



Ardal O'Hanlon



Joanne Harris



Val McDermid



Simon Armitage



Lemn Sissay



Elmer the Elephant



Hardeep Sahota



Spider-Man

# HuddLitFest26 – Celebrating 20 Years!

6-17 May 2026

## Plus

- Children's storytelling & illustration
- Workshops, competitions & performance opportunities
- South Asian storytelling, poetry & dance
- Stories, Food & Rhythms of the African-Caribbean Diaspora



**HUDDERSFIELD  
LITERATURE  
FESTIVAL**  
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2006 - 2026

[www.huddlitfest.org.uk](http://www.huddlitfest.org.uk)



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# Celebrating 20 amazing years – 2006-2026

It's our 20th birthday – and we can't wait to bring you this year's rich and diverse line up, from bestselling authors and renowned poets to riveting discussion topics, creative workshops, family friendly events and multi-arts performances.

Much has changed in the 20 years since our award-winning Festival was founded, but while funding remains a constant challenge, our commitment to programming high-quality accessible events and supporting local talent has never been stronger. We are also passionate about promoting creativity and encouraging reading – in all its forms – which is why we fully support the National Year of Reading 2026 initiative, 'Go All In'.

The Festival would not still be going strong after 20 years without the dedication of our core team and volunteers, and the support of our funders, sponsors and the authors, poets and performers who have taken part over the years. Finally, thank you to you, our audiences, for participating in our events and spreading the word. We look forward to celebrating this milestone with you!



**Michelle Hodgson**  
Festival Director

Look out for the



and save by booking early.

## The National Year of Reading 2026

The National Year of Reading 2026 'Go All In' is a UK-wide campaign designed to inspire more people to make reading a regular part of their lives.

To support the initiative, we are expanding our **Schools Programme** to engage and inspire 5,000+ children and young people across Kirklees to read and be creative, and piloting a new **Reading Warriors** scheme at Crow Lane Primary School. We are grateful to One17 Charitable Trust for sponsoring some of our workshops.

We are also working with youth worker Tashan Gabriel on a project for the after-school club at **Empower Movement & Wellbeing**. **What's Your Aura?** will showcase the talents of a group of young people as they create characters and write a short performance piece, which will be staged and recorded at the gym.



# Schedule in brief

## Pre-Festival events

<b>Sat 18 April</b>	9.30am-3.30pm	Music Journalism Competition & Workshop
<b>Thu 30 April</b>	7pm-8.40pm	An Evening with Lemn Sissay
<b>Tue 5- Thu 7 May</b>	Various times	The Gruffalo

## Festival events

<b>Wed 6 May</b>	6.45pm-8pm	An Evening with Ardal O'Hanlon
<b>Thu 7 May</b>	4pm-5.30pm	The Art of Connection
	6pm-7.30pm	20/20 Writing Competition & Launch
<b>Fri 8 May</b>	12.30pm-1.30pm	Storytelling: Benji and His Bellowing Burp
	5pm-7pm	HuddLitFest 20th Birthday Party
	7pm-8.45pm	Polari: Celebrating LGBTQ+ Writing Talent
	7.15pm-8.45pm	Open Mic with Talking Zebras
<b>Sat 9 May</b>	11am-1pm	Film: 3000 Lesbians Go to York
	11am-1pm	Workshop: Celebrating Life Stories
	1.30pm-3.30pm	Workshop: What's Your Story?
	1.30pm-3.30pm	Meet Elmer & Storytelling with Spider-Man
	2pm-3pm	We Came by Sea
	4pm-5pm	Emily Brontë Reappraised
	6pm-7pm	Golden Thread of Seva – Sikh Heritage in Huddersfield
7.30pm-9pm	Out + Loud Queer Open Mic	
<b>Sun 10 May</b>	11am-12pm	Illustrating Children's Books with Chris Mould
	11am-1pm	WORKSHOP: Conquer the Blank Page!
	1pm-1.35pm	Meet Elmer at Waterstones
	2.30pm-3.30pm	Ancient: Reviving the Woods That Made Britain
	5pm-7pm	Huddersfield Voices Open Mic

