Tom Heap argues that we must urgently change our relationship with the land if we are to fulfil the needs of both people and planet. In this practical guidebook we meet Britain's most innovative farmers, scientists and conservationists radically re-imagining land use to address this imbalance and allow both to thrive. A helpful and hopeful event for anyone living or working in our precious countryside.

Sponsored by Borders Forest Trust







Scottish Borders Folk Tales with James Spence

MELROSE ABBEY | 2.15PM | £10, £8

The Scottish Borders are rich in stories – fantastical and powerful, dark and funny. Within the atmospheric setting of Melrose Abbey, in the shadow of the enchanting Eildon Hills, Border Scots storyteller James Spence will entertain you in the rich and lively tongue of the region with some of the best of these well-loved, magical stories from Thomas the Rhymer to Canonbie Dick and Tam Linn, most of which are to be found in his best-selling book *Scottish Borders Folk Tales*.

Meet outside the Box Office Tent.



Reading is Caring

CREATIVE HUB | 2.45PM | FREE

Reading is Caring is a Scottish Book Trust programme which seeks to support people living with dementia and their carers. Through free, tailored support, Scottish Book Trust equips carers with the knowledge and tools needed to undertake personalised shared reading. This is an information and shared reading session for people living with dementia and their care partners.

'It was as if when we read together, she was lost with me in the story, and we then talk about the story as if her dementia was no longer there.'

Rosemary, a professional carer for Margaret who is living with dementia.

Scan code to donate



John Swinney: A Life in Books

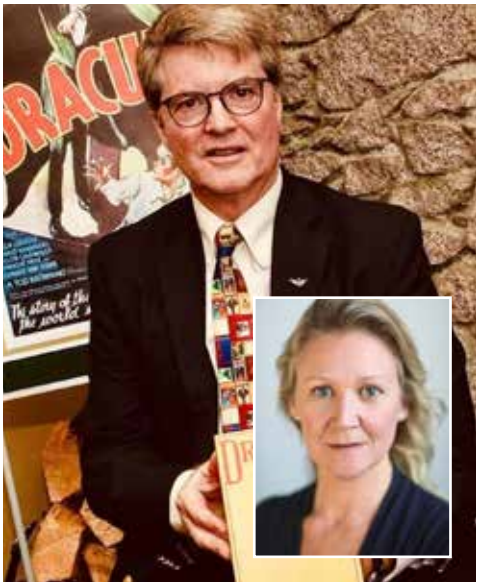
HARMONY MARQUEE | 4.00PM | £16, £14

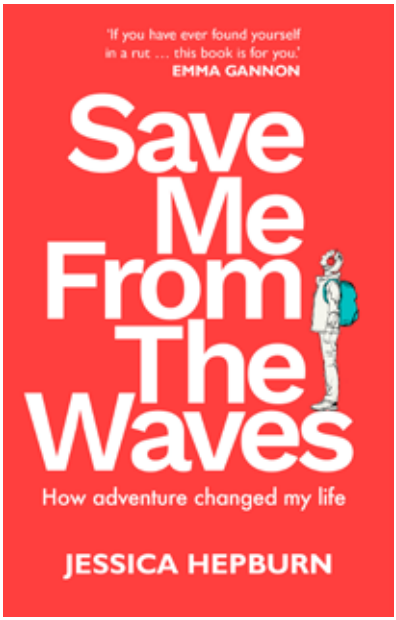
Scotland's First Minister makes a first visit to the festival. In the company of Michael Moore, he will talk about the books that have influenced, entertained and informed him throughout his life. Born and educated in Edinburgh he worked in financial services before his election to Westminster in 1997 and the Scottish Parliament in 1999. John has been at, or near, the front line of politics ever since. This is a rare opportunity for a virtual browse of his library and to learn which books have been critical to his personal and political world view.

Dacre Stoker & Ellie Zeegen: The Origins of Dracula

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE
4.00PM | £14, £12

Dacre Stoker, great grand-nephew of Bram Stoker and best-selling co-author of *Dracula the Un-Dead* and *Dracul*, is an internationally well-known and respected figure in the world of vampires, delivering associated lectures and events worldwide. In this event, Dacre and actor/founder of Firebrand Theatre Company Ellie Zeegen, discuss how her unique connections with a little-known Scottish woman writer, Emily Gerard, author of *Transylvanian Superstitions* (1885) and *The Land Beyond the Forest* (1888), have surfaced in Dacre's research. Together they will reveal how one woman's courageous walks in the Carpathian Mountains led to Bram Stoker being inspired to write one of the greatest gothic novels ever written, *Dracula*.







Jessica Hepburn: Save Me from the Waves

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
4.00PM | £14, £12

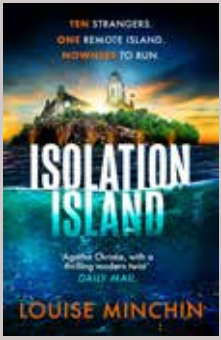
Jessica Hepburn had never been the sporty type, hating exercise, loving food and relaxing on the sofa. But fraught with the trauma of miscarriage, divorce and loneliness, she amazed herself by becoming the first woman to complete the Sea, Street, Summit Challenge, swimming the English Channel, running the London Marathon and climbing Everest. From setting out as an arts producer, Jessica has become health campaigner, endurance athlete and multi award -winning writer. Her inspiring story will encourage all of us charting the choppy waters of life, to power up and sail through the storm.



