

The Octagon Theatre and
Westlands Entertainment Venue
presents

yeovil literary festival

In partnership with
Waterstones



16-26
Oct 2026



Yeovil Literary Festival: Where Words Come to Life

Welcome

Welcome to Yeovil Literary Festival! We're thrilled to be back for another year, bringing you a vibrant programme of events and an exciting line-up of guests.



This year, we are starting early with a special pre-festival appearance by international bestselling author John Boyne on Wednesday 14th October, followed by our Library events commencing on the 16th, then the main bulk of the events taking place at Westlands Entertainment Venue from Wednesday 21st.



Our festival celebrates variety - from acclaimed novelists and poets to historians, true-crime writers, comedians, and beloved celebrities sharing their real-life stories. Whether you're passionate about gripping fiction, fascinated by history, or inspired by new voices, you'll find something to spark your imagination.

Recognised as one of the leading literary festivals in the South West, Yeovil Literary Festival offers unique opportunities to connect with inspirational artists, celebrated authors, rising stars, and performers from across the literary and entertainment worlds.

As a Footlights member, you can enjoy discounted tickets for many festival events - plus extra savings on a wide range of performances throughout the year at Westlands. See our Footlights advert for details on how to join and start enjoying the benefits.



Yeovil Literary Festival is a not-for-profit collaboration between Yeovil Town Council's Westlands Entertainment Venue and Octagon Theatre, Yeovil Library (Somerset Libraries), Waterstones Yeovil, and Yeovil Community Arts Association.

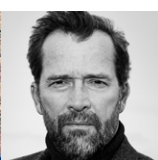
We can't wait to welcome you to this year's festival - and we'd like to thank our artists, volunteers, sponsors, and supporters for helping make Yeovil Literary Festival 2026 a success.



Festival Directors (Left to Right): Emma Mercer - Somerset Libraries, Liz Pike - Yeovil Community Arts Association, Marcus Bishop - Waterstones Yeovil and Adam Burgan - Director of Culture, Events and Promotions, The Octagon Theatre & Westlands Entertainment Venue (Yeovil Town Council)

Keep up to date with all the excitement of the festival:

[f /YeovilLiteraryFestival](#) [@YeovilLitFest](#)





yeovil
literary
festival

Sponsors

We would like to thank our sponsors
for the **Yeovil Literary Festival 2026**.



FOOTLIGHTS

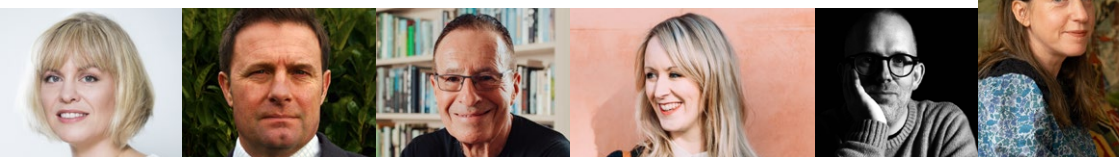
Membership with The Octagon & Westlands

Benefits include:

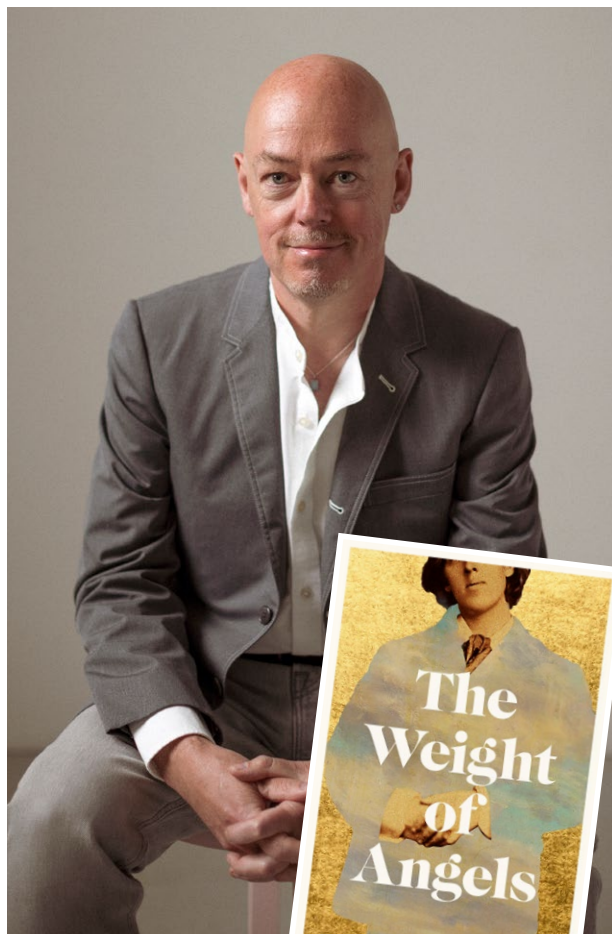
- Discounted tickets for most shows
- Priority notice (via email) of all new events
- Priority booking period
- Returns list exclusive to Footlight Members

For more information call **01935 422884**
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Just £25



Pre Festival Event



John Boyne **The Weight of Angels**

John Boyne will be talking about his extraordinary new novel ***The Weight of Angels*** - taking the 'sliding doors' moment of Oscar Wilde's life as the jumping off point, he imagines an alternate future for the iconic writer based on him ignoring the Marquess of Queensbury's homophobic note rather than suing for libel.

His 2006 novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* has sold more than 11 million copies worldwide and has been adapted for cinema, theatre, ballet, and opera. His many novels include *The Heart's Invisible Furies* and *A Ladder to the Sky*.

