



[information out of scope]

St Andrew's Book Festival background

8. This year headline authors include Val McDermid, Irvine Welsh, Nicola Sturgeon, Damian Barr, Justin Currie (from the band Del Amitri), Sally Magnusson and Michael Pedersen.

[information out of scope]

Press release information

*Big names including Val McDermid, Irvine Welsh, Nicola Sturgeon and Justin Currie of Del Amitri will appear alongside exciting debut authors, exploring themes that span fiction, history, music, sport and the arts.*

[information out of scope]

[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)],

[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)],

Scotland House - 5<sup>th</sup> Floor | 58 Victoria Embankment | London | EC4Y 0DS

[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)],

@ScotGovLondon

From: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

Sent: 27 October 2025 09:47

To: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>; [redacted under FOISA

Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>; [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>

Subject: Minister quote

[information out of scope]

Big names including Val McDermid, Irvine Welsh, Nicola Sturgeon and Justin Currie of Del Amitri will appear alongside exciting debut authors, exploring themes that span fiction, history, music, sport and the arts.

[information out of scope]

**3. Email exchange with Festival organisers. Note other document is attached separately as part of this exchange.**

**From:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

**Sent:** 29 September 2025 11:20

**To:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

**Subject:** Box Office Open - St Andrew's Book Festival

[information out of scope]

# St Andrew's Book Festival



26-30th Nov 2025 | Knightsbridge | Belgravia | Blackfriars | Soho

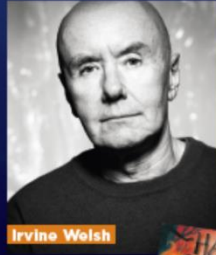
Wide-ranging programme from fiction and politics to sport and music



Val McDermid



Nicola Sturgeon



Irvine Welsh

*"One of  
the best  
literary festivals  
in London"*

The Glossary  
Magazine

Family events in Knightsbridge Sat 29 Nov (Ages 4-12)

Buy tickets now: [www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)  
[info@standrewsbookfestival.org](mailto:info@standrewsbookfestival.org)



Brought to you by:



@standrewsbookfest



@standrewsbkfest

**From:** redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

**Sent:** 27 October 2025 09:45

**To:** redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]; redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

**Subject:** Re: Press release

[Information out of scope]

Big names including Val McDermid, Irvine Welsh, Nicola Sturgeon and Justin Currie of Del Amitri will appear alongside exciting debut authors, exploring themes that span fiction, history, music, sport and the arts.

From: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

Sent: 24 October 2025 16:52

[Information out of scope]

Big names including Val McDermid, Irvine Welsh, Nicola Sturgeon and Justin Currie of Del Amitri will appear alongside exciting debut authors, exploring themes that span fiction, history, music, sport and the arts.

[Information out of scope]

[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

From: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]  
Sent: 24 October 2025 16:26

[Information out of scope]

Big names including Val McDermid, Irvine Welsh, Sally Magnusson and Nicola Sturgeon will be joined at central London venues by debut authors and others covering fiction, history, music sport and the arts.

[Information out of scope]

**From:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]  
**Sent:** 21 November 2025 14:39  
**Subject:** Spreading the Word

Dear Scots in London,

Below is the final Friday Book Festival newsletter that has gone out ahead of the start of the Book Festival next week.

<https://mailchi.mp/892c94e172a0/spreadingtheword>

[Information out of scope]

**From:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]  
**Sent:** 06 November 2025 10:31  
**To:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]  
**Subject:** Festival programme for you.

Dear friends,

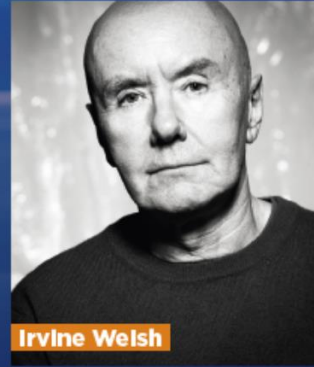
Please find attached a digital copy of the St Andrew's Book Festival programme. [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)] and I are so happy to have helped create this festival which this year includes Val McDermid, Nicola Sturgeon, Sally Magnusson, Justin Currie, Irvine Welsh, John Niven, Dougie Donnelly, Pat Nevin, Damian Barr, Edinburgh Makar Michael Pedersen, to name just a few.

[information out of scope]  
[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

**From:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]  
**Sent:** 06 November 2025 10:00  
**To:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]  
**Subject:** St Andrew's Book Festival Programme 2025

[information out of scope]

26-30th Nov 2025 | Knightsbridge | Belgravia | Blackfriars | Soho



## Join us at our Central London Book Festival



## Scottish writers - Scottish themes

Brought to you by:

[info@standrewsbookfestival.org](mailto:info@standrewsbookfestival.org)  
[www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)



    @standrewsbookfest  @standrewsbkfest

**From:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]  
**Sent:** 02 December 2025 14:35

**To:** [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]  
**Subject:** FW: Scots in London December Newsletter

Dear all,

Please find below the December Scots in London newsletter, web link:  
<https://tinyurl.com/7wzhh5n7>

As ever please do share wherever you can.

