

20th Anniversary

WINTER WORDS FESTIVAL 2024

8 - 11 February



PITLOCHRY
FESTIVAL
THEATRE

WELCOME

Welcome to our Winter Words Festival 2024. We are thrilled to share our exciting programme celebrating 20 years of this much-loved literature festival.

We have extraordinarily talented writers and artists taking part, and it's set to be a true celebration of Scotland's finest fiction and non-fiction writers. We will discuss the craft and art of all literary forms from poetry to novels, academia, and journalism. As you've come to expect from Winter Words in Pitlochry, we continue to investigate our relationship to Scotland's beautiful landscape and important heritage through various talks alongside drama and dramatic writing that so closely speaks to our role as Scotland's largest producing theatre.

We are thrilled to offer a home for discussion and debate, especially during this Festival. Words remain such a powerful way to connect, to unite and to guide us through life. Thank you for continuing to support the Theatre and we look forward to meeting you in person and online to celebrate our 20th Anniversary!

Elizabeth Newman
Artistic Director

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Thanks to



THURSDAY



2 - 3pm | FREE

KOKUMO ROCKS

Performance poet

Kokumo will read and perform a selection of her vibrant and intense poems. In 1991 she decided to change the direction of her life following a near-death experience, and began to fulfil her life-long ambition to become a performance poet. Kokumo's poetry explores the themes of love, race, freedom and imprisonment, which she does with a sense of fun and humour – proud to include 'the flabby bits'.

From the Scottish countryside to Nigeria, via the metropolitan high street and her childhood experiences, Kokumo paints her world with colour and spirit. Kokumo – the name means 'this one will not die' – lives by the motto 'if you don't ask you won't get', and believes that passion can turn the 'mundane into excitement'. She has been inspired by poets including Maya Angelou, Benjamin Zephaniah and Ivor Cutler, but above all by 'growing up black in Scotland'.

"A power of a writer are you."

Benjamin Zephaniah



11am - 12pm | £12; £10 Members

NEIL ANSELL

The Last Wilderness: A Journey into Silence

Neil Ansell, former BBC journalist, is now a full-time writer living in the Western Highlands. He is the author of a series of acclaimed books of nature memoir, all of which reflect on different aspects of our relationship with the natural world.

Join Neil as he talks about his book *The Last Wilderness: A Journey into Silence*, which is set amongst the wildlife of the rough bounds in the Scottish Highlands.

Over the course of a series of solitary walks in remote country he reflects on the progressive hearing loss that is chipping away at his connection with the sounds of nature. His book was short-listed for the Wainwright Prize for nature writing and the Highland Book Prize.

"Beautiful...a testimony to reticent courage." Daily Mail



12.30 - 1.30pm | £12; £10 Members

ANNIE WORSLEY

Windswept

A few years ago, Annie traded a busy life in academia to take on a croft on the west coast of Scotland.

Hear about what it means to live in this rugged, awe-inspiring place of unquenchable spirit and wild weather, a land ruled by great elemental forces – light, wind and water – that hold sway over how land forms, where the sea sits, and what grows.

In her book *Windswept*, Annie evokes a place where nature reigns supreme and humans must learn to adapt.

"Windswept is a wonderful work, prose painted in bold, bright strokes like a Scottish Colourist's canvas."

Robert MacFarlane

"An instant classic of British nature-writing." Sunday Telegraph



3 - 4pm | £12; £10 Members

DAVID GREIG

Columba's Bones

Columba's Bones is the debut novel from playwright David Greig, which explores a fascinating clash of cultures and religions that played an important part in the shaping of Scotland. It is the fourth book in the Polygon series, *Darkland Tales*.

Columba's Bones is set on Iona in 825 and is the story of the aftermath of a ninth century Viking raid, a 'heist gone wrong'.

Join award-winning playwright David Greig to discover more about his passion for historic Scottish peoples and the inspiration for the story.

"David Greig manages to offer echoes of the Norse sagas while at the same time capturing the spirit of Celtic Christianity."

Alan Massie, The Scotsman

"Stupendously earthy, laugh out loud funny in places, visceral writing."

Sally Magnusson

4.30 - 5.30pm | £12; £10 Members

MAY SUMBWANYAMBE AND

DR PEGGY BRUNACHE

in conversation

Award-winning playwright May Sumbwanyambe and Dr Peggy Brunache, lecturer on the history of Atlantic slavery at the University of Glasgow and Director of the Beniba Centre for Slavery Studies, talk about the case of freedom fighter and Black abolitionist Joseph Knight and Scottish abolitionism.