The Ideas in Things: Poetry Workshop with Craig Aitchison

CREATIVE HUB | 4.30PM – 6.00PM | £15

Craig Aitchison is an award-winning Borders poet, who will launch his long poem about the River Tweed at the Borders Book Festival. He has won the Wigtown Prize for Poetry in Scots and the Badenoch Prize and in 2023 was selected for a New Writers Award by the Scottish Book Trust. American poet William Carlos Williams coined the famous maxim, 'no ideas but in things'. To successfully convey emotions and ideas in poetry, it helps to ground them firmly in the things of the world. In this workshop Craig guides you to produce a poem about an object that holds value for you.



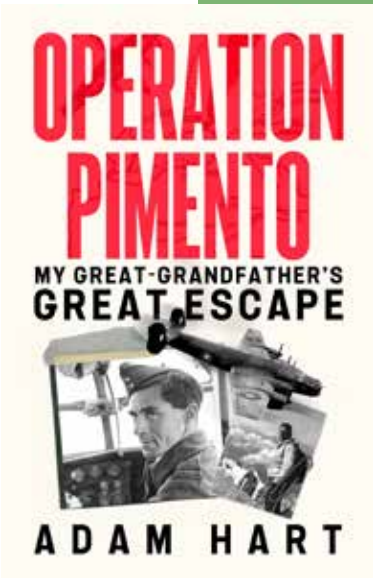
Louise Minchin: Isolation Island

HARMONY MARQUEE
5.45PM | £16, £14

In one of the full-throttle finales to the festival, the nation's treasured anchorwoman and adventurer returns to talk about her gripping debut novel. Investigative journalist Lauren Taylor takes part in the most gruelling reality show ever devised, with the secret aim of exposing a celebrity contestant. A fierce storm hits the remote Scottish island they're staying on; all communication goes down and there's no way out. When a body is discovered, Lauren finds herself at the centre of a shocking and deadly game. Join Louise in conversation as she reveals how her unique experiences in reporting, endurance and reality TV have helped pen a terrifying first thriller, the envy of established crime writers.



Image: Yana Audas



Adam Hart: Operation Pimento

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE
5.45PM | £14, £12

On the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, Adam Hart tells the cracking story of his Great-grandfather's Great Escape. In August 1943, Squadron Leader Frank Griffiths' plane crashed in occupied France and he began a 1400-mile, 108-day, escape from the Nazis. Helped by ordinary people, he made his way to Gibraltar via a Frenchwoman's chimney, the attic of a brothel and a Spanish prison cell, not to mention an arduous trek over the Pyrenees. 79 years later, his steps have been retraced by Adam, who made it his mission to track down the descendants of those who risked, and in some cases gave their lives, to make sure Frank came home. Had they failed, this extraordinary story would never have been told.

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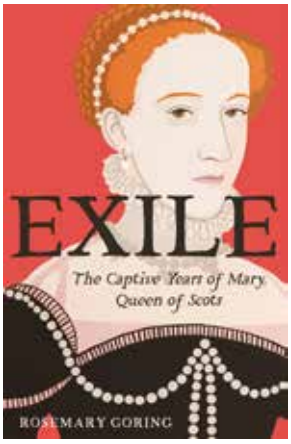




Image: Chris Scott

Rosemary Goring: The Captive Years of Mary Queen of Scots

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE | 5.45PM | £14, £12

In 2023 news broke of the discovery and decoding of 57 secret letters written by Mary Queen of Scots and smuggled out by visitors during her incarceration. Using this as a point of reference, *Exile* tells the lesser-known story of Mary's years in captivity in England, almost half of her life. Within her prison walls, Mary was not docile or resigned, and it was only as her execution approached that she lost hope of a return to Scotland to reign. The acclaimed writer, Rosemary Goring, has produced a penetrating psychological portrait of one of history's greatest queens. In conversation with Alan Taylor.

Dr Clara Doran: Heads Up

DAVIDSON CHALMERS STEWART STORYTELLING TENT
5.45PM | £10, £8

How to look after your brain so it will look after you – that's not only the subtitle of this fascinating book by Dr Clara Doran but also a plan! Whether you are struggling with energy levels, focus or mood swings – your brain holds the answer. New research shows that how we care for our brains governs how well we live, and in this accessible, brain-friendly book, Clara outlines the best way to do that. With 13 easy to digest lessons, *Heads Up* is sure to empower readers to live better lives.





The Secret Listeners

BUCCLEUCH MARQUEE
5.45PM | £10, £8

Above his shop in Selkirk's Market Square, at the dead of night, for hours on end, John Blair listened. Tuning his radio to the invisible traffic of the airwaves, he was listening for the faint dot-dash of the Morse code messages of Britain's enemies during World War Two. He was a Voluntary Interceptor, one of a highly secret group who monitored the coded radio traffic of German intelligence and sent what they heard to Bletchley Park, enabling the vital Ultra signals intelligence. Sworn to the Official Secrets Act, these silent warriors on the Home Front all over Britain were not allowed to tell their story. Until now. Alistair Moffat will talk to Bruce McCartney, who has uncovered many of these extraordinary accounts.



Si King: The Return of the Hairy Biker

HARMONY MARQUEE
7.30PM | £16, £14

Our festival of national treasures closes with a real gem. Hairy Biker Si King first appeared at the Borders Book Festival in 2018 with his close friend and partner-in-food, the late Dave Myers. Now he has roared up the A68 on his Harley Davidson for a return trip to talk about a life-long love of cookery and his new book, *The Best of the Hairy Bikers*. With 120 of their best-loved recipes, it celebrates his 30-year friendship and collaboration with Dave, and on this road trip down memory lane, Si will share stories from his life, offering a deeper insight into the man behind the handlebars and the hob. A wonderful, heart-warming end to our festival. Welcome back, Si!





Claire Mitchell & Zoe Venditozzi: How to Kill a Witch

CULLEN KILSHAW MARQUEE | 7.30PM | £14, £12

In 16th - 18th century Scotland, thousands - mostly women - were accused of witchcraft and many executed. *How to Kill a Witch* by Claire Mitchell KC and author Zoe Venditozzi examines this dark history through trial records, expert testimony and real-life stories, exposing how fear, misogyny and patriarchal power fuelled injustice. With sharp wit and righteous anger, they explore what we can learn from these tragedies - and whether history could repeat itself. Join them for a gripping discussion on justice and the cost of silencing women.



The Hot Club of Halifax

JRW HOGG & THORBURN MARQUEE
7.30PM – 9.00PM | £14, £12

Wrap up the festival with the sounds of The Hot Club of Halifax as Andy Lawrenson (violin/vocals), Vernon Bigsby (guitar), and Ges Cavileri (vocals/guitar) take you on a musical journey around the world. Expect toe-tapping Gypsy Jazz in the style of Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelli, Latin rhythms, Celtic flourishes and vintage folk. With dazzling musicianship and fresh twists on classic tunes, this is jazz with heart, soul and a smile. A cracking night's entertainment!

Inspiring Young Minds: Creativity, Literacy & Opportunity

Alongside our vibrant summer festival, we're dedicated to nurturing new audiences, igniting a love of reading in children and providing young people with creative and professional development opportunities.



Some of our flagship initiatives:

- **Schools Programme** - a dynamic Schools Day that brings thousands of primary and secondary school pupils across the Scottish Borders together, fostering literacy, creativity, and distributing free books.
- **Teen-Led Programming** - empowering secondary school students to shape and promote YA events at the festival, ensuring they are curated by teens, for teens.
- **The Bloom Media Project** – equipping young people (aged 16+) and recent graduates with hands-on experience in content creation, media production, journalism and broadcasting. Participants receive extensive training and work alongside renowned broadcasters such as Clive Myrie, Sally Magnusson and James Naughtie.

Please Donate

Help us continue our work with schools, local communities and young people, while making the festival accessible to all.

Your donation will ensure our charity thrives for generations to come - every contribution makes a huge difference!

Donate £5
Text BBF to 70970

Donate £10
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BLACKPORT INVESTMENTS

The FAMILY BOOK FESTIVAL

Sponsored by Blackport Investments



Sat 14 & Sun 15 June

Join us for a fun-filled weekend for all ages...

Come and explore around the Orchard, it's a beautiful family-friendly area to relax and have fun in. There's space to play and free activities too!

There is NO entry charge for adults accompanying children to our family events. Please note, however, that our events are ticketed, so remember to put your FREE adult ticket in the basket at the time of booking.

TICKETS MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE FOR ALL EVENTS.

Accompanying Children to Events
Children under ten must be accompanied to all events and everyone attending needs a ticket. Space is limited so we can admit ticket holders only.

Age Suitability
Ages in listings are for guidance only.

Photography & Video
Official photography and videos may be taken throughout the festival and used in further publicity. No unofficial photography or filming is permitted, and our official media team will be wearing book festival identification.





Box Office: 0131 290 2112 / www.bordersbookfestival.org

All accompanying adults go FREE!

Thank you to Quarto Publishing and illustrator Daniel Gray-Barnett for the use of their images.

The FAMILY BOOK FESTIVAL

Sponsored by Blackport Investments

Saturday 14 June



Robots and Oranges with Alan Windram

JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee
9.45am | £6 | Age 3-6

Join award-winning author Alan Windram in this highly interactive, fun-filled children's event with his latest One Button Benny picture book, *One Button Benny and the Dinosaur Dilemma* AND his brand new book *Kevin The Orange*. There will be stories, sing-along songs, some robot and mixed fruit 'n veg dancing, and even some flying fluffy oranges. Come along and join in the fun.



Image: Olivia Weetch

Chanté Timothy: Meet Supa Nova!

Buccleuch Marquee 9.45am | £6 | Age 6 - 10

Get ready for an event that's filled with fun and fizzing with invention! Join author and illustrator Chanté Timothy as we meet Nova, a science superstar on a mission to tackle the world's plastic problem. But when her plastic eating monster starts rampaging through the city, only a GENIUS can solve this problem. Can YOU help Nova save the day? Expect draw-alongs, scientific experiments and of course, lots of fun as we activate our imaginations in an event that's guaranteed to be SUPA!

Storytelling the Super Power Agency Way!

Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent
9.45am | £6 | Age 8-12

In this fun, high-energy interactive writing workshop, participants will work together with volunteers to craft a story from scratch, creating original characters and plots using the power of their imagination. We'll provide coloured pencils and markers to help bring characters to life on the page. Once the story reaches its climax, participants will separate and write their own ending.

Bookbug Rhyme Session

Creative Hub | 9.45am - 10.10am
Free | Babies & under 3s

Join **Live Borders Libraries** for a fun-packed session of interactive songs and stories for babies and toddlers.

No ticket required.

Miniature Masterpieces

Abbotsford Tent | 10.00am - 3.30pm
Free | All Ages

Over 200 years ago, Walter Scott was one of the most popular authors of the day. He wrote a lot of stories of all shapes and sizes, and those stories were printed in all sizes too, from tall tales to tiny texts! Join the Abbotsford team to create your own miniature masterpiece. Learn how to make a miniature book and why not try to write a tiny story of your own to fill the pages?

Drop-in session. Children must be accompanied by an adult.



Bookbug Rhyme Session

Creative Hub | 10.30am – 10.55am
Free | Babies & under 3s

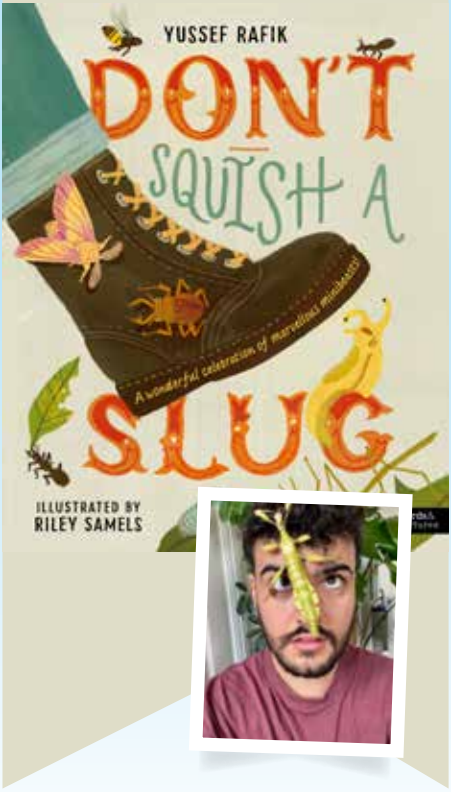
Join **Live Borders Libraries** for a fun-packed session of interactive songs and stories for babies and toddlers.

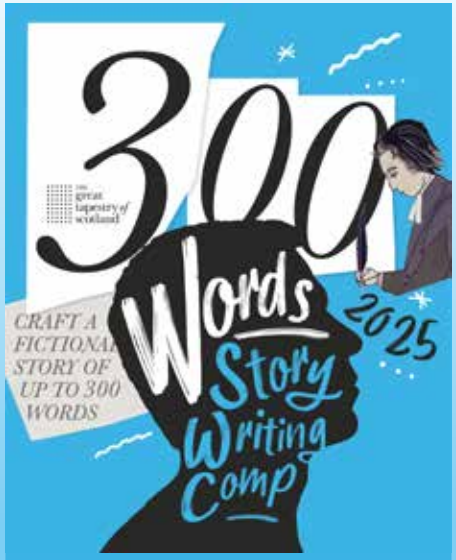
No ticket required.

Yussef Rafik: Don't Squish a Slug!

JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee
11.15am | £6 | Age 7 - 9

Join Yussef Rafik for an interactive minibeast show as he takes you through the superpowers of all the bugs featured in his brand new children's book *Don't Squish A Slug*. Yussef will teach kids about the different noises bugs can make, getting the kids to do their best buzzy bee impression. They'll learn all about the mighty strength that some creepy-crawlies have, and even how some bugs can light up their bottoms! Yussef will then test your knowledge of bugs in a mini quiz before getting the chance to meet some of his own minibeasts! Are you brave enough to hold a giant hissing cockroach?





300 Words Story Writing Competition Awards

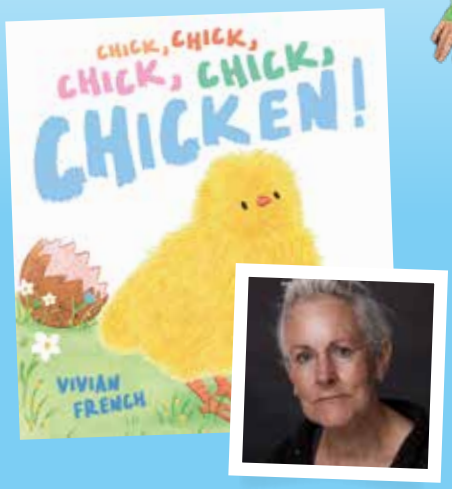
Buccleuch Marquee | 11.15am
Free – ticketed | All Ages and Families

We are thrilled to unveil our second Creative Writing Competition, inspired by the rich legacy of **The Great Tapestry of Scotland**! This incredible initiative is all about sparking creativity, celebrating storytelling, and encouraging the next generation of authors. Open to all children aged 7-15 living in the Scottish Borders, Midlothian, and Edinburgh, the competition has already seen hundreds of talented young writers bring their imaginations to life with fantastic tales woven with wonder, heart, and history. Each story is a testament to the unique voice and creativity of our young participants. The winning story from each age group will be hand-picked by acclaimed author **Mairi Kidd**. Join us for the big reveal, where exciting prizes and a chance at literary fame await our brilliant young storytellers!

