

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12TH FEB 2019

From bestselling crime writers to The Yorkshire Vet Huddersfield Literature Festival announces a packed programme for March 2019

The award-winning **Huddersfield Literature Festival (HLF)** will be welcoming a host of talent from Yorkshire and beyond to its 2019 Festival, which will run from **21-31 March 2019**.

Bestselling crime writers **Ann Cleeves** (Vera, Shetland series) and **Cath Staincliffe** (Blue Murder, Scott & Bailey) will team up for a pre-Festival event on 6 March, while the Festival launches on 20 March with a Ted Hughes and Phillip Larkin exhibition and a captivating performance by **Jonathan Tulloch**, inspired by his acclaimed novel, Larkinland.

TV personalities will include **Johnny Ball**, who will bring numbers to life with a talk about colourful figures from history (22 March), and **Julian Norton** (29 March), known across the UK from the popular TV series The Yorkshire Vet, as well as marine biologist **Dr Jon Copley** (Ask an Ocean Explorer, 21 March), who worked as an advisor on Blue Planet II.

Politician turned award-winning author **Alan Johnson** will talk about his lifelong passion for music and his latest memoir, In My Life (26 March), and the editor of The Good Immigrant, **Nikesh Shukla**, will discuss the themes of immigration and assimilation in his latest novel The One Who Wrote Destiny, which begins with a young man moving from Kenya to Keighley (29 March).

As always, Yorkshire poets and writers get pride of place on the HLF schedule. **Joanne Harris** will be talking about The Strawberry Thief, the long-awaited new novel featuring the characters from Chocolat (30 March), sports journalist **Rob Stewart** will give a talk at the John Smith Stadium about the inspirational story of Huddersfield Town's record-breaking 1979-80 season (26 March) and performance poet **Rose Condo** presents a 10 x 10 Poetry Cabaret with an all-Yorkshire-based line up (23 March). There is also a talk on Huddersfield in 50 Buildings (27 March) and a Literary Huddersfield Walk (31 March), both with local writer **Christopher Marsden**.

Events for families include the **Stafflex Free Family Day**, with storytelling, a film showing and many other free activities (30 March), plus storytelling and walkabouts celebrating the 30th birthday of **Elmer the Elephant** (23 March). The **Fables & Fiction Cosplay Ball** returns for the second year (30 March) and there's a new show from Perrier-nominated comedian **Owen O'Neill** (28 March).

Aspiring and established writers and poets can take part in a variety of writing and performance workshops, as well as Open Mic Nights, the launch of the **Grist** anthology (28 March) and the popular annual **Poetry Slam** (30 March).

An evening of LGBTQ+ performers (27 March) features the ever-popular literary salon **Polari Up North** with host Paul Burston, VG Lee and Fiona Mozley, plus performances from poet **Gerry Potter** and comedian **Rosie Wilby**.

The Festival's Events Around Autism strand features Autism-friendly events including a film showing of children's film **Sing** (29 March), sponsored by One17 Charitable Trust, and **Kate Fox's Hyperlexic Cabaret** (30 March). **The Bibliotherapy Experience** will take place as part of Disabled Access Day (16 March) and a **Wellbeing Weekend** (23-24 March) will include talks, a workshop and a film showing.

Finally, a special post-festival event (9 April) will include a panel discussion with bestselling author **Kit de Waal** on *Common People: An Anthology of Working Class Writers*, plus a talk by the Chief Executive of Arts Council England, **Darren Henley**, on his new book, *Creativity: Why It Matters*.

The Festival is well known for its accessibility and inclusivity, with several free events, Stagertext subtitling at selected events and Access Guides to venues.

Full information on events, venues and tickets can be found on the Festival website www.huddlitfest.org.uk, where anyone wishing to receive advance information can sign up to the mailing list or unlock special benefits by becoming a 'Festival Friend'.

For more information, visit www.huddlitfest.org.uk or call 01484 951108.

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About Huddersfield Literature Festival

The Festival began in 2006, and takes place annually in March, offering a diverse programme of events at venues across the town. Recent performers include Dame Jenni Murray, Sir Patrick Stewart, Jeremy Vine, Alan Johnson MP, Ian Rankin, Lemn Sissay and Irvine Welsh; there are also children's events, library events, dance, creative writing workshops, LGBTQ+ events, a Poetry Slam, Open Mic, a popular Literary Afternoon Tea and an 'Events Around Autism' strand.

Events are held in accessible venues with Access Guides on the Festival website, many are free or low cost, and several have live subtitling by Stagertext to make them accessible to audiences who are deaf, deafened and hard of hearing.

The 2016 and 2017 Festivals were both finalists in the prestigious Welcome to Yorkshire White Rose Awards, and the Festival won a 2017 Huddersfield Examiner Community Award (Arts).