Best wishes,  
[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]

#### **4. Internal emails regarding St Andrew's Book Festival event**

From: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Sent: 24 September 2025 11:33  
To: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Subject: St Andrew's Book Festival Launch - draft comms post

[Information out of scope]

*This year you can see events featuring Val McDermid, Irvine Welsh, Nicola Sturgeon, Sally Magnusson, Dougie Donnelly, Pat Nevin, Rory Lawson, Damian Barr & Michael Pedersen to name just a few.*

[Information out of scope]

[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Scotland House - 5<sup>th</sup> Floor | 58 Victoria Embankment | London | EC4Y 0DS  
[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
@ScotGovLondon

From: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Sent: 22 September 2025 16:25  
To: Mark Boyce <Mark.Boyce@gov.scot>  
Subject: St Andrew's Book Festival – background and speaking points

[Information out of scope]

- **Headline events announced to date include:**

[Information out of scope]

- Irvine Welsh and John Niven, in conversation with Nicola Meighan, for a live recording of the podcast *A Kick Up the Arts* to focus on Welsh's *Men in Love* and Niven's *Fatherhood*.

[Information out of scope]

Suggested speaking points

[information out of scope]

- The value of Scotland's literary talent amongst our best known cultural figures around the world, from Val McDermid to Irvine Welsh today to Robert Louis Stevenson and Rabbin Burns. They breathe life into Scotland's cultural dialogue but also shape perceptions of Scotland and raise our profile around the world.

[Information out of scope]

From: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Sent: 28 October 2025 12:23  
To: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Cc: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Subject: St Andrew's Book Festival Opening Reception – Invitation

[Information out of scope]

Big names including Val McDermid, Irvine Welsh, Nicola Sturgeon and Justin Currie of Del Amitri will appear alongside exciting debut authors, exploring themes that span fiction, history, music, sport and the arts.

[Information out of scope]

[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Scotland House - 5<sup>th</sup> Floor | 58 Victoria Embankment | London | EC4Y 0DS  
[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
@ScotGovLondon

## **5. Speech – Cabinet Secretary for Housing – St Andrew's Reception**

[Information out of scope]

Take, for example, the St Andrew's Book Festival, which was founded last year by our good friends at Scots in London. It brings together hundreds of literature enthusiasts here in London and showcases the very best of Scotland's literary talent, from household names like Val McDermid and Irvine Welsh to new and emerging writers like Chris Barkley and Natalie Janje Clarke . The second edition of the festival kicks off this evening and lasts all week. I encourage you all to get a programme from their table tonight and grab the few remaining tickets.

[Information out of scope]

#### **6. Email exchange on Book Festival connections**

From: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Sent: 15 October 2025 12:29  
To: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
Cc: [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Scot Gov Follow-up and Next Steps

Thanks [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>! Yes we can certainly connect the EIBF with the Ottawa team - [redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>, I assume you are on that?

[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot> and the team will have great links there. We attended the Toronto International Book Festival in 2022 with Irvine Welsh and Michael Pederson, I'm sure the team will still have those contacts.

Thanks,  
[redacted under FOISA Section.38 (1)(b)]gov.scot>

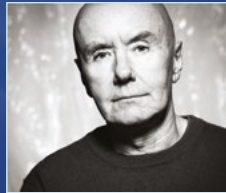
# St Andrew's *Book Festival*



25 - 30 NOVEMBER 2025



Val McDermid



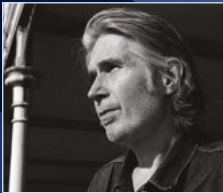
Irvine Welsh



Nicola Sturgeon



Coinneach MacLeod



Justin Currie



Nicola Meighan



Michael Pedersen



Denise Mina



Damian Barr



Ayesha Hazarika



Dougie Donnelly



Sally Magnusson



Jenny Colgan



Gordon Buchanan



Claire Mitchell  
and Zoë Vendittozzi



Pat Nevin

Follow us:     

Book now and see full updated programme  
at [www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)

Scots in  
London





**Shaped by visionary architecture, St Columba's offers activity and oasis, peace and prayer.**

Serving Scots and Presbyterians from around the world, our building welcomes a wide community and witnesses a lot of life – performing arts classes, schools, support groups and drop-in dinners for homeless guests. All the while we worship God through Sunday worship and services marking life's great events, growing together and seeking to serve.

We are delighted to welcome you to the events of the **St Andrew's Book Festival 2025** and whatever your tradition of prayer, or none, to:

**The Festival Service**

**11.00am**

**Sunday 30th November**



SCAN for more information



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

# WELCOME TO ST. ANDREW'S BOOK FESTIVAL 2025

After an amazing first year in 2024 we are absolutely delighted to celebrate St Andrew's Day with you once again by bringing together best-selling and debut authors with their readers in a celebration of Scotland's culture and heritage in the heart of London.

The St Andrew's Book Festival is brought to you by Scots in London, an umbrella organisation that is made up of a diverse range of Scottish organisations across the capital. Across the festival you can enjoy a wide-ranging programme, from spoken word and fiction, to history, politics, geography and more.

Thank you to all our speakers, supporters and sponsors, and to you for joining us.

## Membership Scheme

Become a Friend of the Festival for just £75 and enjoy a range of benefits including 20% off tickets (excl. Literary Lunch) and entry to a prize draw to win a luxury stay at Prestonfield House.