TICKETS: £12

TICKET & BOOK: £25

FOOTLIGHTS:
DISCOUNT APPLIES
(Ticket only option)

14.10.26 | **7pm**
Westlands Ballroom

Library Events



Holly Watt **The Good Listener**

One unexpected call. One terrifying truth. **The Good Listeners** are there for anyone who needs to talk. When the phone rings, a Good Listener has no idea who could be at the other end. The woman cheating on her husband, the man who has lost yet another job, the teenager struggling at school... And Clara is prepared for every kind of caller. Except this one. Because the woman on the other end of the line has just told her, "My husband killed a little girl". And two years ago, Clara's own daughter was murdered and her killer never caught. The police have no leads. This is Clara's only chance of justice. But when the caller is anonymous, what chance does she have of finding them?

16.10.26 | 12pm
Yeovil Library

TICKETS: £8 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES



Ellie Levenson **Room 706**

Nobody knows she's checked into **Room 706**. Caught in the wrong place at precisely the worst time, Kate must face the most confronting situation of her life - and discover what matters most - in this deeply suspenseful and thought provoking debut novel.

16.10.26 | 2pm
Yeovil Library

TICKETS: £8 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

Library Events



Lori Inglis Hall **The Shock of the Light**

Cambridge, 1942. Twins Tessa and Theo had always shared everything – until the summer Tessa spent studying in France. She hasn't been the same since. But before Theo can find out why, he is recruited by the RAF and disappears into the skies. Determined to carve her own path, Tessa joins the clandestine Special Operations Executive, slipping into the shadows of occupied France. It will be dangerous work, but France is the home of her greatest love – and her darkest secret. Tessa has many reasons for wanting to return. Two years later, only one of them comes home. ***The Shock of the Light*** is as exhilarating as it is heartbreaking.

TICKETS: £8 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

16.10.26 | **4pm**
Yeovil Library



Meg Clothier **In the Shadow of the Solstice**

In the Shadow of the Solstice is a devastating feminist reimagining of Arthurian legend set in the dark and dangerous years after the Romans left Britain. Nin is joining the gilded world of her sister's husband – a powerful man known only as the Bear. It's midwinter and there's victory to feast. And where better than at the Hall high above the mists of the Lake? Why is the Lake so unsettled? What is the strange crying only Nin can hear? Torn between loyalty and desire - between rage and fear - Nin must fight to the death to uncover a terrible truth. Who will live to see the sun rise?

TICKETS: £8 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

16.10.26 | **12pm**
Yeovil Library

Library Events



BA Paris When I Kill You

Nell Masters is certain someone is following her. The hairs on the back of her neck rise when she travels to and from work, there are silent calls to her office, and a huge bouquet of flowers arrives without a card. And Nell has a reason to be looking over her shoulder, because she has a secret that she's hiding from everyone in her life, including her new partner, Alex. But Alex also has secrets of his own. Fourteen years earlier, when Nell went by the name Elle Nugent, she witnessed a student, Bryony Sanders, getting into a stranger's car. When Bryony was found murdered, Elle became obsessed with finding the person responsible. Now, Nell tries to convince herself that this unnerving feeling of being watched is all in her mind.

17.10.26 | 2pm
Yeovil Library

TICKETS: £8 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES



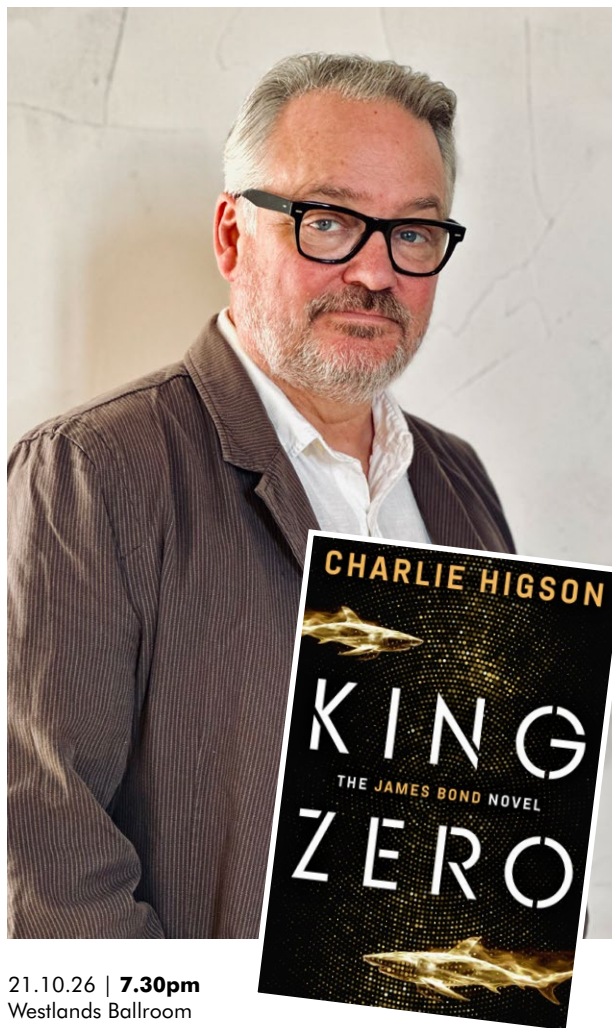
Tom Cox Everything Will Swallow You

Eric and Carl live in Dorset in a small white cottage under the shadow of a big cliff. The story of Eric and Carl's friendship spans 21 years: a constant anchor in a changing world. During that time, they adopt an eccentric, unlikely gang of fellow travellers. Their wanderings through Southwest England unfold against a backdrop of lived, local folklore and hints at future apocalypse. All the while, Carl's true nature remains a closely guarded secret. A story centred around the importance of friendship, the power of landscape and the joy of accepting the unusual.

17.10.26 | 4pm
Yeovil Library

TICKETS: £8 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

Wednesday



Charlie Higson *King Zero*

Charlie Higson is a comedian and actor who is co-creator and star of the hugely successful comedy series *The Fast Show*. He is the author of the bestselling Young Bond books and the incredibly successful horror series *The Enemy*, as well as five adult crime thrillers.