Tue 12 May	6.15pm-7.15pm	Vince Cable: Eclipsing the West	
	6.30pm-8pm	What's in a Story?	
	7pm-late	The Lazy Book Club	
	7pm-9pm	ONLINE: A Masterclass in Story Structure	
Wed 13 May	7pm-8pm	An Audience with Sunny Ormonde – The Archers' Lillian Bellamy	
	7pm-8.30pm	Stu Hennigan – Keshed	
Thu 14 May	1pm-4pm	Exploring Literature, Creative Writing and Poetry in Creative Health	
	5.30pm-6.30pm	The Arts Dividend with Darren Henley	
	6pm-8pm	Radical Georgian Women Writers	
	7pm-8pm	A Celebration of the Huddersfield Ukrainian Community	
Fri 15 May	2pm-3pm	These Isles – with Brian Groom	
	6pm-10pm	Stories, Food & Rhythms of the African-Caribbean Diaspora	<b>Postponed to October 2026</b>
	7pm-9pm	Spoken Here: Voices from West Yorkshire & Beyond	
	7pm-10pm	Inkspill Poetry Night	
Sat 16 May	11am-1pm	Workshop: Plot Without Panic	
	12pm-12.45pm	Storytelling: Winnie-the-Pooh	
	2pm-2.45pm	Storytelling: Winnie-the-Pooh	
	1.30pm-2.30pm	Workshop: World Dance	
	4pm-5pm	Live Podcast with Rose Condo & Nick Barley	
	5pm-6.30pm	The 'Chocolat' Experience with Joanne Harris	
	5.30pm-6.30pm	HD Sounds Songwriting Performance	
	7.30pm-10pm	Poetry Slam 2026	
Sun 17 May	11am-1pm	Workshop: Have a Kind Word with Yourself	
	1pm-3.30pm	The Walk of Green Hope	
	1pm-4pm	Workshop: Illuminated Lettering	
	2.30pm-3.30pm	Val McDermid – Silent Bones	
	7pm-8pm	Simon Armitage	

## Post-Festival event

Thu 21 May

6pm-8pm

An Evening with author David Scott

## Pre-Festival events

### Music Journalism Competition & Workshop

Saturday 18 April | 9.30am-3.30pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 Free

👤 Age guidance: 16-30



**FREE  
EVENT**

Love music? Love sharing your passion for music? Aged between 16 & 30? Send 200 words on your favourite music artist or band to: [toolegittoquit@saving-grace.co.uk](mailto:toolegittoquit@saving-grace.co.uk). The top 12 entries will win a place on this free workshop with Alex Coles. Deadline for entries: midnight 30 March. Visit our [website](#) for T&Cs.



### An Evening with Lemn Sissay

Thursday 30 April | 7pm-8.40pm

📍 The Civic Holmfirth | Huddersfield Road | Holmfirth | HD9 3AS

🎫 £20 (£18 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 14+

**EARLY  
BIRD**

Inspirational poet and Festival Patron Lemn Sissay OBE returns with a life-affirming and electrifying performance of his work. In the first half of his set, he will revisit past work from his collections such as **Gold from the Stone**. After the interval, Lemn will perform a selection of his dawn poems, collected in **Let the Light Pour in**.

### The Gruffalo

Tuesday 5 May - Thursday 7 May | Various times

📍 Lawrence Batley Theatre | Queen Street | HD1 2SP

🎫 £14-£16

👤 Age guidance: 3+



**LAWRENCE BATLEY  
THEATRE  
HUDDERSFIELD**

The Gruffalo © Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler 1999, Macmillan Children's Books

Tall Stories' magical, musical adaptation of The Gruffalo. Booking: [thelbt.org](http://thelbt.org); 01484 430 528.

# HuddLitFest 6-17 May 2026

## An Evening with Ardal O'Hanlon

Wednesday 6 May | 6.45pm-8pm

📍 Huddersfield Town Hall | Ramsden Street | HD1 2TA

🎫 £15 (£12 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 14+

Star of *Father Ted*, *Death in Paradise* and *Derry Girls*, Ardal O'Hanlon is a much-loved actor, stand-up comedian and bestselling novelist. Join us for an entertaining in-conversation about his extensive career and his latest novel *A Plot to Die For*, a new mystery series set in a small Irish town. Plus book signing. Booking through the Town Hall box office.

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## Our Cultural Heart – a new library for Huddersfield

An ambitious centrepiece for Huddersfield, **Our Cultural Heart** is set to transform the cultural offer in the town centre. This summer will see the opening of a brand-new purpose-built library and we look forward to working with Kirklees Libraries and hosting events there at future Festivals.



# The Art of Connection

Thursday 7 May | 4pm-5.30pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎟 Free (no booking required)

👤 Age guidance: all ages

A free intergenerational exhibition created by *Our Creative Connection*, bringing children and older adults together to share stories, take photos, make collages and write poems. Plus a live poetry performance by Michelle Scally Clarke.