For more information and to join visit [www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)

<b>PUBLIC EVENTS</b> .....	<b>Pages..... 7-17</b>
<b>FAMILY &amp; SCHOOL EVENTS</b> .....	<b>Pages..... 18-19</b>

Scan the QR Code to book tickets for Festival events, or visit the Festival website:  
[www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)



**Festival Office:** St Andrew's Book Festival. Organised by Scots in London Events Ltd, a company limited by guarantee. **Registered address:** C/O The Caledonian Club, 9 Halkin Street, London, SW1X info@standrewsbookfestival.org

Follow us on social media



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@standrewsbkfest



## BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The St. Andrew's Book Festival 2025, brought to the capital by the Scots in London organisation, builds on the success of last year's inaugural event. As Royal Patron of Scots in London, I am delighted that you have combined once more to offer this ambitious and wide-ranging venture.

The St. Andrew's Book Festival is a wonderful vehicle for bringing people together, encouraging authors and readers of all ages and interests, and demonstrating the creativity and contribution of Scots, in the heart of this most international city.

I send my thanks to all those responsible for the planning and running of the Book Festival. To guest speakers and audience members alike, I hope you experience inspiring encounters with authors, readers and all those who derive great pleasure from the written word.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne', with a long, sweeping underline.

Poetry, prop forwards, political memoirs and policing mysteries – the authors of the St Andrew's Book Festival 2025 certainly promise variety and fascination. Building on the foundations of last year's inaugural event, Scots in London are delighted to see the Book Festival return for a second year. With venues across central London the Festival programme offers something for all readers, committed, casual, old or young.

With our roots in the collaborations at the time of Armistice100 Scots in London brings together Scottish organisations in London to promote heritage and culture, co-ordinate members' events, support relevant charities, and seek to enhance the life of the city where we reside. Together we are able to achieve considerably more than we can do alone. The return of the St Andrew's Book Festival is testimony to that, and we hope these events will reach far beyond the circles of our existing organisations.

My thanks to all involved in further establishing this wonderful venture – the Book Festival Team, the amazing Programme Team from Handheld Events, our Royal Patron and event volunteers, authors and audience members.



**Reverend Angus MacLeod**  
Convenor, Scots in London Forum

# PLANNING YOUR VISIT

## HOW TO BUY TICKETS

ONLINE through TicketSource at:  
[www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)  
 Carers and Support Workers are entitled to a free ticket by emailing  
[info@standrewsbookfestival.org](mailto:info@standrewsbookfestival.org)

## BUYING BOOKS

A team from Bookbar Chelsea will sell copies of the authors' books after each event and most authors will stay after their talks to sign them.

## EVENTS

All events last one hour unless otherwise stated. Some children's events are shorter. Children under 14 years of age must be accompanied by a responsible adult, each with their own ticket.

## VENUES

**Tuesday 25 November:** event takes place at our sponsors **Fundment in Fitzrovia** (58-60 Berners Street, W1T 3NQ). **Wednesday 26 November:** event takes place at **Scotland House in Blackfriars** (58 Victoria Embankment, EC4Y 0DS). **Thursday to Sunday** programme (27-30 November) all takes place at **St Columba's Church in Knightsbridge** (Pont Street, SW1X 0BD), with the exception of the Literary Lunch on **Friday 28 November**, which takes place at **The Caledonian Club in Belgravia** (9 Halkin Street, SW1X 7DR)

Our weekday schools programme and Saturday children's programme all takes place at **St Columba's Church** (Pont Street, SW1X 0BD)

## ACCESSIBILITY

Our venues have varying accessibility. Step-free access is available at all our venues via either ramps or lifts. Accessible toilets are available at all our venues and Scotland House also has gender neutral toilets. Hearing loops are available at St Columba's Church in The Sanctuary and at Scotland House.

There is one blue badge parking bay available outside St Columba's Church and pay and display parking is available around the building. Where possible we would advise travelling by public transport to all our venues.

## TRAVEL & TIMINGS

For Scotland House: nearest tube station is Blackfriars (Circle and District Lines and National Rail Services).

For St Columba's: nearest tube stations are Knightsbridge (Piccadilly Line) and Sloane Square (Circle and District Lines).

For The Caledonian Club: nearest tube stations are Hyde Park Corner (Piccadilly Line) or Green Park (Piccadilly Line, Jubilee and Victoria Lines).

For Fundment Offices: nearest tube station is Tottenham Court Road (Central, Elizabeth and Northern Lines).

## FOOD & DRINK

Food and drink will be on sale at St Columba's before our evening events on Thursday and Friday and all day Saturday. Our caterer Auld Hag is famous for providing the best Scottish food in London! A few of our events include a welcome drink in the ticket price and this will be indicated in the event description. There are also cafes and restaurants near all of our venues.

## REFUNDS

Refunds are only issued if the event itself is cancelled.

**We hope you enjoy your visit to the St Andrew's Book Festival.**

**TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER**



**1 6:30-7:30pm**  
**Sir Jeremy Hunt: Can We Be Great Again?**  
 What will be Britain's place in the world in the century ahead? Looking back at his time as this country's global ambassador, **Sir Jeremy Hunt** asks: is Britain a minor player, marginalized by our departure from the EU and dwarfed by the rise of new economies? Or is

there a major role for us to play in a rapidly changing international order? Chaired by the BBC's **Hugh Pym**.

