



Saturday 21st to Sunday 29th March 2026



Simon Schama



Jung Chang



Antony Beevor



Brenda Hale



William Hague



Julia Donaldson



Chris Packham



Anuradha Roy



John Studzinski



Kathleen Stock



Yann Martel



Reeta Chakrabarti



Sajid Javid



Naz Shah



Hugh Bonneville



Pam Ayres



Xuemo



Penny Mordaunt

## POCKET GUIDE

Box Office 0333 666 3366 • [www.oxfordliteraryfestival.org](http://www.oxfordliteraryfestival.org)

## WELCOME TO YOUR POCKET GUIDE TO THE 2026 OXFORD LITERARY FESTIVAL

### Tickets

Tickets can be booked up to the last minute before the event:

- online at [www.oxfordliteraryfestival.org](http://www.oxfordliteraryfestival.org)
- by telephone on 0333 666 3366
- at the door on the day if spaces remain (card payments only)

**Note:** there will be an information desk in Blackwell Hall but no festival box office on site. **Please book ahead where possible.** We will be able to take card payments on the door if spaces remain available at events.

This pocket guide was correct at the time of going to press. Venues are sometimes subject to change, and more events may be added to the programme. See **STOP PRESS** on page 2 for some additional events that were still to be scheduled at time of publication. For all the latest times and venues, check our website at [www.oxfordliteraryfestival.org](http://www.oxfordliteraryfestival.org)

See page 54 for events for children and young people.

Email: [info@oxfordliteraryfestival.org](mailto:info@oxfordliteraryfestival.org)

Ticket enquiries: [tickets@oxfordliteraryfestival.org](mailto:tickets@oxfordliteraryfestival.org)

**Festival hub in Blackwell Hall** There will be a festival hub in Blackwell Hall, Weston Library, Broad Street. The hall will host the festival bookshop, festival information desk, a café, toilets, seating areas, exhibitions and some free talks.

**Festival bookshop** The festival bookshop is in Blackwell Hall opposite the Sheldonian Theatre. It will be open throughout the festival – browse a wide range of books by festival authors.

**Blackwells pop-up bookshops** You will find a book desk for buying the works of each author at individual festival events where you can have your copy signed by the author.



### Festival 25 Appeal

We are the only one of the big literary festivals not to receive UK government or public grants and rely on private sponsors and donors. Please scan the QR code for more details and to donate now. Help us to secure the future of the festival.

The festival is a registered charity No. 1128820.

## THE FESTIVAL AND FREE SPEECH

For 30 years the Oxford Literary Festival has been committed to freedom of speech, debate and diversity, maintaining a tradition of courteous dialogue, allowing for contentious and difficult subjects to be publicly discussed and examined.

The Oxford Literary Festival is a place where intellectual curiosity is nurtured and standards are set. It is conceived as a platform for dialogue, where the big ideas of the world can be freely debated in an intellectual but congenial atmosphere. Attendees are given access to some of the world's leading thinkers, and the opportunity to question and debate with them. In an era when there is an increasing desire to shut down free speech, the festival is a platform for free expression.

Over the decades we have welcomed speakers of every faith, and none; politicians and political thinkers of every persuasion; representatives of every minority and special interest group; as well as Nobel, Booker and Pulitzer Prize winners; former presidents and premiers and leading figures in every field of literature, philosophy, the arts, science, technology and the environment, and human endeavour.

Each year, the festival stages a series of international programmes to celebrate the literature and culture of those countries or continents. These have included India, Africa, USA, Ireland, Spain, Italy and China. We believe that offering a diverse range of speakers, writers and thinkers is the key to promoting authentic representation of other cultures. The multicultural character of the city and the university in Oxford provides a fitting backdrop. We see ourselves as a global and multicultural resource.

For decades the festival has been subject to threats of boycotts, platforming, protests, disruptions and even physical violence. No invitation has ever been withdrawn.

We are greatly encouraged by the support of the thousands of festival attendees each year, who come to hear dissenting voices on every topic, ask questions, meet the speakers, and form their own opinions.

This tradition of open dialogue and free expression is one we are committed to preserving and maintaining.





Exeter College Chapel – a festival venue

## LITERARY WALKS

SATURDAY 21 MARCH, WEDNESDAY 25 MARCH  
AND SATURDAY 28 MARCH

### Literary Oxford with Alastair Lack

2pm / Meet outside St John's College Lodge, St Giles / £25

Walk lasts two hours

SUNDAY 22 MARCH

### Oxford Poets with Alastair Lack

2pm / Meet outside St John's College Lodge, St Giles / £25

Walk lasts two hours

FRIDAY 27 MARCH

### Alastair Lack

The Oxford of Morse, Lewis and Endeavour

2pm / Meet outside St John's College Lodge, St Giles / £25

Walk lasts two hours



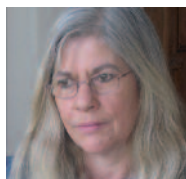
Aerial view of ancient university and college buildings in central Oxford, many of which are festival venues. (Photo: Yushi Zhao)

# SATURDAY 21 MARCH

SEE PAGE 54 FOR CHILDREN'S EVENTS



Jem Poster



Sarah Burton

## Jem Poster and Sarah Burton

**Creative Writing Course:**  
**Rediscovered Selves: Writing Memoir and Autobiography**

**9.30am / Harris Manchester College:**  
**Warrington Room / £90**

Everyone has stories to tell about themselves, and if you've ever thought about writing down your own life-story, or any part of it, you've probably wondered how best to approach your task; or you may have begun the task and found it more challenging than you had anticipated. Whether you imagine writing only for friends and family or for a wider readership, this one-day course will help you to rediscover and shape your own personal life story.



Richard Brooks

## Richard Brooks talks to Nick Wallis

**Private Eye: Post Mortem**

**10am / Mathematical Institute:**  
**Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)**

Investigative journalist for *Private Eye* Richard Brooks explains how the Post Office, the British government and a global IT company ruined the lives of thousands of people.



## Charles Foster Pets and Their People

**10am / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18**  
**(£10 student)**

Bestselling natural historian Professor Charles Foster mixes psychology, science and cultural history to explore the fascinating relationship between humans and pets.

## Hallie Rubenhold talks to Andrew Wilson

**Story of a Murder: The Wives, the Mistress, and Dr Crippen**

**10am / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Historian and bestselling author Hallie Rubenhold talks about her latest book, a panoramic examination of the infamous 1910 murder in London of the American music hall performer, Belle Elmore.



Hallie Rubenhold



Andrew Wilson

## Bill Tara, Marlene Watson-Tara, Gary Francione, Anna Charlton and Laurence Candy

**Exploring the Microbiome: Health from the Inside Out**

**10.30 am / Pusey House / £85**

Join our presenters for a day of inquiry into what we are eating and how changing our daily diet can improve our health and reconnect us with the world we live in. The day includes a delicious plant-based lunch to demonstrate how you can incorporate these dietary principles into your daily life without compromising on taste and enjoyment. **One-day workshop**

## Jonathan Dimpleby talks to Chris Patten



Jonathan Dimpleby



Chris Patten

**Lord Patten Free Speech Conversation:**  
**War in Palestine and the New World Order**

**12 noon / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-£18**  
**(£18-£10 student)**

Author, historian and broadcast journalist Jonathan Dimpleby discusses an updated version of his seminal book *The Palestinians* and his view that there can be no lasting peace without a solution to the human tragedy of a people without a land. And he considers the worrying changes to the post-world order and their implications for all of us. Dimpleby appears at the invitation of Lord Chris Patten for his annual Free Speech Conversation.



Elizabeth Drayson

**Elizabeth Drayson Introduced by**  
**Miles Young**

**Voltaire Lecture: The Hidden Islamic Sources of the European Enlightenment**

**12 noon / New College: New Space / £18**  
**(£10 student)**

Expert in medieval literature and cultural history Dr Elizabeth Drayson explains how Islamic knowledge laid the foundations for the age of reason.

## Gerri Kimber talks to Michael Caines

**Katherine Mansfield: A Hidden Life**

**12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18**  
**(£10 student)**

World expert on Katherine Mansfield Professor Gerri Kimber challenges previous conceptions about the author's life and uncovers friendships and relationships barely acknowledged until now.

## Louis Charalambous talks to Nick Wallis

**Better Call Louis: Adventures in the Media Jungle**

**12 noon / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Media lawyer and advisor Louis Charalambous looks back over 30 years of media scandals and the murky world of injunctions, defamation and celebrity ego.





Simon Mason

### Simon Mason talks to Triona Adams

Leading a Double Life of Crime:  
Wilkins Mysteries and Finder series

12 noon / Pusey House: Chapel / £18  
(£10 student)

The author of two successful, concurrent, much-loved and very different series Simon Mason explains how writers keep their separate identities separate.

### Frank Thabani Sayi and Peter Godwin The Birth of Zimbabwe: No Safer Kinder Hatred and Exit Wounds

12 noon / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18  
(£10 student)



Frank Thabani Sayi



Peter Godwin

Open University lecturer and former police officer Frank Thabani Sayi and author, journalist and former human rights lawyer Peter Godwin discuss the country of their birth, Zimbabwe, and why they write about it, including themes of colonialism, ethnic violence, racial equality, migration and legacy.

### Alistair Moffat

The North Sea: Along the Edge of Britain

2pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Historian and former television executive Alistair Moffat tells the history of Britain's North Sea coast and explains how it has shaped who we are and how we see ourselves.



Chris Packham

### Chris Packham talks to Philip Lymbery Wild for Life

2pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-£18 (£18-£10 student)

BBC wildlife presenter and animal activist Chris Packham talks about his life and inspiration and about what troubles him and what gives him hope.



Carl Frey

### Carl Frey talks to Linda Yueh

How Progress Ends: Technology, Innovation, and the Fate of Nations

2pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Economic historian Professor Carl Frey warns that societies need to get the balance right when adjusting to new technologies or progress can stall.

### Andrew Taylor talks to Carolyn Kirby

Historical Crime Fiction: A Servant of Two Masters?



Andrew Taylor



Carolyn Kirby

2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)

Historical crime writer Andrew Taylor discusses the line between historical fact and fiction in the genre in conversation with fellow novelist Carolyn Kirby.

### Olivia Laing in Conversation with Eley Williams

The Silver Book

2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)



Olivia Laing



Eley Williams

Join Olivia Laing for a captivating discussion of art, illusion, and desire. Their new novel *The Silver Book* is a queer love story and a noirish thriller set in 1970s Italian cinema, where beauty and danger intertwine and the boundaries between truth and artifice blur.

### Chris Packham, Isabella Tree and Philip Lymbery.

4pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-£18 (£18-£10 student)

BBC wildlife presenter and animal activist Chris Packham, author and conservationist Isabella Tree and chief executive of Compassion in World Farming Philip Lymbery discuss why we should care about nature and how we can put a value on it when a tree is worth more dead than alive.



Chris Packham



Isabella Tree



Philip Lymbery

### Colin Freeman

The Mad and the Brave: The Untold Story of Ukraine's Foreign Legion

4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)

Foreign correspondent Colin Freeman gives a sense of life on the Ukrainian frontline including eyewitness accounts of key events in the first two years of the war such as the sieges of Kyiv and Mariupol, the liberation of Kherson and the failed counter-offensive of 2023.