King Zero starts with a murdered agent in the Saudi desert. Only a traitor could have known enough to bring him down. But even James Bond can't guess at the secret that was worth killing him to keep. As *Bond* follows the trail across the globe, he doesn't realise the countdown has already begun. And hiding in the shadows is a man with more power than *Bond* could ever have imagined. Prepare for a villain unlike any before.

TICKETS: £15

TICKET & BOOK: £28

FOOTLIGHTS:
DISCOUNT APPLIES
(Ticket only option)

21.10.26 | 7.30pm
Westlands Ballroom

Thursday



22.10.26 | 12pm
Westlands Ballroom

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YEovil PRESS

Anneka Rice **Challenge!**

National treasure and television pioneer **Anneka Rice** has had an action-packed career jumping out of helicopters, rising to fame in Channel 4's *Treasure Hunt*, racing against the clock on *Challenge Anneka* and inspiring millions with her boundless energy and much-loved jumpsuits.

Full of heart, humour and hard-won wisdom, ***Challenge!*** is an astonishing story of adventure and survival, of personal battles and public triumphs. It's a manual on how to reinvent yourself, throw caution to the wind and take the path full of jeopardy. It's mad, bad and dangerous – and should come with a warning: don't try this at home.

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES



22.10.26 | 2pm
Westlands Ballroom

Su Pollard **Fully Charged**

Su Pollard is a British actress, singer, songwriter and author whose career has spanned over 50 years. She is best known for her roles in the hit sitcoms *Hi-de-Hi!*, *You Rang, M'Lord?* and *Oh, Doctor Beeching!* Su has more than earned the title of national treasure.

For every role she played, Su has a dozen madcap behind-the-scenes stories which will keep readers giggling all the way to the final page. She shares hilarious tales of her showbiz friendships with the likes of Princess Diana and Dame Barbara Windsor and pulls back the curtain about what fame is really like. Until now, Su has been very guarded about her personal life – but has decided it's finally time to let fans see the real her, making ***Fully Charged*** one of the most engaging autobiographies of the year.

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

Thursday



Minette Batters

Harvest

Never afraid to stick her head above the parapet, **Minette Batters** has led some of the most impactful campaigns in farming history, including building coalitions of farmers, environmentalists, animal welfare groups, and food experts such as Jamie Oliver to ensure that imported food meets the same high standards required of British farmers. Minette's expertise in British farming spans many years further than those spent as NFU president. Born and raised on her parents' tenanted farm near Downton, her story reflects the heart of rural Britain and its changing tides.

Blending memoir and manifesto, **Harvest** is a powerful insight into the real life of farmers, a love letter to rural life and a rallying cry to save it.

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

22.10.26 | 4pm
Westlands Ballroom

Sponsored by:



Victoria Hislop

The Wine-Dark Sea

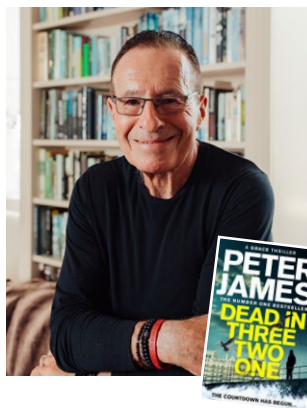
During three years of brutal civil war in Greece, thousands of children were caught in the chaos that swept across the country. Huge numbers were orphaned; many found themselves imprisoned alongside their mothers and others were left to fend for themselves. **The Wine-Dark Sea** follows the travails of a mother, searching for both a daughter who has been kidnapped and taken behind the Iron Curtain and a boy who, unbeknown to her, has been sold into adoption.

Beloved and bestselling author **Victoria Hislop** novels include *The Island*, which sold over 6 million copies worldwide and was made into a 26-part Greek TV series, *The Figurine*, *The Return* and *Those Who Are Loved*.

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

22.10.26 | 6pm
Westlands Ballroom

Thursday & Friday



Peter James **Dead in Three, Two, One**

Peter James is a New York Times and Sunday Times bestselling author best known for his crime thrillers featuring Detective Superintendent Roy Grace, who Queen Camilla recently named as her favourite fictional detective.

Seven of his novels have been adapted into phenomenally successful stage plays, with his most recent, *Picture You Dead*, now on national tour in the UK. His plays have been named as the most successful stage franchise since Agatha Christie.

In his latest heart pounding novel, ***Dead in Three, Two, One***, Roy Grace's old nemesis prepares to exact devastating revenge during Brighton Pride.

22.10.26 | **8pm**
Westlands Ballroom

TICKETS: £15 | **TICKET & BOOK:** £28.00 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES (Ticket only option)



James Aldred **A Wagon in the Woods**

There are some moments in childhood that are frozen in time, vivid and vital, an anchor. When James tracked down an old Romani wagon he once played in, he found himself inside one such moment again. Pairing an ambition to restore the wagon to its former glory with a determination to share the forest with his children, he embarked on a remarkable journey.

James Aldred is an Emmy award-winning wildlife cameraman working regularly with National Geographic and the BBC, collaborating on many landmark natural history programmes with David Attenborough. He is also the author of *The Man Who Climbs Trees* and *Goshawk Summer*, for which he won the Wainwright Prize for Nature Writing 2022.

23.10.26 | **12pm**
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

Friday



23.10.26 | **2pm**
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

Sponsored by:



Jon Woolcott

The Tattooed Hills

Author and publisher **Jon Woolcott** takes us on a journey through Britain's chalklands, uncovering the stories, symbolism and shifting meanings of the mysterious figures carved into our hills. Across southern England and beyond, the land bears the marks of centuries – white horses, giants, crosses, badges, even a lost panda – cut into the chalk and exposed to the sky.