**Fundment, 58-60 Berners Street, W1T 3NQ, £15**  
**Supported by Fundment**

**BOOK YOUR TICKETS HERE**

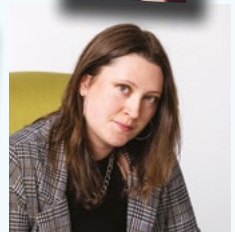
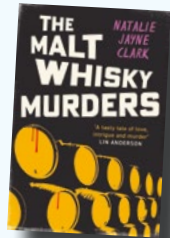
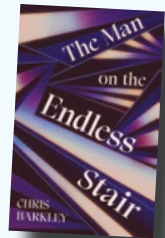
**SCAN THE QR CODE** to book tickets for Festival events, or visit the Festival website: [www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)



**WEDNESDAY 26 NOVEMBER**

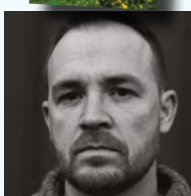
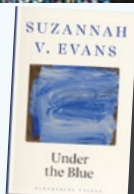
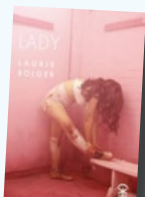
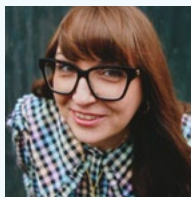
**2 6-7pm**  
**Debuts Showcase**  
 Showcasing some of the best new Scottish writers, we are delighted to welcome two super talented debut novelists to the festival. **Chris Barkley**, *The Man on the Endless Stair* - an expertly plotted mystery from Writer in Residence at the Edinburgh Festival this year and **Natalie Jayne Clark**, *The Malt Whisky Murders* - a darkly comic crime debut, a tasty tale of love, murder and intrigue. Award from the Scottish Book Trust. Chaired by **Hugo Rifkind**.

**Scotland House, 58 Victoria Embankment, EC4Y 0DS, £10**



## THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER

All events on Thursday take place at St Columba's Church, Pont Street, SW1X 0BD



### 6 6-7pm

#### Poetry Showcase

Continuing the tradition of spoken word performance, join host **Laurie Bolger**, an award winning host, presenter and poet, as she reads from her debut collection, *Lady*. Laurie will be introducing **Suzannah V Evans**, author of *Under the Blue*, **Jennifer Morag Henderson**, author of *Jofrid Gunn* and **Taylor Strickland**, author of *Dwell Time*, as they read from their collections. Sit back, relax and immerse yourself in a wonderful hour of verse.



### 7 6:30-7:30pm

#### Nicola Sturgeon in conversation with Ayesha Hazarika

Join **Nicola Sturgeon** in conversation with broadcaster and Labour peer **Ayesha Hazarika** as she discusses her candid and compelling autobiography *Frankly*. Scotland's former First Minister reflects on her political journey, personal life, and the challenges of leadership.

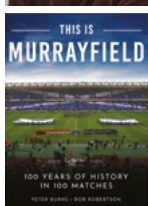
£12



### 8 7:30-8:30pm

#### 100 Years of Murrayfield

Join rugby writers **Peter Burns** and **Rob Robertson** as they celebrate 100 years of iconic matches at Murrayfield, drawn from their book *This is Murrayfield*. Featuring unforgettable moments, quirky encounters, and legendary fixtures, they offer a lively, illustrated journey through Scottish rugby history—packed with insight, nostalgia,



and the spirit of the nation's most beloved stadium. Chaired by former Scotland International and sports broadcaster **Rory Lawson**, and featuring a special guest appearance by **Ian Smith**.

£12

**THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER**



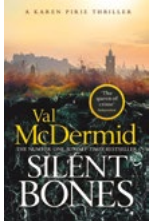
**9 8:30-9:30pm**

**Val McDermid in conversation with Nicola Sturgeon**

Bestselling crime writer **Val McDermid** joins **Nicola Sturgeon** to discuss *Silent Bones*, the gripping new thriller in her much-loved Karen Pirie series (as seen on ITV). In this special event, McDermid reveals the inspiration behind the

story, her enduring fascination with cold cases, and the craft of crime writing. Expect sharp insights, dark twists, and brilliant conversation between two Scottish icons.

**£12**



**FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER**



**13 12:30-3:30pm**

**Lunch with Sally Magnusson**

Join one of Scotland's true national treasures, broadcaster and author **Sally Magnusson** for a special literary lunch celebrating her spellbinding new novel *The Shapeshifter's Daughter*. Enjoy a two-course lunch with wine, tea or coffee, shortbread

and tablet to follow, as Sally discusses folklore, memory, and the inspiration behind her latest story. Interviewed by **Hugh Pym**. Doors open at 12:30pm for a drinks reception, with lunch at 1pm.

**Caledonian Club, 9 Halkin Street, SW1X 7DR, £65**

**Caledonian Club dress code smart: jackets and ties, dresses and skirts.**



All remaining events on Friday take place at St Columba's Church, Pont Street, SW1X 0BD

**FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER**



**14 6:30-7:30pm**

**Scotland's Place in the World**

Small but mighty - Scotland has long punched above its weight in terms of influence in the world.

Join our panel, journalist and broadcaster

**Gavin Esler**, Scotland's Geographer Royal,

**Jo Sharp**, and **Mary**

**Macleod** who served as a strategic advisor to HM Queen Elizabeth II, and a Member of Parliament, as

they discuss with Times Radio presenter **Calum**

**Macdonald** the who, the how, the where and the why.

**£12**



**15 6:30-7:30pm**

**Christmas Traditions: Feasts and Festivities the Hogmanay Way**

Celebrate the season with **Anna Marshall** (*The Little Book of Christmas and Hogmanay*) and **Sarah**

**Rankin** (*Feast*) in a lively conversation with **Rhoda**

**Macdonald** on Scottish Christmas traditions and festive feast foods.

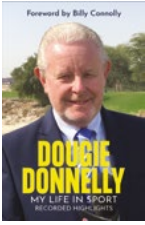
Explore ancient customs,

family rituals, and seasonal folklore, alongside hearty dishes and sweet treats.



