



# BRADFORD LITERATURE FESTIVAL

**3 - 12 July 2026**

explore words, discover words

• ART • LITERATURE • HISTORY • FILM • MUSIC • DEBATE • POETRY • COMEDY •

# DIRECTOR'S WELCOME



Welcome to Bradford Literature Festival 2026, a festival built on a simple belief: that stories matter.

They help us understand ourselves and one another, make sense of the world around us, and encounter lives, ideas and experiences beyond our own. They remind us that even in periods of uncertainty and change, we are connected by a shared humanity.

This belief has shaped the festival since its beginning. It stems from two convictions: that education has the power to change lives, and that culture is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

We are living through a period of profound change. Across the world, people are grappling with questions of identity, belonging, power, meaning and the future. Technological transformation is reshaping how we work, communicate and understand knowledge. