

The World's Only Festival of Biography and Memoir

# BOSWELL / 10-16 JUNE BOOK FESTIVAL / 2021 ONLINE

FEATURING:

ANDREW COTTER

WITH OLIVE & MABEL

BILL PATERSON

ANDREW MARR

LEE LAWRENCE

AMANDA OWEN

ANNE GLENCONNER

JANEY GODLEY

CHRIS BRYANT MP

MELANIE REID

RORY STEWART

THE GUILTY FEMINIST



ALL EVENTS ARE FREE!

BROWSE THE PROGRAMME AND REGISTER TO VIEW

[www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk)



The World's Only Festival of Biography and Memoir

# BOSWELL BOOK FESTIVAL / 10-16 JUNE 2021 ONLINE

Cover painting:  
Girl Reading by George Henry  
© Fleming Collection



## Welcome

I have never been more grateful for our unique theme of biography and memoir than in planning this exciting first online Festival, which we are offering free of charge thanks to the generous support of

loyal sponsors and with the help of your much needed donations. Not only will we showcase a rich choice of home-grown talent but the lack of geographical borders has allowed me to search further afield to find speakers and new partnerships from America and Canada to Australia and Italy – even including one with our namesake, the Boswell Book Company in Milwaukee.

This Festival started with the great Scottish biographer James Boswell as its inspiration and in hoping to offer a programme which is both entertaining and thought provoking, I have also wanted to explore what it takes to capture your own or other people's stories as he, Boswell, did so brilliantly, either in biography, diaries, journalism, letters or today's new platforms such as blogs.

Appropriately we will open with a live stream from Edinburgh Old Town with appearances from Andrew Marr on 'Boswell the Man', Bill Paterson, Robert Burns and Ludwig van Beethoven and then will roll on into a wonderful weekend programme that will culminate on the Monday with masterclasses in biography, memoir and the new platforms for life stories.

We are also offering an inspirational and entertaining Family and Schools programme under the new Curatorship of Janet Smyth. Please tell anyone with children to divert to take a look.

In what has been a long lockdown for everyone, which has left us unable to stage our traditional Festival at the wonderful Dumfries House in Ayrshire, your attendance will make such a difference - in particular, to the authors who have magnificently risen to the challenges of Zoom.

I am hoping our only competition for your time is the sunshine so please take the Festival with you wherever you are, on whatever device you find most relaxing, with a drink at hand and join us. Or log in later to hear talks on catch up.

**Caroline Knox, Festival Director  
Ayrshire 2021**

## Sponsors & Supporters

The Boswell Book Festival would like to thank Creative Scotland, Baillie Gifford, East Ayrshire Council, Scottish Friendly and our anonymous sponsors who all so generously support us.



*Actual Investors*



## How to register and watch an event

1. Choose an event - all events are FREE to watch!
2. Press the 'CLICK HERE TO REGISTER' button attached to each event
3. Add your details on our online box office when prompted
4. You will be sent an email to confirm what event you have chosen to watch
5. You will receive an email on the day of the event to remind you
6. Watch the event on your computer, tablet or mobile phone - and even ask questions on the chat facility

- Some events will be BSL Interpreted and captioned
- Most events will be available to watch again on Catch-Up until 30 June 2021

For more information about the festival visit our website or follow us on social media:

[www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.boswellbookfestival.co.uk)



## Festival at a Glance

\* BSL Interpreted

### THURSDAY 10 JUNE

17:00 **Andrew Marr \***  
Followed by Scottish Portraits as Biography 1  
18:30 **Winetasting Live I**  
19:45 **William Zachs**

16:00 **Amanda Owen & Gavin Francis**  
18:00 **Anne Glenconner**  
19:30 **Janey Godley \***

### FRIDAY 11 JUNE

15:00 **Simon Heffer & Hugo Vickers**  
Followed by Scottish Portraits as Biography 2  
16:30 **Sigrid Rausing & Georgia Thomson**  
18:00 **Winetasting Live II**  
19:30 **Kapka Kassabova & Rory Stewart**

### SUNDAY 13 JUNE

10:00 **Hella Pick**  
Followed by Scottish Portraits as Biography 4  
12:00 **Deborah Frances-White**  
14:00 **Helen Lewis & Chris Bryant**  
16:00 **Fredrik Logevall with James Naughtie**  
18:00 **Desmond Cole & Lee Lawrence**  
19:30 **Andrew Cotter with Olive & Mabel \***

### SATURDAY 12 JUNE

10:00 **Alberto Angela**  
Followed by Scottish Portraits as Biography 3  
12:00 **Alex Renton & Geoff Palmer**  
14:00 **Charlie Gilmour & Mohsin Zaidi**

### MONDAY 14 JUNE

10:00 **Professor Jane Ridley Masterclass**  
14:00 **Melanie Reid Masterclass**  
18:00 **Ned Sedgwick Masterclass**

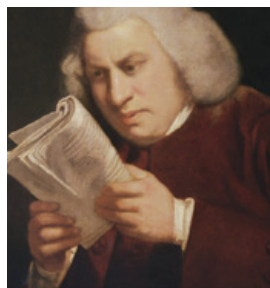


PRE-FESTIVAL WARM UP EVENT

SUNDAY 16 MAY

# CELEBRATING NATIONAL BIOGRAPHERS' DAY

14:00: Broadcast **LIVE** from Auchinleck Churchyard, Ayrshire



PENGUIN CLASSICS

JAMES BOSWELL  
*The Life of Samuel Johnson*

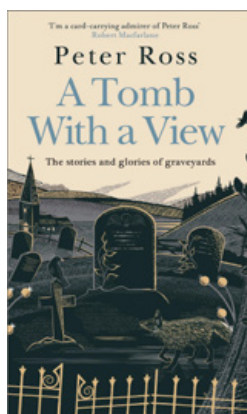


Image: Peter Ross



Peter Ross



Gordon Turnbull

## With Peter Ross & Gordon Turnbull

The great biographer and diarist James Boswell lies in his eternal resting place, with his immediate family members, in the ancestral tomb at Auchinleck. Surrounding him in the graveyard lie many of the Ayrshire folk of his time, immortalised by mention in his marvellous diaries and letters.

As award-winning journalist, Peter Ross notes in his lyrical and moving book, *A Tomb with a View: The Stories and Glories of Graveyards*, in death there is life: 'there is nothing quite like a turn among the headstones to remind us that we are alive'.

Gordon Turnbull, head of the Yale Boswell Editions, notes that in this very special place, we remember not only life, but the Life — Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, the pathbreaking biographical achievement that issued from the deepest Boswellian impulse — to remember and to commemorate.

National Biographers' Day falls on May 16th, the date chosen to commemorate that day in 1763 when a chance meeting between the young Scot and the English man of letters Samuel Johnson led to a brief, hurried diary record that, with many other later ones, was crafted by Boswell's hand into a monumental biographical commemoration.

Join Peter Ross as he guides us into a fascinating 'grave new world', and Gordon Turnbull in conversation with James Knox, charting Boswell's drive to record, to refuse to allow those who have gone before us to 'evaporate in oblivion'.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

FESTIVAL  
PLUS +

## Bill Paterson

Before each talk, don't miss the opportunity of hearing Bill Paterson read excerpts from James Boswell's books and journals.

The much-loved Scottish actor known to many through his recent roles in *Shetland*, *Fleabag*, *Guilt* and *Rebecca* as well as through his narration of numerous TV and radio programmes including the reading of his own classic childhood memoir *Tales from the Back Green*, will be reading excerpts from James Boswell's books and journals.

