

SUNDAY 5TH OCTOBER

13:30 - 14:30, Library Upstairs

NOT ENOUGH BLUE

The bones of a blue whale, a man paints only blue canvases, the woman in Vermeer's bluest painting speaks, and angels with blue feathers creep into the writing. Meet the author and find out how fact and fiction collide in **Douglas Bruton's** books *Blue Postcards*, *With or Without Angels*, *Hope Never Knew Horizon* and *Woman in Blue*.

Chair: **Joanne Baird**

15:00 - 16:00, Library Downstairs

CAMPAIGNING FOR EDINBURGH

Cliff Hague OBE, and former chair of The Cockburn Association, in discussion with **DJ Johnston-Smith**, a former Assistant Director, about their book *The Cockburn Association 1875-2049*. They take us on a tour of the essential role the Association has had in its 150 years of campaigning for parks, walkways renovation, and conservation areas, and against motorways, monstrosities and mischief. Keeping a watchful eye on all proposed 'developments' and looking to the future - what next?

15:00 - 16:00, Library Upstairs

INDIGENOUS SOUL: GAZA AND ME

Nada Shawa's "voice and story are a bridge between Scotland, her home since childhood, and Gaza Her words are an almighty call to justice, a heart's keepsake and a love song to family, culture and home". (Karine Polwart)

Chair: **Jennie Renton**

16:30 - 18:00, Library Downstairs

DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS?

Lindsay Paterson, Emeritus Professor of Education Policy, University of Edinburgh, **Satwat Rehman**, Chief Executive of One Parent Families Scotland and co-chair of Scotland's Just Transition Commission, and **Shannon Vallor**, Baillie Gifford Chair in the Ethics of Data and Artificial Intelligence at the Edinburgh Futures Institute.

Chair: **Donald Bloxham**, (Richard Pares Professor of History, University of Edinburgh)

17:00 - 18:00, Library Upstairs

MINING THE MYTHS

RM Brown (*Song of the Stag*), **Angie Spoto** (*The Bone Diver*) and **Janis Mackay** (*On a Northern Shore*) explore how the rich tradition of Scottish mythology and folklore has inspired their writing. From selkies to ballads, Orkney to the Borders, we'll be going through Scotland's magic with a fine-tooth comb. Dive deep into some magical and murky waters with us!

Chair: **Grace Baird**

SCHOOL EVENTS

BRUNSTANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

School visit from Edinburgh-based poet **Nadine Aisha Jassat**, author of *The House at the Edge of the World*.

ST JOHN'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

School visit from Edinburgh-based author and poet **Amy B Moreno** author of *A Billion Balloons of Questions*.

****SCHOOL EVENTS FOR PUPILS ONLY****

The Portobello Bookshop will be selling contributors' books from a pop-up shop in the library throughout the festival weekend.

VENUES

PORTOBELLO LIBRARY

14 Rosefield Avenue,
EH15 1AU

TRIBE PORTY

19 Windsor Place,
EH15 2AJ

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PORTOBELLO BOOK FESTIVAL

3RD - 5TH OCTOBER 2025



PORTOBELLO BOOK FESTIVAL is organised by a group of local book enthusiasts in collaboration with Portobello Library. Tickets are free and contributors are not paid. The Festival is entirely dependent on donations.

All events are ticketed.
Tickets available at the library from 13th September.

Find us online:
Instagram: **@porty.bookfest**
X/BlueSky: **@portybookfest**
www.portobellobookfestival.com

Email:
portobellobookfestival@gmail.com

FRIDAY 3RD OCTOBER

12:00 - 13:00, Library Upstairs

THE BUSY BODIES: A PORTOBELLO TALE

The fascinating story of how researcher and editor **Lisa Baptie** re-discovered, edited and published *The Busy Bodies*, a long-forgotten gem of the Scottish literary scene. *The Busy Bodies* is a novel written and set in Portobello in 1827. It details the misadventures of an aristocratic family who have moved to Portobello and caused a scandal locally when published.

Chair: **Paul Hudson**

13:30 - 15:00, Library Upstairs

LOVE COMICS? GRAPHIC NOVEL BUILDER

In this workshop local comic creator, Edward Ross, gets you started making your own comics full of amazing characters and hilarious stories. Edward brings his book, *Graphic Novel Builder*, full of tips and ideas for taking your comic creations to the next level! For age 9-12.

15:30 - 16:30, Library Upstairs

SCOTTISH CRIME: FACTS AND FICTION

Scottish crime writers **Tom Wood** and **Rob McInroy** talk about the importance of research and authenticity in their work. Tom writes True Crime and Scottish History; his book *Ruxton: The First Modern Murder* was shortlisted in the Scottish National Book Awards. Rob is the author of the Crime Writers Association longlisted Bob and Annie Kelty historical crime series set in Perthshire from the 1930s to 2010s.

Chair: **Paul Hudson**

19:30 - 20:30, Library Downstairs

FRANKLY

Nicola Sturgeon, author of *Frankly*, the much-anticipated memoir from Scotland's first female and longest-serving First Minister, in conversation with writer and presenter **Alistair Heather**.