## SATURDAY 21 MARCH (continued)



### Alison Larkin Grief: A Comedy

4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Comedian and writer Alison Larkin talks about her novel-memoir, an uplifting story that shows how true love can live on after death, based on her solo comedy show of the same name.



### Kate McLoughlin Silence: A Literary History

4pm / Oxford University Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)

English lecturer Professor Kate McLoughlin looks back over 12 centuries of English literature to uncover the power and possibilities of silence.



### Luka Jukic Central Europe: The Death of a Civilisation and the Life of an Idea

4pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Journalist and historian Luka Jukic attempts to define Central Europe and asks why the idea of a central Europe is such a powerful one.

### Nigel Biggar and Marie Kawthar Daouda Empire and the Colonies: Challenging Ideas of Guilt and Victimhood

4pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)



Nigel Biggar



Marie Kawthar Daouda

Theologian Lord Nigel Biggar and Moroccan-French academic Dr Marie Kawthar Daouda challenge the ongoing debate around the legacy of colonialism and discuss making amends for historic wrongs, paying reparations, immigration and questions of race and responsibility.

### Ian Patterson and Francesca Galligan A Passion for Books

6pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)



Ian Patterson



Francesca Galligan

Writer and poet Ian Patterson and rare books librarian Francesca Galligan discuss their passion for books and reading and why it is so important in our lives and offer some thoughts on buying and collecting books and keeping them safely stored.

### John Finnemore talks to Mick Herron My First Murder

6pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)

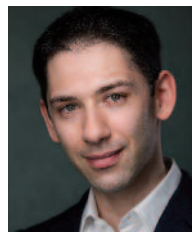


John Finnemore



Mick Herron

BBC Radio 4 sketch writer John Finnemore discusses his first venture into crime fiction in conversation with one of the UK's greatest crime writers Mick Herron.



### Joseph Jebelli The Brain at Rest: Why Doing Nothing Can Change Your Life

6pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Neuroscientist Dr Joseph Jebelli says long baths, walks in nature, meditation and simple daydreaming are the key to a happier, healthier and more productive life.



### Liam Byrne Why Populists Are Winning: and How to Beat Them

6pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)

Labour MP and former cabinet minister Liam Byrne says populists such as Trump and Le Pen are rewriting the rules of politics and stoking division and argues that it is a road that leads to ruin.

### Tim Wigmore and Huw Turbervill Test Cricket: Past, Present and Uncertain Future

6pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)



Tim Wigmore



Huw Turbervill

Sports writers Tim Wigmore and Huw Turbervill discuss their love of test cricket and its history and ask whether it will survive the inexorable rise of the short form of the game.

### Michelle Paver and Catriona Ward talk to Suzi Feay Masters of Gothic Fiction

6pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)



Michelle Paver



Catriona Ward

Join two masters of modern gothic fiction, Michelle Paver and Catriona Ward, for an evening of chilling conversation and literary insight and a complimentary glass of wine.

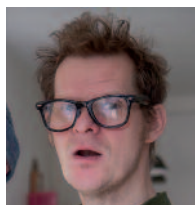
## SUNDAY 22 MARCH

SEE PAGE 54 FOR CHILDREN'S EVENTS

**Jem Poster and Sarah Burton** Creative Writing Course:  
Imagined Selves: An Approach to Fiction-writing

**9.30am / Harris Manchester College: Warrington Room / £90**

A work of fiction will usually draw to some extent – sometimes to a significant extent – on the writer's personal experience, but it doesn't simply replicate that experience. How might we use our own experience as the basis or starting point for the writing of a novel or short story? And to what extent might we need to distance ourselves from the facts of our lives in the interests of our fictions? This one-day course will address these and related questions, guiding you towards ways of writing that are at once grounded in experience and imaginatively adventurous.



Joff Winterhart

**Joff Winterhart talks to Patrick Gale**  
Dear Historian

**10am / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Graphic novelist Joff Winterhart talks about his new book, *Dear Historian*, a comic story of two women navigating a generational age gap, loss, celebrity historians and bad knees.



**Oliver Bullough** Everybody Loves our Dollars: How Money Laundering Won

**10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)**

Investigative journalist and writer Oliver Bullough exposes the dark secrets at the heart of the world economy and explains how few crimes of acquisition would be worthwhile without money laundering.



**Andrew Lownie** Entitled: The Rise and Fall of the House of York

**12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)**

Literary agent and biographer Andrew Lownie lifts the lid on the lives of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and his ex-wife Sarah Ferguson, finding a spoilt prince unable to connect and a duchess desperate to maintain the attention brought by her royal status.



**Catherine Clarke**  
A History of England in 25 Poems

**12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)**

Professor Catherine Clarke tells the history of Britain through 25 poems written between the eighth century and today and explains how they connect us with the emotions and imaginations of those who lived them.

**Artemis Cooper and Cal Revely-Calder.**  
Chaired by Miles Young Pol Roger Duff Cooper Prize:  
Writing Non-fiction in the Age of AI.

**12 noon / New College: MacGregor Matthews Room / £18 (£10 student)**



Artemis Cooper



Cal Revely-Calder

Artemis Cooper, the chair of the Pol Roger Duff Cooper Prize for non-fiction, discusses the challenges of writing non-fiction in the age of AI with the literary editor of *The Telegraph* Cal Revely-Calder. Where will we continue to find the great, well-told stories? The event marks the 70th anniversary of the first award in 1956. A glass of Pol Roger champagne will be served to every ticket holder.



**Jim Mellon**  
Jim Mellon Future Tech Interview

**12 noon / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

An innovation and technology leader talks to businessman and investor Jim Mellon about their field and the opportunities it holds for the world. See website for details.

**Joe Tidy** Ctrl+ Alt+ Chaos: How Teenage Hackers Hijack the Internet

**12 noon / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

BBC cyber correspondent Joe Tidy tells the story of notorious hacker Julius Kivimäki, known as Zeekill, who blackmailed 30,000 Finnish psychotherapy patients with their stolen therapy notes.

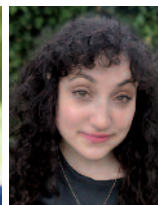
**Taeku Lee, Oliver Bullough, Sarah Stein Lubrano and Pepper Culpepper.** Chaired by Stephen Law  
Oxford Debate: Is Democracy under Threat from Oligarchs and Corporate Capture?

**12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £18 (£10 student)**

Experts in democracy Professor Taeku Lu and Professor Pepper Culpepper, investigative journalist Oliver Bullough and social theorist Dr Sarah Stein Lubrano discuss the growing mistrust of politicians and the rise in influence of oligarchs and corporate business.



Taeku Lee



Sarah Stein Lubrano



Pepper Culpepper



Stephen Law





**Tim Spector** Ferment and World-Leading Research on Health and Diet  
12 noon / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-£18 (£18-£10 student)

World-leading gut scientist and bestselling author Professor Tim Spector talks about his new book, *Ferment*, his work on diet and health, his efforts in fighting Covid-19 and his leadership of the world's biggest citizen science project.



**Daniel Taub** Beyond Dispute: Rediscovering the Jewish Art of Constructive Disagreement  
2pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Experienced peace negotiator and diplomat Daniel Taub argues that ancient Jewish wisdom offers a way to help resolve seemingly irreconcilable differences around the world.

### Deborah Douglas and Tracy King

The Cost of Trust: The Butcher Surgeon

2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)



Deborah Douglas



Tracy King

The 'Erin Brokovich of Birmingham' Deborah Douglas and writer and producer Tracy King discuss their book on the case of Ian Paterson, the so-called 'butcher surgeon' who deceived thousands of patients and carried out unnecessary surgery.

### Jay Griffiths talks to Charles Foster How Animals Heal Us

2pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Writer Jay Griffiths draws on science, history and indigenous knowledge to offer an insight into the healing nature of our relationship with animals.



Jay Griffiths



Charles Foster

Here she talks to natural historian Professor Charles Foster, author of *Pets and People*, about which he speaks at another festival event.

### Patrick Gale talks to Sophie Ratcliffe Love Lane

2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)



Patrick Gale



Sophie Ratcliffe

Novelist Patrick Gale talks about his latest work, *Love Lane*, an exploration of home and family, which sees him return to the story of Harry Cane, the central character in his bestselling book *A Place Called Winter*.



### Pam Ayres Doggedly Onward: A Life in Poems

2pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-£18 (£18-£10 student)

Pam Ayres talks about her life as one of the UK's bestselling poets of the last few decades and about her latest book, *Doggedly Onward: A Life in Poems*.

### Andrew Jamieson talks to Roslind Porter On the Couch: Twenty Extraordinary Personalities, from Picasso to Putin

4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)



Andrew Jamieson



Roslind Porter

Psychotherapist Professor Andrew Jamieson discusses the key principles of psychoanalysis and illustrates them with psychobiographies of well-known artists and personalities including Picasso, Putin, Virginia Woolf and Kafka.

### Justin Marozzi talks to Professor Eugene Rogan

Captives and Companions: A History of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Islamic World



Justin Marozzi



Eugene Rogan

4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)

Historian and journalist Justin Marozzi explains the often-overlooked history of slavery in the Islamic world, which ranged from agricultural labour and domestic enslavement through to concubinage, political leadership and even military command.



## SUNDAY 22 MARCH (continued)



Kate Wilson

**Kate Wilson talks to Oliver Bullough**  
Disclosure: Unravelling the Spycops Files

**4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)**

Campaigner Kate Wilson tells how she took on Britain's secret police in court and won after discovering she and her fellow environmental campaigners had been spied on and that a former partner was an undercover policeman.



**Tim Lenton**

Positive Tipping Points: How to Fix the Climate Crisis

**4pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Earth scientist Professor Tim Lenton says we can all play a part in triggering positive tipping points to accelerate us out of the climate crisis.

**Katrien Devolder, Daniel Kodsia and Carissa Véliz. Chaired by Gary Francione**

How Can Philosophers Tackle Pressing Social Issues

**4pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-£18 (£18-£10 student)**

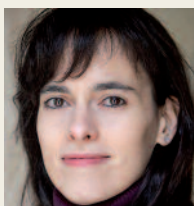
Philosophers Professor Katrien Devolder, Dr Daniel Kodsia, Professor Carissa Véliz and Professor Gary Francione discuss how philosophical analysis can be used to tackle complicated social issues that are important to the public, ranging from laziness and welfare support to trust in experts, privacy and the moral value of animals.



Katrien Devolder



Daniel Kodsia



Carissa Veliz



Gary Francione

## MONDAY 23 MARCH



**Simon Schama** The History of Antisemitism: A Warning for Today

**12 noon / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**

Award-winning historian and broadcaster Professor Sir Simon Schama gives the festival's first annual lecture on antisemitism with a talk on its history and origins.

**Jem Poster and Sarah Burton**

Serious Play: The Value of Guided Fiction-writing Exercises

**12 noon / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

In this interactive session creative writing tutors Jem Poster and Sarah Burton talk about their new book, *The Prompts You Need to Help You Write the Book You Want to Write*, explaining its nature and purpose and inviting questions from the audience.