When the first volume of Boswell's Journals, the *London Journal 1762* was published in 1950, having been hidden by the family until the 1920s its candid contents caused a publishing sensation making it a worldwide bestseller. The Yale Editions of the *Private Papers of James Boswell* has been publishing volumes of his writing ever since most recently under the General Editorship of Festival favourite Dr Gordon Turnbull.

Boswell's frank record of his private and public life - he was as forthright about his wretched behaviour as he was matter-of-fact in reporting his more admirable moments - has attracted many readers and repelled others, but rarely has it elicited indifference.

FESTIVAL  
PLUS +

## Kenneth Dunsmuir

Relax to music whilst waiting for your event to start

In the lead up to the start of most events in the programme, you will hear the gentle playing of Kenneth Dunsmuir, a familiar face at the Festival's traditional home at Dumfries House where he has recently retired as Deputy Chief Executive of the House and The Prince's Foundation, while remaining an Ambassador for the latter.

Born and educated in Ayrshire, Kenneth studied piano at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland before going onto a career in education in the Shetland Isles and in Ayrshire as Music Teacher, Director of Music, Deputy Head and Head Teacher. He is now rediscovering the joy of being a pianist after an absence of more than 30 years.

Kenneth will play: Mozart Sonata in C Major KV 283 Andante, Chopin Nocturne E Flat Major Op 9 No 2, Beethoven Sonata in C Major (Pathétique) Op 13 Andante Cantabile and Faure Nocturne in E Flat minor Op 33 No 1



## Festival Hosts

Each day a Festival Host will present the day's events and keep you entertained:

FESTIVAL  
PLUS +

### JAMES KNOX

James Knox, Chair of the Boswell Trust, biographer of Robert Byron and Osbert Lancaster, Director of the Fleming Collection of Scottish Art.



### SALLY MAGNUSSON

Sally Magnusson, journalist, broadcaster, novelist and author of a memoir of her mother, *Where Memories Go: Why Dementia Changes Everything*.



### ALAN TAYLOR

Alan Taylor, journalist, biographer of Muriel Spark and editor of *The Assassin's Cloak: An Anthology of the World's Greatest Diarists*.



### JAMES NAUGHTIE

James Naughtie, broadcaster, presenter of Radio 4's *Book Club* and *Meet the Author*, journalist, novelist and biographer of *On The Road: American Adventures from Nixon to Trump*.



**All events are FREE but  
please do give what you  
can to support the festival.**

Your support is especially needed at this time when the events we hold cannot generate the income on which we usually depend.

Any donation towards the cost of this festival, however small, would be hugely appreciated.

The Boswell Book Festival is staged by the Boswell Trust, a volunteer-led charity and therefore support, both practical and financial, is always going to be essential to allow us to stage the festival including its exciting programme for young people through schools and outreach work.

We are indebted to all who have supported the Boswell Book Festival over the past ten years in so many different ways. It is only with the help of so many loyal supporters that the festival has achieved recognition as a cultural event of national importance.

**CLICK HERE TO  
DONATE**

**The World's Only Festival of Biography and Memoir**

**BOSWELL / 10-16 JUNE  
BOOK FESTIVAL / 2021  
ONLINE**

**FESTIVAL  
PLUS +**

# SCOTTISH PORTRAITS AS BIOGRAPHY

Don't miss the chance, each day of the festival, of seeing how paint on canvas offers a fresh look at the art of life.



John Byrne: © David Eustace

**James Holloway**, former Director of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, **James Knox**, Director of The Fleming Collection, and **David Eustace**, internationally acclaimed Scottish photographer, will explore the ability of portraits to convey the personality, physical looks and life of a sitter and how this has changed over time.

Subjects will range from Scotland's greatest rebel leader, William Wallace, to Paisley's finest dramatist and artist, John Byrne, and the artists will range from the great Enlightenment portrait painter, Henry Raeburn, to Celtic Revivalist, Phoebe Anna Traquair.



James Holloway



David Eustace



James Knox

## PROGRAMME

- Scottish Portraits as Biography Episode 1 - Thursday 18:00 following Andrew Marr
- Scottish Portraits as Biography Episode 2 - Friday 15:45 following Simon Heffer & Hugo Vickers
- Scottish Portraits as Biography Episode 3 - Saturday 11:00 following Alberto Angela on Cleopatra
- Scottish Portraits as Biography Episode 4 - Sunday 11:00 following Hella Pick

Each illustrated talk will last 10 - 15 minutes.

# JOIN AN EVENING PARTY

OF TALK, MUSIC AND ART  
IN EDINBURGH'S OLD TOWN

HOSTED BY WILLIAM ZACHS IN THE COMPANY OF ANDREW MARR,  
BILL PATERSON, ROBERT BURNS & LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

AND RAISE A GLASS  
TO JAMES BOSWELL, BIOGRAPHY  
AND LIFE STORIES



## THURSDAY 10 JUNE

OPENING NIGHT



ALL EVENTS ARE  
FREE TO VIEW



FESTIVAL HOST FOR THE EVENING: JAMES KNOX

James Knox, Chair of the Boswell Trust, biographer of Robert Byron and Osbert Lancaster,  
Director of the Fleming Collection of Scottish Art.

THURSDAY 10 JUNE  
17:00 - 18:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



BSL INTERPRETED



## Andrew Marr Boswell the Man

When young and impressionable and growing up in Scotland, Andrew Marr was given a copy of Boswell's 1762 *London Journal* by his mother. Boswell fast became one of Marr's literary heroes and indeed was chosen by him for his BBC tv series *Great Scots: The Writers who Shaped a Nation*. As author of the *Life of Samuel Johnson*, Boswell invented the art of modern biography; his *Tour to the Hebrides* and his *Account of Corsica* established him as one of the earliest travel writers; and his rediscovered journals published in the 1950s, acclaimed for their unflinching honesty, verve and historical importance, turned him into a twentieth-century literary sensation.

So what is it about Boswell that since his death in 1795 has made him an outsider to the accepted pantheon of great writers?

One of our most incisive broadcasters, journalists and critics, Andrew Marr, will argue that his hero has been unduly neglected, not least in his home country of Scotland; and that Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* blew apart literary convention with its flesh and blood portrayal of a great writer with all his flaws, physical tics, prejudices and love of language and by so doing has transmitted to readers across the centuries the very sound of Johnson's voice. He will also argue that Boswell's achievement extended to his self-portrait in his journals, exposing his charm, sensitivity, grossness, contrariness, courage and enthusiasms that bring him alive today as a contemporary literary figure.

One of Boswell's myriad breakthroughs was inventing the art of the celebrity interview – in those days of philosophers such as Voltaire and Rousseau. Don't miss this chance to hear one of the UK's greatest present day interviewers take on his eighteenth century predecessor.

Chaired by William Zachs

Sponsored by Baillie Gifford



Actual Investors

## SCOTTISH PORTRAITS AS BIOGRAPHY

Episode 1 will follow this event:

James Holloway and James Knox on two Scottish heroes, William Wallace and Robert the Bruce and the rebirth of Scottish portrait painting after the Reformation.

 FLEMING COLLECTION

THURSDAY 10 JUNE  
18:30 - 19:30

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

**CORNEY & BARROW**  
INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780

## Winetasting Live (I)

While the live talk by Zoom is limited to 30 people, there is room for anyone to tune in and listen along

Celebrate our eighteenth-century Opening Evening with Katie Rooney of Corney & Barrow, Ayr.