**FREE  
EVENT**



# 20/20 Writing Competition & Launch

Thursday 7 May | 6pm-7.30pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎟 £3 (free for competition winners)

👤 Age guidance: 16+

To celebrate our 20th anniversary, we're inviting writers over 16 to send us an extract of up to 500 words from their unpublished novel, short story or non-fiction work (deadline: 29 March). The 20 longlisted entrants will see their work published on the HuddLitFest website and a shortlist of 10 will be invited to read their work at this event, with the top 3 receiving prizes. Visit our [website](#) for full details of how to enter and T&Cs.

# Storytelling: Benji and His Bellowing Burp

Friday 8 May | 12.30pm-1.30pm

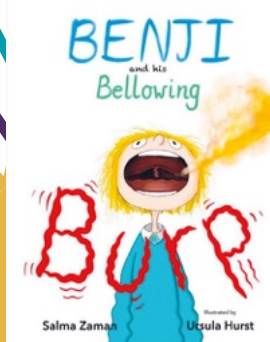
📍 Birkby & Fartown Library | Lea Street | Hillhouse | HD1 6HF

🎟 Free

👤 Age guidance: all ages

Children's author Salma Zaman leads a fun, interactive storytelling session, including colouring activities inspired by the book's characters.

**FREE  
EVENT**



# HuddLitFest 20th Birthday Party

Friday 8 May | 5pm-7pm

- 📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD
- 📄 Free (booking recommended)
- 👤 Age guidance: 14+

**FREE  
EVENT**

Join us for a free party to celebrate 20 years of the Festival. There will be cake! Plus find out more about Culture Collective and creative opportunities in the region. All welcome!



## Polari: Celebrating LGBTQ+ writing talent

Friday 8 May | 7pm-8.45pm

- 📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD
- 📄 £9 (£7 conc)
- 👤 Age guidance: 16+



An evening of fabulous performances from a diverse and talented line-up of LGBTQ+ writers. Hosted by bestselling author and journalist Paul Burston, and showcasing the work of the QPOC poet, artist and teacher Jay Gadhia, the poet and theatre maker Roma Havers, and the writer, researcher and historian Jane Traies.



## Open Mic Night with Talking Zebras

Friday 8 May | 7.15pm-8.45pm

- 📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD
- 📄 Free (no booking required)
- 👤 Age guidance: 16+

**FREE  
EVENT**

Open Mic slots led by long-established local group Talking Zebras. Sign up on the night.



## Film: 3000 Lesbians Go to York

Saturday 9 May | 11am-1pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £5

👤 Age guidance: 16+

Val McDermid, Jackie Kay, Sarah Waters – just a few of the authors and poets who arrived in Yorkshire over the course of 10 years for the York Lesbian Arts Festival. Hear their moving, entertaining and often very funny stories of this unique festival (run time 1hr 40mins), plus a Q&A with Jane Traies.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aROBMbYKVP>



## BOOK THESE TWO WORKSHOPS TOGETHER AND SAVE!

One workshop: £12 (£10 conc), both workshops: £20 (£16 conc)



### Workshop: Celebrating Life Stories

Saturday 9 May | 11am-1pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £12 (£10 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 16+

Celebrate your own life stories in this creative non-fiction writing workshop led by Juliet Thomas, Creative Coach and founder of From Seed to Sky. Open to all levels, it will help you tap into your inner creativity, develop new skills and create connections while building confidence and fostering mental wellbeing.

### Workshop: What's Your Story?

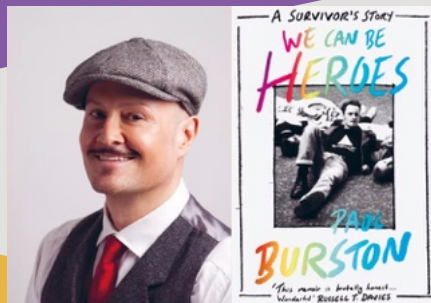
Saturday 9 May | 1.30pm-3.30pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £12 (£10 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 16+

Paul Burston is the author of six novels, numerous short stories and a bestselling memoir. In this workshop he'll explore how writing from life can help shape long and short form fiction. Open to all levels, the workshop will include writing exercises to help shape the stories you want to tell.



# Meet Elmer & Storytelling with Spider-Man

Saturday 9 May | 1.30pm-3.30pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 Free

👤 Age guidance: all ages

**FREE  
EVENT**

Bring your little ones to meet Elmer the Patchwork elephant, with walkabouts from 1.30pm-2pm & 3pm-3.30pm. Plus Spider-Man will be hanging around for selfies and chat, with a special superhero storytelling session around 2.15pm-2.45pm.



# We Came By Sea

Saturday 9 May | 2pm-3pm

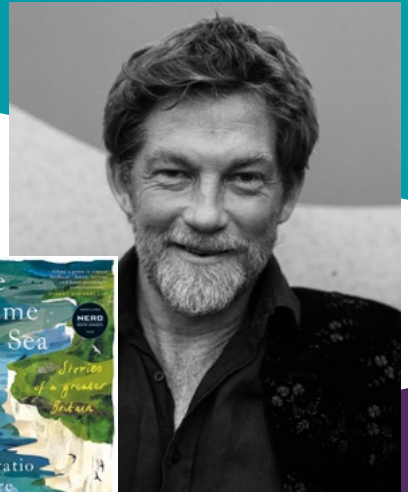


📍 Attic | Lawrence Batley Theatre | Queen Street | HD1 2SP

🎫 £8 (£7 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 16+

We're constantly fed stories about 'migrants' and 'small boats' in newspapers and online. But no story has only one side, as Horatio Clare discovered while researching **We Came By Sea**. By meeting and listening to the volunteers, lifeboat crews and others who help the vulnerable and desperate, he bears witness to hope and humanity.



# Emily Brontë Reappraised

Saturday 9 May | 4pm-5pm

📍 Attic | Lawrence Batley Theatre | Queen Street | HD1 2SP

🎫 £9 (£7 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 16+

As the latest adaptation of Emily Brontë's only novel **Wuthering Heights** hits our cinema screens, Dr Claire O'Callaghan – author of **Emily Brontë Reappraised** – and fellow Brontë expert Dr Michael Stewart dismantle the myths around one of our best-known and yet most enigmatic writers.

# Golden Thread of Seva – Sikh Heritage in Huddersfield

Saturday 9 May | 6pm-7pm

📍 Attic | Lawrence Batley Theatre | Queen Street | HD1 2SP

🎫 £7 (£5 conc)

👤+ Age guidance: 16+

An exciting multidisciplinary presentation that explores the lived history of the Sikh community in Huddersfield. Five large-scale banners will be unveiled – each representing a different chapter of Sikh migration, labour, family life, faith and community building in the UK – accompanied by original poetry. Plus a photographic talk. With multidisciplinary artist and academic Hardeep Sahota.



**FREE  
EVENT**

## Out + Loud Queer Open Mic

Saturday 9 May | 7.30pm-9pm

📍 Attic | Lawrence Batley Theatre | Queen Street | HD1 2SP

🎫 Free

👤+ Age guidance: 16+

An open mic night for queer performers, hosted by poetic comedian Zee and drag king singer-songwriter Ding Frisby. Email [outnloud.events@gmail.com](mailto:outnloud.events@gmail.com) or message on Instagram @OutAndLoudTogether to reserve a slot, or sign up on the night! Allies welcome.

## Illustrating Children's Books with Chris Mould

Sunday 10 May | 11am-12pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £5 adult + child ticket, £2 further adult or child tickets

👤+ Age guidance: 7+

A creative draw-along session with the award-winning children's author and illustrator, Chris Mould. Chris will demonstrate how he creates his imaginative drawings, with the option of drawing along. For children aged 7+ and adults alike.



# Workshop: Conquer the Blank Page!

Sunday 10 May | 11am-1pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £9 (conc £7)

👤 Age guidance: 16+



Bestselling indie author Rachael Hardcastle leads a creative workshop to spark inspiration and build confidence. Explore practical ideas for idea generation along with an overview of classic story archetypes in a supportive, friendly environment.



# Meet Elmer at Waterstones

Sunday 10 May | 1pm-1.35pm

📍 Waterstones | 12/13 Kingsgate Centre | King Street | HD1 2QB

🎫 Free

👤 Age guidance: all ages



Meet Elmer the Patchwork elephant at your local Waterstones.



# Ancient: Reviving the Woods That Made Britain

Sunday 10 May | 2.30pm-3.30pm

📍 Marsden Mechanics | 16 Peel Street | Marsden | HD7 6BW

🎫 £8 (£7 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 12+



Join Luke Barley, the National Trust's senior adviser on woodland, on a journey into Britain's richest habitats. With the benefit of over 20 years' experience rehabilitating ancient woodland, he explains why woods need the thoughtful intervention of humans to survive.

