

# Evesham *Festival of Words*



# 2024

A YEAR-LONG FESTIVAL

**Main Festival Weekend**

**FRI 28TH – SUN 30TH JUNE**

[www.eveshamfestivalofwords.org](http://www.eveshamfestivalofwords.org)

[info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org](mailto:info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org)



Evesham Festival of Words



infoFoW



Photo by Ian Tustin

Welcome to our 2024 Festival Brochure. The Festival celebrates words in all their forms. The main weekend, which is packed with events, runs from Friday 28th June – Sunday 30th June, but we also have events throughout the year.

Whatever your interest – writing, reading, poetry, author talks and interviews, meeting like-minded folk – the Festival really does offer something for everyone, with an exciting and varied programme at numerous locations in and around Evesham.

2023 was a fabulous year with a large number of sell-out events, and we are so excited about our 2024 programme. We very much look forward to welcoming you to our Festival and our lovely town.

For any accessibility concerns, please contact [info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org](mailto:info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org), or 0787 128 5606.

**Sue Ablett,**  
Festival Chair



**FRI 22ND MARCH, 1.00 PM**

### The Ups and Downs of the River

Holland House, Cropthorne, £22

Tickets via Holland House: [www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)  
E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org), or T: 01386 860330

The Severn Bore has delighted or frustrated viewers over centuries. However, this tidal phenomenon is not only found on the Severn. This talk looks at the bore worldwide, then concentrates on the Severn tide, where the wave comes from, how people use and view it, the shape and changing nature of the river, its channels, floods and banks. This is a celebration of one of England's great natural free events.

Speaker, Tony Conder, is a Festival favourite, usually entertaining us with tales of canals, canal people and railways.

*Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated), but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the lovely house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.*



**FRI 29TH MARCH, 2.30 PM**

### 'Flog It' battles 'Bargain Hunt'

Raphael's Restaurant, £15

Includes afternoon tea. Pre-booking essential.

Enjoy a classic Raphael's Afternoon Tea (freshly baked scone with clotted cream and jam; finger sandwiches, and assorted sweet treats) in the company of Robert Arley talking about how TV favourites 'Flog It' and 'Bargain Hunt' battle against each other. Hear how clever contrivances and taxing schedules engineer unlikely candidates and dodgy collectibles into happy day-time viewing.

Robert is a retired TV producer. He directed 'The Antiques Roadshow', 'Flog It' and 'Bargain Hunt' over many years and enjoys revealing behind-the-scenes stories from his days as a broadcast location director.

Come along and support a local cause, part of Raphael's Easter Charity Weekend. Enjoy a great tea, and a fabulous talk – all in the stunning riverside setting.

Tickets can also be booked direct with Raphael's 01386 45460

**WED 17TH APRIL, 1.00 PM**

### Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know – Lord Byron and his Women

Holland House, Cropthorne, £22

Tickets via Holland House:

[www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)

E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org), or  
T: 01386 860330

Lord Byron wasn't just a poet, he was more of a rock star. England's most prominent and outrageous celebrity in the early nineteenth century, he lived life to excess – and his relations with women were completely scandalous. This talk explores those relationships in the context of some of Byron's most well-known poetry, his extraordinary rise to fame and legend, and his place in the tradition of English Romantic poets.

Speaker, Jeremy Holmes, has worked in advertising and higher education. Now semi-retired he is a trustee of various charities. In his youth he won a scholarship and gained a Double First in English Literature at Oxford.

*Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated), but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the lovely house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.*



**TUES 7TH MAY, 7.00 PM**

### A Game of Two Halves

Cornmill Yard, £22

Includes 2-course supper.

Pre-booking by 3rd May essential.

With its industrial and arty interior, Cornmill Yard is the ideal venue for an intimate evening of fabulous food and an entertaining talk.

"He's good, but can he do it on a cold, wet Tuesday night in Stoke?" This quote was said live on air by one well known broadcaster when referring to the great Lionel Messi! It is just one of many great stories that former sports reporter, Alan Tolley, will be sharing. Alan began life as a freelance reporter for BBC Radio WM back in 1982, later spending 21 years covering Premier League games for TodayFM Ireland. He'll be recounting how he was advised not to give up his day job, as well as some of the strange, interesting and often humorous situations he's found himself in over the years. He'll also talk about the do's and don'ts of reporting, as well as the inevitable highs and lows of his reporting career. This is a talk that will appeal to lovers of football as well as the not so keen!