In James Boswell's record of liquors at Auchinleck, he kept a detailed arithmetical account of every bottle of wine and other liquor consumed. Despite concern about his excessive drinking, at one dinner in 1783 for six guests the consumption totalled 11 bottles of claret and 3 of port which, with rum, madeira, mountain and lisbon bought the total to 19 bottles!

While not wishing to encourage anyone to indulge on this scale, we thought it irresistible to offer a Festival wine tasting to include a claret, hock and port from cellars which were operating in Ayr during Boswell's lifetime. Alexander Oliphant founded his wine business at 8 Academy Street in 1766. Now, 255 years later, Corney & Barrow are proud custodians of these historic wine cellars, which are still to this day used for wine storage.



## WINES FOR THE TASTING

**Claret Corney & Barrow Claret Maison Sichel** (Bordeaux, France)

Maison Sichel is a highly respected family company with more than 130 years of experience, spanning six generations. The Corney & Barrow buyers, along with the Sichel team, have blended a classic though ripe claret style.

**German Hock** (i.e. Riesling) **Rheingau Riesling Kabinett Schloss Schönborn** (Rheingau)

This is the estate Riesling from this historic family vineyard on the Rhine. Vinified in stainless steel, this has the purity of fresh, unadulterated, ripe Riesling, refreshingly nuanced with notes of flowers, citrus and orchard fruit and gentle hints towards peach – elegant and harmonious.

### Port

Quinta do Vale Dona Maria Port LBV 2014 Halves – "intense fruit character and soft ripe tannins"

### ORDER

To order two or more bottles to enjoy during the tasting session, delivered to your home, please contact Katie Rooney:  
[katie.rooney@corneyandbarrow.com](mailto:katie.rooney@corneyandbarrow.com)

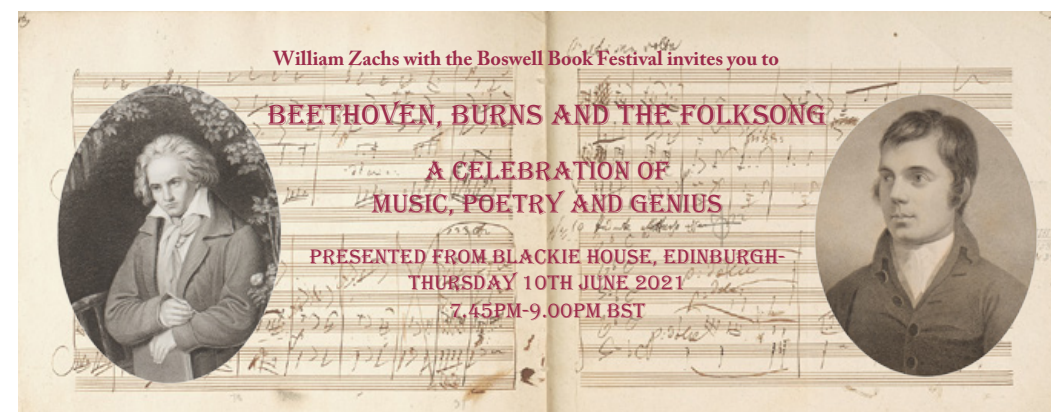
**£44 for all three bottles or £31.95 without the port. Includes delivery to the customer.**

*To ensure your wines arrive on time, please order by Thursday 27 May*

THURSDAY 10 JUNE  
19:45 - 21:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Event available only at the scheduled time.



## William Zachs Beethoven, Burns and the Folksong

This virtual tour narrated by William Zachs tells the story of an unlikely collaboration between Robert Burns and Ludwig van Beethoven. How did Beethoven come to love all things Scottish? Why did he produce nearly two hundred folksong arrangements for piano, violin, cello and different voices, many of them to words by Burns, including 'Auld Lang Syne'?

These two towering geniuses never met. In fact Burns had died ten years before Beethoven took up the project. Yet through the agency of a near-forgotten Edinburgh publisher called George Thomson these legends were brought together - their words and music - their genius.

William's story begins as he reveals a 24-page musical manuscript in the hand of Beethoven of five of these folksong arrangements. Original Burns manuscripts will also be on show along with printed books and works of art. During the 50-minute 'tour' you will hear the unforgettable folksongs produced through this long-distance collaboration - a celebration of music, poetry and genius.



William Zachs

William Zachs is a writer and collector, a story-teller and antiquary. He runs a private library, museum, research centre and exhibition space in the heart of Edinburgh's Old Town. An Honorary Fellow at the University of Edinburgh, Bill has written several books, articles, and exhibition catalogues. He lectures widely on topics relating to Scotland, the eighteenth century, book history and the history of collecting. Hailing from Connecticut, he has lived in Edinburgh for nearly forty years.

*How did Beethoven come to love all things Scottish?*



# FRIDAY 11 JUNE

## DIARIES AND LETTERS

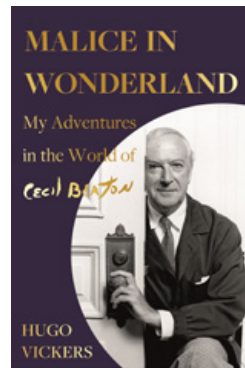


ALL EVENTS ARE  
FREE TO VIEW



### FESTIVAL HOST FOR THE DAY: ALAN TAYLOR

Alan Taylor, journalist, biographer of Muriel Spark and editor of *The Assassin's Cloak: An Anthology of the World's Greatest Diarists*.



FRIDAY 11 JUNE  
15:00 - 16:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



Simon Heffer  
& Hugo Vickers

Image: Nicola Vivian

## Simon Heffer & Hugo Vickers

An historian and a biographer  
discuss what truly makes a diarist and more.

The celebrated historian and journalist Simon Heffer is the editor of the unexpurgated diaries of society figure and politician, Henry 'Chips' Channon. The first volume 1918-38 provides a feast of gossip and acute observation documented by a man who knew everyone in the highest and most powerful echelons of British society. He is in company with the bestselling biographer and Royal expert, Hugo Vickers, who shares his own diaries, *Malice in Wonderland*, kept while researching his acclaimed biography of Cecil Beaton. Over the years of writing and research, he travelled the world to befriend and interview many of the most fascinating and influential social and cultural figures of the time.

'Chips' Channon (1897-1935), who was born in Chicago, settled in England after the Great War, marrying into the immensely wealthy Guinness family. He served as Conservative MP for Southend-on-Sea from 1935 until his death in 1958. His career was unremarkable. His diaries are quite the opposite – and will ensure that his fame will outlast all but the greatest of his political contemporaries.

Cecil Beaton (1904-1980), one of the most talented and original photographers of his generation, also shared a fascination with glamour and High Society as his own diaries, published in his lifetime, reveal. He was sought-after on both sides of the Atlantic, photographing famous faces from Hollywood, fashion and the theatre. His greatest importance was as a Royal photographer, taking the official photographs at the Coronation along with many other iconic images.

In a diary fest, Heffer and Vickers will delve into their subjects, exploring all aspects of diaries whether as editor, biographer or diary writer – and will also consider what lies in the future for the diary in the digital age.

Chaired by Alan Taylor

## SCOTTISH PORTRAITS AS BIOGRAPHY

Episode 2 will follow this event:

James Holloway on portraits of the Enlightenment by Henry Raeburn and David Wilkie.

FLEMING COLLECTION

FRIDAY 11 JUNE  
16:30 - 17:30

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



Sigrid Rausing

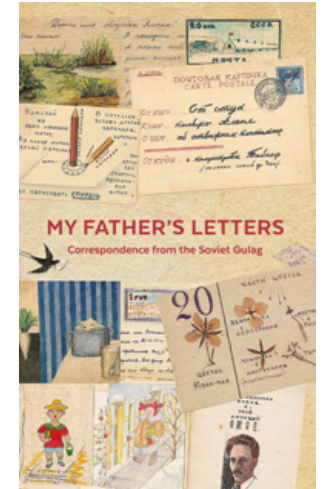


## Letters from Prison

My Father's Letters with Sigrid Rausing and Georgia Thomson

Between the 1930s and 1950s, millions of people were sent to the infamous Gulag in the Soviet Union. *My Father's Letters* tells the stories of 16 men – mostly members of the intelligentsia, and loyal Soviet subjects – who were imprisoned in the Gulag camps, through the letters they sent back to their wives and children. Almost none of the writers of these letters survived.

Pieced together from the archives of the Memorial Human Rights Centre, a Russian historical and civil rights group that focuses on recording and publicising the Soviet Union's totalitarian past and monitoring human rights, here are letters illustrated by fathers keen to educate their children in science and natural history; the tragic missives of a former military man convinced that the terrible mistake of his arrest will



Poignant letters  
of love and loss  
that stand as a  
testament to 16 men  
imprisoned during  
Stalin's Great Terror.

be rectified; the 'letter' stitched on a bedsheet with a fishbone and smuggled out of a maximum security camp, and the father whose letter to his medical student daughter urges her to become as well-rounded a doctor as possible, for life, he writes, could throw anything at her. The implication is clear.

Sigrid Rausing, editor of *Granta* magazine, the publisher of Granta Books, author of a powerful memoir, *Mayhem*, will talk with translator Georgia Thomson about these wonderful letters hoping they will give all who read them a sense of the extraordinary tenacity, warmth and courage of Russia's people and of the letters' importance as documents in the stories of people's lives.

Chaired by Alan Taylor



FRIDAY 11 JUNE  
18:00 - 19:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

**CORNEY & BARROW**  
INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780

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Quinta do Vale Dona Maria Port LBV 2014 Halves – "intense fruit character and soft ripe tannins"

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[katie.rooney@corneyandbarrow.com](mailto:katie.rooney@corneyandbarrow.com)

**£44 for all three bottles or £31.95 without the port. Includes delivery to the customer.**

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FRIDAY 11 JUNE  
19:30 - 20:45

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

## Kapka Kassabova & Rory Stewart

Both are garlanded with awards: poet and novelist, Kapka Kassabova, for *To the Lake*, her account of re-discovering her family's roots around the fabled Lakes Ohrid and Prespa, trisected by Albania, Greece and North Macedonia; and adventurer, diplomat, and politician, Rory Stewart, for *The Places In Between*, describing his journey on foot across Afghanistan, accompanied by his dog Babur, dodging bullets and wolves along the way.

Do these award-winning books rely to a large extent on diaries written on the hoof? If so, what form did they take? Were they factual accounts of the day or did they serve as sketch books to capture fleeting images of natural beauty? Or records of conversations? Was there a constant fear of losing them – whether notebooks or laptops? How much were they inspired by the diaries of earlier travellers such as the Mughal Emperor Babur (in Stewart's case) or Edward Lear (in Kassabova's).

Both books have been lauded for their layering of the past upon the present, for their reaching back from the here and now to the deep past which in turn casts fresh insight into the destructive political and military legacies of the present countries that they describe. Are such brilliant narratives the result of polishing and refining back in the safety of one's own writing room or are they captured in moments of inspiration among the far-flung communities and mountainous terrain of their subjects?

In conversation with Alan Taylor, anthologist of the world's greatest diarists, discover how Kassabova and Stewart craft their outstanding talents as writers, which transcend genre, to summon up the beauty, tragedy and humanity of foreign lands.

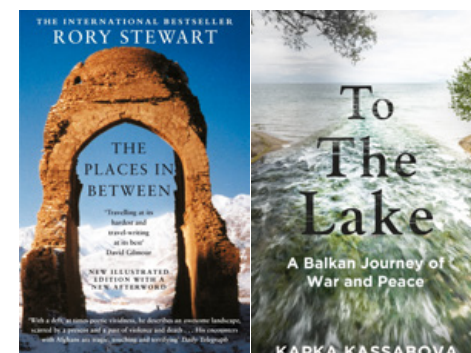
Chaired by Alan Taylor

Sponsored by Baillie Gifford



Actual Investors

Two travel writers with Scottish roots discuss the use of diaries in their art.



# SATURDAY 12 JUNE

## MEMOIR & BIOGRAPHY

Image: Derek Prescott



### FESTIVAL HOST FOR THE DAY: SALLY MAGNUSSON

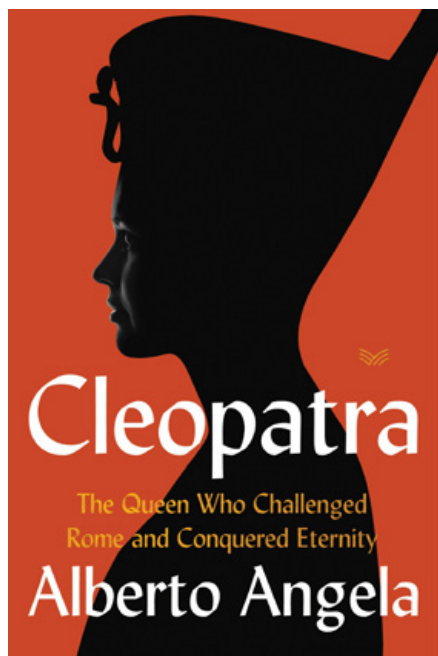
Sally Magnusson, journalist, broadcaster, novelist and author of a memoir of her mother, *Where Memories Go: Why Dementia Changes Everything*.



ALL EVENTS ARE  
FREE TO VIEW

SATURDAY 12 JUNE  
10:00 - 11:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



## Alberto Angela on Cleopatra



Image: Barbara Ledda

Our world today would not be the same without Cleopatra. Yet while she is one of the most famous figures in history, the legendary Egyptian queen remains, in many ways, an enigma. In this mesmerizing biography, Alberto Angela offers a fresh and dynamic portrait of this extraordinary ruler, revealing a strikingly modern woman born in an ancient era and skilled in the art of diplomacy and war, who would conquer the heart of a general - Marc Antony - and Rome itself.

*Cleopatra*, meticulously researched and rich with vivid detail, focuses on a twenty-year period that marked a sweeping change in Roman history, beginning with the assassination of Julius Caesar that led to the end of the Republic, and ending with the suicides of Antony and Cleopatra and the birth of the Augustan Empire. Angela brings the people, stories, customs and traditions of this fascinating period alive as he transports us to the chaotic streets of the capital of the ancient world, the exotic port of Alexandria in Egypt, and to the bloody battlefields where an empire was won and lost.

One of Italy's most revered cultural figures, paleontologist, naturalist, journalist, author, and popular television host - Angela's tv documentary *Meraviglie* attracts over six million viewers per episode - reconstructs the extraordinary life of the legendary Cleopatra at the height of her power in this epic story of passion, intrigue, betrayal, and war.