In **The Tattooed Hills**, writer Jon travels to these remarkable sites, exploring their history and the deep cultural roots that link landscape to identity. Part travelogue, part cultural history, he examines how these figures – sometimes ancient, sometimes surprisingly recent – reflect our collective imagination, and how their interpretations have changed over time.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

The Yeovil Literary Prize

23.10.26 | **2pm**
The Studio

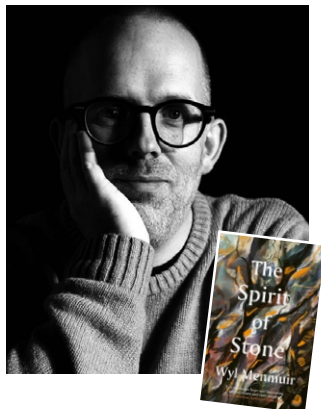
YCAA:

The Yeovil Literary Prize Winners

The Yeovil Literary Prize is a competition held annually by Yeovil Community Arts Association and has seen writers from across the world enter the 22nd competition. Meet and listen to exciting recent winners of the Yeovil Literary Prize, with many past winners now having had books published. Yeovil Community Arts Association also encourages emerging literary talent and awards grants to young art and literature students. This year, they have worked with the Octagon Theatre Arts Engagement & Outreach team to hold an acrostic poem competition. This year the YCAA worked with Yeovil College and senior schools with their Young Writers' competition.

TICKETS: £10 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

Friday



Wyl Menmuir *The Spirit of Stone*

Wyl Menmuir is a novelist, editor and literary consultant based in Cornwall. He is the author of the *Man-Booker* nominated novel and Observer Best Fiction of the year pick, *The Many, and Fox Fires*. His latest work of Non-Fiction, ***The Spirit of Stone*** follows on from *The Draw of the Sea* and *The Heart of the Woods*, completing a trilogy of explorations into our relationship with place. Where the first two books took readers to the water's edge and into the forest, this book journeys into the landscapes of rock, stone and earth, reflecting on how they continue to define us.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

23.10.26 | 4pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3



Jeremy Hunt *Can We Be Rich Again?*

In recent years a succession of economic shocks has led to low growth, stagnant living standards and divided politics. As debt and taxes have risen to record levels, many worry that the UK economy is stuck in a low-growth trap with ruinous implications for future generations. **Jeremy Hunt** was Chancellor during one of those shocks and successfully navigated the economy out of both inflation and recession. He argues that despite widespread pessimism, Britain still has a lot going for it – the third largest technology ecosystem in the world, a huge financial services sector, globally admired universities and respected institutions. ***Can We Be Rich Again?*** sets out a credible case for optimism when it comes to the future of Britain's economy, and a roadmap of how we might get there.

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

23.10.26 | 6pm
Westlands Ballroom

Sponsored by:



Friday

Rosie Walsh & Lulu Taylor

The One Day You Were My Husband & The Forever Summer

We're so pleased to welcome bestselling authors **Rosie Walsh** and **Lulu Taylor** to the festival.

Come and celebrate the million-copy, New York Times bestselling author of *The Man Who Didn't Call*, Rosie Walsh, as she makes her return this year with ***The One Day You Were My Husband***. With twists, yearning, and deep emotional stakes, this brilliant novel is the edge-of-your-seat love story of the year.

Her previous novels, *The Man Who Didn't Call* and *The Love of My Life*, were international bestsellers and have sold over two million copies worldwide. *The One Day You Were My Husband* is her third novel.

Rosie will be chatting with friend, fellow-bestselling author and festival favourite, Lulu Taylor. Lulu has had six Sunday Times bestselling novels and her novel *The Last Song of Winter* was the winner of the RNA Historical Romantic Novel Award 2025. She began her career as a commissioning editor of fiction in publishing houses and then turned to her own writing. Her latest novel, ***The Forever Summer***, is full of wartime secrets, betrayal and family drama that will keep you turning the pages long into the night.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES



23.10.26 | 6pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

Friday



Mary Portas *I Shop, Therefore I am*

Mary Portas is a businesswoman, broadcaster, author and activist. At age 32, she became a board member at Harvey Nichols before founding her own retail consultancy, Portas, where she continues to work with the biggest names in global retail. Mary will be talking about her new paperback, *I Shop, Therefore I Am*, part memoir and part manifesto for business as a creative act.

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

23.10.26 | **8pm**
Westlands Ballroom

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James Purefoy

James Purefoy has been seen in over 300 hours of television, 36 feature films, 27 theatre plays, 22 radio plays, 7 short films, 3 music videos and a commercial.

He has travelled far and wide in his pursuit of interesting parts from the slums of Quito in Ecuador to the frozen North, from the jungles of the Eastern Cape to the sweatbox that is the Louisiana Bayou. He has covered pretty much every genre known from zombie movies to period dramas, dystopian worlds to high-concept action thrillers, from Euripedes to Shakespeare, Noel Coward to Bertold Brecht, Edward the Black Prince to the leader of the Cornish folk group Fishermans Friends. He is currently playing his 10th King in Amazon's new version of Robin Hood. He clearly knows a thing or two about being an actor and has got the stories to prove it.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

23.10.26 | **8pm**
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

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Saturday



24.10.26 | 12pm
Westlands Ballroom

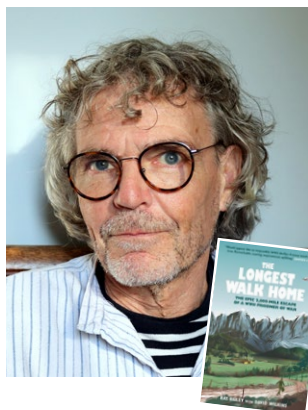
Dame Maggie Aderin

James Webb's Ancient Cosmos

Can the James Webb Space Telescope really see the past? Bringing her passion and expert knowledge of space, **Dame Maggie Aderin** will be talking about her new book, **James Webb's Ancient Cosmos**, taking us on a journey back in time to explore the creation and formation of our solar system, galaxies and other exoplanetary systems in the universe.