**Jenny Uglow** A Year with Gilbert White: The First Great Nature Writer

**12 noon / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)**

Award-winning biographer Jenny Uglow provides a unique insight into the mind and character of Britain's first great nature writer Gilbert White.



**Marion Coutts**

What did the Deep Sea Say?

**12 noon / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)**

Writer and artist Marion Coutts combines the real with the fictional in a reflection through the lens of art, poetry, geology, maps and Minecraft on intimacy and separation and the fragility and strangeness of the ocean and its borders.



**Nicola Moorby** Turner and Constable: Art, Life, Landscape

**12 noon / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Art historian and curator Nicola Moorby throws new light on two artists, Constable and Turner, born only 14 months apart, who went on to change the face of British art.



**Paula Byrne**

**Six Weeks by the Sea: The Summer Jane Austen Fell in Love**

**12pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Biographer and Jane Austen expert Dr Paula Byrne discusses her new novel, *Six Weeks by the Sea*, in which she imagines Jane Austen falling in love.



**Alwyn Turner** **A Shellshocked Nation: Britain Between The Wars**

**2pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Historian and writer Alwyn Turner describes how the turbulent period between two world wars in Britain laid the foundations for our modern nation.



**Anuradha Roy** **Called by the Hills: A Home in the Himalaya**

**2pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)**

Novelist and winner of India's highest literary prize Anuradha Roy talks about her memoir of building a home and garden on the edge of the Himalayan hills.



**Daniel Swift** **The Dream Factory: London's First Playhouse and the Making of William Shakespeare**

**2pm / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)**

English lecturer Professor Daniel Swift tells the story of London's first purpose-built playhouse and how it was the place that first made Shakespeare.

**Diarmaid MacCulloch and Christopher Clark.**

**Sex and the Church and the Scandal in Königsberg**

**2pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**



Historian of the Church Professor Sir Diarmaid MacCulloch and historian Professor Sir Christopher Clark discuss sex and Christianity including a curious scandal in Königsberg.

Diarmaid MacCulloch Christopher Clark

**Vikki Heywood and Francis Spufford. Chaired by Suzi Feay** **Festival Debuts: Miss Veal and Miss Ham**

**2pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Debut novelist Dame Vikki Heywood and established novelist Professor Francis Spufford discuss their work including why Spufford admires and is championing Heywood's writing.

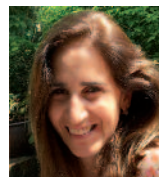
**David Marsh, Marina Wheeler and Viktor Mallet. Chaired by Stephen Law** **Oxford Debate: Can Europe Survive?**

**4pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Economist and journalist Professor David Marsh, barrister Marina Wheeler and foreign correspondent Victor Mallet ask whether Europe can survive the threats it is facing and whether the UK should build a new partnership with Europe to defend our democracy.



David Marsh



Marina Wheeler



Viktor Mallet

**Fiona Sampson** **Becoming George: The Invention of George Sand**

**4pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)**

Poet and biographer Dr Fiona Sampson reassesses the life and work of the 19th-century French novelist George Sand, who scandalised Paris and seemed to break every rule for women in polite society.

**Fitzroy Morrissey** **The Renewal of Islam: Thinkers and Believers of the Modern Era**



**4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Historian Dr Fitzroy Morrissey explains how Islam has evolved between the 19th century and today and discusses the thinkers who have helped to reinterpret the religion to meet changing ideas around gender, politics and history.

**Sally Gardner and Francis Spufford. Chaired by Suzi Feay** **The Bride Stone and Nonesuch**

**4pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**



Sally Gardner



Francis Spufford

Two award-winning novelists Sally Gardner and Professor Francis Spufford talk about their latest works, *The Bride Stone*, the story of a late 18th-century marriage of convenience, and *Nonesuch*, the story of an ambitious woman who must thwart an occult plot.

## MONDAY 23 MARCH (continued)



Howard Jacobson

### Howard Jacobson talks to Dr Louisa Treger *Howl*

6pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Booker winner Howard Jacobson talks about his latest novel, *Howl*, a devastating psychological portrait of a primary school head teacher who believes the world is crumbling around him.



### Jonathan Harris The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades

6pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Historian Professor Jonathan Harris introduces a history of the Crusades that reflects new research and understanding of the period and the approach to medieval warfare.



### Michael Pollan A World Appears: A Journey Into Consciousness

6pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-£18 (£18-£10 student)

Highly influential author, activist and journalist Professor Michael Pollan talks about his latest investigation into one of the greatest mysteries of nature – our consciousness – and explains how science may not be able to explain everything about our inner lives.

### Emily Tesh and Antonia Hodgson Scholarship and Sorcery

6pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)

Enter the world where institutions hold both promise and peril. Fantasy authors Emily Tesh and Antonia Hodgson explore the hallowed halls of education-as-power, the fraught inheritance of institutions and the keen awareness that learning can be the key to control, all served with a complimentary glass of wine.



Emily Tesh



Antonia Hodgson

## TUESDAY 24 MARCH



### Colin Shindler

A Forever War: Israel and Palestine

10am / Magdalen College: Auditorium / £18 (£10 student)

Leading authority on the Middle East and supporter of a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict Professor Colin Shindler asks how we can approach the truth about a perpetual war that has devastated the region.



### Franny Moyle

Mrs Kauffman and Madame Le Brun: The /Extraordinary Entwined Lives of Two 18th-Century Painters

10am / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Art historian Franny Moyle explains how two unjustly neglected women painters, Angelica Kauffman and Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun, were visionaries who helped to define 18th-century art and feminism before the term was even invented.

### Zoe Gardner, Simon Heffer and Jonathan Portes. Chaired by Stephen Law Oxford Debate. Immigration Debate: Legitimate Concerns or the Mainstreaming of Racism?

10am / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Policy researcher Zoe Gardner, journalist and historian Professor Lord Simon Heffer and former Treasury official Professor Jonathan Portes explore the tangled relationship between policy, prejudice and perception in the immigration debate.



Zoe Gardner



Simon Heffer



Jonathan Portes





## Benjamin Wood and Nicola Garrard

Young Lives Seeking a Better Future:  
Seascaper and On the Edge



Benjamin Wood



Nicola Garrard

**10am / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)**

Celebrated novelists Benjamin Wood and Nicola Garrard discuss the common themes in their latest novels about young lives in coastal towns seeking a better future.

## Astrid Goldsmith talks to Dr Louisa Treger The Crystal Vase



Astrid Goldsmith



Louisa Treger

**12 noon / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

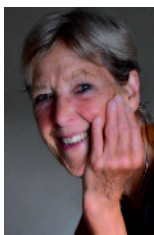
Animator and writer Astrid Goldsmith talks about her graphic memoir, *The Crystal Vase*, based on the true story of her grandmother, Gisela, a cousin of Anne Frank who escaped the Nazis and found refuge in Zimbabwe.

## Clare Jackson and Carol Chillington Rutter

History Makers: James VI and I and Henry Wotton



Clare Jackson



Carol Chillington Rutter

**12 noon / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Historian Professor Clare Jackson and Shakespeare scholar Professor Carol Chillington Rutter discuss two seminal figures from the late 16th and early 17th centuries, James VI and I, who joined the Scottish and English thrones, and Henry Wotton, a father of modern diplomacy.

## Katia Pizzi talks to Lavinia Filippi Venice Tales



Katia Pizzi



Lavinia Filippi

**12 noon / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Former director of the Italian Cultural Institute in London Dr Katia Pizzi introduces a new collection of short stories on Venice by Italian authors ranging from Boccaccio to Calvino. In discussion with Lavinia Filippi, director of the Venice in Peril Fund.



## Paul Dolan

Beliefism: How to Stop Hating the People we Disagree With

**12 noon / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)**

Behavioural scientist Professor Paul Dolan looks at why we discriminate against those we disagree with and asks how we can better accommodate opposing views.

## Simon Jenkins and Melissa Butcher

Making Sense of Donald Trump's United States



Simon Jenkins



Melissa Butcher

**12 noon / Magdalen College: Auditorium / £18 (£10 student)**

Veteran journalist Sir Simon Jenkins and geographer and former journalist Professor Melissa Butcher discuss the United States past and present and reflect on how it has arrived at where it is today. Why is the US so divided and what does the future hold?

## Alan Winfield and Marina Jirotko. Chaired by Tilda Storey Law Oxford Debate. Artificial Intelligence: Promise or Peril?

**2pm / Magdalen College: Auditorium / £18 (£10 student)**

Robotics researcher Professor Alan Winfield and computer scientist Professor Marina Jirotko discuss the extraordinary potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and the genuine dangers posed by this fast-advancing technology.



Alan Winfield



Marina Jirotko



Tilda Storey Law

## Hannah French and Kate Wakeling

The Rolling Year: Listening to the Seasons with Vivaldi



Hannah French



Kate Wakeling

**2pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Radio 3 presenter Dr Hannah French and poet and music critic Dr Kate Wakeling take a fresh look at Vivaldi's famous set of concertos, *The Four Seasons*, and encourage us to listen seasonally.



## Clare Mulley

Agent ZO: The Untold Story of Fearless WW2 Fighter Elżbieta Zawacka

2pm / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)

Author Clare Mulley tells the story of Elżbieta Zawacka who was the only woman to parachute from Britain into enemy occupied territory in Poland.



Harriet Cullen

## Harriet Cullen talks to Simon Heffer

Lady Pamela Berry: Passion, Politics and Power

2pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Writer Harriet Cullen talks about her portrait of her mother, Pamela Berry, the wife of a newspaper owner who became the most famous political and press hostess of her generation and used her beauty and wit to influence successive governments.

## Jamie Franklin, Bijan Omrani and Nick Spencer.

### Chaired by Jane Shaw

Ignoring Christianity at our Peril:  
How Christian Faith can Save West

2pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Priest Father Jamie Franklin, barrister and researcher Bijan Omrani and researcher Nick Spencer discuss belief in Christianity and why they feel a return to Christian faith can save the West and help it to face upcoming challenges.



Jamie Franklin



Bijan Omrani



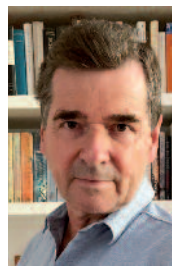
Nick Spencer



Jane Shaw

## Robert Winder and Vanessa Taylor

Great Rivers: The Current that Runs through Human History



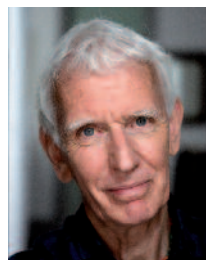
Robert Winder



Vanessa Taylor

4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Writer and critic Robert Winder and historian of rivers Dr Vanessa Taylor discuss the great rivers of the world, how they are closely intertwined with humanity and history and how they face greater threats than ever before.



## Steve Crawshaw

Prosecuting the Powerful: War Crimes and the Battle for Justice

4pm / Magdalen College: Auditorium / £18 (£10 student)

Journalist and human rights campaigner Steve Crawshaw asks whether powerful leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Benjamin Netanyahu could ever be put in a dock and charged for crimes.