**Chaired by Anna Somers Cocks who also chaired the Venice in Peril Fund.**

In partnership with Pisa Book Festival

## SCOTTISH PORTRAITS AS BIOGRAPHY

Episode 3 will follow this event:

James Knox on portraits of women by women from the Celtic Revival and the Roaring Twenties

FLEMING COLLECTION

SATURDAY 12 JUNE  
12:00 - 13:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



Image: Caroline Hryb

Alex Renton



Geoff Palmer

## Alex Renton & Geoff Palmer

*Two personal stories - a descendant of slave owners and a descendant of enslaved people discuss how their actions help us to address Scotland's colonial and slavery past.*

In Alex Renton's personal story of his Ayrshire family's history as slave and plantation owners, he explores both the inheritance that has been passed to the descendants of the enslaved and also that passed to the descendants of the slave owners, and asks one of the most important moral questions of our age: how can the enslavers, himself amongst them, begin to make reparations for the past?

*Blood Legacy*, an account of the everyday brutality of Caribbean slavery, whose lasting legacy is still clear in these countries today, sets the ordinariness of slaveholding in the eighteenth-century monied world

BOSWELL BOOK FESTIVAL 2021 ONLINE



alongside accounts of the extraordinary lives of those owned by the wealthy.

Sir Geoffrey Palmer OBE, a descendant of slavery in Jamaica, who was aged 15 when he joined his mother who had arrived on the Windrush in 1948, has been appointed to lead the group investigating the street names, monuments and buildings of Edinburgh. Sir Geoff, published author on the history of slavery in the West Indies, Professor Emeritus at Heriot-Watt University and a leading anti-racism campaigner, has been closely involved with the current Black History debate and says: "Don't take down statues - take down racism. If you remove the statue you remove the deed, and our statues are in the context of our history which must not be forgotten."

**Chaired by James Knox**

Sponsored by Baillie Gifford

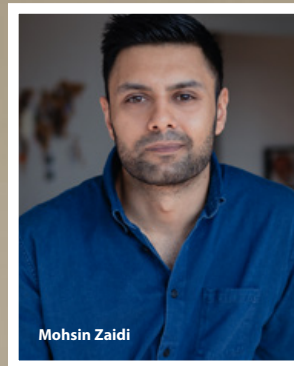


*Actual Investors*



SATURDAY 12 JUNE  
14:00 - 15:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



Mohsin Zaidi

*Two highly acclaimed coming of age memoirs from young men who hail from very different backgrounds, have been on different sides of the law but have in common childhoods moulded by parental behaviour and an understanding today of the power of love.*



## Charlie Gilmour & Mohsin Zaidi

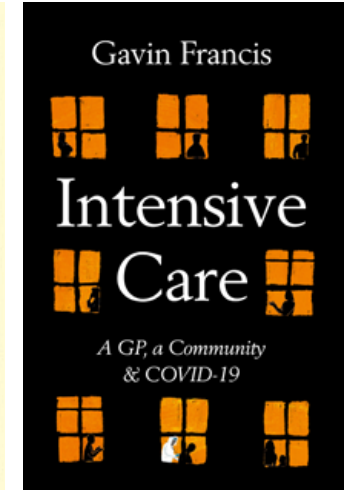
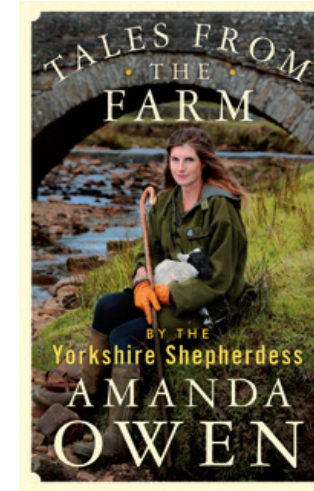
On the day after Charlie Gilmour swung in mad protest against student fees on the Cenotaph flag, he was the most hated young man in Britain: soon to be a jailbird. The adopted son of Pink Floyd's David Gilmour, *Featherhood* is his searing tale of loss, addictive despair, the redemptive power of love and a passion for birds that runs in the blood – a magpie that fell into Charlie's life, swiftly changing it, and tales of a jackdaw kept by his biological father Heathcote Williams, anarchist, poet, magician, who vanishes from Charlie's life in the dead of night.

Mohsin Zaidi's *A Dutiful Boy* is a beautiful testament to what it means to feel "othered". An outsider in his own country for his ethnic heritage, an outsider to his familial community due to his sexual identity, an outsider to the LGBT+ community because of his religious background, this is the story of a young boy growing up in a devout Muslim family in east London who knew he was gay but who also knew such an admission was inconceivable in a religious culture where homosexuality was still taboo. Now a high profile criminal barrister, Mohsin Zaidi is an advocate for LGBT rights, BAME representation and social mobility.

**Chaired by James Shaw, BBC Scotland correspondent**

SATURDAY 12 JUNE  
16:00 - 17:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



## Amanda Owen & Gavin Francis

*Two writers from very different spheres of life, but both rooted in their own communities and both having created influential platforms through their writings based on their vocations.*

Amanda Owen, known to many as The Yorkshire Shepherdess, was born in Huddersfield with no links to rural life. Forty-six years on, she is mother to nine children, and with her husband Clive also mothers over a thousand sheep, forty cows and six dogs on their 2,000-acre hill farm, not to mention being author of four best-selling books and having her own series on Channel 5, *Our Yorkshire Farm*. As Covid-19 sent the

country into lockdown, Amanda felt luckier than ever to live close to nature.

Gavin Francis is a GP and award-winning author who splits his time between Edinburgh and the islands of Orkney, who has worked across four continents as a surgeon, emergency physician and medical officer with the British Antarctic Survey. He has described the pandemic response of 2020 as the most intense period of his twenty-year career in medicine and *Intensive Care* is a deeply personal account of nine months spent caring for a society in crisis.

**In conversation with Sally Magnusson,** Francis and Owen will discuss how their roles in seemingly very different communities has led them both to where they are today.



Amanda Owen



Gavin Francis



SATURDAY 12 JUNE  
18:00 - 19:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

## Anne Glenconner

From Maid of Honour at the Queen's Coronation to Lady in Waiting to Princess Margaret, Lady Glenconner is a unique witness to royal history - earning her a place in the most recent series of *The Crown* - as well as an extraordinary survivor of a generation of aristocratic women trapped without inheritance and burdened with social expectations.

She married the charismatic but highly volatile Colin Tennant, Lord Glenconner, who became the owner of Mustique. Together they turned the island into a paradise retreat for the famous, including Mick Jagger, David Bowie and Princess Margaret.

But beneath the glitz and glamour there has also lurked tragedy. On Lord Glenconner's death in 2010 he left his fortune to a former employee. And of their five children, two grown-up sons died, while a third son had to be nursed back from a coma.

Anne Glenconner will talk about *Lady in Waiting*, the bestselling account of her remarkable life, **in conversation** with leading historical and royal biographer **Hugo Vickers**.



In association with Boswell  
Book Company Milwaukee

An extraordinary life  
in the shadow of the  
crown.