Sponsored by



# Huddersfield Voices Open Mic

Sunday 10 May | 5pm-7pm

📍 Café Life | 42 Victoria Lane | Huddersfield | HD1 2QF

🎫 Free: donations welcomed on the night

👤 Age guidance: 16+

Poetry open mic led by mental health charity Serendipity Creative Writers.

# Vince Cable - Eclipsing the West

Tuesday 12 May | 6.15pm-7.15pm

📍 Diamond Jubilee Lecture Theatre | Charles Sikes Building | University of Huddersfield | 78 Firth Street | HD1 3BN

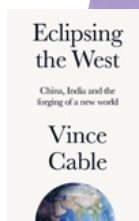
🎫 £7 (£5 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 14+

**SUBTITLED**

EARLY BIRD

The international order is crumbling and the Western-dominated world we've known for the past 300 years is coming to an end. In this fascinating talk inspired by his new book **Eclipsing the West: China, India and the forging of a new world**, Vince Cable will discuss what the rise of the Asian superstates means for our future – for commerce, international law and the fight against climate change. With live subtitling by Stagertext.



Sponsored by



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**FREE  
EVENT**

## What's in a Story?

Tuesday 12 May | 6.30pm-8pm

📍 Kirkburton Library | Turnshaw Road | Kirkburton | HD8 0RT

🎫 Free

👤 Age guidance: 16+

Four bestselling women writers talk all things novel writing. From mid-life wives to midwives, Christmas crackers to beach reads, a Yorkshire village to a Berlin zoo!



## The Lazy Book Club

Tuesday 12 May | 7pm-late

📍 Beaumont Arms | Church Lane | Kirkheaton | HD5 0BH

🎫 Free (no booking required)

👤 Age guidance: 16+

A relaxed book club in a friendly environment. No set text, just bring whatever you are reading or a favourite book and enjoy discussion and quiet reading. All welcome.



**FREE  
EVENT**

## ONLINE: A Masterclass in Story Structure

Tuesday 12 May | 7pm-9pm

📍	Online
📄	£7 (£5 conc)
👤	Age guidance: 16+

ONLINE  
EVENT

Whether you are a short story writer, a novelist, or a script writer, how you structure your story is key to its success. This masterclass led by Dr Michael Stewart of the Brontë Writing Centre will teach you the basic building blocks, focusing on the main craft skills and techniques. For writers at any level.



## An Audience with Sunny Ormonde – The Archers’ Lilian Bellamy

Wednesday 13 May | 7pm-8pm

📍	Cellar   Lawrence Batley Theatre   Queen Street   HD1 2SP
📄	£12 (£10 conc)
👤	Age guidance: 16+

Celebrate 75 years of The Archers and 25+ years of the inimitable Lilian Bellamy in this special audience with actor Sunny Ormonde. Sunny will be chatting – in and out of character – about the glamorous, witty and often outrageous Lilian. Plus insider stories from the radio show and tales from Sunny’s career in radio, TV and theatre. Expect fun, frolics and a fabulous night out!

## Stu Hennigan – Keshed

Wednesday 13 May | 7pm-8.30pm

📍	Byram Arcade   Westgate   HD1 1ND
📄	£5
👤	Age guidance: 16+



Yorkshire writer, poet and musician Stu Hennigan discusses his dark, complex and visceral debut novel **Keshed**, an unflinching character study exploring class, belonging, fatherhood and conflicting ideals of modern masculinity. **Keshed** is the story of the impossible pressures of raising a child under late-stage capitalism; but it’s also a love letter to the working-class north.



# Exploring Literature, Creative Writing and Poetry in Creative Health

Thursday 14 May | 1pm-4pm

📍	University of Huddersfield   Queensgate   HD1 3DH
🎫	Free (booking essential)
👤	Age guidance: 16+

University of  
**HUDDERSFIELD**  
Inspiring global professionals

**Cultures  
of Creative  
Health**

**FREE  
EVENT**

A networking lunch (provided) and workshop to share ideas on the role of literature, creative writing and poetry in creative health. Prof Rowan Bailey will introduce the work of the University's National Creative Health Hub; speakers include Darren Henley of Arts Council England, academic Luise Marino and Nick Barley, Director of the National Poetry Centre. All welcome. Limited places, booking essential.



## The Arts Dividend with Darren Henley

Thursday 14 May | 5.30pm-6.30pm

📍	Cellar   Lawrence Batley Theatre   Queen Street   HD1 2SP
🎫	£5 (£4 conc)
👤	Age guidance: 16+

**SUBTITLED**

Your chance to hear from – and put your questions to – Darren Henley, CEO of Arts Council England. In his updated book, **The Arts Dividend: Why Investment in Culture Pays**, he explains why he believes that public investment in creativity and culture can help us all to lead happier lives. With live subtitling by Stagejet.