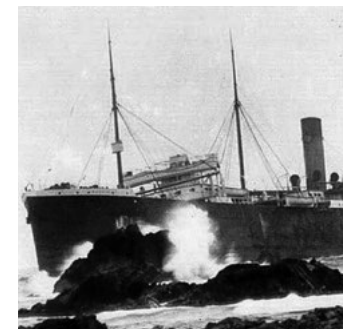
**WED 22ND MAY, 7.00 PM**

### SS Suevic: A Tale of Shipwreck and Survival

Ecgwins Club, Evesham. £10

The SS Suevic was a steamship, built specifically to service the Liverpool-Cape Town-Sydney route. She ran aground in a storm near the Lizard Point in Cornwall 117 years ago, in 1907. 456 people were rescued by the RNLI over some 16 hours with no lives lost, still the largest number of people rescued by the RNLI in a single operation.

Galen Bartholomew is a keen family historian. Two of his relatives were amongst those rescued. His illustrated talk will describe how he pieced together an extraordinary story - how the Suevic ran aground; the dramatic circumstances of the rescue; the salvage and rebuilding of the ship (in what was the largest salvage operation ever undertaken at that time); and the Suevic's final years as a whaling factory ship in the Antarctic, before being scuttled off Norway to avoid capture by German warships. A truly remarkable tale! 2024 being the 200th anniversary year of the RNLI, this talk, first aired in 2023, is being repeated by popular demand.





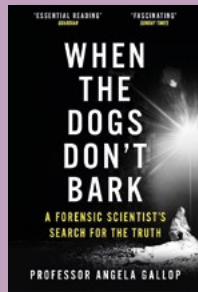
## THROUGH THE YEAR

WED 5TH JUNE, 7.00 PM

### When the Dogs Don't Bark

Evesham Rowing Club, £12

Speaker, Dr Angela Gallop, CBE, is a leading UK Forensic Scientist and star of ITV's 'Cold Case Forensics'. During her remarkable 40-year career, she has worked on thousands of cases in the UK and around the world, helping to solve a huge number of cases, correcting some serious miscarriages of justice and exonerating innocent people. Some of the most intriguing cases include the deaths of Stephen Lawrence, Rachel Nickell and Damilola Taylor. From crime scene to courtroom Angela has seen it all. From examining blood patterns and footwear marks, to analysing fragments of glass, paint and textile fibres, she shows that every contact really does leave a trace and every trace can help to solve a crime. This promises to be a fascinating event!



SAT 8TH JUNE, 2.00 PM

### Glowing Bright

Methodist Church, £12  
Includes tea and cake.

Marie Skłodowska Curie was one of the most famous scientists of all time. An outstandingly talented Polish girl with huge ambitions both for herself and her country, she broke through all the restrictions placed on women at the time. Her amazing discovery of not one but two new elements with her beloved husband Pierre Curie is an astonishing and well-loved story. The subsequent ups and downs of her turbulent private life, and spectacular work during World War One, are perhaps less well known, but equally fascinating.



Written and performed by Alison Neil, a story teller second to none, this one-hour play will be followed by a Q & A session, and tea and cake.

SAT 22ND JUNE, 7.30 PM

### Musical Histories: A Concert

Bengeworth Church, £10 (Children under 12 free of charge)  
Including interval drink.

EODS (Evesham Operatic & Dramatic Society) are delighted to return to the Festival of Words and Bengeworth Church once again with an evening of song and words - 'History as seen in Musicals'.

Join us on a journey through time, sharing stories from the past as told in musical form. With songs from well-known hit musicals to slightly more obscure shows, it will be a show stopping evening to enjoy! This is set to be one for the History Books! This is always a wonderful evening, with great music, beautiful voices and the stunning setting of Bengeworth Church.

Tickets also available from: The Almonry Museum  
Call in person, or T: 01386 446944 E: [tic@almonry.ndo.co.uk](mailto:tic@almonry.ndo.co.uk)

MON 24TH JUNE, 1.00 PM

### A River Avon Year

Holland House, Crophorne, £22  
Tickets via Holland House:  
[www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)  
E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org),  
or T: 01386 860330

Speaker, Rick Thompson, is a former journalist and broadcaster and a lifelong birdwatcher. His beautifully written book, *A River Avon Year*, the subject of his talk, follows 'Shakespeare's Avon' month-by-month, describing the fascinating wildlife, and relating the human dramas that have played out on its banks and changed British history. From its source at Naseby to the Severn at Tewkesbury, the Avon's riverside towns all have their stories, and some surprises.

