

DURHAM BOOK FESTIVAL

Press release

Free books for schools as children and young people are invited to take part in Durham Book Festival

Every primary school and nursery in County Durham will receive a free picture book this October as a gift from Durham Book Festival. 1700 books copies of *Greta and the Giants* are being safely distributed by Durham County Council, including to childminders and looked-after children. The book will also be available to borrow from Durham Libraries.

The Little Read is a Durham Book Festival initiative which aims to encourage children, schools and families to enjoy exploring books together. *Greta and the Giants* is inspired by environmental activist Greta Thunberg. This positive story teaches the importance of caring for the environment and empowers young children to know that they can make a difference in the world.

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

Each year the Little Read works with communities across the county to spread the love of reading. In 2020, Durham Book Festival is taking place online, which means children everywhere can access a wide range of free events and activities.

As well as a story-time session with author Zoë Tucker (13 October) and a live drawing event with illustrator Zoe Persico (14 October), there are craft, music and drama workshops created by Durham Book Festival and a wide range of teachers' resources created by Education Durham, all inspired by *Greta and the Giants*. Schools and families can even join in the Discover Arts Award, with children receiving a certificate for taking part.

The Little Read is just one of a programme of free events at Durham Book Festival aimed at schools and families.

Younger children will also enjoy a dazzling story-time about celebrating difference and being your own wonderful self as author and illustrator duo Garry Parsons and Simon James Green share their colourful picture book *Llama Glamarama* (15 October).

Sharna Jackson recently won the Waterstones Children's Book Prize for her stand-out debut

Commissioned by



Festival Partners



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



BBC
NEWCASTLE

NEW WRITING
NORTH

DURHAM BOOK FESTIVAL

children's novel, *High Rise Mystery*. Her lively detective duo is back in the sequel, *Mic Drop*, in an event ideal for children aged 7-12 (16 October).

Young people and adults alike are invited to take part in a creative writing workshop with award-winning poet, writer and publisher Anthony Anaxagorou (14 October). Adapted from his new book *How to Write It*, he offers a short masterclass in crafting poetry for all abilities.

Viewers can also watch back an event with celebrated author Alex Wheatle, who was awarded an MBE for services to literature in 2008 and will be familiar name to many young readers. Ideal for Key Stage 3-5 readers, the gripping and unforgettable, *Cane Warriors* follows the true story of Tacky's War in Jamaica, 1760. This event aired on 12 October and is now available to watch back until 1 November.

Claire Malcolm, Chief Executive of New Writing North, producer of Durham Book Festival, said: "Books are truly magical objects and they are for everyone. Here at New Writing North, we know the transformative power of storytelling. Not only do we see it in our work every day, but as lifelong readers, we know the profound effects books have had on our own lives. So, it is with huge pleasure that we can share that magic, by gifting 1700 books right across the county and inviting every young child in County Durham to take part in the Little Read. We hope schools and families will get involved with the events and creative activities we have produced, as throughout the county we inspire the readers and writers of the future."

Cllr Joy Allen, the council's Cabinet member for transformation, culture and tourism, said: "Reading is really important for children as it is a great source of entertainment and also education. So we're really pleased to be helping youngsters to read by making what is a truly wonderful story available to so many young children.

"Durham Book Festival and The Little Read are great ways for people of all ages to experience the joy of reading both by themselves and with others – albeit virtually, and we hope everyone taking part finds them both enjoyable and educational."

Durham Book Festival runs until 18 October, when events will be streamed via durhambookfestival.com. The events will also be available to watch back on the Durham Book Festival website until 1 November, meaning schools and families can access all of the content at their convenience.

To find out more about the full programme, visit durhambookfestival.com

Commissioned by



Festival Partners



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



BBC
NEWCASTLE

NEW WRITING
NORTH