Joseph Knight became a notable figure in a landmark legal battle that saw him successfully appeal against a Scottish court's decision that had reduced him to a mere chattel in the ownership of his former slaveholder. This victory affirmed that Scots Law could not uphold the institution of slavery in Scotland, a ruling that would make a profound contribution to paving the way for the abolition of slavery in Britain.

FRIDAY



6 - 7pm | £12; £10 Members

ALLAN RADCLIFFE

The Old Haunts

Allan Radcliffe discusses his new book, *The Old Haunts*, a wistful coming-of-age story, which paints a tender portrait of grief in all its complexities.

The beauty of his understated prose invokes empathy and he writes with a rare honesty and understanding. *The Old Haunts* is a novel full of love, kindness, and compassion, but also regret and contrition.

Allan has won the Allen Wright Award and the Scottish Book Trust New Writers Award. With an MA from the University of Glasgow, he works as an arts journalist and editor, and is currently a freelance theatre critic and feature writer.

"Poignant and evocative."

Books from Scotland

SATURDAY



11am - 12pm | £12; £10 Members

CATHERINE MOOREHEAD

Mountain Guru – The Life of Doug Scott

Catherine Moorehead talks about the life of one of the greatest mountaineers in history, Doug Scott, whose extraordinary expeditions were undertaken over a period of four decades across seven continents.

Catherine talks about the man behind the mountaineer. She uncovers how Scott matured in thought and action as his formidable global reputation increased revealing him to be a clash of opposites, a man who took extraordinary risks yet who developed a deep interest in Buddhism and inspired widespread affection.

"Doug Scott was one of my closest friends. He had so many facets to his character – integrity, courage, great intelligence, and a strong sense of social responsibility, particularly in the way that he devoted his later life to support the people of up-country Nepal. This book is a remarkable tribute to an extraordinary climber and a great humanitarian." Sir Chris Bonington



12.30 - 1.30pm | £12; £10 Members

JACKIE KAY

**in conversation with Pitlochry
Festival Theatre Artistic Director
Elizabeth Newman**

Jackie Kay was born and brought up in Scotland. She is the author of - among other books - *The Adoption Papers*, which won the Forward Prize, *Red Dust Road*, winner of the Scottish Book of the Year Award, *Trumpet*, and the Costa-shortlisted *Fiere*. She was the third Makar, or National Poet for Scotland (2016-2021). She is a Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Salford.

"Her poetry achieves that joyful and rare thing; it is of high literary merit and also accessible to even those who may not have encountered poetry before."

The Guardian

3 - 4pm | £12; £10 Members

SALLY MAGNUSSON

**in conversation with Magnus
Linklater about her third novel
*Music in the Dark***

Set over one night in a room-and-kitchen in Rutherglen, the book explores the aftermath of the clearance of communities in Strathcarron, Ross-shire, in the 1850s.

Partly inspired by her own Highland great-grandmother, this critically acclaimed novel delves into the experience of women on which the historical record is largely silent - placing a Victorian washerwoman of low class, despised Gaelic race, advancing age and brilliant but injured mind into exhilarating light. A beautifully written story of love and resilience, it explores the effects of brutal community displacement and the healing power of music.

"Truer to the reality of clearance and what came after than many ostensibly factual accounts of those events." Dr James Hunter

SATURDAY



4.30 - 5.30pm | £12; £10 Members

CHRIS MULLIN

Didn't You Use to Be Chris Mullin?

"The Queen was at the next table. I caught her staring at me during the national anthem and half-wondered whether someone had pointed me out as the author of that incident which the Mail on Sunday had splashed all over the front page of its review section, about which she would not have been too pleased."

No longer in the tent, but not quite out of it, celebrated diarist Chris Mullin gives his take on the twelve turbulent years since he left Parliament. With his trademark wit and keen eye for the absurd, he recounts events from the fall of New Labour to the death of the Queen and his encounters with movers and shakers from all political parties and with citizens from all walks of life, from dustmen to dukes.

"One of Mullin's charms is his readiness to like people who don't echo his politics."

Jenni Russell, Sunday Times

BOOKSHOPS

Yeadon's Buy the book

Yeadon's Booksellers will be selling books by guest authors. Their professional, enthusiastic and knowledgeable booksellers will be on-hand to help.

Like to read up in advance? You can order or reserve any book by a Winter Words author now. It can be sent to you, or you can pick it up at the Festival. Simply email Ann@Yeadons.co.uk with your requirements.