Graham Tomlin Blaise Pascal: The Man Who Made The Modern World

6pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Theologian Rt Revd Dr Graham Tomlin explains why he views the scientist, geometer, physicist, philosopher, polemicist and theologian Blaise Pascal as one of the makers of the modern world.



Blackwell Hall, Weston Library – the festival hub and location of the festival bookshop.

photo: James Britain



## Dan Jones and Jo Harkin Lion Hearts and The Pretender

10am / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)



Dan Jones



Jo Harkin

Historian, broadcaster and novelist Dan Jones and novelist Jo Harkin discuss their latest works of historical fiction set in the 14th and 15th centuries.



## Helen Taylor Childless by Choice: What it Means to be Child Free

10am / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)

Writer and feminist academic Professor Helen Taylor reflects on her own experience, cultural history and portrayals in media and literature to explore what it means to voluntarily live a life without children and to challenge assumptions about family and female identity.

## Christina Hardyment

### Novel Crime Scenes: Twenty Deadly Fictional Landscapes

10am / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Writer and journalist Christina Hardyment explores the landscapes of 20 crime novels and explains what the settings meant to authors such as Agatha Christie, John Buchan and Colin Dexter.



## John Blair Killing the Dead: Vampire Epidemics from Mesopotamia to the New World

10am / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)

Medieval historian and archaeologist Professor John Blair talks about his latest book, *Killing the Dead*, the world's first in-depth account of the widespread mass hysteria known as a vampire epidemic.

## Michael Symmons Roberts talks to Jane Shaw

### Quartet for the End of Time: On Music, Grief and Birdsong

10am / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Poet and librettist Michael Symmons Roberts explains his fascination with Olivier Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps* and how it led him into an exploration of grief, of personal faith and doubt, and of the end of time and what may lie beyond it.



Michael Symmons

## Richard Susskind and Charlotte Blease

### Future Vision: Can AI Improve our Lives and Wellbeing?

10am / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)



Richard Susskind



Charlotte Blease

Renowned computer scientist Professor Richard Susskind and health researcher Dr Charlotte Blease discuss the future impacts of artificial intelligence (AI), including the advent of conscious machines and virtual new worlds and the potential for much better healthcare.

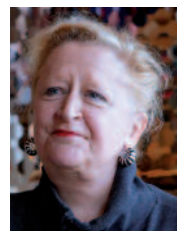


## Hannah Bourne-Taylor Nature Needs You: The Fight to Save Our Swifts

12 noon / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Nature writer and bird conservationist Hannah Bourne-Taylor tells how she created a national campaign to save swifts and how she used her painted and naked body to spark a national conversation.

## Margaret Heffernan and Steven D'Souza Unlocking Your Potential: Harnessing Uncertainty and your Darker Side



Margaret Heffernan



Steven D'Souza

12 noon / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Life coaches Margaret Heffernan and Steven D'Souza discuss ways of unlocking your personal potential including through harnessing uncertainty and recognising and embracing our darker side.



## Simukai Chigudu Chasing Freedom: Coming of Age at the End of Empire

12 noon / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)

Zimbabwe-born Oxford academic Professor Simukai Chigudu talks about the memoir of his life, his family's role in the liberation of his home country and Africa and about the legacy of colonialism.



## Martin Shaw Liturgies of the Wild: Myths that Make Us

12 noon / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)

Writer and mythographer Dr Martin Shaw argues we live in a myth-impooverished age and invites us to allow the oldest stories in the world to reshape our own.





**Tim Bouverie** Allies at War: The Politics of Defeating Hitler

**12 noon** / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Historian Tim Bouverie reveals the political drama behind the alliance between Britain, the United States and Russia that brought victory in the Second World War.



**Carol Attack** Plato: A Civic Life

**2pm** / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)

Classicist Dr Carol Attack explains how the lived experience of Plato, one of the key western philosophers, had an impact on his thought.

**Federico Varese and Nick Harkaway**  
Tradecraft: Writers on John le Carré



Federico Varese



Nick Harkaway

**2pm** / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Close friend of the writer John le Carré Professor Federico Varese and Le Carré's son, Nick Harkaway, introduce a new collection of essays that provide insights into the novelist's working methods.

**Jana Bakunina, Joe Luc Barnes and Lucy Ash**  
Russia Today: What do its People Really Think

**2pm** / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Russian dissident author and journalist Jana Bakunina, journalist Joe Luc Barnes and presenter and documentary maker Lucy Ash discuss what life is like in Russia and its satellites today, what people really think about Putin and war in Ukraine and how the Church is being used to control the population.



Jana Bakunina



Joe Luc Barnes



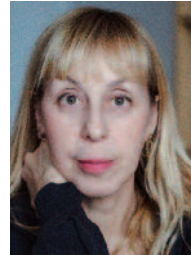
Lucy Ash



**Justine Picardie** Fashioning the Crown: A Story of Power, Conflict and Couture

**2pm** / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Writer and former features director of *Vogue* Justine Picardie explains how royal women including Queen Elizabeth II and the Queen Mother projected power and perpetuity, diplomacy and even defiance through what they wore during a tumultuous period for the monarchy.



**Lola Lafon** When You Listen to This Song: On Memory, Loss, and Writing

**2pm** / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)

Leading French feminist intellectual and novelist Lola Lafon talks about her prize-winning reflection on Anne Frank, on her own family's experience of the Holocaust and on her own loss of a childhood friend.

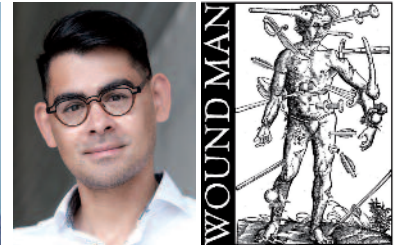
**Jack Hartnell and Ruben Verwaal** Medical Image and Mythology: The Wound Man and Blood, Sweat and Tears

**2pm** / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Art historian Dr Jack Hartnell and medical researcher Dr Ruben Verwaal discuss medical imagery and mythology, including a look at the famous Wound Man image and a reflection on how our bodily fluids have been represented through history.



Jack Hartnell



Ruben Verwaal

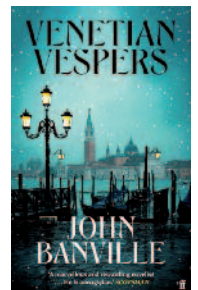
**John Banville talks to Suzi Feay**  
Venetian Vespers

**4pm** / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Booker Prize-winning author John Banville introduces his latest work, *Venetian Vespers*, an eerie novel set in Venice.



John Banville





**Antony Beevor** *Rasputin and the Downfall of the Romanovs*

**4pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**

Multi-award-winning writer Sir Antony Beevor turns his gaze to the Russian mystic Rasputin. Was he a visionary, a fraud or a victim of history?



**Luke Kemp** *Goliath's Curse: The History and Future of Societal Collapse*

**4pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Social scientist Dr Luke Kemp looks back in history at the fundamental forces that led to the collapse of societies and draws out some lessons for our uncertain future.

**Matt Cook and Rebecca Jennings**

*A Queer Scrapbook: Britain and Ireland Since 1945*

**4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**



Matt Cook



Rebecca Jennings

Social and cultural historian Professor Matt Cook and historian Professor Rebecca Jennings discuss a collection of LGBTIQ+ histories from the last 80 years and explain how they show how communities have fought against injustice and for equal rights.



**Sally Gimson**

*Off the Rails: The Inside Story of HS2*

**4pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)**

Journalist Sally Gimson says the much-vaunted High-Speed 2 (HS2) rail project collapsed after being dogged by mismanagement, overspending and incompetence.



Saalessh Rao

**Saalessh Rao talks to Bill Tara**

*A Guide to Planet B*

**6pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Systems specialist and founder of Climate Healers Dr Saalessh Rao talks about why humanity has to switch from a Planet A to a Planet B mindset to combat climate change.

**Joanna Miller and Harriet Evans**

*Conversation and Books over a Glass of Wine*

**6pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)**



Joanna Miller



Harriet Evans

Come and meet novelists Joanna Miller and Harriet Evans over a glass of wine, hear about their latest novels and enjoy conversation about all things books and publishing.

**Steven Parissien** *Another Round: A Post-War History of Britain in 12 Strong Drinks*



**6pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Cultural historian Dr Steven Parissien looks at Britain's drinking culture. What are our favourite drinks and what do they say about our wider culture?

**John Sergeant talks to William Hague**

*Chancellor's Forum: Give me Ten Seconds*



John Sergeant



William Hague

**6pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**

One of the UK's best known political broadcasters John Sergeant talks about his life and career and the state of politics and journalism today in conversation with the Chancellor of the University of Oxford and former Conservative Party leader Lord William Hague.



Sir Christopher Wren's Sheldonian Theatre – venue for the Chancellor's Forum and other great festival events.



City centre map of  
festival venues

- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Weston Library – Festival Hub, Blackwell's Festival Bookshop, Information Desk, Lecture Theatre, Exhibitions in the Galleries, and Café and Toilets | <b>7</b> Pusey House                |
| <b>2</b> Sheldonian Theatre  | <b>8</b> Mathematical Institute     |
| <b>3</b> Convocation House   | <b>9</b> Worcester College          |
| <b>4</b> Oxford Martin School Lecture Theatre  | <b>10</b> Lincoln College           |
| <b>5</b> Blackwell's Bookshop  | <b>11</b> Exeter College            |
| <b>6</b> Department for Continuing Education   | <b>12</b> New College               |
|  | <b>13</b> St John's College         |
|  | <b>14</b> Harris Manchester College |
|  | <b>15</b> Magdalen College          |
|  | <b>16</b> Bus Station               |

Festival port and wine  
tastings – in association  
with Symington Family  
Estates of Portugal.

See website for details

  
**SYMINGTON**  
*Family Estates*

Wines of the Douro Valley



## Reeta Chakrabarti talks to Suzi Feay

### Festival Debuts: Finding Belle

10am / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)



Reeta Chakrabarti



Suzi Feay

BBC News presenter Reeta Chakrabarti discusses her debut novel *Finding Belle*, a story of mothers and daughters that stretches from the beaches of Mombasa to the suburbs of England and the streets of Kolkata. Here she talks to reviewer for the FT Suzi Feay.

## Adam Sisman The Indefatigable Asa Briggs

10am / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Biographer Adam Sisman tells the story of Asa Briggs, one of the foremost historians of his time whose inner life was more turbulent than it appeared even to those who knew him well.

## Alice Loxton and Hetta Howes

### Medieval Women: A Forgotten Queen and Extraordinary Lives

10am / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)



Alice Loxton



Hetta Howes

Two of the UK's brightest young historians, Alice Loxton and Dr Hetta Howes, discuss the lives of medieval women, including those of England's forgotten but formidable queen Eleanor and four ordinary women doing extraordinary things.



## Fawaz A Gerges The Great Betrayal: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in the Middle East

10am / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Political scientist Professor Fawaz Gerges argues that an authoritarian status quo maintained by political leaders, meddling by the west and regional conflicts is holding back political change and social progress in the Middle East.