## Radical Georgian Women Writers

Thursday 14 May | 6pm-8pm

📍	Porter Hill Tea Company   Westgate   HD1 1NN
🎫	£3
👤	Age guidance: 14+



Local author and poet Mary Lister inherited five volumes of letters by writers, poets and royalty, collected by her great-great-grandmother Theresa Lister/Lewis, a novelist historian and campaigner against Slavery. In this illustrated talk, Mary focuses on letters from radical women writers.



## A Celebration of the Huddersfield Ukrainian Community

Thursday 14 May | 7pm-8pm

📍	Cellar   Lawrence Batley Theatre   Queen Street   HD1 2SP
🎫	Free (booking recommended)
👤	Age guidance: 11+

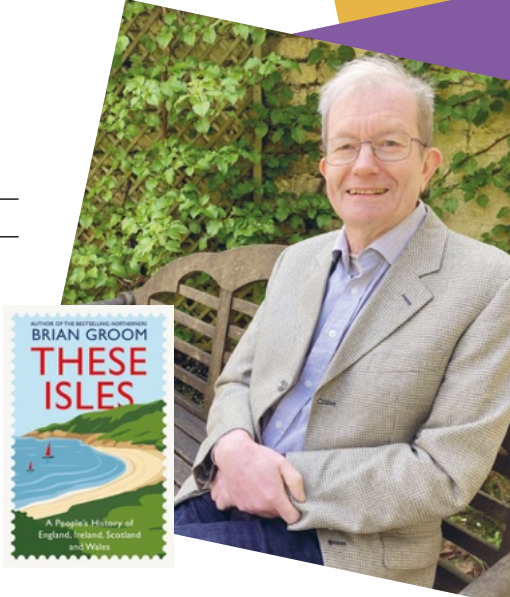
An illustrated talk by Michael Drapan, author of **Home from Home**, on the history of the Ukrainian community in Huddersfield. Plus traditional folk songs and ballads from the Huddersfield Ukrainian Singing Troupe and folk dance from Zolota Kalyna Dance Ensemble.

## These Isles - with Brian Groom

Friday 15 May | 2pm-3pm

📍	Heritage Quay   Schwann Building   University of Huddersfield   Queensgate   HD1 3DH
🎫	£5
👤	Age guidance: 14+

The bestselling author of **Northerners**, Brian Groom, discusses his latest book, **These Isles: A People's History of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales**. From 800,000-year-old footprints on a Norfolk beach to the present day, **These Isles** is a rich and timely cultural, historical and social examination of the entwined histories of our nations.



**Postponed to  
October 2026**

## Stories, Food & Rhythms of the African-Caribbean Diaspora

Friday 15 May | 6pm-10pm

📍	Huddersfield Mission   3-13 Lord Street   HD1 1QA
🎫	£7.50 advance, £10 on the door (includes free buffet)
👤	Age guidance: 16+

An evening of sharing stories, food and music of the African-Caribbean Diaspora. With contributions from local writers, film-makers, singers and musicians, plus a DJ. Ticket price includes a free buffet. Early bird tickets just: £5.

# Spoken Here: Voices from West Yorkshire and Beyond

Friday 15 May | 7pm-9pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £5

👤 Age guidance: 16+

An inclusive, collective poetry showcase hosted by Sharena Lee Satti, bringing together poets from West Yorkshire and beyond for an evening of live performance, conversation, and creative connection. Experience powerful performances, ask the poets questions about their work, and take part in gentle, interactive activities. A friendly, welcoming space to listen, learn, and maybe even discover your own voice.



## Inkspill Poetry Night

Friday 15 May | 7pm-10pm

📍 Head of Steam | St George's Square | HD1 1JB

🎫 Pay as you feel

👤 Age guidance: 16+

Half workshop, half open mic – all about poetry! Take some time to be creative and join hosts Abbi and Hannah for a night focused on poetry and community.

## Workshop: Plot Without Panic

Saturday 16 May | 11am-1pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £12 (£10 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 16+



Ever had a great idea for a novel... but don't know where to start? Or worse... you started, but got stuck halfway through! In **Plot Without Panic – Planning a Novel that Actually Works**, creative writing tutor and bestselling author Russ Thomas will lead you through a practical, supportive workshop that demystifies plot and shows you how stories really work.