Dame Maggie Aderin PhD is a space scientist whose passion is presenting science and demonstrating that you 'don't need a brain the size of a small planet' to understand it. Maggie also won the Institute of Physics gold medal for exceptional services to science education and physics communication and was made a Dame in the 2023 New Year's Honours list.

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES



24.10.26 | 12pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

Sponsored by:

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David Wilkins

The Longest Walk Home

In 1940, Private Raymond Bailey, a 21-year-old Vauxhall motors apprentice, was captured in northern France, becoming a Nazi prisoner of war. But he wouldn't remain one for long... **The Longest Walk Home** is the incredible account of his daring 2,000 mile escape across Europe and over the Pyrenees, to the safety of British Gibraltar, and home in time for Christmas.

David Wilkins spent most of his working life in the charitable and public sectors. He also taught at university. Outside of work he has long collected old diaries, manuscripts, letters, photo albums and other similar items. In 2019 he gambled on a box of old notebooks at auction and discovered he now owned Ray Bailey's wartime memoir. *The Longest Walk Home* is David's second book based on a found memoir.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

Saturday

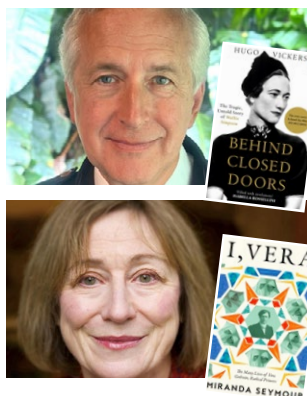


Professor Dame Sue Black *An Expert Witness*

Sue Black, the UK's leading forensic scientist, has forty years' experience analysing criminal case evidence. And acting as an expert witness, over the same period she has repeatedly put her research and reputation on the line, all in the name of justice. Now in ***An Expert Witness*** she puts forensic science itself on trial. From nineteenth-century poisonings to modern sex crimes, the first identification techniques to the possibilities provided by artificial intelligence, Sue traces the evolution of forensics. She shows how the scientist sits in a fraught but critical relationship with both our law enforcers and the Law.

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

24.10.26 | 2pm
Westlands Ballroom



Hugo Vickers & Miranda Seymour *Behind Closed Doors* & *I, Vera*

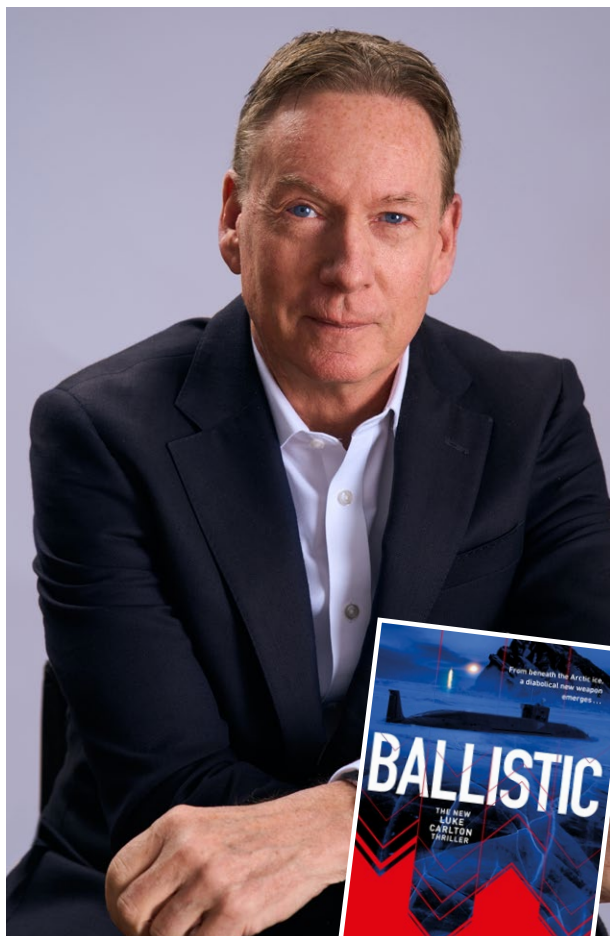
Hugo Vickers is a writer, lecturer and broadcaster, and an acknowledged expert on the Royal Family. In ***Behind Closed Doors*** he shines the spotlight on the tragic true story of Wallis Simpson, the inspiration for the forthcoming film *My Duchess* starring Joan Collins and Isabella Rossellini.

Miranda Seymour's latest book ***I, Vera***, brings the many lives of the radical princess Vera Gedroitz to life. Vera Gedroits was a towering, sweet-faced lesbian Princess, a superb writer and ardent supporter of workers' rights who regularly performed true medical miracles of surgery, while on one occasion forcibly ejecting an inquisitive Rasputin from a hospital ward.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

24.10.26 | 2pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

Saturday

Frank
Gardner
Ballistic

Frank Gardner has been the BBC's Security Correspondent since 2002. In 2004, while filming in Saudi Arabia, he was ambushed by terrorists, shot multiple times and left for dead. He survived and returned to active news reporting within a year. Although paralysed in the legs, he still travels extensively, reporting from Ukraine to Colombia to Saudi Arabia.

Frank will be talking about his career and his latest novel, **Ballistic**, which takes Luke from the frozen wastes of the Russian Arctic to the warm azure sea of the Caribbean.