## Robert Douglas-Fairhurst

### Look Closer: How to Get More out of Reading

10am / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)

Award-winning writer Professor Robert Douglas-Fairhurst reflects on more than 20 years' teaching English literature and offers some simple techniques to help readers get more from their reading.



## John Studzinski A 21st Century Perspective: Our Life and Times Today

10am / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)

Investment banker and philanthropist John Studzinski gives the festival's annual 'perspective' lecture in which a distinguished intellect is invited to give their views on the complex and confusing times in which we find ourselves today.

Studzinski reflects on the themes in his book *A Talent for Giving: Creating a More Generous Society that Benefits Everyone*.



## Harriet Rix The Genius of Trees: How Trees Mastered the Elements and Shaped the World

12 noon / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Tree scientist Harriet Rix reveals the inventive and astonishing ways trees learned to shape the natural world.

## James Fox Craft Land: A Journey Through Britain's Lost Arts and Vanishing Trades

12 noon / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)

Art historian and broadcaster Dr James Fox says Britain has always been a craft land and what we built with our hands has defined and shaped our identities, communities and regions throughout the ages.

## Lou Gilmond and Brian Klein AI Dangers Imagined: Divinity Games and The Spider Covenant

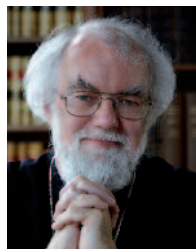
12 noon / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)

Novelists Lou Gilmond and Brian Klein discuss their latest works that put artificial intelligence (AI) and its dangers at the heart of the plot. Could this really happen?

## Ramie Targoff Shakespeare's Sisters: Four Women Who Wrote the Renaissance

12 noon / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Literary scholar Professor Ramie Targoff tells the story of four women writers of Shakespeare's day whose important work has been either forgotten or overlooked.



## Rowan Williams Solidarity: The Work of Recognition

12 noon / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Former Archbishop of Canterbury the Rt Rev Lord Rowan Williams explains why he finds hope for humankind in the idea of solidarity both as an idea and as a way of acting in the world.

**Zoe Gardner, Paul Holden, Albie Amankona**

**Chaired by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown**

**Oxford Debate: You Ask the Questions**

**12 noon / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**

Join our panel of leading political and media figures Zoe Gardner, Paul Holden, Albie Amankona for lively debate on topics of the day, chaired by Yasmin Alibhai Brown. Ticketholders will be invited to email questions before the event, and Alibhai-Brown will pick a representative range for audience members to ask.



Paul Holden



Albie Amankona



Yasmin Alibhai Brown



**Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason**

**To be Young Gifted and Black**

**12 noon / Exeter College: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Mother of seven highly talented and creative children Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason looks at what it means and how it feels to grow up as a Black artist today.



**Andrew Martin** **To the Sea by Train: The Golden Age of Railway Travel**

**2pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)**

Railway historian and novelist Andrew Martin talks a nostalgic look back at a time when the seaside getaway was intertwined with the train and millions of urban dwellers were lured by posters carrying the words 'to the sea by train'.



**David Woodman**

**The First King of England: Æthelstan and the Birth of a Kingdom**

**2pm / Exeter College: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Historian Professor David Woodman tells the story of England's founder king Æthelstan and says his achievements rival the Norman conquest in shaping the Britain we know today.



Anne Sebba

**Anne Sebba talks to Dr Louisa Treger**

**The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz: A Story of Survival**

**2pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Journalist and biographer Anne Sebba introduces some of the 50 women and girl prisoners drafted into an orchestra to play marching music to other inmates at Auschwitz as they left for work and returned each day and regular concerts for Nazi officers.

**Jeremy Hunt in Conversation with David Starkey**

**David Starkey Talks: Can Britain Be Great Again?**

**2pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**

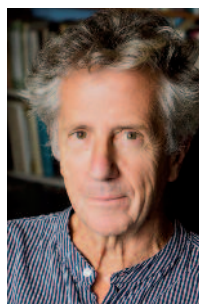


Jeremy Hunt



David Starkey

Former Foreign Secretary Sir Jeremy Hunt talks to historian Dr David Starkey about his new book on whether the UK still has a major role to play in world affairs. The conversation will be filmed for the David Starkey Talks YouTube channel.



**Blake Morrison**

**On Memoir: An A-Z of Life Writing**

**2pm / Bodleian: Convocation House / £18 (£10 student)**

Poet, novelist and journalist Professor Blake Morrison talks about his new collection of narrative non-fiction, *On Memoir*. The collection ranges from AI to ethics, politics and sex. It is a product of Morrison's lifetime as a passionate reader of others' lives and as an honest chronicler of his own.



**Nigel Biggar** **The New Dark Age: Why Liberals Must Win the Culture War**

**2pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Theologian Lord Nigel Biggar warns of a new dark age as the dishonesty, bad faith and mindless abuse of the culture wars threaten our liberal culture.

**Jim Mellon** **Jim Mellon Future Tech Interview**

**2pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

An innovation and technology leader talks to businessman and investor Jim Mellon about their field and the opportunities it holds for the world. See website for details.



## **Muir Gray** Healthy Longevity and the Future of Ageing

**4pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

One of the UK's leading public health experts Sir Muir Gray explains how the secret to living healthier for longer lies right here in Oxford.

## **Georgette Bennett** Half-Jew – Full Life: The Unlikely Journey of a Voluntary Jew from Nazi Persecution to the American Dream

**4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Sociologist and campaigner for interreligious relations Dr Georgette Bennett tells the story of Gary 'Pips' Phillips, a man with an Aryan mother and Jewish father who chose to identify as a Jew in Nazi Germany and later moved to the US where he co-owned the world's largest photo agency.



## **Haitham Hussein** Ramina Books: Creative Writing from The Gulf

**4pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 student)**

Ramina Books publisher Haitham Hussein, a novelist and critic, discusses the rich tradition of Arab literature, particularly in the genres of poetry and the short story, and explains how contemporary writers continue to innovate while responding to that tradition.

## **David Betz and Jonathan Portes. Chaired by Stephen Law** Oxford Debate: Is Civil War Coming to the UK?

**4pm / Exeter College: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Expert in the study of war Professor David Betz and former Treasury official Professor Jonathan Portes discuss the likelihood of civil war in the UK. The thought that civil war in UK is likely over the next ten years is held by 30% of the population according to a recent YouGov poll. It's also a view shared by outsiders: in October 2025 Elon Musk said on X: 'Civil war in Britain is inevitable. Just a question of when.'



## **Vince Cable** Eclipsing the West: China, India and the Forging of a New World

**4pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**

Former UK Business Secretary and ex-Liberal Democrat MP Sir Vince Cable looks at what the rise of Asian superstates means for the future.

## **Ben Barry** The Rise and Fall of the British Army, 1975–2025

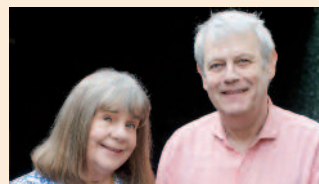
**6pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Long-serving soldier and expert in land warfare Brigadier (Rtd) Ben Barry describes the transformations and decline that have taken place in the British Army over the last half century.

## **Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler talk to Richard Ovenden** The Bodley Lecture and Award of the Bodley Medal: Working Together on Children's Classics

**6pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**

Author Julia Donaldson and illustrator Axel Scheffler discuss their longstanding collaboration on children's classics such as *The Gruffalo* in conversation with Bodley's Librarian Richard Ovenden and receive the Bodley Medal for outstanding contribution to children's books.



Julia Donaldson



Axel Scheffler



Richard Ovenden



## **Francesca Wade**

### Gertrude Stein: An Afterlife

**6pm / Exeter College: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Biographer Francesca Wade looks at the creation of the Gertrude Stein myth and finds a woman who wanted to be remembered for her work rather than her personality.

## **Oliver Darkshire and E S Drake** Fables After Dark

**6pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)**



Oliver Darkshire



E S Drake

Join us for a celebration of all things bookish, an evening where the boundaries between story and reality grow deliciously thin. Fantasy writers Oliver Darkshire and E S Drake explore the strange magic that lives at the edge of storytelling, all served with a complimentary glass of wine.



## **Tim Marshall** Prisoners of Geography

**6pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Veteran foreign correspondent Tim Marshall reflects on the changing global geopolitical landscape including wars in Ukraine and Gaza in a talk to mark the ten-year update for his global bestselling book.



## Lawrence Krauss and Alice Sullivan The War on Science

10am / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)

Theoretical physicist and cosmologist Professor Lawrence Krauss and Professor Alice Sullivan, sociologist and author of the Sullivan Review into data on sex and gender, join a panel of fellow academics to discuss threats to academic freedom and scientific thought from a range of sources, including attacks on merit-based hiring, policing of language, and replacement of scholarship by ideological mantras.



Lawrence Krauss



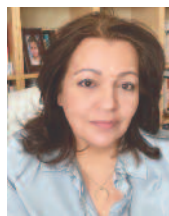
Alice Sullivan

## Rime Allaf, Patrick Haenni and Jerome Drevon

The Future of Syria after Assad

10am / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Writer and political analyst Rime Allaf and researchers Dr Patrick Haenni and Dr Jerome Drevon discuss the overthrow of President Assad in Syria and the rise of a new Islamic government that has grown from a former al-Qaeda affiliate.



Rime Allaf



Patrick Haenni



Jerome Drevon



Georgette Bennett

## Georgette Bennett talks to Nick Higham Thou Shalt Not Stand Idly By

10am / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Sociologist and campaigner for interreligious relations Dr Georgette Bennett tells the inspiring story of how one woman confronted a humanitarian crisis in Syria by forging partnerships across national, tribal and religious boundaries.

## Iain Pears Parallel Lives: A Love Story from a Lost Continent

10am / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)

Writer Dr Iain Pears tells the love story of Larissa Salmina and Francis Haskell who felt out of place on their respective sides of the Iron Curtain but instantly found an enduring bond when they met in a restaurant on the back streets of Vienna in 1962.



## Liam Shaw Dangerous Miracle: A Natural History of Antibiotics and How We Burned Through Them

10am / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Biologist Dr Liam Shaw tells the history of the antibiotics that have saved millions of lives and warns that we need to adapt quickly if we want them to have a future.

## Zoe Gardner, Eric Heinze, James Schneider and Zoe Strimpel. Chaired by Stephen Law

Oxford Debate: Has Socialism's Time Come?

10am / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Immigration researcher Zoe Gardner, Momentum founder James Schneider, writer and academic Professor Eric Heinze and journalist and historian Zoe Strimpel discuss the evidence for a significant shift to the left in UK politics and ask how the left could gain power.



Eric Heinze



James Schneider



Zoe Strimpel

## Anthony Gardner, Jane Thynne and Alex Preston

Spies on the Case in Britain Past and Present

12 noon / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Novelists Anthony Gardner, Jane Thynne and Alex Preston discuss their latest spy thrillers, one set in modern London among oligarchs and theological unrest, another in wartime Britain and the third a reimaging of a slice of the history of the British intelligence service.