Discover how Scotland's unique heritage shapes holiday gatherings with warmth, storytelling, and culinary celebration.

**£10**



**16 8-9pm**

**Dougie Donnelly & Pat Nevin**

They are two of the best known names in Scottish sport and we are delighted to welcome **Dougie Donnelly** and **Pat Nevin** to have a “blether” about the wider sporting scene. Acclaimed and award-winning broadcaster Dougie has a recently published autobiography



*My Life in Sport*. Pat, a former Scotland international and now a BBC pundit, has written *Football and How to Survive It* his second book on his life in football. They are joined occasionally on stage from the subs bench by **Stephen Walsh**, who's football inspired verse memoir is divided into poems depicting Scotland's various performances in the World Cup. Referee for the evening will be BBC sports presenter **Jill Douglas**.

**£12**



**17 8-9pm**

**Festive Feel Good: Jenny Colgan & Andrew Meehan**

Bestselling author **Jenny Colgan** introduces *The Secret Christmas Library*, a heartwarming festive tale of friendship and hope. She's joined by



**Andrew Meehan** with *Best Friends*, a witty, tender novel exploring the complexities of lifelong bonds. Together they share stories brimming with warmth, humour, and the magic of human connection. Chaired by **Marcus Railton**.

**£10**

**SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER**

**FAMILY EVENTS**

**For full details see page 19**

**11am-12pm - Cressida Cowell: How to Train your Dragon School**

**11am-12pm - Step back in time for ADVENTURE!**

**12:15-1pm - Halloween Fun with Eamonn the Bat**

**AULD HAG  
THE SHOAP**

Proudly supplying morning rolls  
for St Andrew's Book Festival



406 ST JOHN STREET, LONDON, EC1V 4NJ



**21 12:30-1:30pm**

**Hebridean Baker:  
The Scottish Cookbook**

Join bestselling author and BBC presenter

**Coinneach MacLeod**

(the Hebridean Baker) for a warm celebration of Scotland's stories, recipes and island life.

Born on the Isle of Lewis, Coinneach shares cosy

bakes, Gaelic traditions and heartwarming tales from the Hebrides. He'll discuss his latest cookbook, *Hebridean Baker: The Scottish Cookbook*, plus his new TV series *Hebridean Baker: Nordic Isles* – with laughter, nostalgia, plenty of inspiration and maybe even a song or two! Chaired by **Georgina Godwin**.

**£12**



**23 2-3pm**

**Lockerbie: Jim Swire & Peter Biddulph**

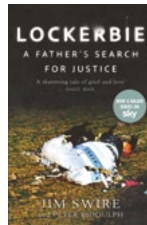
**Dr Jim Swire** and **Peter Biddulph** talk

about their powerful new book *Lockerbie*. Drawing on decades of investigation, personal loss, and relentless pursuit of justice, they reveal

untold truths behind the tragedy. Join them as they share an intimate, moving account of resilience, love, and the fight for accountability. Jim has recently been played on screen by Colin Firth in

the Sky drama *Lockerbie: A Search for Truth*. Interviewed by **Hugh Pym**.

**£12**



the Sky drama *Lockerbie: A Search for Truth*. Interviewed by **Hugh Pym**.

**£12**



**22 12:30-1:30pm**

**Daughters of the North:  
Jean Gordon**

**& Mary Queen of Scots  
Jennifer Henderson's**

*Daughters of the North* and **Rosemary Goring's**

*The Exile: The English Years of Mary, Queen of Scots* illuminate women navigating power, loyalty, and survival in turbulent times. In conversation, the authors reveal striking parallels between their subjects' lives—resilience, sacrifice, and the enduring struggle for agency in history. Chaired by **Fiona Lindsay**.

**£10**

**£10**

**£10**

**£10**

**£10**

**£10**

**£10**



**24 2-3pm**

**Charles Cumming & Kim Sherwood**

Join acclaimed thriller writers **Charles Cumming** (*Kennedy 35*) and **Kim Sherwood** (*A Spy Like Me*) as they talk about espionage and intrigue. From Cold War secrets to contemporary intelligence and surveillance, both authors explore high stakes, hidden loyalties, and the cost of betrayal. Expect insight and razor-sharp storytelling from two of today's leading voices in spy fiction. Chaired by **Georgina Godwin**.

**£10**

**£10**

**£10**

**£10**

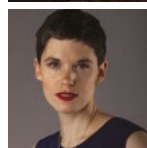
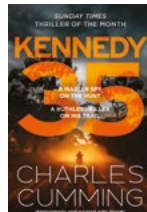
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**25 3:30-4:30pm**

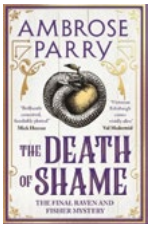
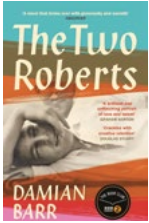
**Damian Barr & Michael Pedersen**

Poets of memory and myth, **Michael Pedersen** and **Damian Barr**

chart inner and outer landscapes in bold new works. Pedersen's *Muckle Flugga* sails to the edges of love, grief and friendship, while Barr's *The Two Roberts* reimagines war, art and intimacy. Both summon

tenderness and truth, bridging history and heart with lyrical precision and luminous storytelling. Chaired by **Fiona Lindsay**.