**A joint event with Evesham Walking Festival.**

**Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated), but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the lovely house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.**

## THROUGH THE YEAR



WED 26TH JUNE, 2.30 PM

### Hatch, Match and Despatch

The Vale (Marriage) Room,  
Evesham Registration Office,  
£9

This talk by former Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, John Boon, covers something of the history of civil registration in England and Wales, but focusses mainly on some of the many stories, both light-hearted and sad, from his 35 years working as a Registrar in Plymouth. The Vale (Marriage) Room in Evesham is the perfect venue for this talk.

When not working John has always had an interest in nature, something that has taken him all over the world. Before coming to Evesham in 2017 he was chair of a charity that owned and managed an historic Victorian cemetery!



WED 26TH JUNE, 7.30 PM

### Stories and Songs on a Fair Summer Evening

Studio Theatre,  
The Henrician, Evesham, £11  
(plus £1 booking fee per ticket)

Colin Pitts returns to the Festival this year with some new songs and some old favourites, all performed in his relaxed warm style. Some will make you think and some will make you smile. ("Colin Pitts is a wonderfully talented song maker and fine musician whose music I have known and admired for many years." Larry Kaplan, Songwriter USA). This year Colin is joined by award-winning short story writer Philip Douch. Philip's engaging readings of his own warm and witty stories for grown-ups have been delighting audiences around the South West: "Really really fun!" .... "Thank you for bringing joy into my evening".... "Beautifully written and superbly delivered." The Studio Theatre at the Henrician is the perfect venue for this intimate evening of words and song.

**Tickets only available from:**  
[www.henrician.org](http://www.henrician.org)

THURS 27TH JUNE,  
2.00 – 6.00 PM

### Poetry in Nature: Guided Walk

Meet Cleeve Prior Heritage Trust  
Car Park. WR11 8JX

**£9 including tea and cake at end of walk.**

A joint event with Evesham Walking Festival and Cleeve Prior Heritage Trust, this delightful 3-mile easy walk takes in old pasture, traditional orchards, woodland and ponds, with poetry readings to complement the scenery and surroundings. Our route takes us into The Sanctuary and Sanctuary Wood before making our way to the Village Green and on through the churchyard into open fields to reach the river. We return to the Field Barn for poetry, tea and cake in the Heritage Garden with the opportunity to visit the 'Edgar Wheeler' hovel.

**Tickets only available from**  
[www.eveshamwalkfest.org.uk](http://www.eveshamwalkfest.org.uk)







**FRI 28TH JUNE,  
10.45 AM – 12.00 NOON**

**Burns on Seats**

**Ecgwins Club, Evesham. £9**  
Includes cold drink and cake.

Sue Ablett has been Festival Chair since it launched in 2016. In this talk Sue goes behind the scenes of Evesham Festival of Words. Hear how the Festival began, how Sue got involved, and see some of the events featured over the years. If you ever wondered how speakers are found, this will be your chance to find out – and you might get some surprises. And what about those tricky moments? And there have been a few. We finish off with some lessons learned. A fun, interesting and engaging event!

*Why not stay on for lunch at Ecgwin's Club? Menu will be circulated to attendees ahead of the event for pre-ordering menu choices on the morning.*

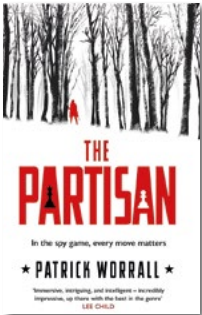


**FRI 28TH JUNE,  
2.00 – 3.00 PM**

**The Partisan**

**Ecgwins Club, Evesham £9**  
Includes cold drink and cake.

Local lad, Patrick Worrall, has enjoyed remarkable success with his first novel, *The Partisan*. Described as “a compelling spy thriller in the grand tradition of le Carré and Deighton” and “an explosive debut novel”, Patrick weaves a gripping tale of espionage and resistance that spans the 1930s to the Cold War, moving seamlessly across Europe from Lithuanian forests to London Jazz Clubs, and from rural Siberia to the Moscow underworld. Add into the mix a lethally dangerous chess tournament in the London of 1961 and you have all the makings of a great read. Join us as Patrick explains the inspiration behind the book, how he is coping with its success, and what comes next.