TICKETS: £16.50

FOOTLIGHTS:
DISCOUNT APPLIES

Sponsored by:



24.10.26 | 4pm
Westlands Ballroom

Saturday

Sir Ian Botham Seasons

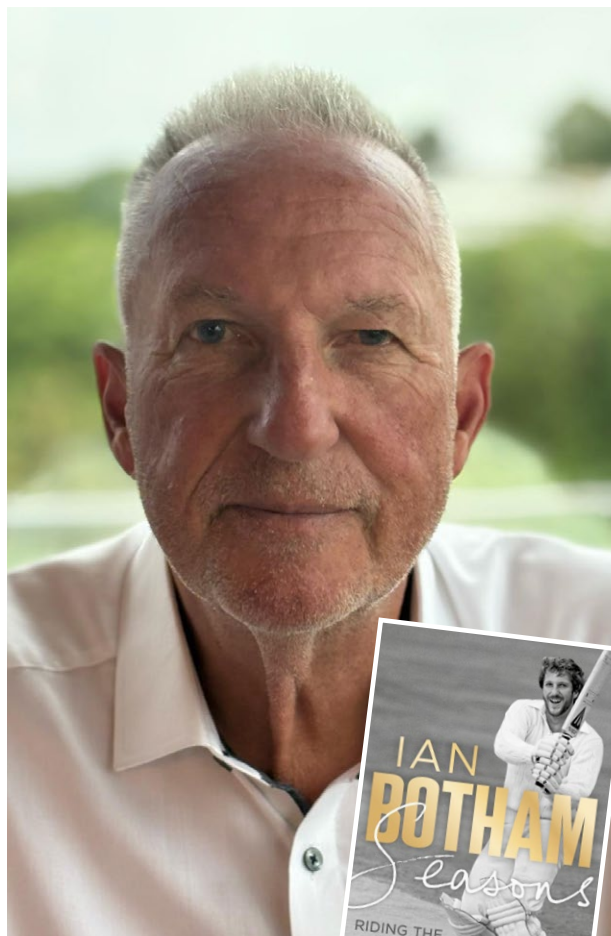
Local legend, Ashes hero, cultural icon, adventurer and force of nature, **Sir Ian Botham**, is one of the defining figures of modern British sport. Ian grew up in Yeovil; he went to Milford Junior School and his performances on the sports field for Bucklers Mead School drew him to the attention of Somerset County Cricket Club in his early teenage years.

Now, as he reaches the milestone of seventy, he looks back on an extraordinary life with characteristic honesty, humour and insight in **Seasons**, his most personal and revealing book to date. Taking stock once and for all, he revisits the triumphs and controversies that made headlines, the friendships that shaped him and the passions that continue to define him.

TICKET & BOOK: £25

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24.10.26 | 6pm
Westlands Ballroom

Saturday



24.10.26 | 6pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

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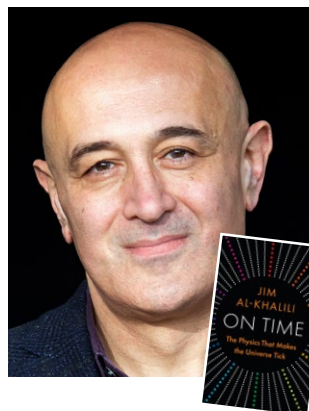


Vaseem Khan

The Man with the Golden Compass

Shaken and Stirred: From headless corpses in India to a hidden history of James Bond... and Q. Bestselling crime fiction author **Vaseem Khan** takes us on a whirlwind journey from the Naga Hills region in 1950s India and a locked-room mystery featuring a headless corpse – via his award-winning Malabar House mystery novels – to contemporary Britain's MI6 and the exploits of James Bond and Q. **The Man with the Golden Compass** is the second in his 'clever cosy' mystery series, aimed at fans of Mick Herron and Richard Osman, featuring Q from the Bond franchise...

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES



24.10.26 | 8pm
Westlands Ballroom

Jim Al-Khalili

On Time

While we have come a long way toward deciphering the laws of the universe, many physicists still regard time to be one of the greatest unsolved mysteries. In **On Time**, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Physics at the University of Surrey, presenter, author and one of Britain's leading science communicators, **Jim Al-Khalili** provides answers to the questions about time that philosophers and scientists have been asking for millennia, such as whether it has a beginning and an end, why it only points toward the future and not the past, whether it can be stretched and squeezed or even reversed, and whether it is even real.

TICKETS: £20 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

Sunday



AJ West **The Deadly Inheritance of Everest MacDonald**

AJ West is coming back to Yeovil Literary Festival to talk about his new novel, ***The Deadly Inheritance of Everest MacDonald***, inspired by the notorious real-life murder of celebrated Victorian actor William Terris, who was stabbed outside London's Adelphi Theatre in 1897 - and whose ghost is said to haunt the theatre, and Covent Garden Underground station, to this day.

AJ West's bestselling debut novel *The Spirit Engineer* won the Historical Writers' Association Debut Crown Award. His second novel, *The Betrayal of Thomas True*, debuted at No 2 in the Sunday Times bestseller list, and won the CWA Historical Dagger.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

25.10.26 | 12pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

Sponsored by:



Ruthie Henshall **The Showgirl and the Prince**

From much-loved West End and Broadway star **Ruthie Henshall**, ***The Showgirl and the Prince*** is a funny, honest and touching real-life Cinderella story – if Cinders is a lycra-clad chorus girl from Bromley who drinks and smokes too much.

Ruthie shares hilarious backstage stories from some of the era's biggest musicals – including *Miss Saigon*, *Les Misérables* and *Crazy for You* – rocks up to Buckingham Palace in dungarees over a leotard (the height of 80s fashion), has tea at Windsor with the Queen and charms Prince Philip at Balmoral. But as she swaps her hotpants for Laura Ashley frocks and tries to be good, she wonders can she have her happy ever after?