SATURDAY 4TH OCTOBER

10:30 - 11:30, Library Upstairs

STRONG WOMEN

Natalie Fergie's *25 Library Terrace* and Mhairi Collie's *The Bright Fabric of Life* are set in very different places and different eras so what links these two books? Strong, supportive women! From suffragettes to surgeons, from Edinburgh to Ethiopia, this promises to be a fascinating event.

Chair: **Joanne Baird**

11:00 - 11:30, Library Downstairs

BOOKBUG: FEATURING ROBY WALSH

Bookbug with Portobello Library staff, featuring a reading from *The Extraordinary Unicorn* by our special guest author **Roby Walsh**.

SATURDAY 4TH OCTOBER

11:00 - 13:00, Tribe Party

POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP

The writing workshop is led by **Samuel Tongue** from the Scottish Poetry Library and is open to writers of all abilities.

12:00 - 13:00, Library Upstairs

ROBERT FERGUSON: SELECTED POEMS

Robert Fergusson died in 1774 aged just 24. Burns paid for his tombstone in Canongate cemetery, describing Fergusson as his 'elder brother in the muse'. Despite his short life, Fergusson left a remarkable body of work in both English and Scots. **James Robertson** discusses Robert Fergusson's extraordinary legacy and his poems, many of them comical observations of the Edinburgh of his day, which he describes in his new edition of *Robert Fergusson: Selected Poems*.

Chair: **Gary West**

13:30 - 14:30, Library Upstairs

BRAVE NEW MUSIC: THE MARTYN BENNETT STORY

Martyn Bennett, a radical artist, piper, violinist, composer, producer and DJ, died tragically young at just 33. Martyn's music continues to attract new fans and fill concert halls two decades after his death. Join **Gary West** to hear more about this inspirational musician who he pays tribute to in his new book *Brave New Music – The Martyn Bennett Story*.

Chair: **David Francis**

15:00 - 16:00, Library Upstairs

WITCH SISTERS

Two very different books both with a backdrop of witch trials. **AD Bergin** introduces his historical thriller *The Wicked of the Earth* and **Elsbeth Wilson** presents her modern campus tale *These Mortal Bodies*. Twists, turns and dark forces abound!

Chair: **Dr Kaye McAlpine**

16:30 - 18:00, Library Upstairs

UNHEARD VOICES

This session hears from **Mark Baillie**, author of *Salvage*, a mystery exploring the tragic history of Scotland's Gypsy-travellers, **Stephen Christopher**, writer, playwright and member of Edinburgh Recovery Activities group, and **Jim Aitken**, Tutor, and Editor of *Windows to our Past*, a collection of stories from North Edinburgh.

Chair: **Debbie Menezes** (Researcher, Social Action Inquiry Scotland)

18:30 - 19:30, Library Upstairs

COOK OUT: CUISINE WITH A VIEW

Harrison Ward, otherwise known as the **Fell Foodie**, talks about his love of the mountains and outdoor cooking and how they transformed his life from an overweight, depressed alcoholic to author (*Cook Out* is his first outdoor cooking recipe book), mental health speaker, social media influencer and fit, fell loving foodie.

Chair: **Rona Gray**

SUNDAY 5TH OCTOBER

10:30 - 11:30, Library Downstairs

LOSING THE SKY

Andy Lawrence, Regius Professor of Astronomy, Edinburgh University: "A new generation of large satellite constellations pollute the night sky pushing us towards a space debris run-away that may make space industry unsustainable. The scary thing is that this may be the thin end of the wedge."

Chair: **Doug Johnstone**

10:30 - 11:30, Library Upstairs

HOLD FAST: MOTHERHOOD, MY AUTISTIC DAUGHTER AND ME

It was obvious to **Catherine Simpson** from the beginning that there was something different about her first child, Nina. Join Catherine to hear about the ups and downs of mothering an autistic child, the joy of accepting them as they are and not how the world says they should be, and the power of unconditional love.

Chair: **M Louise Kelly**

12:00 - 13:00, Library Downstairs

WAYS TO SEE THE WORLD

A panel of authors with different perspectives on travel - **Claudia Esnouf** presents her book *Walk Like A Girl*, **Colin Renton** discusses *The Wine Runner* and **Jon Davey** tells us about *Fifteen Days In Paris*. Chair: **Esa Aldegheri**, (editor of *There She Goes: New Travel Writing by Women*)

12:00 - 13:00, Library Upstairs

A BOY AND A BOMB: THE STORY OF MY FATHER

Local author **Geoff Pearson** (*Roker Beach*) talks about his research into his family history and the story of his father Tom, who never said much about his family. Geoff explores DNA and atomic bombs, what probably happened, and the consequences.

Chair: **Paul Hudson**

13:30 - 14:30, Library Downstairs

WILHELMINA BARNES-GRAHAM: GLACIERS

Celebrating the recent publication of *Wilhelmina Barnes-Graham – The Glaciers*, editor and Wilhelmina Barnes-Graham Trust Director, **Rob Airey** is joined by many of the contributors to the book: celebrated filmmaker **Mark Cousins**, Edinburgh University's Professor of Glaciology **Pete Nienow**, esteemed poet **Alyson Hallet** and the Trust's Archivist **Tilly Heydon** to talk about the book, all things glacial and Barnes-Graham.