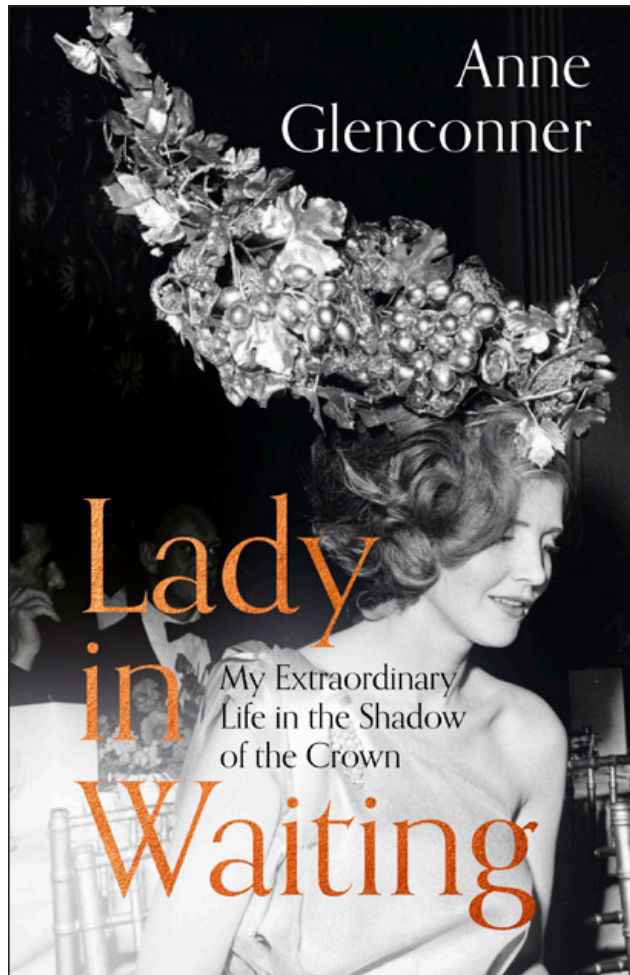


Image: Hal Shinnie

SATURDAY 12 JUNE  
19:30 - 20:30

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BSL INTERPRETED



## Janey Godley

*She has kept us laughing during lockdown -  
but who is Janey Godley?*



Renowned for her 2020 sketches on the First Minister's daily coronavirus updates - her hilarious Nicola Sturgeon voice-overs winning 'Best Online Content' at the Scottish Comedy Awards with her book *Frank! Get The Door: ma feet are killin me* swiftly following on, Godley's route to success has been highly unusual.

Born in the tough East End of Glasgow and married into one of the city's most notorious criminal families, Janey Godley's young life was far from ordinary. From the grim and far-from-swinging 60s, to the discos of the 70s, to the tidal wave of heroin addiction which engulfed Glasgow's East End during the 1980s, Janey was witness to an extraordinary underworld - as well as religious sectarianism, abject poverty and a frightening family of in-laws.

Talking about her searingly honest memoir *Handstands in the Dark*, it was Godley's indomitable spirit and her vivid sense of humour that kept her going leading her to become one of the UK's best loved comics performing all over the world. Today she has over 50 million online hits for her iconic voiceover videos, while her weekly podcasts get over 40,000 hits worldwide.

**Chaired by Sally Magnusson**



# SUNDAY 13 JUNE

## BIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR



ALL EVENTS ARE  
FREE TO VIEW



### FESTIVAL HOST FOR THE DAY: JAMES NAUGHTIE

James Naughtie, broadcaster, presenter of Radio 4's *Book Club* and *Meet the Author*, journalist, novelist and biographer of *On The Road: American Adventures from Nixon to Trump*.

SUNDAY 13 JUNE  
10:00 - 11:00

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*'A remarkable personal journey, by one of the great political correspondents of our world.'*

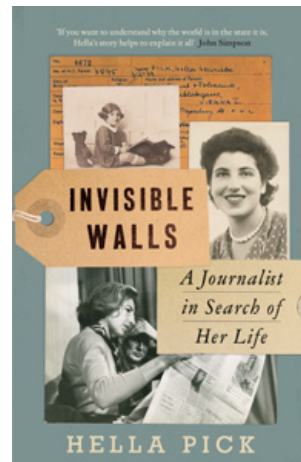
Philippe Sands

## Hella Pick

Hella Pick was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1929. A Kindertransport evacuee at the age of eleven - number 4672 - with her mother who followed her to Britain three months later, she experienced the struggles of life as a Jewish refugee. Defying expectations that she would become a teacher, she went to the London School of Economics, and began a career in journalism. Over nearly four decades she covered the volatile global scene, first in West Africa, followed by America and long periods in Europe. In her thirty-five years with the *Guardian*, she reported on the end of Empire in West Africa, the assassination of President Kennedy, Martin Luther King's march from Selma to Montgomery, the Vietnam peace negotiation in Paris, the 1968 student revolt in France, the birth of the Solidarity movement in Poland, and the closing stages of the Cold War. A request for coffee on board a Soviet ship anchored in Malta led to a chat with Mikhail Gorbachev. A request for an interview with Willy Brandt led to a personal friendship that enabled her to come to terms with Germany's Nazi past.

Now 92, her intensely touching story is also a clarion call for preserving professionalism in journalism at a time when social media muddy the waters between fact and fiction, and between reporting and commentary.

Chaired by James Naughtie



## SCOTTISH PORTRAITS AS BIOGRAPHY

Episode 4 will follow this event:

David Eustace on photography as portraiture starring John Byrne and others.

SUNDAY 13 JUNE  
12:00 - 13:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

*'Hilarious, irreverent, eternally surprising, classy as hell...'*

Phoebe Waller Bridge

## Deborah Frances-White

*'I'm a feminist but ... one time I went on a women's rights march, and I popped into a department store to use the loo, and I got distracted trying out face cream. And when I came out the march was gone.'*

Deborah Frances-White is a writer, comedian, regular at the Edinburgh Fringe and podcaster. Her weekly podcast *The Guilty Feminist* has had 85 million downloads in five years becoming something of a cultural phenomenon. She has taken the show on tour around the world including a sell-out performance at the Royal Albert Hall in 2019. Her book *The Guilty Feminist*, inspired by her podcast, is a *Sunday Times* bestseller. She has just been commissioned to write a new book – *The Six Conversations we are Too Scared to Have*.

As an award-winning podcaster Frances-White is an example of non-traditional channels to fame and celebrity. *The Guilty Feminist's* appeal lies partly in its autobiographical nature and partly in her ability to explore the narratives and events that have shaped the lives of her guests as they discuss the big topics all 21st century feminists agree on, whilst confessing our "buts" – the insecurities, hypocrisies and fears that undermine our lofty principles. The line is often blurred between confession, comedy and exploration, making podcasts an easy springboard to biographical publishing success.

Podcaster **Ned Sedgwick** joins Deborah Frances-White for a discussion on her life, writing career and her future.



SUNDAY 13 JUNE  
14:00 - 15:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

## Helen Lewis & Chris Bryant MP

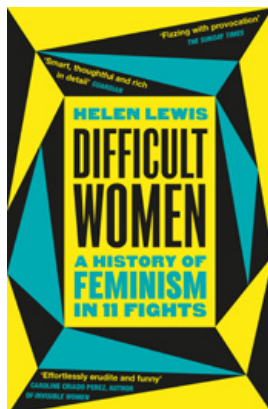
*Two groups of people making history but airbrushed from the history books as inconvenient truths.*

Meet the 'Glamour boys', a little-known group of courageous queer MPs, among them Ronnie Cartland (brother of Barbara), who were among the very first to warn Britain about the danger of Hitler's rise to power and the most vocal in demanding that the government stop appeasing and start opposing him. In doing so they risked everything, swimming against the overwhelming tide of public opinion at a time when even the suggestion of homosexuality could land you in prison.

Then meet the brave and bullish feminist trailblazers who have been sidelined for being 'difficult' - and discover how they made a difference - among them strikers in saris; bomb-throwing suffragettes; the pioneer of the refuge movement who became a men's rights activist; the working-class suffragettes and the princess who discovered why so many women were having bad sex.

