

# DURHAM BOOK FESTIVAL

**Press release**

**Embargoed until 00.00 Friday 10 August**

## **Line-up revealed for Durham Book Festival 2018**

*The annual festival returns this October with headline guests including Sarah Waters, David Olusoga, Sarah Perry, Pat Barker, Carol Ann Duffy and Alan Johnson*

The programme has been announced for Durham Book Festival 2018, the North East's largest literary event. Tickets go on sale on Friday 10 August.

The festival takes place between 5 and 14 October 2018, and will see some of the country's most talented writers, artists and thinkers inspiring audiences across County Durham.

The festival features an array of talks, readings and performances, including an evening with one of the UK's best-loved authors, **Sarah Waters**. Sarah's Booker Prize-shortlisted novel *The Little Stranger* is this year's Durham Book Festival Big Read, and this autumn the festival will distribute 3,000 free copies of the book throughout County Durham to schools, libraries, prisons, businesses, and to university staff and students. Sarah will talk about her modern classic at a special event at the Gala Theatre, and reflect on her incredible career and some of the books that have meant the most to her.

New to the festival for 2018 is the inaugural Little Read, which will see us distribute picture books throughout the county and produce an innovative family story-gig adapted from the picture book *Izzy Gizmo*, written by **Pip Jones** and illustrated by Newcastle-based illustrator **Sara Ogilvie**. The performance will feature brand new songs written by children from across County Durham, who will attend story telling and music-making workshops with Durham Book Festival favourites **Ruth Johnson** and **Jeremy Bradfield**.



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Durham Book Festival is commissioned by Durham County Council and produced by New Writing North, with funding from Durham University and Arts Council England.

The ten-day festival begins on Friday 5 October with a packed programme of events across Durham City centre. With a diverse roster of speakers ranging from **Professor Dame Sue Black**, the world's leading forensic anthropologist, to Poet Laureate **Carol Ann Duffy**, there will be something to suit every literary taste. The festival also offers far more than traditional literary events: Mercury Prize-nominated musicians **Field Music** will be playing an exclusive 'first gig' for younger readers, performing songs inspired by their favourite children's books and nursery rhymes; and to celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of **Daphne du Maurier's** Gothic masterpiece *Rebecca*, the festival will be holding a special screening of Hitchcock's 1940 adaptation, held in the atmospheric surroundings of Durham's historic Town Hall.

Durham Book Festival is renowned for its original commissions. Amongst this year's selection is **David Olusoga's** 'Black and British: Growing Up in the North East', which will see the BBC broadcaster reflect on his experiences growing up in 1970's Gateshead, and his consequently complicated relationship with his home town. The commission is inspired by David's hit BBC show and bestselling book *Black and British: A Forgotten History*. Alongside other events celebrating the centenary of women's suffrage, we have also commissioned an original piece from Durham author **Lucie Brownlee** investigating the crucial role of women activists in the Durham Miners' Strike, told through the historically overlooked female voices and stories from the world above the pits.

The announcement of the Gordon Burn Prize will take place on Thursday 11 October in Durham Town Hall. Celebrating bold fiction and non-fiction, this is one of the UK's most exciting awards and this year's shortlist features books by **Nicola Barker, Jesse Ball, Guy Gunaratne, Olivia Laing, Deborah Levy** and **Michelle McNamara**. Hosted by **Mark Lawson**, the event will celebrate the shortlisted titles before the £5,000 prize is awarded to the winner.

Booker Prize-winner and Durham resident **Pat Barker** features in this year's fiction line-up, introducing her much-anticipated new novel *The Silence of the*



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*Girls*. Other highlights include international best-selling authors **Sarah Perry** and **Kate Mosse**, whose new books are two of the most anticipated of the year.

Politics and social issues continue to be a core theme of Durham Book Festival. Highlights this year include the return of festival favourite **Chris Mullin** as he examines the mishaps and blunders that have shaped the UK's political landscape as we know it today; broadcaster and author **Cathy Newman** talks about her new book on the unconventional and unstoppable women who have fought to change women's place in society; and *New Statesman* editor **Jason Cowley** will be in conversation with Sky News political correspondent **Lewis Goodall**, discussing the forces driving the current age of unrest and upheaval.