**FRI 28TH JUNE,  
3.30 – 4.30 PM**

**Clothbound Classics**

**Ecgwins Club, Evesham. £9**  
Includes cold drink and cake.

Described as “literature’s new cover star” Coralie Bickford-Smith is one of Penguin’s in-house book cover designers and is responsible for its Clothbound Classics series. Clothbounds have some famous fans – Barack Obama and the Princess of Wales to name but two, and to date some 6 million have been sold in 110 countries! Coralie has also gained cult status with TikTok, or more specifically BookTok. To quote *The Mail on Sunday*, “In so far as someone from the book-cover world can be a celebrity, Coralie is a total A-listener!” Join us to hear how Coralie got into the world of book covers, how she produces her stunning designs, and what else she’s up to – not least writing and illustrating her own children’s books.

**FRI 28TH JUNE, 7.30 PM**

**Festival Quiz Night**

**Raphael's Restaurant**  
**£8.50 per person (Teams of 4)**  
**Light supper included. Pre-booking of teams essential.**

With us since year one, our regular and very popular Festival quiz masters, Helen Yendall and Chris Cherry, return once again with more questions on everything from poetry and song lyrics to book titles and the meaning of words. As usual, the Festival’s popular Quiz Night definitely has a WORDY slant! And Raphael’s is the perfect venue.

*(Maximum of 11 teams of 4).*



**SAT 29TH JUNE, 10.30 AM – 12 NOON**

**But I Haven’t Finished Yet!**

**Friends Meeting House, £10 Includes tea/coffee and cake.**

We are all growing older and most of us don’t like it! But since we can’t do anything to change it, why not laugh? Join poet Brenda Read-Brown in a riotous celebration of growing older and discover why Brenda’s final words will definitely be “But I haven’t finished yet!” Mostly funny but with some poignant moments. Not suitable for children.

In 2001 Brenda gave up a secure career to become a poet. She has performed her poetry on Radio 4, the House of Lords, and any number of ‘low dives’ but says she gets her greatest rewards by helping other people find their words.

**WORKSHOP**

**SAT 29TH JUNE,  
10.30 AM – 12.30 PM**

**Flash Fantastic**

**Evesham Library**  
**(Upstairs Meeting Room). £18**  
Includes hot/cold drink and cake.

Flash Fantastic – big stories in a few words, an introduction to flash fiction, or writing the shortest of short stories. Suitable for experienced writers, or those new to the short story. This workshop will cover the basics of flash and look at some tricks and tips for putting the shine on stories from between 6 - 1,000 words.

Electra Rhodes began writing in 2020, since when she has won and been placed in numerous competitions, as well as judging. She runs creative writing workshops at various literary festivals. Last year’s workshop ‘Winning Words’ was very popular hence her return in 2024.



**SAT 29TH JUNE,  
1.00 – 2.00 PM**

**Taking the Waters:  
The Rise and Fall  
(and Rise Again) of  
the English Spa**

**Friends Meeting House, £9**  
Includes tea/coffee and cake.

The English have always been obsessed with bathing. English bathing culture over the centuries was riotous, salacious and sometimes devoted to treatments that did more harm than good. This talk is a romp through the centuries telling the extraordinary story of the English spa from their origins to their reinvention in the 21st century as beauty and wellness resorts.

Melanie King is a writer of historical non-fiction, and a highly engaging and informative speaker.



**SAT 29TH JUNE,  
3.00 – 4.00 PM**

**A Passion for Fashion–  
300 Years of Style at  
Blenheim Palace**

**Friends Meeting House, £9**  
Includes tea/coffee and cake.

Antonia Keaney returns to Evesham to talk about the clothes, underclothes, shoes and accessories which would have been worn by some of the more colourful characters (men and women) in the Palace’s 300-year history, as well as a look at the House of Dior’s special relationship with Blenheim Palace. Metre high wigs and killer cosmetics were not unusual – nor was the involvement of mice in what had to be one of the most bizarre moments in 18th century fashion!

Antonia Keaney is Social Historian and Researcher at Blenheim Palace.







SAT 29TH JUNE, 7.00 – 8.30 PM  
**An Evening with Mike Gayle**  
Evesham Rowing Club, £12

Mike Gayle has worked as a journalist, “agony uncle” for teen magazine Bliss, and for the last 25 years as a novelist. His first novel, *My Legendary Girlfriend*, published in 1998, was described as “full of belly laughs and painfully acute observations”. His earlier books roughly corresponded to challenges facing his peer group – post university, first job; relationship issues (*Mr Commitment*); moving back in with parents after a failed relationship (*Turning Thirty*). His more recent work is broader, tackling topics such as adoption. Now with 18 novels to his name and, unusually, all with the same publisher (Hodder) he finds his original loyal readers are introducing their children to his books. Mike’s books have been translated into over 30 languages. After stints in Manchester and London, Mike now lives in Birmingham with his wife, kids, two sheds and a rabbit! Mike was last with us in 2019. We look forward to welcoming him back to Evesham.