**£12**



**26 3:30-4:30pm**

**Ambrose Parry & Allan Gaw:**  
**Murderous Medical Mysteries**

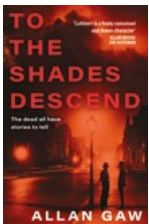
**Ambrose Parry** (writing duo **Chris Brookmyre** and **Marisa Haetzman**)

entwines historical intrigue with the pulse of Edinburgh's medical past in their new book *The Death of Shame*.

**Allan Gaw's** latest, *To the Shades Descend*,

probes science, ethics and human ambition. Chaired by author **Denise Mina**, both unravel how knowledge shapes lives, balancing discovery with danger, and offer readers gripping insights into humanity's perpetual pursuit of progress.

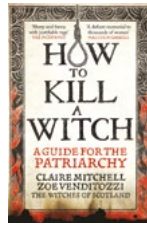
**£10**



**27 5-6pm**

**How to Kill a Witch**  
**Claire Mitchell** and **Zoë Vendittozzi** join

broadcaster **Nicola Meighan** to talk about the publishing sensation of 2025, *How to Kill a Witch*, uncovering Scotland's dark history of witch trials. Together, they examine injustice, myth and memory, asking



how past persecutions shape present conversations. A compelling discussion of storytelling, truth and reclaiming silenced voices across centuries.

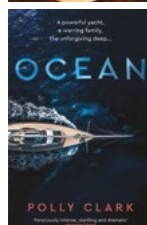
**£10**



**28 5-6pm**

**Secrets, Survival and Storytelling: Denise Mina and Polly Clark**

**Denise Mina** (*The Good Liar*) and **Polly Clark** (*Ocean*), are in conversation with **Marcus Railton**, revealing the sharp edges of human experience in their new books. Mina's storytelling crackles with crime, history and justice, while Clark's work probes wilderness, survival and desire. Both navigate obsession and truth, unearthing resilience and vulnerability in unforgettable, richly imagined worlds.



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We believe in the power of stories to connect communities. TrinityBridge is proud to support the St Andrews Book Festival – where culture, heritage, and ideas come alive.



**29 6:30-7:30pm**

**Libraries: Can They Save the World?**

Join **Amina Shah**, National Librarian for Scotland and **Damian Barr**, award winning author and Literary Salon host for a timely conversation on the role of libraries. Chaired by **Fiona Lindsay** and celebrating a century of Scotland's National Library, they'll explore



how these vital spaces connect us - more than books, they're hubs of creativity and change. Could libraries even save the world?

**£10**

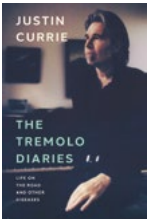


**30 6:30-7:30pm**

**Justin Currie: The Tremolo Diaries**

Del Amitri frontman

**Justin Currie** joins **Craig McLean** to discuss *The Tremolo Diaries*, his moving, darkly funny memoir charting life as a touring musician after a Parkinson's diagnosis. From raw diary entries to poetic reflections on illness, art, and ageing, Currie's candid account is a powerful meditation on love, loss, music—and what happens when



everything changes.

**£12**



**31 6:30-7:30pm**

**Amanda Barrie: I'm Still Here**

**Amanda Barrie's** long-awaited autobiography has shone a light on her extraordinary journey, from childhood during wartime to her rise as a star of stage and screen and a household name. Join Amanda as she shares behind-the-scenes



stories of *Coronation Street*, *Carry On* films, and *Big Brother*, alongside deeply personal reflections. She recalls her early days as a runaway showgirl, the challenges of hiding her sexuality, and the joy of finding love with her wife, crime novelist **Hilary Bonner**. Her first great theatre break took place on stage in Glasgow, a city that has remained close to her heart and she will talk of the joy of her recent return.

**£10**



**32 8-9pm**

**Irvine Welsh and John Niven**

Join **Irvine Welsh** and **John Niven** in conversation with **Nicola Meighan** for a live podcast recording of *A Kick Up the Arts*.

Celebrating their latest novels, Welsh's *Men in Love* and Niven's *Fatherhood*, this promises an unfiltered, provocative, and darkly funny dive into masculinity, family, and the messy truth of modern



life. Expect laughs, sharp takes, literary fireworks and adult language. Suitable for 18+ only.

**£12**

## SUNDAY 30 NOVEMBER



**33 11am**

### Festival Service

The last day of the St Andrew's Book Festival begins by celebrating a week of wonderful encounters. The joint congregations of St Columba's, Pont Street and Crown Court Church of Scotland invite you to a service of celebration, giving thanks for the gift

of authors, readers and the pleasure and power of books. In the 1880's when the congregation of St Columba's was established, the first group to be founded was the Literary Society. Over a hundred years later our community will be delighted to welcome all who share the love of books – whatever your tradition of prayer, or none, we will be glad to see you. **Reverend John Bell**, author of *And Then She Said* is guest preacher.

**FREE, all welcome. A two-course lunch is available after the service for £10**



**34 1:30-2:30pm**

### Atlas of Scotland

**Andrew Barr** is a writer, illustrator and map-maker from Edinburgh. He will be talking to **Marcus Railton** about his latest book, the beautiful *Atlas of Scotland*. He uses hand-drawn maps and illustrations to tell Scotland's story, exploring

in detail how Scotland was made, its history and culture, as well as its long standing as one of the ancient kingdoms of Europe.