TICKETS: £15 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

25.10.26 | 2pm
Westlands Ballroom

Sunday



25.10.26 | 2pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

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YEovil PRESS

Jennie Godfrey and Friends

Join us for this very special, big-hearted event - **Jennie Godfrey**, the author of the No.1 Sunday Times bestseller *The List of Suspicious Things* will be talking about her new novel, the instant Sunday Times bestseller ***The Barbecue at No.9***. Jennie will be joined by **Matt Coyne**, creator of the popular Man Vs. Baby blog and author of books including the acclaimed *Frank and Red*. He'll be talking about his new novel ***The Trouble with Sister Francis***. Finishing off the exciting panel is **Alex Kadis**, former editor of Smash Hits magazine (RIP) who'll be introducing her debut novel ***Big Nobody***.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES



Hamish de Bretton-Gordon Tank Command

In his thrilling new book, former tank commander **Hamish de Bretton-Gordon** OBE offers a unique and timely exploration of the evolution of the tank, on and off the battlefield. Written in close collaboration with the world-renowned Tank Museum, it brings the thrill of hardware together with the sweep of history, telling the tank's origin story on the battlefields of World War I, charting its primacy during World War II, and analysing its critical role in modern warfare, whether in the Gulf (where Hamish served) or on the new Ukrainian and Russian front lines.

25.10.26 | 4pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

Sunday

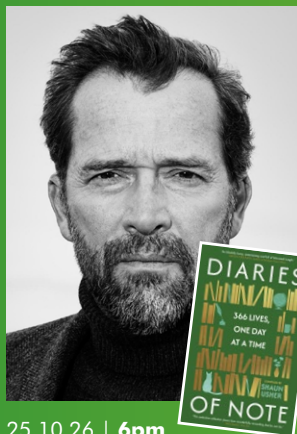


Paul de Zulueta **Last Night I Dreamt**

Paul de Zulueta has drawn on private family archives, new interviews and his own memories of his grandmother, a woman who was central to his early life. In doing so, he gives us an extraordinary look into the world of Daphne du Maurier in his book ***Last Night I Dreamt***, with rare closeness and emotional candour, and a moving portrait of one of the great British artistic families of the 19th and 20th centuries.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

25.10.26 | **4pm**
The Studio



James Purefoy and Friends **Diaries of Note**

What is more personal, more intimate, than the diary? In this special event **James Purefoy** will be joined by fellow actors to read diary extracts from ***Diaries of Note***, compiled by Shaun Usher - bestselling author of *Letters of Note*. The book collects 366 of the most noteworthy diary entries ever written, one for each day of the leap year, each authored by a different individual.

This special event promises to be a moving, funny and inspirational journey. All proceeds from the event are to support the development of The Octagon Theatre. Please visit the website or call the Box Office for further performer announcements.

TICKETS: £25

25.10.26 | **6pm**
Westlands Ballroom

Sunday



Sophie Pavelle

To Have or To Hold

Sophie Pavelle is science communicator and has worked for Beaver Trust and presented their award-winning documentary *Beavers Without Borders*. She is an Ambassador for The Wildlife Trusts and sat on the RSPB England Advisory Committee.

Her latest book **To Have or To Hold** is a thrilling exploration of nature's symbiotic relationships, some comforting and familiar, others wildly alien. What can nature teach us about living together?

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

25.10.26 | 6pm
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3



Celia Imrie

The Elegant Hustler

Jump on board with the Award-winning actress and star of BBC One's *Celebrity Traitors*, **Celia Imrie**, as she journeys back in time in her new book **The Elegant Hustler**, and shares the most memorable adventures of her life, riding ocean waves and iconic railways around the world.

From tours across Australia with Glenda Jackson, Arctic quests in search of the Northern lights and chaotic cross-country journeys through Europe; to rolling through America's sweeping plains on Amtrak, glamorous voyages on the Queen Mary 2, and unforgettable trips on India's legendary trains.

TICKETS: £20 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

25.10.26 | 8pm
Westlands Ballroom

Sponsored by:



Sunday & Post Festival



James Briggs From Ibiza to the Norfolk Broads

James Briggs had never known what David Bowie's *Life on Mars* meant. And twenty-five years later with a career stealing his soul, a relationship in stasis and a hairline in furious retreat, life on earth had him cornered. So when a lightning bolt of inspiration strikes, he leaves everything behind to cycle one of the song's lyrics, '*From Ibiza to the Norfolk Broads*' to discover what life, love and *Life on Mars?* really mean.

TICKETS: £12 | **FOOTLIGHTS:** DISCOUNT APPLIES

25.10.26 | **8pm**
Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3



Donna Ashworth The Art of Being Easily Pleased

We're so excited to welcome multi-Sunday Times bestselling author and poet **Donna Ashworth** to Yeovil as she returns with a collection of poems and essays that teaches readers how to master ***The Art of Being Easily Pleased***. Her most honest and hopeful book yet, it's a collection that solidifies Donna's status as a midlife cultural icon.

Beloved by her 2M+ strong audience, Donna is known for her precise and relatable reflections on ageing, femininity and acceptance. In this book, fans will specifically learn how to live a life led by delight, wonder - and joy.

TICKET & BOOK: £25

2.11.26 | **7.30pm**
Westlands Ballroom
Sponsored by:



Post Festival



Cody Dahler **The State of This!**

Want to stop feeling like a thick thick dumb dumb in front of all your mates? Award winning comedian, satirist and political writer **Cody Dahler** launches his blisteringly funny, sharply researched and pointedly accessible deep dive book at a time when UK politics feels more like a never-ending circus of culture wars, personality clashes and questionable decision making. **The State of This!** is the book readers have been crying out for: a guide to Britain's political mess that's as entertaining as it is enlightening, written by one of the UK's fastest growing comedy stars.

TICKETS: £15 | **TICKET & BOOK:** £25

FOOTLIGHTS: DISCOUNT APPLIES (Ticket only option)

10.11.26 | **7.30pm**
Westlands Ballroom

Sponsored by:



Harry Whittaker **Orlando**

In 2019, **Harry Whittaker** and Lucinda Riley co-authored the Guardian Angels series for children – four reassuring, timeless stories addressing worries that a small child may have. After Lucinda's death in 2021, it was announced that Harry would complete the Seven Sisters series on behalf of his late mother. *Atlas: The Story of Pa Salt* was published in 2023. Now he returns to the world of the Seven Sisters with **Orlando**, reader-favourite antiquarian bookseller Orlando Forbes - first introduced in *The Shadow Sister* - returns in this dual-timeline saga. We're promised exciting appearances from beloved Seven Sisters characters, and we'll discover how their lives have shaped following the events of *Atlas: The Story of Pa Salt*.