Anthony Gardner



Jane Thynne



Alex Preston

## Gillian Straine and Nicky Burr

Holistic Healing, Gender and Politics

12 noon / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)



Gillian Straine



Nicky Burr

Cancer survivor the Revd Dr Gillian Straine and transgender church leader Nicky Burr discuss holistic healing, spirituality and suffering and reflect particularly on current debates around gender and politics.



**Daniel Hahn** If this be Magic: The Unlikely Art of Shakespeare in Translation  
**12 noon / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Award-winning translator, writer and editor Daniel Hahn looks at the way the magic of Shakespeare has been conveyed to a global audience through the medium of translation.

**Ed Davey and Tiggy Walker**

Why We Care and Why it Matters

**12 noon / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**



Ed Davey



Tiggy and Johnnie Walker

Leader of the Liberal Democrat Party Sir Ed Davey and writer, producer and director Tiggy Walker discuss themes of grief, loss and caring for loved ones that run through their latest highly personal books.

**Mia Bennett and Klaus Dodds**

Unfrozen: The Fight for the Future of the Arctic

**12 noon / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**



Mia Bennett



Klaus Dodds

Geographer Professor Mia Bennett and political scientist Professor Klaus Dodds say that the threats of climate change and global competition are felt most strongly in the Arctic and the consequences will be felt across the globe.



**Sarah Williams** When Courage Calls: Josephine Butler and the Radical Pursuit of Justice for Women

**12 noon / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Social historian Professor Sarah Williams describes the life of Victorian Josephine Butler and explains how one of the earliest feminists confronted, exposed and championed difficult issues that needed to be addressed.



Mark Oakley

**Mark Oakley and Sally Read**  
 Splash of Words: Poetry and Faith

**2pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)**

The Dean of Southwark Cathedral the Very Rev'd Dr Mark Oakley and poet and writer Sally Read discuss how poetry can shift our perceptions of the world and faith.



**Alan Johnson**

Harold Wilson: Twentieth-Century Man

**2pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)**

Former cabinet minister Alan Johnson paints Harold Wilson as a truly 20th-century man who was as much part of the 1960s as the Beatles and the Profumo scandal.

**Bill Tara and Marlene Watson-Tara** Macrobiome: How the Human Microbiome Reflects Our Relationship with Nature

**2pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**



Bill Tara



Marlene Watson-Tara

Natural health educators and vegan activists Bill Tara and Marlene Watson-Tara discuss the ideas and actions to reclaim our physical, mental and spiritual health outlined in their new book.

**Martin Plaut talks to Nigel Biggar** Unbroken Chains: A 5,000-Year History of African Enslavement

**2pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**



Martin Plaut

Journalist and former BBC Africa editor Martin Plaut explains how slavery of Africans did not begin or end with the transatlantic trade, it has ravaged African societies since 2500 BCE and continues today.

**Michel-Yves Bolloré and Olivier Bonnassies**

God, the Science, the Evidence: The Dawn of a Revolution

**2pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**



Michel-Yves Bolloré

Olivier Bonnassies

Computer engineer Dr Michel-Yves Bolloré and theologian Olivier Bonnassies argue that latest discoveries in science are the dawn of a new era in which science has become an ally to belief in God.

## FRIDAY 27 MARCH (continued)

### Louise Perry and Zoe Strimpel. Chaired by Julie Bindel The Sexual Revolution: How Liberated are Women Today?

2pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Writer and campaigner against sexual violence Louise Perry and historian and Daily Telegraph columnist Dr Zoe Strimpel discuss their contrasting views on the sexual revolution and how much freedom women enjoy today.

### Carolyn Kirby and Anthony Delaney Gender Fluid Georgians

4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)



Carolyn Kirby



Anthony Delaney

Historical novelist Carolyn Kirby and historian Dr Anthony Delaney discuss the hidden stories of lovers, lawmakers and homemakers who defied convention in Georgian times and whose stories are only now coming to light through dramas such as *Gentleman Jack* and *Bridgerton*.

### Eamonn Gearon The Arab Bureau: The Story of Britain's Most Ingenious Intelligence Unit

4pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)



Historian Eamonn Gearon uncovers the extraordinary British intelligence unit that operated from Cairo's Savoy Hotel during World War I and combined the talents of archaeologists, academics and soldiers.

### Jonathan Romain and Kathleen Stock.

Chaired by Nick Higham

Assisted Dying: A Dignified end or a Collective Fantasy?

4pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)



Jonathan Romain



Kathleen Stock

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain and philosopher and writer Professor Kathleen Stock debate assisted dying and the pros and cons of the legislation currently passing through parliament. Will assisted dying grant us dignity and control of our life and death or is this notion simply a collective fantasy?

### Ludovic Orlando

Horses: A 4,000-Year Genetic Journey Across the World

4pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Research director Professor Ludovic Orlando talks about the groundbreaking genealogical investigation that led him and a team of fellow international scientists to uncover the genomic history of horse domestication.

### Jan McFarlane Festival Evensong

6pm / Pusey House: Chapel / Free / No booking required

Join festival evensong with the first female Dean of Lichfield Cathedral the Rt Revd Jan McFarlane.

### James Cahill and Christopher Stephens talk to A J West Being Gay in Oxford: From the Dawn of Liberation to Today

6pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)

Art critic and novelist Dr James Cahill and academic and writer Christopher Stephens look back at Oxford's gay past including life as a gay man in Oxford at the beginning of this century and the story of gay rights activist and former Oxford student, Roger Butler, the first man to come out publicly as gay seven years before decriminalisation. They are in conversation with award-winning BBC broadcaster A J West.



James Cahill



Christopher Stephens



A J West

### Sajid Javid talks to Alan Johnson

The Colour of Home: Growing up in 1970s Britain

6pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)



Sajid Javid

Former Home Secretary, Health Secretary and Chancellor Sir Sajid Javid talks about his memoir of a childhood marked by poverty and racism and the path that took him to serve as a secretary of state in six government departments.

### Tim Gregory Going Nuclear: How the Atom will Save the World and Build a Sustainable Future

6pm / Oxford Martin School: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Nuclear chemist Dr Tim Gregory argues that the answer to climate change is not simply to replace fossil fuels with renewables, but to fully embrace nuclear: a carbon-free energy source that's safe, efficient, and capable of powering our world.

### Yuliia Iliukha and Olia Hercules

Ukrainian Lives: Confronting the Realities of War

6pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Ukrainian poet, novelist and journalist Yuliia Iliukha and Ukrainian cookery writer Olia Hercules discuss their books about the realities of life in their country, one a novel about women confronted by the brutalities of war and the other a moving memoir of a family over four generations.



## SATURDAY 28 MARCH

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Rod Dreher

### Rod Dreher talks to Tim Stanley

Living in Wonder: Finding Mystery and Meaning in a Secular Age

10am / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

US journalist and author Rod Dreher talks about his latest book exploring the mystery and meaning of the supernatural world and about his belief that the British have lost respect for their history, traditions and values.

### Natasha Walter and Harriet Wistrich

Feminism for a World on Fire

10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)



Natasha Walter



Harriet Wistrich

Writer and prominent feminist Natasha Walter and feminist lawyer Harriet Wistrich discuss the themes in their recent books, including the need for a new vision for changing times and the arcane and byzantine laws that women have to navigate to gain justice.

### Avi Shlaim and Peter Osborne. Chaired by Eugene Rogan

Gaza: Genocide and Britain's Complicity in Destruction

10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £18 (£10 student)



Avi Shlaim



Peter Osborne

Influential historian of the Middle East Professor Avi Shlaim and political journalist Peter Osborne discuss themes of genocide in Gaza and Britain's complicity in the destruction wreaked on the territory. With Professor Eugene Rogan.

### Chine McDonald talks to Dr Jessica Hamel-Akré

Unmaking Mary: Shattering the Myth of Perfect Motherhood

10am / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Think tank director Chine McDonald explains how to free yourself from the myth of perfect motherhood perpetuated by art, literature, culture and society.



Chine McDonald



Jessica Hamel-Akré

### Kelly Grovier and Lachlan Goudie

The Artist's Brush: The Secrets Behind Great Paintings



Kelly Grovier



Lachlan Goudie

10am / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Art critic Dr Kelly Grovier and artist and broadcaster Lachlan Goudie discuss the secrets behind some of the world's greatest masterpieces.

### Ruth O'Callaghan Poetry Workshop: A Body of Work

10am / Pusey House: Ursel Room / £18 (£10 student)



Poet Ruth O'Callaghan leads a two-hour poetry workshop on use of the body in poems. Attendees will consider how we can use the body in our poems: it is with us from birth to death, constantly changes, makes different demands upon our attention and affects our relationships with others. Hence, it is an ideal source of information when composing poems.

### Elizabeth Oldfield and Oliver Burkeman

Living Life to the Full: Making the Most of the Time we Have

12 noon / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)



Elizabeth Oldfield



Oliver Burkeman

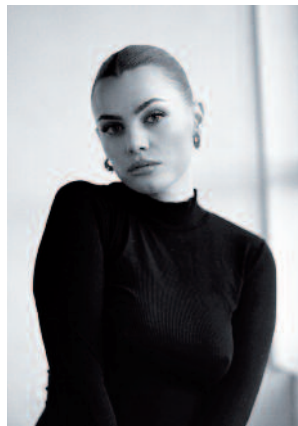
Journalist and former think tank director Elizabeth Oldfield and author and journalist Oliver Burkeman reflect on how to live a meaningful life to the full and make the most of the time available to us.

### Charli Howard talks to

Julie Bindel Flesh: Decentering the Male Gaze and Reclaiming the Objectified Body

12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)

Author and model Charli Howard discusses how society has sexualised the female body and how women can reclaim their bodies for themselves.



Charli Howard



Julie Bindel



**Margaret Busby** Part of the Story:  
Writings from Half a Century

12 noon / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18  
(£10 student)

Pioneering publisher, writer and cultural activist Margaret Busby talks about her life and her work to champion the lives and stories of others, in particular those who have been marginalised.

**Nick Higham** Mavericks: Empire, Oil, Revolution and the Forgotten Battle of World War One



12 noon / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18  
(£10 student)

Writer and former BBC journalist Nick Higham gives an illustrated talk on his new book about a group of British mavericks who set out on an almost impossible task in the chaotic Caspian Sea at the end of World War I.



**Penny Mordaunt** Pomp and Circumstance:  
Why Britain's Traditions Matter

12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £18 (£10 student)

Former cabinet minister Dame Penny Mordaunt celebrates the traditions and ceremonies that underpin British life and argues that they promote values, encourage reflection and act as an antidote to nationalism.

**Andrew Monaghan** Blitzkrieg and the Russian Art of War

2pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Political scientist Dr Andrew Monaghan explains Russian thinking on fighting war and the threat it poses to international order.

**Carla Kaplan and Mimi Pond**

The Enduring Fascination of the Mitford Sisters

2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18  
(£10 student)



Carla Kaplan



Mimi Pond

Writer and academic Professor Carla Kaplan and cartoonist, illustrator and writer Mimi Pond discuss the enduring fascination of the Mitfords including that of one of the lesser-known sisters, Jessica, who was the most radical and least understood of the family.