SUN 30TH JUNE,  
10.00 AM – 12 NOON  
**Evesham Town Trail:  
A Guided Walk**  
Meet 9.45 am, The Almonry  
Museum. £3

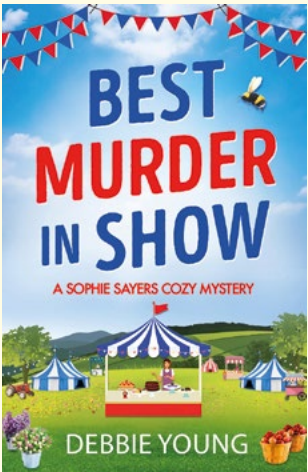
Whether you are local or a visitor, this two-hour guided tour following Evesham Town Trail will showcase some of Evesham’s wonderful history and heritage. Gill Pawson, Chair of Vale of Evesham Civic Society, will share her love for the town’s buildings and point out some of the many treasures that so often go unnoticed, usually because we only look ahead, not up or down! This walk also includes a rare chance to go inside Evesham’s iconic Bell Tower and visit the first floor Ringing Chamber. Maximum of 20 – so do book early!

**WORKSHOP**  
SUN 30TH JUNE,  
10.30 AM– 12.30 PM  
**So You Think You’ve  
Got a Book in You?**

**Hampton Community Hall, £18**  
Includes hot and cold drink and cake.

“Ever dreamed of writing a book? Think you’ve got a book inside you, but not sure where to start?” Author Debbie Young’s workshop will help you define your book idea and turn your idea into reality, whatever your chosen genre - novel, short story, poetry, non-fiction, memoir, local history, and more. The session will include helpful case studies, constructive exercises, top tips for writing well and consistently, an overview of publishing opportunities in the UK today, and the best route to publication for your project.

Debbie is the author of 13 novels, now published by Boldwood Books, for whom she has just signed an additional four-book contract. She has also written guidebooks for writers, is a course tutor, Founder and Director of the Hawkesbury Upton Literature Festival, a frequent speaker and reader at other litfests, and co-judge for the Stroud Short Stories event.



SUN 30TH JUNE, 2.00 – 4.00 PM  
**An Afternoon with Rebecca Tope**  
Friends Meeting House, £10  
Includes tea, scone and cake.

Rebecca Tope is a British crime writer and journalist. She admits to “blundering accidentally into writing crime fiction, and still wonders how it happened.” Fortunately for fans of Rebecca’s writing, there are around 30 novels to choose from. She is the author of three murder mystery series, featuring the fictional characters of Den Cooper, a Devon police detective; Drew Slocombe, a former nurse, now an undertaker; Thea Osborne, a house sitter in the Cotswolds; and Persimmon Brown, a florist in the Lake District. She is also ghostwriter of the novels based on the ITV series *Rosemary and Thyme*. If Rebecca hadn’t accidentally blundered into crime writing, she admits that she could have found herself writing historical, or sagas, or even non-fiction. She is currently trying her hand at two of those, and has large plans for a series of memoirs.



SUN 30TH JUNE, 7.00 – 9.00 PM  
**From Railways to Royalty: An  
Evening with Jack Boskett**  
Evesham Rowing Club £12

Multi-award winning photographer Jack Boskett is set to captivate audiences with his presentation, ‘From Railways to Royalty’. He delves into the narratives behind his photographs, offering a glimpse into some truly captivating moments. His extensive portfolio includes his experiences as an official photographer during the solemn occasion of Queen Elizabeth II’s funeral and the grandeur of King Charles III’s Coronation.

Surprisingly, Jack attributes his remarkable journey to his initial passion for railways. This seemingly unrelated interest served as the catalyst for his eventual career. As he unravels his story, the audience will see the unexpected twists and turns that led Jack to where he stands today, showcasing his extraordinary talent and unique perspective.

Through Jack Boskett’s lens, the convergence of railways and royal occasions becomes a tale worth hearing, unveiling the fascinating link between seemingly disparate worlds. Get ready to embark on a visual journey where unexpected passions intertwine to create a remarkable photographic legacy.