Vivian French: Chick, Chick, Chick, Chick, Chicken!

Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent
11.15am | £6 | Age 4 – 7

Bob isn't quite sure if he likes chickens, but when he and his big sister go to stay with Grandpa something amazing happens... can you guess what? Join Vivian French as she tells the story, learn to sing the chicken song... and make your very own pop-up chick!



Lego Club

Creative Hub | 11.30am
Free | Age 4-11

Join the fun at **Live Borders Libraries Lego Club** where you can create your own next art masterpiece with the LEGO bricks (or just build a castle…). Activity lasts one hour and is run on a drop-in basis.

No ticket required.

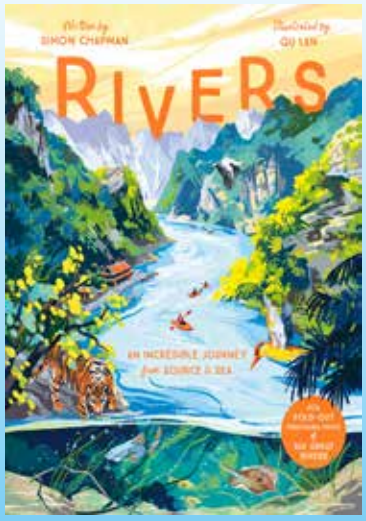




Simon Chapman: Rivers, An Incredible Journey from Source to Sea

JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee
12.45pm | £6 | Age 8 -12

Join explorer and author Simon Chapman for a thrilling journey down the world's greatest rivers! From kayaking raging rapids to canoeing crocodile-infested creeks, Simon's action-packed talk includes stunning visuals, real expedition gear and interactive demos. Discover how rivers shape our planet and meet the wildlife and people who live along their banks. Expect piranhas, mud, jungle kit and plenty of splash in this unforgettable source-to-sea adventure.





Mike Nicholson: My Granny Went to Scotland and she brought back...

Buccleuch Marquee
12.45pm | £6 | Age 3 - 6



Granny returns from her trip to Scotland with an increasingly absurd collection of gifts for the family in this hilarious picture book that puts a Scottish spin on the popular memory game. Come and join Mike Nicholson with singing, guessing and memory games and more as Granny's gifts are revealed!

Fiona Carswell: Making Sense of Our Senses

Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent
12.45pm | £6 | Age 4 - 7

Fiona Carswell, author of *The Boy Who Loves to Lick the Wind*, returns this year for an inclusive, sensory event, suitable for all ages...the more the merrier! Join Fiona to explore the senses, to delve into how they dictate our experience of the world and to look at how different brains process everything we take in around us. An interactive event with plenty of activities to keep little (and big) hands busy and engaged, this is one for all the family, with fun and crafty takeaways guaranteed!



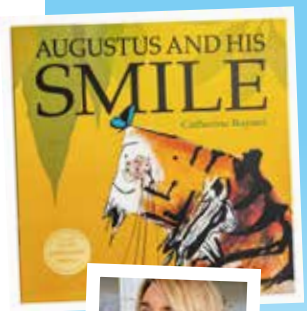
Family Printmaking Workshop

Creative Hub | 1.15pm - 3.15pm
Free | All Ages

Join artist and printmaker **Georgie Fay** for this drop-in workshop and make your own monoprints inspired by your favourite book characters to take home. All ages and abilities welcome and we will provide all the materials. Just be prepared to get some inky fingers!

Workshop is free, but donations are invited.





Catherine Rayner Celebrate 20 Years of Augustus and His Smile!

JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee
2.15pm | £6 | Age 3 - 6



Join award-winning author and illustrator Catherine Rayner for a very special event celebrating the 20th book birthday of her beloved picture book, *Augustus and His Smile*. Catherine will be drawing live, sharing stories and offering a peek inside her sketchbooks as she reflects on the journey of creating Augustus - her very first picture book. This heart-warming celebration marks two decades of a tiger who has brought joy to readers around the world, making it an extra special occasion not to be missed! Everybody will leave smiling like Augustus!



Elle McNicoll: Wish You Were Her

Buccleuch Marquee
2.15pm | £6 | Age 12+

Join best-selling and award-winning author Elle McNicoll for an in-conversation event for her brand new YA book, *Wish You Were Her*. Take a trip back to Lake Pristine for Elle's second YA novel, in which an enemies-to-lovers romance is looking to heat up the town's famous book festival. Hear Elle talk about diving into YA, cosy romance, experiencing fandom, and normalising neurodiversity. This event is programmed by teens, for teens.

Programmed by students from Galashiels Academy.

Please note this is a family event. Adults accompanying under 16s go free.