# Storytelling: Winnie-the-Pooh

Saturday 16 May | 12pm-12.45pm & 2pm-2.45pm

📍 Cellar | Lawrence Batley Theatre | Queen Street | HD1 2SP

🎫 £5 adult + child, £2 further adult or child tickets

👤 Age guidance: 4+

Celebrate 100 years of Winnie-the-Pooh with Jane Riordan, author of *Winnie-the-Pooh: Tales from the Forest* and *Winnie-the-Pooh: Once There Was a Bear*. Go on an adventure to Hundred Acre Wood, get to know Winnie-the-Pooh and friends, hear a special storytime, and discover how to draw the bear of very little brain. Choose one of two 45-minute sessions.

Author image: © Historic Royal Palaces;

Book cover image: © The Trustees of The Pooh Properties, The Trustees of The Shepard Trust and HarperCollinsPublishers Limited



## Workshop: World Dance

Saturday 16 May | 1.30pm-2.30pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £2

👤 Age guidance: all ages

A fun, relaxed session for all the family and all abilities. Dance teacher Salma Zaman will lead you through different dances from around the world, from Bollywood to line dancing. SEND children and adults welcome.



## Live Podcast with Rose Condo & Nick Barley

Saturday 16 May | 4pm-5pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £4

👤 Age guidance: 16+

*Have A Kind Word With Yourself* is a podcast that explores how we can keep kind, creative and connected. Join us for a live recording of the podcast, hosted by award-winning poet Rose Condo, with Nick Barley, Director of the National Poetry Centre.



## The 'Chocolat' Experience with Joanne Harris

Saturday 16 May | 5pm-6.30pm

📍 Cellar | Lawrence Batley Theatre | Queen Street | HD1 2SP

🎫 £10 (£8 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 14+



The million-copy bestselling author of **Chocolat**, Joanne Harris, teams up with World Master Chef David Greenwood-Haigh to lead you through a chocolate-tasting experience. Plus readings from **Vianne**, Joanne's most recent novel in the **Chocolat** story, and an author Q&A. Audience members will each receive a limited-edition tin of Xocolati Rub, created for the event by David.



## HD Sounds Songwriting Performance

Saturday 16 May | 5.30pm-6.30pm

📍 Turntable Café | 35 New Street | HD1 2BQ

🎫 Free (booking recommended)

👤 Age guidance: 16+



**Conscious Youth** presents an exciting live performance celebrating the talent of aspiring songwriters aged 16-30 who have taken part in a Songwriting Camp led by rapper, poet, freestyler, songwriter and World Rap Champion, Jack Flash.



## Poetry Slam 2026

Saturday 16 May | 7.30pm-10pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £12 (£9 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 16+



Ten outstanding poets compete for the 2026 Slam Champ title. Hosted by award-winning poet Rose Condo with a guest spot from 2025 Slam winner, Loll the Poet. First Prize: £50, and a guest spot at our 2027 Poetry Slam. **To apply:** Send a video (max length 3 minutes) of you performing your work to [HLFPoetrySlam@gmail.com](mailto:HLFPoetrySlam@gmail.com) by Monday 13 April. Visit our [website](#) for T&Cs.

## Workshop: Have a Kind Word with Yourself

Sunday 17 May | 11am-1pm

📍 Amped | 29 Queensgate | HD1 2RD

🎫 £15 (£12 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 16+



Award-winning poet Rose Condo leads a creative writing workshop to explore how we can cultivate kinder language for ourselves. Suitable for writers at any level who seek opportunities to keep creative, kind and connected. Ticket price includes one free hot or cold (non-alcoholic) drink.



## The Walk of Green Hope

Sunday 17 May | 1pm-3.30pm

📍 Visitor Centre | Beaumont Park | Beaumont Park Road | HD4 7AY

🎫 Free

👤 Age guidance: all ages

**FREE  
EVENT**

A creative walk featuring poetry, Indian dance and hopeful thoughts. With **6 million+** and **Balbir Singh Dance Company**. The group will look closely at nature, listen to poetry that celebrates refugees who have come to Huddersfield, watch beautiful dancing set against the architecture of the park and explore words of hope.

**1pm-2pm** Picnic with music, weather permitting

**2pm-3.30pm** The creative walk, whatever the weather

## Workshop: Illuminated Lettering

Sunday 17 May | 1pm-4pm

📍 Bagshaw Museum | Woodlands Road | Wilton Park | Batley | WF17 0AS

🎫 £8

👤 Age guidance: 12+

Take inspiration from nature in the museum grounds and learn how to design a beautiful illuminated letter in pen and ink. A relaxed workshop for beginners and intermediate artists, led by artist Louise Grassby. All materials provided.