WED 17TH JULY, 7.00 PM  
**Four Shots in the Night**  
Evesham Rowing Club, £10

*Four Shots in the Night: A True Story of Spies, Murder and Justice in Northern Ireland*, tells the extraordinary true story of how the death of a British spy inside the IRA led to the biggest murder investigation in British history. On 26th May 1986 the body of an undercover British agent was found by the side of a muddy lane with a rope around his wrists and tape over each eye.

Speaker Henry Hemming is the Sunday Times bestselling author of six non-fiction books, including *M: Maxwell Knight – MI5's Greatest Spymaster*; the Doman Travel Award shortlisted *Misadventure in the Middle East*, and the New York Times bestseller, *The Ingenious Mr Pyke*. *Four Shots in the Night* is his latest book. Henry was last with us in 2017. We look forward to another fascinating talk about a book described as “a compulsive blend of investigative journalism and true crime thriller.”



SUN 21ST JULY, 2.30 PM  
**Words of Women**  
All Saints Church, £15 (£20 on door). Under 18s £5.

Classical soprano and established young opera singer, Susanna MacRae, joins with award-winning pianist, Claire Habbershaw, to perform their recital, ‘words of women’. Through the words of women in poems, letters and musical extracts, Susanna and Claire explore the relationship between music and literature. The programme is ideal for all, including those new to classical music, and the perfect way to spend a summer Sunday afternoon. Highlights from the programme include a contemporary setting of suffragette letters (Paul Ayres’ setting of *Anti-Suffragist Reasons* by Alice Duer Miller); and settings of Emily Dickinson, and Lady Montagu Mary Wortley.

**A joint event with Evesham & District Music Club.**



SAT 27TH JULY, 2.00 PM  
**Books and Bikes**  
Free event

Postponed after a rainy 2023, this event is a unique opportunity to celebrate a love of biking with a love of books. Join us for a leisurely 20-mile social cycle ride, starting at Evesham Velo Park and finishing at Raphael’s Restaurant. Led by leading local cyclist, Helen Russell, this ride will pause in Dumbleton to hear about Dumbleton Hall and its literary connections, and visit the grave of Patrick Leigh Fermor, once described as “Britain’s greatest travel writer”. On to Bredon Hill, where we will stop for a reading of Housman’s poem, *On Bredon Hill*.

Ride in conjunction with Cycle Evesham Vale. Suitable for all abilities and for regular or electric bikes. There will be a back-marker so no one will be left behind.

**This is a free event but please register with info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org**



WED 7TH AUGUST, 7.00 PM  
**The Ashchurch to Tewkesbury Railway**  
Evesham Rowing Club, £10

If you heard Ian Boskett’s Great Train Robbery talk in 2023 you won’t want to miss this one. Ian is a heritage railway enthusiast whose passion and enthusiasm for his subject guarantees a wonderful evening’s entertainment. In this talk we journey along the railway line from Ashchurch to Tewkesbury, looking at some of the old stations, and with plenty of then and now photos and some great stories. Ashchurch is where Ian grew up – happy memories of running away from school to watch trains! The talk reveals many of the local landmarks left behind and Ian will be bringing along a selection of some of the many artefacts he has collected over the years and which now adorn his house, garden, and even his bedroom! He reckons he has so many artefacts he could easily rebuild the line. Come on board for this unique journey – enjoyment guaranteed!

SUN 11TH AUGUST, 2.00 PM  
**Common Ground, with Mikron Theatre Company**  
Raphael’s Restaurant

The Pendle and District Ramblers are looking forward to their 50th anniversary walk. But the path has been blocked by the landowner. How will they find their way through? Maybe we’re all just trying to find our own way. A diverting ramble through the history of land access in England, from the Norman Conquest to Lockdown, via the mass trespass at Kinder Scout. Get your boots and jacket, and join Mikron for a hike through history.

**This event will take place outside whatever the weather. Bring your own chairs. No need to pre-book for this event. Just come along. There will be the usual Mikron ‘pay what you feel’ bucket collection at the end of the performance. If you would like to eat at Raphael’s, please book with them direct – 01386 45460.**

SAT 7TH SEPTEMBER, 7.00 PM  
**The Enigma of Edward Elgar, with Michael Lunts**  
Bretforton Theatre Barn, £15

A musical drama about Edward Elgar, focussing on his relationship with his beloved wife Alice. Written and performed by Michael Lunts. The friends who inspired the famous ‘Enigma Variations’ are also brought to life as, following the death of Alice, the composer muses on the origins of that first acknowledged masterpiece, a work that put him on the musical map, and which may never have seen the light of day but for Alice’s encouragement and inspiration. But who, ultimately, was Edward Elgar? Was he the real ‘enigma’?