Image: Aashfaria Anwar / Studio Ash



The Notwitches with Gary Panton & Dotty Sutton

Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent
2.15pm | £6 | Age 7-11

Melanda's monstrous aunts treat her more like a servant than a niece – can she escape with the help of her new witchy friend, a talking cat and a little bit of magic? Laugh out loud in this hilarious event with Gary Panton and Dotty Sutton and their new book *The Notwitches* – expect live drawing, spooky surprises and lots of tips to set your inspiration alight!





Scribble and Scrawl CRAWL!

The Scribble and Scrawl Abbey Crawl

Melrose Abbey | 2.15pm – 3.45pm
£6 | 7+ and Families

Be inspired by the sights, sounds and centuries-old secrets of Melrose's awesome abbey and flex your creative muscles on a drawing and writing workshop with award-winning duo, illustrator Jill Calder and children's author Justin Davies. This fun medieval meander around the beating heart of Melrose's historic past is perfect for budding young illustrators, writers and history heroes. This is an outdoor event - dress for the weather (or like a monk). Quills and parchment will be provided.

Meet outside the Box Office Tent.



The FAMILY BOOK FESTIVAL

Sponsored by Blackport Investments

Sunday 15 June



Kjartan Poskitt: Adventures of the Runaway Pea

JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee
11.00am | £6 | Age 3 - 6

It's six o'clock, we're ready for tea… but look, what's that? It's a Runaway Pea! Join the little green hero on his adventures that take him round the dangerous kitchen, down a mysterious plug hole and high up into the clouds! There's also a sneaky chance to meet the hero of Kjartan's new book *The Snowman's Nose* and find out what happens when he does a really massive sneeze! The award-winning *Runaway Pea* will tour the UK as a stage show in 2026.







Coorie Doon and Draw a Dreamtime Animal Book with Jill Calder

Buccleuch Marquee
11.00am | £6 | Age 5+ and Families

Enter the magical dreamscape of *Coorie Doon* written by Jackie Kay and illustrated by award-winning artist Jill Calder. Jill will introduce you to wee Shona's world, including all her favourite animals too! After listening to this beautiful story, Jill will lead drawing activities inspired by the dancing unicorns, sleeping cats and flapping corbies in Shona's vivid dreams and help you to create your own hand made picture book that can be taken away at the end of the event! Families welcome!

Young Adult Event





Josh Silver: Step into TRAUMALAND - if you dare

Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent
11.00am | £6 | Age 14+

Josh Silver, the award-winning author of *Happy Head* and *Dead Happy*, returns with *TRAUMALAND* – a dark, twisty psychological thriller blending virtual reality, trauma and razor-sharp wit. 17-year-old Eli is numb after a near-fatal crash – until he finds an underground VR club where trauma is the thrill. But as he dives deeper, the lines between fiction and reality blur… and the danger gets real. Join Josh as he explores identity, social media, creativity, mental health and the power of storytelling. Don't miss this gripping talk - programmed by teens, for teens.

Programmed by students from Galashiels Academy.

Please note this is a family event. Adults accompanying under 16s go free.



Sunny Sensory Stories

Creative Hub | 11.00am | £6 | All Ages**

Join storyteller Ailie Finlay from *My Kind of Book* as we head off on a sensory story adventure through bouncy heather and squelchy bogs! Lively stories, inclusive games and lots of props to rattle and squeeze, followed by a calming session with play dough.

****A fun and engaging session for everyone but particularly suitable for children with additional needs and their families and friends.**

Event duration 50 minutes.



Miniature Masterpieces

Abbotsford Tent

11.00am – 3.30pm | Free | All Ages

Over 200 years ago, Walter Scott was one of the most popular authors of the day. He wrote a lot of stories of all shapes and sizes, and those stories were printed in all sizes too, from tall tales to tiny texts! Join the Abbotsford team to create your own miniature masterpiece. Learn how to make a miniature book and why not try to write a tiny story of your own to fill the pages?

Drop-in session. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

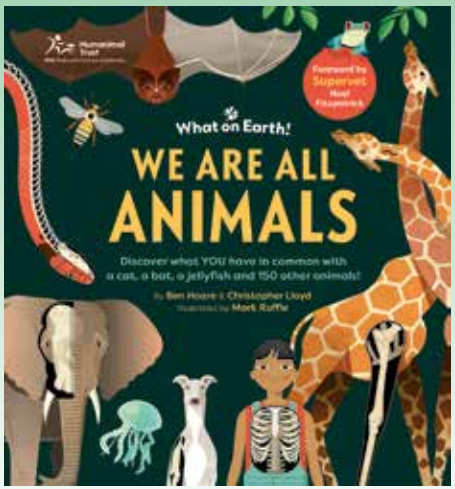


Christopher Lloyd: We Are All Animals

Cullen Kilshaw Marquee

12.45pm | £6 | Age 7+

So you think you're special, huh? Well, prepare to be amazed by how much you have in common with a cat, a bat, a jellyfish – in fact more than 150 other animals! Join festival favourite and non-fiction author Christopher Lloyd - using an all-new coat of many pockets - on a magical safari through the world of animals in which we discover just how incredibly connected we are with all other livings things.



Joseph Coelho: Make Magic with Words!