In *Difficult Women*, Helen Lewis, staff writer at *The Atlantic*, former deputy editor of the *New Statesman*, and host of Radio 4's *The Spark*, seamlessly blends scholarly inquiry and journalistic investigation with autobiographical titbits - while Chris Bryant, MP and author who has appeared on every major TV and radio current affairs programme, has brought to light the remarkable and in some cases, heroic, contribution of gay MPs to Britain's involvement in the Second World War in *The Glamour Boys*. Together they have tackled the complexities of group biography with aplomb and in doing so cast light on some of those airbrushed from history.

**Chaired by journalist Rachel Cooke, author of *Her Brilliant Career - Ten Extraordinary Women of the Fifties*.**



Helen Lewis



Chris Bryant MP

Image: Mr Phil Warren

SUNDAY 13 JUNE  
16:00 - 17:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

## Fredrik Logevall with James Naughtie

*A magisterial and pivotal biography commensurate with a festival named after the great biographer, James Boswell.*



JFK's first thirty-nine years 1917-1956 serve as a vignette of American history of that time, placing in context his early life and grass roots politics in Boston, from sickly second son of a wartime ambassador to Britain and politics-obsessed mother, through playboy Harvard undergraduate, bestselling author and World War II hero, to young senator - ending with his decision to run for president.

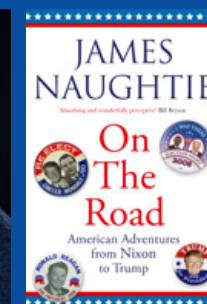
The Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Fredrik Logevall, inspired by a gap in our historical knowledge, has spent much of the last decade combing through material unseen or unused by previous biographers taking us as close as we have ever been to the real John F. Kennedy.

Logevall will share his journey to uncover the iconic, yet still elusive, thirty-fifth president in conversation with acclaimed BBC broadcaster and author, James Naughtie, who has cast his unique and inquisitive eye over America's presidents in his own book *On The Road: Adventures From Nixon To Trump*.



In association with the Biographers' Club.

Fredrik Logevall



James Naughtie



SUNDAY 13 JUNE  
18:00 - 19:00

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

*In a compelling conversation, Cole and Lawrence explore the parallels and similarities between the British and Canadian Black experience, and how the trajectories of their lives have led them to fight for justice, for peace, for change.*

## Desmond Cole & Lee Lawrence

In May 2015, the cover story of Toronto Life magazine shook Canada's largest city to its core and catapulted its author into the public sphere where he used his newfound profile to draw insistent, unyielding attention to the injustices faced by black Canadians on a daily basis. Desmond Cole's *The Skin We're In* exposes the racist practices of the Toronto police force, detailing the dozens of times Cole had been stopped and interrogated under the controversial practice of carding, and went on to be a national bestseller, winning the prestigious Toronto Book Award.

In *The Louder I Will Sing*, Lee Lawrence, winner of the Costa Biography Prize 2020, tells the story of his fight for justice for his mother Cherry Groce, who was paralysed as a result of being wrongly shot by police during a raid on her London home in front of her children including 11 year old Lee - an event that was the catalyst to the 1985 Brixton riots that saw buildings brought down by petrol bombs, cars torched and shops looted over a period of two days. For Lee, it was a spark that lit a flame that would burn for the next 30 years as he fought to get the police to recognise their wrongdoing.

**Chaired by Roland Gulliver, Director of the Toronto International Festival of Authors.**

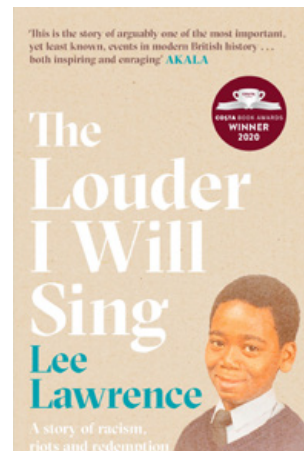
In partnership with  
Toronto International Festival of Authors



Desmond Cole



Lee Lawrence



SUNDAY 13 JUNE  
19:30 - 20:45

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

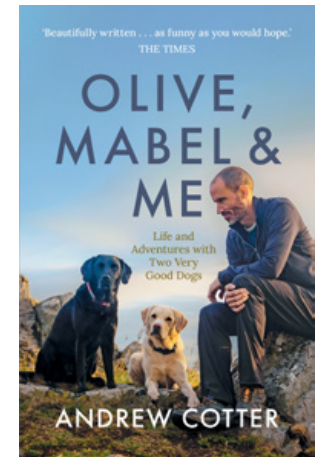


## Andrew Cotter Labradorable!

The BBC Sport commentator Andrew Cotter who was brought up in Troon became an internet sensation after videos of his dogs Olive and Mabel went viral during the Covid-19 shutdown. When the pandemic forced him to stop commentating on sport, he decided instead to record the antics of his two Labradors and millions of frustrated sports fans began following the ultra-competitive dogs with Cotter's soothing soft Scottish accent providing the soundtrack to their every move.

His first video was posted to Twitter, where he now has a following of more than 436k, and was eventually watched more than 30m times. Later he decided to branch out in his video style, ditching the sports commentary for more elaborate productions including a home gym session and a doggy Zoom meeting. Approached by a publisher to write a book, Cotter's dry humour, his sports commentator's eye for small but telling details and his storytelling gifts make the resulting bestseller *Olive, Mabel and Me* a real treat.

**Chaired by fellow sports reporter Stewart Weir**



*Brilliantly observed, touching  
and laugh-out-loud funny!*

# MONDAY 14 JUNE

# MASTERCLASS MONDAY



**10:00** [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

## Professor Jane Ridley: How to Do Biography

If you are thinking about writing biography (or not?) about a famous person, or a member of your family, then this masterclass is for you, as Jane talks about the do's and don'ts and the thrills and spills of becoming a biographer with guidance on choosing a subject, doing research, organising your material and cradle to grave versus shaped life and in doing so you will discover the enjoyment of delving into a life which is not your own. A Q&A session will follow so do please have your questions ready.

Jane Ridley is in charge of the University of Buckingham's Master of Arts course in Biography since establishing it in 1996. A course with wide appeal, it is aimed at anyone who has an interest in biography or in researching and writing a biography for themselves. She wrote the acclaimed *Bertie: A life of Edward VII* and her *Life of George V: Never a Dull Moment* will be published later in the year. She has appeared in many tv documentaries about royal history and is the current chairman of the Biographers' Club.



**ALL EVENTS ARE  
FREE TO VIEW**



**14:00** [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

## Melanie Reid: Do You Have a Story to Tell?

Memoir is one of the most popular and widely read forms of literature generating serious sales. It is endlessly inventive, ranging from covering a whole life to focussing on a moment in a life. It can be written by you or for you. Melanie Reid has done both with her bestselling memoir *The World I Fell*

*Out Of* and in helping actor Gregor Fisher with writing his own life story.

But where do you start and what is the difference between autobiography and memoir; how do you write about those you know; how do you find your voice; what archive do you need; how do you draw your reader in? With countless ways to tell your story, this masterclass will give you the inspiration to get started or keep going. A Q & A session will follow so please do come armed with your questions.

Melanie Reid is an award-winning journalist. Her unflinchingly honest 'Spinal Column' about her life as a tetraplegic following a riding accident in 2010 appears in *The Times Magazine* every week.



**18:00** [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

## Ned Sedgwick: Why and How to Become a Podcaster

Podcasting is booming. There are 16 million podcast listeners in the UK. Spotify and Apple are involved in a nine figure investment arms race and advertising revenues topped one billion dollars a year in America. For every million-download podcast success, however, there are a thousand averagely made podcasts. As audiences become more and more discerning, standards are expected to be higher, just as the market becomes increasingly busy. To make matters worse, podcasting is a new, largely self-taught and fast changing medium. This means there is no simple available handbook to help you make a successful podcast.