There are new memoirs to be enjoyed from some of the country's best-loved personalities. **Alan Johnson** will be discussing the music that made him in *In My Life: A Music Memoir*, whilst **Damian Le Bas** appears at the festival to talk about his BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week, *The Stopping Places*, his enthralling account of what it means to be a Gypsy in Britain today. *Stylist* columnist **Lucy Mangan's** memoir is an exploration of childhood reading, and BBC broadcaster **Robin Ince** will share his meditations on a life dedicated to comedy and science – and how the two intertwine to make us human.

As always, the festival has a strong poetry element, with this year's Festival Laureate **Jacob Polley** introducing his new performance project, *Lamanby*, based on his TS Eliot prize-winning collection, *Jackself*. Poet Laureate **Carol Ann Duffy** will read from her new collection, *Sincerity*, a deeply moving exploration of loss and remembrance. Previous Festival Laureate **Andrew McMillan** also returns to Durham to produce an exclusive new podcast, *Rich Seams*, celebrating the best of new and emerging poetry in the North of England, and to read from his new collection, *Playtime*.

The Durham Book Festival Schools' programme includes the award-winning poet Imtiaz Dharker, whose work features on the National Curriculum. Imtiaz will speak to a teen audience about the ways her work engages with issues such as faith and diaspora, whilst the younger students will be entertained by picture book makers **Helen Stephens** and **Kate Pankhurst**, author and illustrator of



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2017's number-one bestselling children's book, *Fantastically Great Women Who*

*Changed the World.*

**Claire Malcolm, chief executive of New Writing North, said:** “We are really excited to announce another packed programme for Durham Book Festival, which really does have something for every reader. As a huge Sarah Waters fan, I’m especially looking forward to welcoming Sarah to Durham for this year’s Big Read. Her Gothic novel *The Little Stranger* is brilliantly chilling, so do pick up your free copy. This year we’re also launching our Little Read, through which we are giving away free copies of the gorgeous picture book *Izzy Gizmo* to every primary school in County Durham, as well as through family activities at community centres, culminating in a special event at Gala Theatre. We hope lots of children take part in the Little Read in their schools and homes and discover the joy of spending time with a good book.”

**Cllr Ossie Johnson, Cabinet member for tourism, culture, leisure and rural issues, said:** “This year’s Durham Book Festival looks set to be one of the best to date, and I’m sure people will be just as excited about the line-up as I am. Once again we are welcoming some of the country’s best-loved writers into County Durham, along with rising stars of the literary world. I would encourage everyone to take advantage of the fantastic talks, workshops and creative opportunities on offer at this wonderful event.”

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High res images relating to festival highlights can be found via this link:  
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gr53y4jj9bgfqem/AACVT74MI9GWawVb8LcOHrWla?dl=0>

For all media enquiries, including interview requests, review tickets and any other images, please contact Laura Fraine [laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com](mailto:laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com) 0191 204 8850 / 07411 164 837.



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## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Durham Book Festival takes place in October 2018 at venues across County Durham with events for all ages. Durham Book Festival is a Durham County Council festival produced by New Writing North, which is made possible by support from partners Durham University and Arts Council England.

Durham Book Festival 2018 launches its programme on Thursday 9 August. Tickets go on sale at [www.durhambookfestival.com](http://www.durhambookfestival.com) from 10am on Friday 10 August.

New Writing North is the writing development agency for northern England, and was founded in 1996. In 2012, New Writing North joined Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations and now works on projects across the greater North.

New Writing North works with writers to develop career opportunities, new commissions, projects, residencies, publications and live events. It works in partnership with a broad range of organisations, universities, local authorities, regional development agencies, sponsors and media producers to develop opportunities for writers in our region.

## **Notes on Gordon Burn Prize**

The shortlist for the Gordon Burn Prize 2018 was announced on 20 July 2018 as:

- *Census*, Jesse Ball (Granta Books)
- *H(a)ppy*, Nicola Barker (William Heinemann)
- *In Our Mad and Furious City*, Guy Gunaratne (Tinder Press, Headline)
- *Crudo*, Olivia Laing (Picador)
- *The Cost of Living*, Deborah Levy (Hamish Hamilton)
- *I'll Be Gone in the Dark*, Michelle McNamara (Faber & Faber)



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The judges for the prize in 2018 are critic and broadcaster **Alex Clark**, poet and author **Kei Miller**, artist **Gillian Wearing** and musician **Andrew Weatherall**.



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