Buccleuch Marquee
12.45pm | £6 | Age 6+

Step into the magical world of poetry with Joseph Coelho, the 2022–24 Waterstones Children's Laureate! Known for his playful, powerful verse and dynamic performances, Joseph will share poems and stories from his award-winning books, then create a brand new poem with help from the audience. Expect riddles, laughs and plenty of creative fun as you discover how poetry can spark your imagination. Poetry has never been this fun - or this fearless!

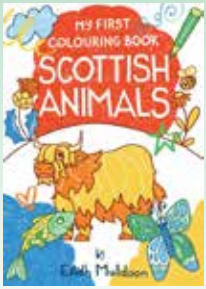




Colouring In Fun with Eilidh Muldoon

Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent
12.45pm | £6 | Age 3 - 6

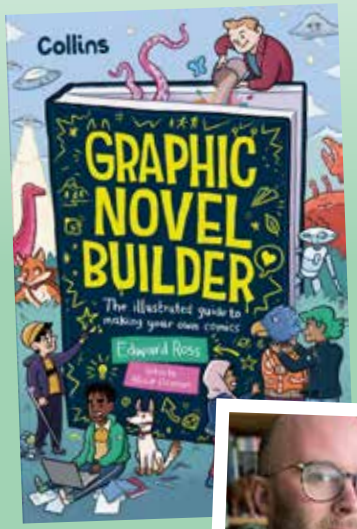
Artist and illustrator Eilidh Muldoon's colouring books celebrate the diverse landscapes, nature, towns and traditions of Scotland. Join her to learn about what inspires her books and put your colouring and drawing skills to use to create your own works of art!



Graphic Novel Builder Workshop with Edward Ross

Creative Hub | 12.45pm – 2.15pm | £6 | Age 11+

Get started making your own comics with Edward Ross and become a certified Graphic Novel Builder! Learn top tips for designing memorable characters, creating the fantastic worlds they live in, and coming up with stories you'll love to tell.









Super Surprising Stories with Vivian French & Tom Morgan-Jones

JRW Hogg & Thorburn Marquee
2.15pm | £6 | Age 6 - 9

Have you ever played consequences? Where you don't have a clue what's going to happen next? Here's your chance to take part as Vivian tries to create a story from your ideas, and Tom draws the story in pictures... BUT (with your help!) the pictures might change the story completely!! Can Vivian cope? We'll see!!!!!! Bound to be bonkers... and enormous fun!



Mairi Kidd: Scottish Fairy Tales, Myths & Legends

Buccleuch Marquee
2.15pm | £6 | Age 7-12

From enchanted frogs to shape-shifting selkies and feisty fairies to ghostly knights, Scottish folklore is full of amazing stories. Join author Mairi Kidd on a journey to the land of once upon a time in an interactive session in which you will learn some fiendish riddles, wrestle with Gaelic warlords, help make a costume to take a Scottish Cinderella to the ball and much, much more.

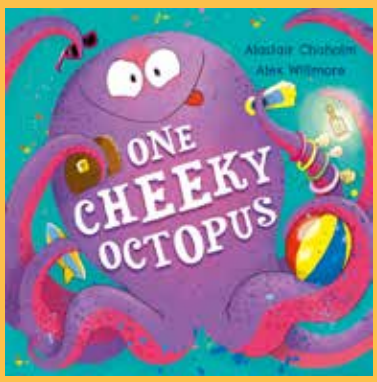
Sunday 15 June

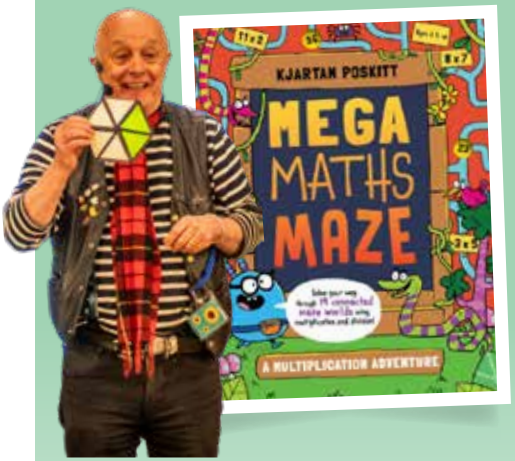
Alastair Chisholm: One Cheeky Octopus

Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent | 2.15pm | £6 | Age 3 - 6

"I'm the cleverest, the sneakiest, the bestest … the CHEEKIEST!" Join Alastair Chisholm, author of *Inch and Grub*, *One Hungry Dragon* and *Space Pirate Bears* for fun with Sylvester, the coolest creature in the sea! What will he do next, and can anybody stop him? Featuring hilarious art by Alex Willmore, it's a counting tale with one VERY cheeky octopus – so wave your tentacles, practice your tickling, and enjoy this tale of seaside silliness!

A storytelling session and drawing activity.