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Enjoy a relaxing browse of second-hand and new books from bestsellers and children's classics to antiquary gems. All the staff are volunteers and every penny raised from book sales goes to six different charities.

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(excludes An Evening
with James Cosmo)

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7 - 8.30pm | £25 includes STORYMAN whisky tasting

AN EVENING WITH JAMES COSMO

James Cosmo in conversation about his long and illustrious career in film and television, followed by a tasting of his STORYMAN whisky.

James Cosmo is a Scottish acting legend who has appeared in over 130 films and TV shows, including *Highlander*, *Braveheart*, *Trainspotting*, *Troy*, *Game of Thrones* and *His Dark Materials*.

He studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and the Bristol Old Vic drama school.

He was awarded the MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in 2018 for his services to drama. He is also a patron of the charity, Chance for Childhood.

In 2023 James teamed up with Annandale Distillery to create his own whisky, STORYMAN. This whisky reflects his personality and his passion for sharing stories with others.

James says, “It is a smooth, rich and complex whisky that is perfect for sharing with family and friends.”



11am - 12pm | £12; 10 Members

DR KERRI ANDREWS

Way Makers

Dr Kerri Andrews talks about her book *Way Makers*, the follow-up to the best-selling *Wanderers*, and the first anthology of women's writing about walking.

Moving from the eighteenth century to the present day, and across poetry, letters, diaries, novels and more, she traces a long tradition of women's walking literature. Walking is, for these women, a source of creativity and comfort, a means of expressing grief, longing, and desire. It is also a complicated activity: it represents freedom but is also sometimes tinged with danger and fear.

This anthology is testament to the rich literary heritage created by generations of women walker-writers over the centuries.

"Way Makers is a scintillating and exciting collection of women's voices."

Katharine Norbury, author of *The Fish Ladder*



12.30 - 1.30pm | £12; £10 Members

DOUGIE STRANG

The Bone Cave

Dougie Strang talks about his journey through the Scottish Highlands to follow a series of folktales and myths to the places in which they are set. Travelling mostly on foot and camping along the way amid some of Scotland's most beautiful and rugged landscapes, Dougie encountered a depth of meaning to the tales he tracked.

He offers a unique perspective on place, culture, land ownership and ecological stewardship, as well as insights into his own entanglement with place.

"I was keen to find out what might happen if I took stories out into the landscape – took them back to the places that held them."

"A unique perspective on place, land, ownership and ecological stewardship."

Oban Times



3- 4pm | £12; £10 Members

JAMES CRAWFORD

Wild History: Journeys into Lost Scotland

Acclaimed author and presenter of BBC One's *Scotland from the Sky*, James Crawford talks about his book, *Wild History: Journeys into Lost Scotland*.

James reveals places all over Scotland which have merged with the landscape and are being reclaimed by nature. Places where you scramble up over the dunes of an isolated beach. You climb to the summit of a lonely hill. You pick your way through the eerie hush of a forest. And then you find them. The traces of the past. Perhaps they are marked by a tiny symbol on your map, perhaps not. There are no plaques to explain their fading presence before you, nothing to account for what they once were. They are being reclaimed by nature. They are wild history.

"...an absolutely riveting journey through time and space." The Scotsman

4.30 - 5.30pm | £12; £10 Members

POLLY PULLAR

Naturalist, Writer, Photographer

Informative and humorous, with glorious photographs and numerous anecdotes, naturalist Polly Pullar talks about the inspirations behind her writing - the wildlife and wild places that are at the heart of her life. Highlighting the importance of nurturing love and respect for nature in all its complexities.

From owls, gannets, beavers and badgers to spiders and dragonflies, and the fact that every red squirrel counts, this is guaranteed to be a thought-provoking and entertaining event.

Polly says, *"The natural world holds the key to our future success on this planet, and we must protect it now as never before."*

Polly contributes to The Scots Magazine and The People's Friend, and previously she was wildlife writer for Scottish Field.



SUMMER SEASON 2024



FOOTLOOSE

31 MAY - 26 SEP



BEAUTIFUL

THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL

7 JUN - 28 SEP



SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

21 JUN - 27 SEP



SHIRLEY VALENTINE

4 JUL - 28 SEP



NAN SHEPHERD:

NAKED AND UNASHAMED

24 MAY - 6 JUL



THE BRENDA LINE

15 AUG - 18 SEP



THE SECRET GARDEN

12 JUL - 22 AUG



DIDO AND AENEAS

31 AUG - 15 SEP

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THE SOUND OF MUSIC

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