TICKETS: £15.00 | **TICKET & BOOK:** £28

FOOTLIGHTS: DISCOUNT APPLIES (Ticket only option)

23.11.26 | **7pm**
Westlands Ballroom

Booking & Information

Festival Box Office Opening Hours

(Festival Dates Only)

The Box Office will open daily at 10am and will close 15 minutes after the start of the last event.

Festival tickets can only be purchased:

Online: www.yeovilliteraryfestival.co.uk

By Phone: 01935 422884

(open during Box Office hours)

In Person: Westlands Entertainment
Venue Box Office

Monday - Saturday, 10am until 5pm.

On evenings when there is a performance the Box Office will close 15 minutes after the start time.

Data Protection Policy

The Yeovil Literary Festival adheres to GDPR legislation. When processing your booking, the Box Office will ask for your name, address and telephone number. This is essential for all non-cash bookings. If you choose to join our mailing list, we will keep you informed of forthcoming shows, attractions and news from The Octagon Theatre & Westlands Entertainment Venue. However, your information will not be passed on to any other party, and we will ensure that all mailings are relevant to your interests. You are able to leave our mailing list and unsubscribe from emails at any time. Our Privacy Policy is also available online.

Getting to the festival

Westlands Entertainment Venue,

Westbourne Close: BA20 2DD

Yeovil Library, King George Street: BA20 1PY

Westlands Entertainment Venue has free on site parking. Yeovil Library and Waterstones - the nearest car park is Petters Way. Car parking charges apply.

Access for all

Everyone is welcome at the festival and we will do whatever we can to ensure you have an enjoyable visit. Staff are available to help, so please ask us if you need any assistance. To ensure any special requirements you have are met, we ask that all patrons who use a wheelchair or have specific seating or access requests contact the Box Office direct. For this reason wheelchair spaces and disabled concessions are not available through online booking.

We also have our Octagon Buddies scheme that is open to anyone that is looking for a companion or buddy to attend shows and events with. It can be particularly useful for individuals who experience anxiety about attending the theatre alone, older people, socially isolated patrons and those who may not have previously had the opportunity to attend a theatre performance. Please visit our website or call the Box Office for further information.

Conditions of purchase

- Tickets cannot be cancelled and are non-refundable except in the case of a cancelled event.
- Use of photographic or recording devices is forbidden. For the comfort of all our guests please ensure that any mobile phones are switched off.
- The Management reserves the right to make alterations to the advertised artist and programme without prior notice.
- The Management reserves the right to refuse admission.
- The Management reserves the right to provide alternative seats to those purchased.
- Events at The Yeovil Literary Festival last approximately 45 - 60 minutes unless otherwise stated.
- All transactions through the Box Office of value are subject to a £2.00 transaction fee.
- The advertised ticket price is inclusive of a £1.50 ticket levy to secure the future of arts and entertainment provision in Yeovil.

Yeovil Literary Festival Schedule

	TIME	VENUE
WEDNESDAY 14 OCT		
John Boyne	7pm	Westlands Ballroom
FRIDAY 16 OCT		
Holly Watt	12pm	Yeovil Library
Ellie Levenson	2pm	Yeovil Library
Lori Inglis Hall	4pm	Yeovil Library
SATURDAY 17 OCT		
Meg Clothier	12pm	Yeovil Library
BA Paris	2pm	Yeovil Library
Tom Cox	4pm	Yeovil Library
WEDNESDAY 21 OCT		
Charlie Higson	7.30pm	Westlands Ballroom
THURSDAY 22 OCT		
Anneka Rice	12pm	Westlands Ballroom
Su Pollard	2pm	Westlands Ballroom
Minette Batters	4pm	Westlands Ballroom
Victoria Hislop	6pm	Westlands Ballroom
Peter James	8pm	Westlands Ballroom
FRIDAY 23 OCT		
James Aldred	12pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Jon Woolcott	2pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
YCAA	2pm	Westlands Studio
Wyl Menmuir	4pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Jeremy Hunt	6pm	Westlands Ballroom
Rosie Walsh & Lulu Taylor	6pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Mary Portas	8pm	Westlands Ballroom
James Purefoy	8pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
SATURDAY 24 OCT		
Dame Maggie Aderin	12pm	Westlands Ballroom
David Wilkins	12pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Professor Dame Sue Black	2pm	Westlands Ballroom
Hugo Vickers & Miranda Seymour	2pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Frank Gardner	4pm	Westlands Ballroom
Sir Ian Botham	6pm	Westlands Ballroom
Vaseem Khan	6pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Jim Al-Khalili	8pm	Westlands Ballroom
SUNDAY 25 OCT		
AJ West	12pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Ruthie Henshall	2pm	Westlands Ballroom
Jennie Godfrey & Friends	2pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Hamish de Bretton Gordon	4pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Paul de Zulueta	4pm	Westlands Studio
James Purefoy & Friends	6pm	Westlands Ballroom
Sophie Pavele	6pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
Celia Imrie	8pm	Westlands Ballroom
James Briggs	8pm	Wheeldon Suites 2 & 3
MONDAY 2 NOV		
Donna Ashworth	7.30pm	Westlands Ballroom
TUESDAY 10 NOV		
Cody Dahler	7.30pm	Westlands Ballroom
MONDAY 23 NOV		
Harry Whittaker	7pm	Westlands Ballroom



Save the Date: **YLF 2027**
FRI 15 - MON 25 OCT