Kjartan Poskitt's Mega Maths Maze

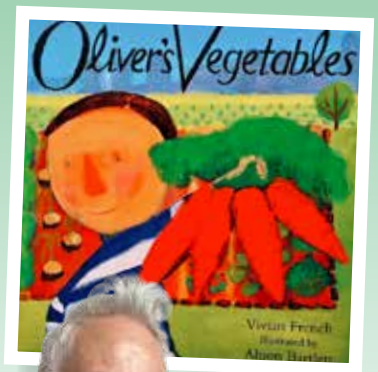
Buccleuch Marquee | 4.00pm | £6 | Age 8 – 12

Kjartan introduces his new *Mega Maths Maze* full of pathways, traps and creatures. Once you've found your way through the river rapids, spooky forest and deep dark caves, you get to unlock the secret doors and go back to learn more about the strange world of numbers. He'll also show some of the weird tricks and games from his Murderous Maths series including his fabulous flexagons, and how to make a dragon from a cinema ticket!

Vivian French: Oliver's Vegetables

Davidson Chalmers Stewart Storytelling Tent 4.00pm | £6 | Age 3 – 7

Celebrating 30 years! Come and meet Oliver! He needs help with his vegetables... maybe, with Vivian's help, you could draw some for him? He'll teach you the caterpillar song, and how to count potatoes... and you'll be able to decorate your very own mini Oliver to take home.





Travel in time
with the Young Walter Scott Prize!

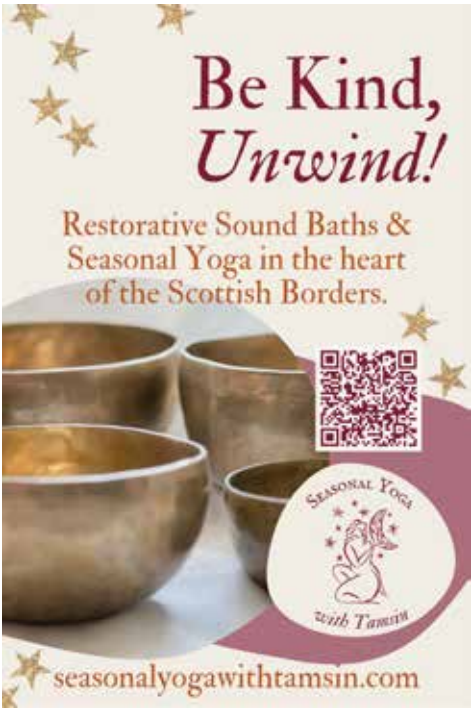
If you're aged between 11 and 19 and interested in writing and history, then the Young Walter Scott Prize is here to take you on an adventure! We are the UK's only creative-writing prize specifically for budding writers of historical fiction. Enter a short story of between 800 and 2000 words, and you could win a £500 travel grant, tickets to next year's Borders Book Festival, and the chance to see your story in print. **The closing date for the competition is 31st October 2025.**

Find out how to enter at **www.ywsp.co.uk**



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For 2025, together with the festival, Clelands have put together a fleet of our striking electric Volvos aiming to reduce our CO_2 impact. Watch out for them around the festival and our team on the entry of Harmony Gardens will be happy to show you around our Volvos and answer all your questions.

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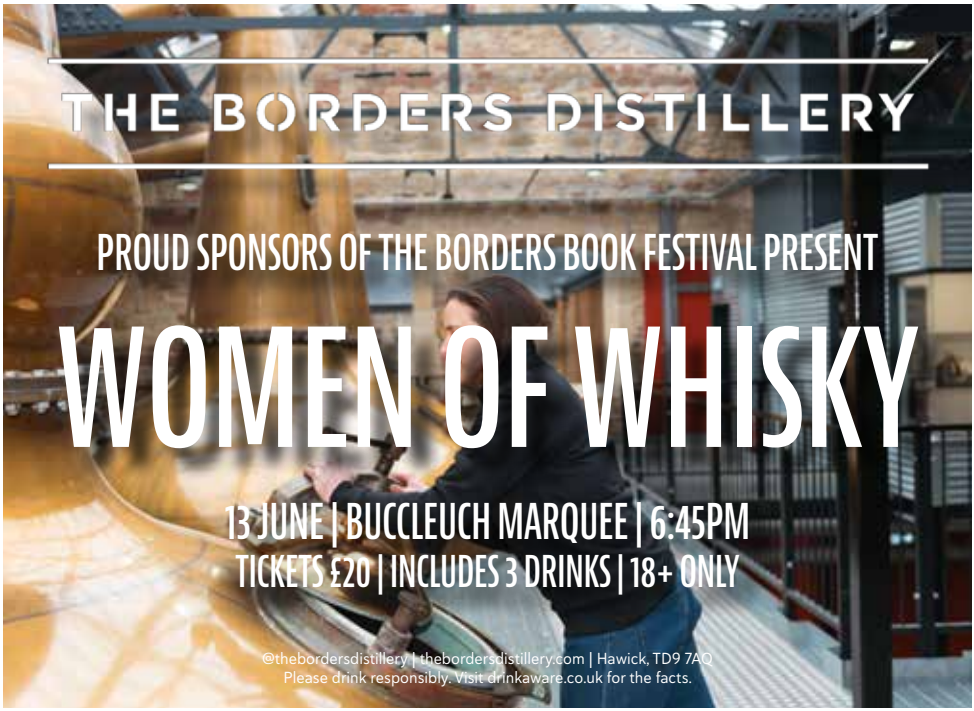
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