**£10**



**35 1:30-2:30pm**

### Reverend John Bell & Rhidian Brook

reflect on the place of faith in their lives and work. Brook's storytelling blends doubt, belief and the search for meaning, while Bell's hymns and reflections root spirituality in everyday experience. Both reveal how faith shapes identity, community and imagination, offering wisdom, honesty and lyrical insight into life's deepest questions. Chaired by **Revd Angus MacLeod**, **Convener of Scots in London and minister of St Columba's.**

**£10**



**36 3-4pm**

### Graeme Macrae Burnet

Shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2016 for his debut novel, *His Bloody Project*, **Graeme Macrae Burnet** was longlisted

again in 2022 for *Case Study*. Burnet discusses his acclaimed novels that blur truth and fiction with dazzling ingenuity, crafting psychological thrillers that



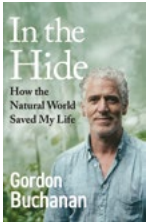
question memory, morality and storytelling itself. Join him for an exploration of character, narrative and the slippery boundaries between fact and invention. Chaired by **Rhoda Macdonald.**

**£10**



**37 3-4pm**  
**Gordon Buchanan:**  
**Wildlife Filmmaker**  
**Extraordinaire**

Join acclaimed wildlife filmmaker **Gordon Buchanan**, renowned for his work on *The Polar Bear Family & Me* and *Big Cat Diary*, as he talks to broadcaster **Nicola Meighan** about his memoir, *In the Hide*. Revealing the incredible stories behind his daring adventures, the challenges of filming in the wild, and the moments



that have defined his career. Having worked alongside Sir David Attenborough on various projects, Buchanan brings a wealth of experience and insight into the natural world. A fascinating conversation for nature lovers, adventurers, and anyone inspired by the natural world.

**£12**

**BOOK YOUR TICKETS HERE**

**SCAN THE QR CODE** to book tickets for Festival events, or visit the Festival website:

[www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)



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*January*

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*Sun 25<sup>th</sup> Wreath-laying ceremony at Burns's statue followed by Lunch*

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## SCHOOL EVENTS

These events are only available to book for school parties and home educators. Please email [info@standrewsbookfestival.org](mailto:info@standrewsbookfestival.org) for more details.

### THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER



4 10:30am

#### The Shadow Thieves

Join *New York Times* bestselling author **Peter Burns** as he discusses the first book in his new middle-grade series,

*Shadow Thieves*. In this fun-filled event, Burns delves into the inspiration behind the series before taking the audience on a journey into the nefarious

world of the international criminal organisation, the Shadow League.

Age 8+



5 12:30pm

#### Sin Bin Island

**Doug Naylor** has won an Emmy Award for his writing on TV and film (co-creator and writer of *Red Dwarf*), he has written the lyrics for a number

one hit song, and has now written his very first fantasy adventure book for children, described by Frank Cottrell-Boyce as

'very, very, very, funny'. Join Doug to hear all about *Sin Bin Island*, and his top tips for writing very funny stories.

Age 8+



### FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER



10 11am

#### Creatures of Myth: Unicorns and Dragons

This spell-binding interactive session features **Lindsay Littleton**, author of picture book *A Dream*

*Plan for Dottie* and Carnegie nominated children's novel *Guardians of the Wild Unicorns*.

Ages 5-7



11 12:30pm

#### Bubble, Bubble, Toil and Trouble

The best stories are steeped in myth and magic, essential ingredients for the atmospheric stories of

**Victoria Williamson**, author of *Hag Storm*, and **Barbara Henderson** author of *The Boy, the Witch and the Queen of Scots*. Expect

object handling, costumes and interactive games as well as mesmerising readings.

Ages 8-12



# FAMILY EVENTS

## SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER



**19 10-10:45am**

### Step back in time for ADVENTURE!

Why does the past make for the best adventures? Because children faced real dangers, that's why! Let us take you back: Defend your kingdom against the Romans? Guard a dangerous prisoner in a medieval castle? Step aboard Titanic? We're in!



Join authors **Barbara**

**Henderson, Victoria Williamson** and **Lindsay Littleson** in this interactive and lively family session.

**Ages 8-12**  
**£5**



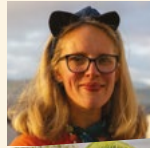
**11am-12pm**

### Cressida Cowell: How to Train your Dragon School

Join **Cressida Cowell** to celebrate *How To Train Your Dragon School*, her first (hilarious) novel in the Dragon world for 10 years, and *Which Way to the Future*, her most recent book in the Which Way series. It's been an

exciting year for Dragon, with a new live action film: Cressida will talk about her inspiration and give writing and drawing tips; her events are energetic, inspiring and unmissable!

**Ages 6+**  
**£5**



**20 12:15-1pm**

### Halloween Fun with Eamonn the Bat

Come and get into the Halloween spirit with Eamonn the Bat; the most lovable critter you will ever meet. Explore the shores of Australia and identify the creatures you might meet. Create bat masks or headbands...



bask in the Australian sun, the adventure has hardly begun. Let's go batty together with author **Molly Arbuthnott**.