Join Ned Sedgwick for a masterclass on how to demystify the process and create a successful, professional and dynamic podcast as he answers questions such as: why choose the podcast above other platforms to tell a life story? Can they get in to the details of something as complicated as a human biography? Are they a good place to discuss contentious or complicated events? Are publishers constantly on the lookout for podcasts that would work as books?

Ned has over five years of experience in podcasting, predominantly with the award-winning production company the Spontaneity Shop. He co-hosted BBC Radio 4's GrownUpLand and is producer, co-host and editor for the Chelsea Physic Garden's upcoming in-house podcast. He consults on podcast strategy to a range of businesses, from venture capital firms to foreign policy think tanks.



## Boy on Fire: The Young Nick Cave NEW AUSTRALIAN PODCAST

Legendary Australian singer and songwriter Nick Cave has proved to be one of the most enduring talents to emerge from the post-punk era, often accompanied by his backing band the Bad Seeds - his deep baritone voice is unforgettable.

In the second episode, entitled Breakdown, from Life Sentences, a podcast from Australia about contemporary biography, Caroline Baum talks to rock journalist Mark Mordue about the personal cost of spending ten years writing about musician Nick Cave, and why he decided to alter his original concept of what the biography should be, focussing on Cave's childhood and adolescence, and his access to Cave's friends and family.

In Life Sentences writer and journalist Caroline Baum is in conversation with Australia's best biographers and learns about their craft, setbacks and breakthroughs.

[CLICK HERE TO LISTEN TO THE TALK](#)



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Buy your books from Bookshop.org and the Festival receives 10%

Billed as an alternative to Amazon and launched in the UK in November 2020, Bookshop.org has generated over £1m in profit for independent booksellers with over 400,000 booksellers signed up to it, particularly helping those without their own sales website.

Having no website ourselves from which to sell the books of authors appearing at the Festival we have joined this year as an Affiliate and we urge you to order Festival books from our platform on the website as not only will it give authors much needed sales but it will also give both the Festival and independent bookshops 10% on the sale of every book - or of course visit your local bookseller.

[CLICK HERE TO VISIT OUR BOOKSHOP](#)

## Boswell Book Company, Milwaukee



Boswell Book Company is a general independent bookstore founded in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It is named after James Boswell. For their tenth anniversary, they commissioned a new logo from local children's book illustrator Aaron Boyd based on the original Rowlandson cartoon of Boswell and inspired by one of their favourite children's books.

## Who's Who

**Director:** Caroline Knox  
**Operations:** Daphne Parlour  
**Children's:** Janet Smyth  
**Marketing and PR:** Fiona Duff  
**Social Media:** Caroline Rankin  
**Volunteers:** Ghislaine Kennerley

The Boswell Book Festival is an event inaugurated and staged by the Boswell Trust, a charity registered in Scotland number SC041655 and a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland SC380815

Trustees: James Knox (Chairman), Margaret Boswell Elliott, Peter Kennerley, Caroline Knox, Gillian Watson, Dr William Zachs

The Boswell Trust has done its best to ensure the accuracy of all statements mentioned in this programme. Any errors are inadvertent.



## The Boswell Quill

A unique landmark celebrating the genius of James Boswell, in the form of a giant bronze feather writing quill, has been erected in an historic Auchinleck graveyard.

The sculpture, the first public tribute in Scotland to the genius of James Boswell, was installed by the Boswell Trust as the heart of a new visitor experience at Auchinleck kirkyard where the famous biographer is interred.

Four years in the making, the ambitious project, which aims to become an all-round visitor destination, has involved re-landscaping around the existing war memorial, planting borders of shrubs as well as hedges and trees, including 12 yews named the Twelve Apostles.

A network of paths has been restored for visitors to explore the graveyard on a series of trails. A specially designed new sign at the entrance to the graveyard explains all, including the history of the site along with leaflet holders of printed maps.

James Knox, chairman of the Trust, said: 'The Boswell Quill is destined to become a unique landmark as there is nothing like it in Scotland or the rest of the UK.

"The overall graveyard project offers locals and visitors alike a way of re-discovering the lives of their forebears, with the children's tour in particular offering an out-of-the-ordinary experience for families. Others can enjoy the newly restored graveyard with its wonderful views towards the southern uplands as a place of quiet beauty and contemplation.

"The Trust is enormously grateful to LEADER, who provided the bulk of the funding, as well as to other private trusts for enabling us to commission the Quill and to enhance its beautiful setting."

[www.jamesboswell.scot](http://www.jamesboswell.scot)





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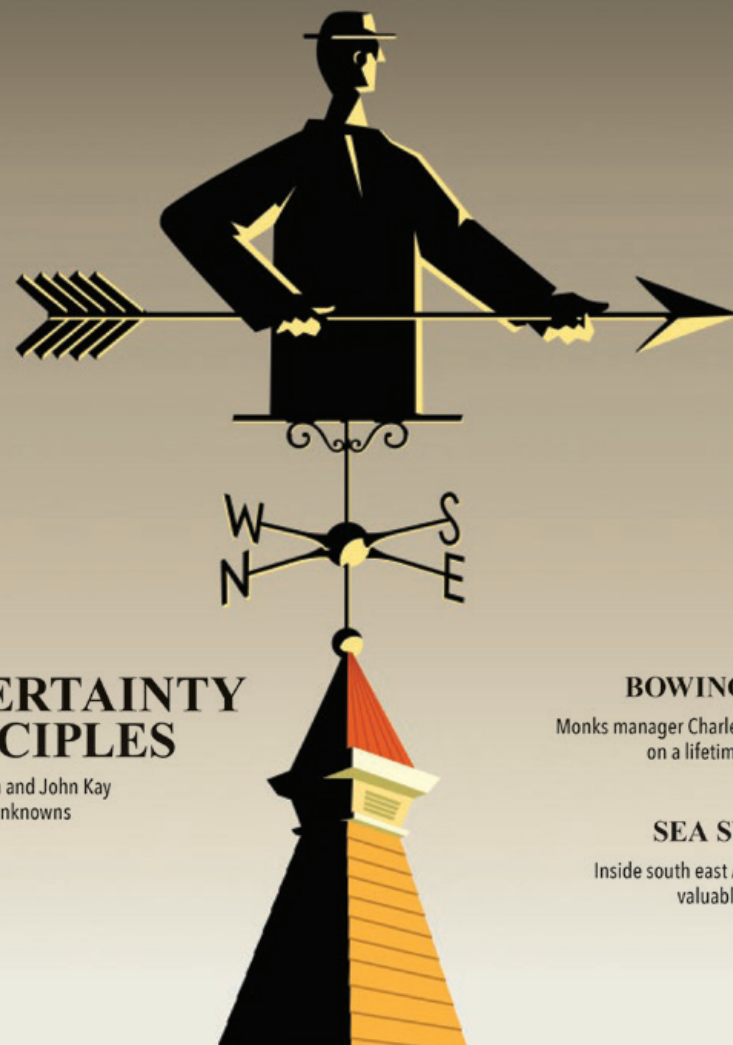
[www.thebiographersclub.com](http://www.thebiographersclub.com)



SPRING 2021

# TRUST

THE INVESTMENT TRUST MAGAZINE FROM BAILLIE GIFFORD



## UNCERTAINTY PRINCIPLES

James Anderson and John Kay  
discuss known unknowns

## BOWING OUT

Monks manager Charles Plowden  
on a lifetime's lessons

## SEA SWELL

Inside south east Asia's most  
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