# Val McDermid – Silent Bones

Sunday 17 May | 2.30pm-3.30pm

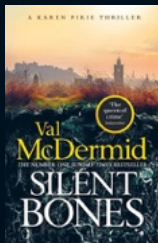
📍 North Light Gallery | 78 Armitage Road | Armitage Bridge | HD4 7NR

🎫 £12 (£10 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 14+

EARLY  
BIRD

Internationally number one bestselling crime writer Val McDermid has sold over 19 million books worldwide, with TV adaptations of her novels including **Wire in the Blood** and **Karen Pirie** (both ITV). Val will be chatting to Helen Scott about her latest Karen Pirie novel **Silent Bones**.



Sponsored by



# Simon Armitage

Sunday 17 May | 7pm-8pm

📍 Lawrence Batley Theatre | Queen Street | HD1 2SP

🎫 £22 (£20 conc)

👤 Age guidance: 14+

Your chance to hear performance poetry, insights and stories from Poet Laureate Simon Armitage in his home town. Simon will read from several of his poetry books which include **Magnetic Field: the Marsden Poems**, two recent illustrated Sunday Times bestsellers, **Blossomise** and **Dwell**, and major new collection **New Cemetery**. He will also read new unpublished poems and take part in an audience Q&A, followed by a book signing. Booking: [thelbt.org](http://thelbt.org); 01484 430 528.



## And on YouTube

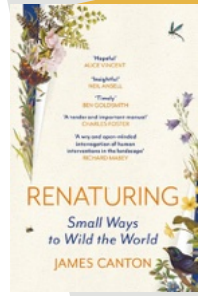


### **ONLINE: Renaturing**

YouTube premiere on Friday 8 May

📍	Online
📄	Free resource
👤	Age guidance: 12+

James Canton talks about his book **Renaturing**. Plus a short film on the subject.



### **ONLINE: The Grieving Body**

YouTube premiere on Friday 15 May

📍	Online
📄	Free resource
👤	Age guidance: 16+

Mary-Frances O'Connor chats about her latest book **The Grieving Body**.



### **ONLINE: Storytelling with Spider-Man**

YouTube from May

📍	Online
📄	Free resource
👤	Age guidance: all ages

Spider-Man reads children's books including **The Dreamies** by Iona Campbell (Magic Cat publishing).

HuddLitFest films can be found at: [YouTube.com/@huddlitfestHD1](https://www.youtube.com/@huddlitfestHD1)



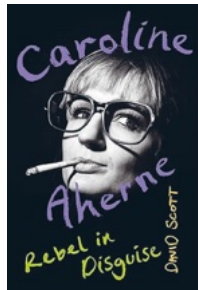
## Post-Festival event

### **An Evening with author David Scott**

Thursday 21 May | 6pm-8pm

📍	A New Leaf   30 Peel Street   Marsden   HD7 6BW
📄	£7.50 (includes a hot drink & book discount)
👤	Age guidance: 16+

David Scott talks about his new book: **Caroline Aherne: Rebel in Disguise**. To book, visit or contact the bookshop: <https://www.anewleafbookshop.co.uk/>



### **Save your 20p coins for our 20th anniversary Festival!**

At each of our events this year, we will be collecting 20p coins to help fund our not-for-profit Festival. Simply hand them in to one of our stewards at any event you attend.

# Booking and other info



Booking is via our website through Eventbrite unless otherwise stated. Tickets will be available on the door for events that are not sold out. Visit our [website](#) for the full programme. **Online events** on Zoom must be booked in advance.

## General info:

[info@huddlitfest.org.uk](mailto:info@huddlitfest.org.uk) | [www.huddlitfest.org.uk](http://www.huddlitfest.org.uk) | 01484 951108

**Access for all** – we are committed to offering accessible free or low-cost events. Our programme is diverse and representative, and includes online and subtitled events. Many events are free for essential carers accompanying a ticket holder and University of Huddersfield staff and students. If you have specific access needs, please contact our Admin at: [info@huddlitfest.org.uk](mailto:info@huddlitfest.org.uk). Our Access Guides to key venues can be found at: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/huddersfield-literature-festival>

**Please note:** While we aim to present events as detailed here, the Festival reserves the right to make changes if necessary. For the latest updates, sign up to our mailing list, check on our website or social media, or call **01484 951108**.

**Under 16s should be accompanied by an adult.**

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