In this performance, the Enigma Variations are played live in a special piano transcription made by Elgar himself. Michael Lunts has written and performed a number of acclaimed one-man shows about key moments in the lives of composers, ‘The Enigma of Edward Elgar’ is the latest of these dramas, and the first in which Michael has portrayed a British composer, whose music and the enigmatic character reflected in it, have long fascinated him.

**Note: steep steps to the theatre. No disabled access.**







WED 2ND OCTOBER, 7.00 PM  
**How We Made the Golden Age of Steam**  
Evesham Rowing Club, £10

TV Producer David Parker's two-part series 'The Golden Age of Steam' broke audience viewing records when it was first transmitted on BBC Four. Yet the series almost never got commissioned. Using superb home movie films of Britain's steam railways and the locomotives that ran on them, alongside testimony from some of the men and women who 'saved our steam', David will talk about what happened, why the series was 'touch and go' and how, having persuaded the BBC to support it, he was able to tell this remarkable story.

David is a firm Festival favourite, having previously delivered superb sessions on Laurie Lee, Johnny Kingdom, and the Flying Scotsman, as well as leading two wonderful Laurie Lee themed walks from the village of Slad.

FRI 1ST NOVEMBER, 1.00 PM  
**Mohandas K Gandhi – 'seditious Middle Temple lawyer' or 'the most enlightened of all political men'?**

Holland House, Cropthorne, £22  
Tickets via Holland House: [www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)  
E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org), or T: 01386 860330

Views on Gandhi are varied, and far from universally positive. To Churchill, Gandhi was a seditious anti-colonialist, while to Einstein he was a truly great human being. His passionate adherence to 'satyagraha' - non-violent resistance - led to India's independence from British rule in 1947, and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom all over the world.

Gandhi learnt from his own life and mistakes. He called his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. How did his experiences training as a lawyer in London and as an early and leading civil rights activist in South Africa forge Gandhi into the powerful force that led India to independence? What price did his wife and family pay? How have his theories stood the test of time?

In this talk, Galen Bartholomew will attempt to examine these issues and to suggest how this painfully shy man became a prophetic voice for the twenty first century, whose views transcend race, religion and nation.

Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated) but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.



FRI 8TH NOVEMBER, 7.00 PM  
**Enid Blyton – Noddy, Big-Ears and Lashings of Controversy**

The Henrician, Evesham, £12  
(plus £1 booking fee per ticket)

Enid Blyton was loved by children. She sold more than 600 million books, despite all her work being banned by the BBC and many libraries and schools for more than thirty years. She was accused of being a racist and of using such limited vocabulary that it actually hindered children's reading progress. She had an interesting love life and enjoyed playing golf so much that she bought a golf course near Swanage. She died of Alzheimer's in 1968, aged 71, mourned by millions of readers all over the world.

Actress Liz Grand (previous shows: 'The Second Best Bed', 'Where is Mrs Christie?' and 'Mrs Churchill – My Life with Winston') plays this remarkable and controversial woman and brings you Enid Blyton's incredible story. An On A Role production. Not suitable for children.

Tickets only from: [www.henrician.org](http://www.henrician.org)



Photo by On A Role

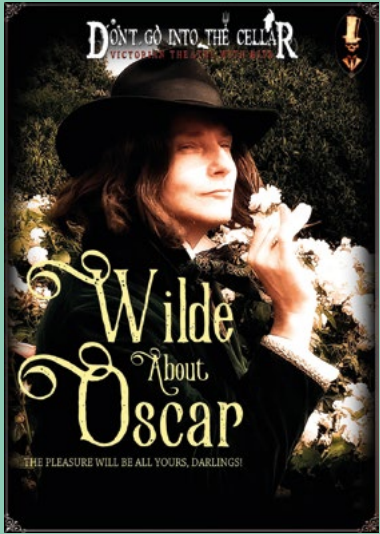
FRI 29TH NOVEMBER, 7.30 PM  
**Wilde About Oscar**

The Henrician, Evesham, £12  
(plus £1 booking fee per ticket)

Join Oscar Wilde for a sparkling and sprightly one-man show, in which stories will be told, laughter will be raised and, perhaps, a few tears shall be shed. Award-winning actor Jonathan Goodwin performs in a show scripted and adapted by himself. This is a production by Don't Go Into The Cellar and anyone who saw Joanthan's performance of A Christmas Carol in 2023 will know they are in for a real treat.