**Elleke Boehmer** Southern Imagining:  
A Literary and Cultural History of the Far Southern Hemisphere

2pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18  
(£10 student)

Expert in world literature Professor Elleke Boehmer says reading can transform our planetary perspective and explores how we look at the world from the south through literary, cultural and scientific material.

**Richard Holmes** The Boundless Deep:  
Young Tennyson, Science and the Crisis of Belief

2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £18 (£10 student)

Biographer Richard Holmes brings new life to the Victorian poet Alfred Lord Tennyson and uncovers a mercurial and highly emotional man haunted by the great intellectual and scientific issues of his time.



**Amanda Smyth** Look at You

2pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18  
(£10 student)

Award-winning novelist Amanda Smyth talks about her latest work, *Look at You*, about a young woman growing up in a divided family.

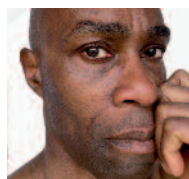
**Seth Berkley** Fair Doses: An Insider's Story of the Pandemic and the Global Fight for Vaccine Equity



2pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18  
(£10 student)

Epidemiologist and public health leader Dr Seth Berkley explains why everyone should have equal access to vaccines for diseases such as Covid, Ebola and AIDS and why it is a huge challenge to achieve that.

**Ben Arogundade** Hollywood Blackout:  
The Battle for Recognition in a White Hollywood



4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18  
(£10 student)

Writer and broadcaster Ben Arogundade explains how the Academy Awards has failed to recognise the work of minorities and women during its 100-year history and how things are finally beginning to change.

**Eleanor Chan** Duet: An Artful History of Music

4pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Musician and art historian Dr Eleanor Chan takes about her radically original history of music that looks at not just how we hear it but also at how we see it.



### Felipe Fernández-Armesto

How the Spanish Empire was Built: A 400-Year History

4pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Historian Professor Felipe Fernández-Armesto argues that Spain's engineers were critical to how a small and sparsely populated 16th-century country built the largest empire the world had ever seen.



### Jung Chang

Fly, Wild Swans

4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £18 (£10 student)

Wild Swans author Jung Chang talks about the sequel to her seminal story of three daughters of China under the last emperor and through Mao Zedong's rule and the cultural revolution.



### Mark Haddon

Leaving Home: A Memoir in Full Colour

4pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / £18 (£10 student)

Author of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* Mark Haddon talks about his new and viciously funny memoir of 1970s family life.

### Michael Collins and Christopher Lamb

American Hope: Leo XIV Builder of Bridges

4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)

Writer and parish priest Father Michael Collins and Vatican correspondent Christopher Lamb explain how a little-known and softspoken cardinal from the United States became the new Pope.

### Amy Jeffs, Gwen Burns and Natalie Brice

Old Songs: Stories of Love and Death from Traditional Ballads

6pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £18 (£10 student)

Join medievalist Amy Jeffs, artist Gwen Burns and musician Natalie Brice for a journey into old songs and retellings of some of Britain's oldest and most traditional ballads. The trio will tell stories, illustrate live, perform for the audience and explain what these ballads tell us about our world and our ancestors.

**Melanie McDonagh** Converts: From Oscar Wilde to Muriel Spark. Why So Many Became Catholic in the 20th Century

6pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Historian and journalist Dr Melanie McDonagh explains how Catholicism attracted a host of unlikely converts in the 20th century including artists, writers and thinkers such as Oscar Wilde and Muriel Spark.



Naz Shah

**Naz Shah** Honoured: Survival, Strength and my Path to Politics

6pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)

Labour MP Naz Shah talks about her extraordinarily difficult childhood and reveals how growing up against almost impossible odds lit the fire that still drives her today.

### Ruth O'Callaghan

Poetry Reading: A Body of Work

6pm / Pusey House: Ursell Room / Free

Participants in the morning's poetry workshop with Ruth O'Callaghan read the poetry they have written as a result. The theme of the workshop was use of the body in poetry. Attendees considered how we could use the body in our poems. Entrance is free but tickets must be booked.



**Sven Beckert** American Lecture. Capitalism: A Global History

6pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £18 (£10 student)

Prize-winning Harvard historian Professor Sven Beckert talks about his groundbreaking new global history of capitalism that places the world's dominant economic system in a new geographical and historic framework.



Olivia Maurel

### Olivia Maurel talks to Julie Bindel

Where are you Mum? The Heartbreaking Story of a Woman Born of Surrogacy

6pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)

Olivia Maurel tells the story of her discovery that she was born of a surrogate mother and sold to her parents and explains why she is supporting the universal abolition of surrogacy.



### Nelio Biedermann

Festival Debuts: Lázár

6pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)

Debut Swiss novelist Nelio Biedermann discusses *Lázár*, a sweeping historical epic that was named Book of the Fair at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2024.



### Marlene Watson-Tara

Closing Dinner

7:30pm / Exeter College: Hall / Reception: College Chapel / £130

Enjoy a delicious menu of vegan dishes specially devised for the dinner by the celebrated chef and writer Marlene Watson-Tara, co-Founder of The Human Ecology Project. Fine Douro Valley wines presented by Symington Wine Estates.



# SUNDAY 29 MARCH

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## Rosa Ribas and Esther García Llovet.

**Chaired by Richard Village** The Queens of Spanish Noir



Rosa Ribas



Esther García

**10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)**

Two of Spain's most exciting contemporary authors, Dr Rosa Ribas and Esther García Llovet, talk about the darker side of life under the burning Spanish sun.

## Barry Cunliffe Driven by the Monsoons:

Through the Indian Ocean and the Seas of China

**10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)**

Archaeologist Professor Sir Barry Cunliffe says the maritime trade routes from the Indian Ocean are just as important to the origins of globalisation as the land routes in the Silk Road.

## Philip Stephens These Divided Isles:

Britain and Ireland Past and Future

**10am / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Award-winning journalist Philip Stephens looks at the turbulent history of Anglo-Irish relations and at how Ireland might use its history to inform its future.



**Tharik Hussain** Muslim Europe: A Journey in Search of a Fourteen Hundred-Year History

**10am / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Author and journalist Tharik Hussain demonstrates how Islam has been central to the development of Western culture over the last 14 centuries.

## Adam Smith and Kevin Weddle.

Saratoga and Gettysburg: Great Battles of US History

**12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)**

Historians Professor Adam Smith and Professor Kevin Weddle discuss two of the most famous battles in American history, Saratoga and Gettysburg, and explain how they helped to define US history.

## Mark Vernon

Awake: William Blake and the Power of the Imagination

**12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3/ £18 (£10 student)**

Philosopher and psychotherapist Dr Mark Vernon talks about his new look at the life of William Blake and argues that the visionary artist, writer and poet can speak to us in challenging times.

## Amanda Rubin The Third Reich of Dreams: The Nightmares of a Nation

**12pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Film director Amanda Rubin describes how her research for an animated film about unsettling dreams chronicled by a Jewish woman, Charlotte Beradt, in Nazi Germany led to the publication of Beradt's diaries in English after they had been out of print for 40 years.

## Tina Beattie, Jane Caplan, Andrew Copson and Gary Francione. Chaired by Stephen Law

**Oxford Debate. Life and Death: Who Decides? Abortion, Euthanasia and Beyond**

**12 noon / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Theologian and broadcaster Professor Tina Beattie, historian Professor Jane Caplan, leading humanist Andrew Copson and academic Professor Gary Francione discuss the assisted dying legislation and changes to the law on abortion and ask whether these are welcome developments or a slippery slope into state-sanctioned killing?



Tina Beattie



Jane Caplan



Andrew Copson



Xuemo

**Xuemo in conversation with Angus Phillips** China Lecture: Life and Work

**12 noon / Magdalen College: Auditorium / £18 (£10 student)**

Award-winning Chinese novelist Xuemo talks to Professor Angus Phillips about his life and work at this year's festival China Lecture.



**Yann Martel** Son of Nobody

**12 noon / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-£18 (£18-£10 student)**

Booker-winning author Yann Martel launches publication of his new novel at the festival, *Son of Nobody*, which connects the life of a foot soldier in the Trojan War with a scholar struggling to make sense of life in modern-day Oxford.



Brenda Hale

**Brenda Hale talks to Professor David Unterhalter** With Law on our Side

**2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £18 (£10 student)**

Former president of the Supreme Court Lady Brenda Hale explains the complex web of laws in the United Kingdom and demonstrates that, while they may appear intimidating, they are on our side.



**Lee Lawrence** The Colour of Injustice

**2pm / Department of Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Award-winning writer and campaigner Lee Lawrence talks about major cases of racial injustice in Britain including his own experience of fighting for 30 years

for justice for his own mother who was shot by police in an incident that sparked the 1985 Brixton riot.

**Gavin Francis and Alastair Santhouse** Mental Health: Are We Becoming Over-Medicated?

**2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)**



Gavin Francis



Alastair Santhouse

GP Dr Gavin Francis and psychiatrist Dr Alastair Santhouse discuss mental health, whether we are prescribing too much medication for mental health, and what future treatment options might be.



Fuchsia Dunlop

**Fuchsia Dunlop in conversation with Angus Phillips**

The Five Tastes of Chinese Cuisine

**2pm / Magdalen College: Auditorium / £18 (£10 student)**

Specialist in Chinese cuisine Fuchsia Dunlop talks about her life as a chef and food writer and about how she is inspired by the tastes of Chinese cuisine.

**Jonathan Freedland** The Traitors Circle: The Rebels Against the Nazis and the Spy Who Betrayed Them

**2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)**

Award-winning Guardian columnist and writer Jonathan Freedland talks about his new book on the true story of a little-known group of rebels from Berlin high society who plotted against Hitler.

**Ruth Larsen** Mistress: A History of Women and their Country Houses

**2pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Historian Dr Ruth Larsen uncovers the lives of the mistresses of some of the great country houses of England and Wales and explains how much power and influence they really had.

**Juliet Nicolson** The Book of Revelations: Women and their Secrets

**4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £18 (£10 student)**

Bestselling social historian Juliet Nicolson looks at the secrets kept by women over three generations and asks what they tell us about ourselves and our world.

**Rachel Seiffert and Joe Dunthorne.**

Refugee Stories: Once the Deed is Done and Children of Radium

**4pm / Magdalen College: Auditorium / £18 (£10 student)**



Rachel Seiffert



Joe Dunthorne

Novelists Rachel Seiffert and Joe Dunthorne talk about their latest books, one a new novel set in a refugee camp at the end of World War Two and the second a biography of a great-grandfather who was a refugee from the Nazis.



**Matthew Ford** War in the Smartphone Age: Conflict, Connectivity and the Crises at Our Fingertips

**4pm / Weston Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Military historian and expert on use of technology in war Professor Matthew Ford discusses the shape of war in the 21st century, including use of the smartphone.



**Samira Ahmed** A Hard Day's Night

**4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £18 (£10 student)**

Journalist and broadcaster Samira Ahmed explains how the Beatles' first film, *A Hard Day's Night*, changed the band and pop music's relationship with the screen and became an enduring classic.

**Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Gary Francione, Emma Jones and Christian Weaver. Chaired by Stephen Law**

**Oxford Debate.** Free Speech, Protest and the Media: How Power and Perception Shape What We Say

**4pm / Department for Continuing Education: Lecture Theatre / £18 (£10 student)**

Journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, academic Professor Gary Francione, journalist and campaigner Emma Jones and barrister Christian Weaver discuss whether free speech is under threat in the UK and, if so, which speech.



**Paterson Joseph** Oxford Brookes Chancellor's Conversation

**4pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £25-18 (£18-£10 student)**

A leading figure speaks at the invitation of actor, writer and Oxford Brookes University Chancellor Paterson Joseph. See website for details.

# EVENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## SATURDAY 21 MARCH



### Leigh Hodgkinson Martha Maps it Out

10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £9

Join author and illustrator Leigh Hodgkinson for a joyful session of storytelling, drawing, and map-making magic. Ideal for children aged 4 and up, Hodgkinson, author and illustrator of *Martha Maps It Out* and *Martha Maps It Out in Time*, will lead an engaging read-a-long, draw-a-long, and creative map-making activity where children will use their imagination. A fun, interactive event celebrating creativity, curiosity, and the wonder of maps. **Age: 4+**



### Michael Morpurgo talks to Daniel Hahn. Black Beauty: A Retelling

10am / Sheldonian Theatre / £12

Bestselling children's author Sir Michael Morpurgo discusses his retelling of the story about a courageous and kind-spirited horse, *Black Beauty*, and the connection and interaction with the people he meets, as well as the compassion and cruelty he witnesses. The parallels are there to one of Morpurgo's best-known novels *War Horse* in this wonderful retelling of Anna Sewell's classic for today's readers. This new edition is beautifully illustrated by Tom de Freston. **Age 8+**



### Anna James Alice with a Why

12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £9

Return to Wonderland in this extraordinary reimagining of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by one of our most brilliant storytellers, Anna James. **Age: 7+**



### Emma Young What if . . .

2pm / Pusey House: Chapel / £9

Join science author Emma Young as she dives into the crazy questions from her *What If...* book series. Discover what would happen if every volcano erupted at once, if your blood turned blue, or if pigs could fly. In this interactive session, Young uses laugh-out-loud questions to introduce key science facts about the Earth, human body, and animal kingdom. Prepare for sneaky learning, humour, and fun facts even the most reluctant reader will be racing to share. **Age: 7+**

## SUNDAY 22 MARCH

### Adam Kay and Henry Paker Dexter Proctor The 10-Year-Old Doctor

10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £9



Adam Kay



Henry Paker

Join the record-breaking Adam Kay and Henry Paker as they take you on a laugh-out-loud journey through their first ever fiction book series to find out if Dexter will be able to save his job, save the school and find his place in the world? (Spoiler alert: yes.) Introducing Dexter Proctor – the world's youngest doctor. It was clear from an early age that Dexter Proctor was different. **Age 8+**

### Louie Stowell Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Causing Chaos

10am / Sheldonian Theatre / £12



Calling all mischief makers. Amazing author and Norse myth super fan Louie Stowell is coming to Oxford to tell us all about her bestselling *Loki* series, including her latest book, *Loki: A Bad God's Guide to Causing Chaos*. In an event packed full of humour, live drawing and quizzing, you'll discover unbelievable Norse myth facts and get to know her mischievous main character Loki.

Perfect for fans of funny fiction, mythology, doodling and anyone who enjoys a bit of chaos. **Age: 7+**

### Rachel Chivers Khoo Children's Writing Workshop: Finders of Silverthorne Forest

10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £9



Join Rachel Chivers Khoo, author of *The Wishkeeper's Apprentice*, *The Magician Next Door*, and *Finders of Silverthorne Forest* series, for this writing workshop for 8-12s. Learn all about Rachel's writing and stories, explore your own ideas and develop your writing skills in this not-to-be-missed masterclass for all aspiring writers. **Age 8-12**

### Hugh Bonneville Rory Sparkes and the Elephant in the Room 2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £9



Join *Paddington* and *Downton Abbey* actor Hugh Bonneville as he shares his first children's book *Rory Sparkes and the Elephant in the Room*. A story packed with friendship and adventure, you'll hear more about the real-life events that inspired Rory's story, from the circus children who really did come to Hugh's school on the back of an elephant, to the pre-emptive grave Hugh dug for his sister (who he promises he gets on very well with now). **Age 7+**



EVENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

SUNDAY 22 MARCH (continued)



Elvira Lindo

**Elvira Lindo, Olatz Ruiz de Gordejuela, Salvador Bolón, Ander Perrino and María Lindo** A Musical Tale: *El Niño y la Bestia* (The Boy and the Beast)

**4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £9**

Spanish author for children and adults Elvira Lindo brings a performance for all the family of her musical tale *El Niño y la Bestia* (*The Boy and the Beast*) to the festival.

Age: family event suitable for 10+

SATURDAY 28 MARCH



**Philip Reeve** Celebrating 25 years of *Mortal Engines*

**10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £9**

2026 marks the 25th anniversary of Philip Reeve's astonishingly imaginative *Mortal Engines* – the steampunk epic that has become a modern classic. To celebrate this milestone, Oxford Literary Festival is joined by Reeve for an exclusive event that fans will not want to miss. **Age 4+**

**Kieran Larwood and Joe Todd-Stanton** *Dungeon Runners*

**10am / Magdalen College Auditorium / £9**



Kieran Larwood

Calling all *Dungeon Runners*. There's a space for a new team of heroes – this is your chance to enter the leagues and fight your way to the top. Join author Kieran Larwood and illustrator Joe Todd-Stanton for this a-maze-ing, puzzle-solving event. Put your skills to the test, create your own characters and embark on an adventure, as you find out whether you have what it takes to become a *Dungeon Runner*. **Age 7+**



Joe Todd-Stanton



**Maz Evans** *The Last Bard*

**12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £9**

Dive into the world of Shakespeare with superstar author Maz Evans, author of the *Who Let the Gods Out* series and new book *The Last Bard*, in a fun-filled hour designed to help you unlock your creativity. Join Maz on a whirlwind tour of Shakespeare's greatest hits and their modern equivalents, from *The Lion King* to *West Side Story*, in this hilarious, anarchic show suitable for key stage two children. Guaranteed fun and games await. **Age 7+**

**Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre** *Of Mice and Mummies*

**12 noon / Magdalen College Auditorium / £9**



Sarah McIntyre

Join beloved, award-winning creators Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre to explore another sparkingly silly adventure in their latest book, *Of Mice and Mummies*. Discover whole new worlds as our intrepid Adventuremice set off on an exciting journey to a secret island, full of mouse sphinxes, pyramids and palaces. This brilliantly interactive event, full of draw-a-longs, creativity and, of course, silliness, is unmissable fun for all the family. **Age 5+**



**Ross Montgomery** *Small Wonder*

**2pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 3 / £9**

Ross Montgomery, bestselling author of *I Am Rebel*, celebrates his latest epic new novel, *Small Wonder*. Perfect for fans of thrilling quest stories, Montgomery reveals how he builds his fantasy worlds, and you'll help him create the beginnings of a brand-new quest. **Age 8+**

**Jennifer Killick, Christopher Edge and Jack MacKay** *Masters of the Macabre*

**4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 2 / £9**

Join masters of the macabre, Jennifer Killick, Chris Edge and Jack MacKay for this spine-tingling journey into children's horror. They'll be discussing everything scary in this special panel event for ages 8+. An absolute must for fans of *Goosebumps*, 'Wednesday' and all things eerie and creepy. **Age 8+**



Jennifer Killick



Christopher Edge



Jack MacKay

# EVENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

## SUNDAY 29 MARCH



**Katie Kirby** The Majorly Awkward BFF Dramas of Lottie Brooks  
**10am / Sheldonian Theatre / £12**  
 The fantastically funny and relatable Lottie Brooks series, written and illustrated by number one children's bestseller Katie Kirby, is filled with first experiences, friendship fails, embarrassing moments and plenty of laughs. And so is this event. Can Lottie get through term without leaving chaos in her wake, and with her BFFs intact? **Age 9+**

### Neill Cameron Donut Squad

**10am / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £9**  
 Do you like drawing? Of course you do. But do you like donuts? Again, silly question. But, have you ever tried putting them together and drawing donuts? Well now you can, in this fun interactive workshop with *Donut Squad* creator Neill Cameron. Find out how to draw beloved characters such as Jammyboi, Spronky and Chalky the Ghost Donut. Discover how to create your own bizarre and improbable new characters. **Age 7+**

### Beano's Mike Stirling and Graig Graham Mischief & Mayhem Reveal: The World's Funniest Story. Written by You

**12 noon / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £9**  
 Beano's Directors of Mischief and Mayhem, Mike Stirling and Craig Graham, reveal their top-secret tips for creating laugh-out-loud stories and comic strips. Join their most exciting Mission of Mischief and Mayhem yet, as you help co-create The World's Funniest Story . . . of all-time. **Age 6+**



**Michael Rosen** The Big Journey  
**2pm / Sheldonian Theatre / £12**  
 Bestselling author of *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* Michael Rosen talks about his latest illustrated book for children, *The Big Journey*, sequel to the acclaimed *The Big Dreaming*. Big Bear and Little Bear are going on a big journey to find a new home. So begins a grand adventure as two bears set out on an epic journey over the mountains, drawing on all their courage and resilience to see them safely to the other side. Rosen and award-winning illustrator Daniel Egn  s tell a story of hope, love and resilience: a modern classic for our times. **Age 4+**

### Ramzee The Cheat Book

**4pm / Mathematical Institute: Lecture Theatre 1 / £9**  
 Do you have lots of creative ideas but not sure how to get them down on paper? Join award-winning storyteller, cartoonist and author-illustrator of *The Cheat Book*, Ramzee, in this interactive session where he will guide you step by step through the process of taking ideas and turning them into your own unique creation. Learn how Ramzee created his main character, Kamal, who is on a hilarious journey from invisible to invincible at school. **Age Age 9-11**

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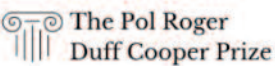
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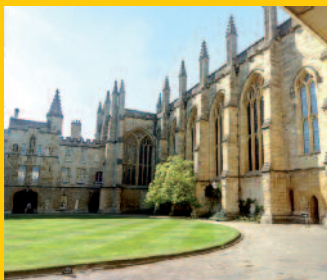
## Festival historic venues



Sir Christopher Wren's 17th-century Sheldonian Theatre



The 17th-century Exeter College Great Hall – venue for the festival closing dinner



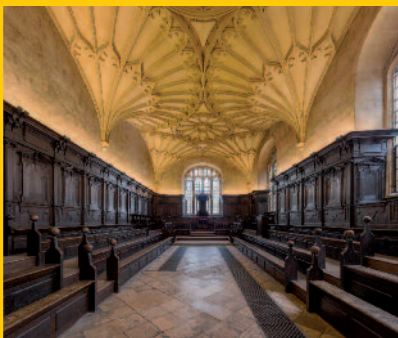
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