**Ages 4+**  
**£5**

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# FESTIVAL TEAM AND SUPPORTERS

## **Festival Team**

Susan Pym (Events Director)  
Jennifer Rowland (Festival Co-Ordinator)  
Malcolm Noble  
Hugh Pym

## **Programming Team**

HandHeld Events:  
Jo James & Lyndy Cooke

## **Media Partner**

The Scotsman

## **Bookseller**

BookBar Chelsea

## **Catering**

Auld Hag and The Shoap

## **Scots in London Management Team**

Convenor: Revd Angus MacLeod,  
Hugh Pym, Shona Fleming,  
Malcolm Noble, David Coughtrie

We would like to thank all our **Scots in London organisations** for their support of our Festival. Particular thanks go to our Scots in London host venues: The Caledonian Club, Scotland House and St Columba's Church.

We are also very grateful to our **Festival Headline Sponsors:** Fundment, TrinityBridge, Prestonfield House, Bukhman Philanthropies and Knightsbridge School, plus Bruce Jack Wines for their support of our Literary Lunch.

Thanks to *The Scotsman*, our Media Partner for their extensive coverage of our Festival. Particular thanks go to Fundment for hosting a special evening at their offices, to Prestonfield House for offering our Friends an exclusive prize draw.

Thank you also to Scottish Books International, and to our partners Auld Hag, our excellent bookseller BookBar and the Ceilidh Club.

Thank you to Stephanie Lau and Templeton Garden Hotel in Earl's Court for their hospitality.

We would also like to extend our thanks to everyone who has supported our Festival by becoming a Festival Friend, your support has helped us make the St Andrew's Book Festival happen.

Special thanks to our participating authors, their publishers, the chairs, and the many hardworking volunteers who donate their time free of charge, and without whom the St Andrew's Book Festival would be much less fun!

*Information is correct at time of going to press on 30 October 2025. Programme and other details subject to change. More events may be added - see posters, notice boards and Festival website for updates: [www.standrewsbookfestival.org](http://www.standrewsbookfestival.org)*

### Our Scots in London Organisations



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Founded 1968



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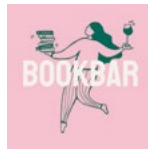
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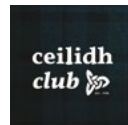
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# EVENTS AT A GLANCE 2025

TIME	EVENT TITLE	VENUE
<b>Tuesday 25 November</b>		
6:30-7:30pm	Sir Jeremy Hunt: Can We Be Great Again?	Fundment
<b>Wednesday 26 November</b>		
6-7pm	Debuts Showcase	Scotland House
<b>Thursday 27 November</b>		
10:30-11:30am	The Shadow Thieves SCHOOLS EVENT	St Columba's
12:30-1:30pm	Sin Bin Island SCHOOLS EVENT	St Columba's
6-7pm	Poetry Showcase	St Columba's
6:30-7:30pm	Nicola Sturgeon in conversation with Ayesha Hazarika	St Columba's
7:30-8:30pm	100 Years of Murrayfield	St Columba's
8:30-9:30pm	Val McDermid in conversation with Nicola Sturgeon	St Columba's
<b>Friday 28 November</b>		
11am-12pm	Creatures of Myth: Unicorns and Dragons SCHOOLS EVENT	St Columba's
12:30-1:30pm	Bubble, Bubble, Toil and Trouble SCHOOLS EVENT	St Columba's
12:30-2:30pm	Lunch with Sally Magnusson	Caledonian Club
6:30-7:30pm	Scotland's Place in the World	St Columba's
6:30-7:30pm	Christmas Traditions: Feasts and Festivities the Hogmanay Way	St Columba's
8-9pm	Dougie Donnelly & Pat Nevin	St Columba's
8-9pm	Festive Feel Good: Jenny Colgan & Andrew Meehan	St Columba's
<b>Saturday 29 November</b>		
10-10:45am	Step back in time for ADVENTURE! FAMILY EVENT	St Columba's
11-12am	Cressida Cowell: How to Train your Dragon School FAMILY EVENT	St Columba's
12:15-1pm	Halloween Fun with Eamonn the Bat FAMILY EVENT	St Columba's
12:30-1:30pm	Hebridean Baker: The Scottish Cookbook	St Columba's
12:30-1:30pm	Daughters of the North: Jean Gordon & Mary Queen of Scots	St Columba's
2-3pm	Lockerbie: Jim Swire & Peter Biddulph	St Columba's
2-3pm	Spies Like Us: Charles Cumming & Kim Sherwood	St Columba's
3:30-4:30pm	Damian Barr & Michael Pedersen	St Columba's
3:30-4:30pm	Ambrose Parry & Allan Gaw: Murderous Medical Mysteries	St Columba's
5-6pm	How to Kill a Witch	St Columba's
5-6pm	Secrets, Survival and Storytelling: Denise Mina and Polly Clark	St Columba's
6:30-7:30pm	Libraries: Can They Save the World?	St Columba's
6:30-7:30pm	Justin Currie: The Tremolo Diaries	St Columba's
8-9pm	Amanda Barrie: I'm Still Here	St Columba's
8-9pm	Irvine Welsh and John Niven	St Columba's
<b>Sunday 30 November</b>		
11am	Festival Service	St Columba's
1:30-2:30pm	Atlas of Scotland	St Columba's
1:30-2:30pm	Reverend John Bell & Rhidian Brook	St Columba's
3-4pm	Graeme Macrae Burnet	St Columba's
3-4pm	Gordon Buchanan: Wildlife Filmmaker Extraordinaire	St Columba's