Don't Go Into The Cellar perform at venues across the UK from theatres to manor houses and festivals. Their shows offer an original take on traditional Victorian and Edwardian literature – perfect for people seeking good old-fashioned theatrical entertainment.

Tickets only from: [www.henrician.org](http://www.henrician.org)



## Festival Steering Group

### Members:

Sue Ablett (Chair); Galen Bartholomew;  
Noelle Chambers; Joyce Davey; Lynn Lucchese;  
Diana Raphael; Caroline Treadwell (Wychavon),  
Social Media: Alison May.

## Festival Book Club

The Festival Book Club started in January 2020 and has proved really popular. Monthly meetings take place in central Evesham – lots of lively discussion, a wide range of books discussed with members having the chance to put forward their suggestions, and a very social group. If you're interested in joining, contact Helen Yendall.

E: [helenyendall@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:helenyendall@yahoo.co.uk)

## Book Blurb Competition

A new online competition for 2024. We all read the blurb on the back cover of books. We'll give you a selection and you just have to see if you can identify the book title and author. Simple! Free to enter. Book token prize. We'll be running this competition through the month of August. Details will be on our website later in the year.

## Want to help?

A Festival like Evesham Festival of Words is a significant undertaking, run entirely by volunteers. If you are interested in helping in any way – delivering brochures, making cakes, serving drinks at events, for example, or maybe joining the Committee, we'd love to hear from you.

E: [info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org](mailto:info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org), or  
T: Sue Ablett, Festival Chair, 0787 128 5606

## Festival Map

- Almonry**  
Abbey Gate, WR11 4BQ
  - Abbey Remains & Bell Tower**
  - All Saints Church / Church House**  
Market Place, WR11 4RW
  - Abbey Park & Riverside Walk**
  - Friends Meeting House**  
Cowl St, WR11 4PN
  - Evesham Library / Marriage Room**  
Oat St, WR11 4PJ
  - Ecgwins Club\***  
117 High Street, Evesham, WR11 4EQ
  - The Henrician\***  
Victoria Avenue, WR11 4QH
  - Evesham Rowing Club\***  
Abbey Rd, WR11 4ST
  - Hampton Ferry & Raphael's Cafe\***  
Boat Lane, WR11 4BP
  - Hampton Community Hall\***  
Pershore Rd, WR11 2PQ
  - Bengeworth Church**  
Port St, WR11 3LF
  - Regal Cinema**  
Port St, WR11 3LD
  - Methodist Church**  
WR11 4SF
  - Cornmill Yard\***  
Cornmill Lane, Cheltenham Rd, WR11 2LL
  - Evesham Velo Park\***  
WR11 2BH
- Bretforton Theatre Barn**  
(off map), WR11 7JH

\* Parking available at venue







## A huge thank you to:

### **Our wonderful contributors, audiences, volunteers, and Festival Patrons:**

Local MP, Nigel Huddleston; TV presenter and comedian, Alistair McGowan;  
Editor Cotswold & Vale Magazine, Lynne Powell; Local author, Helen Yendall

### **Sponsors and supporters:**

Abbey Appliances; Alison's Bookshop, Tewkesbury; Almonry Museum & Tourist Information Centre; Cornmill Yard; Cotswold & Vale Magazine; Evesham Journal; Evesham Library; Evesham Rotary Club; Family and Friends of the late Cllr Peter Griffiths; Friends of Evesham Festival of Words; A Friend of St Richard's Hospice; Raphael's Restaurant; T Stanberry-Flynn; The Henrician; Undervale Ltd; Vale Press Ltd.

**Festival brochure design:** Kitty Kovacevic

**Printing and production:** Vale Press Ltd

### **Major Sponsor:**



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## Where to Buy Tickets



[eveshamfestivalofwords.org](http://eveshamfestivalofwords.org)

Payments Via PayPal



20 Allardene, Evesham,  
Worcestershire, WR11 1EA

Cheques payable to  
'Evesham Festival of Words'.  
Please include full contact  
and event details.



SUE ABLETT

[info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org](mailto:info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org)

0787 128 5606

Note that we will not be printing tickets but confirmation will be given for all ticket purchases, and your name will be on the Event listing. Some events may sell out quickly. Check website for latest status.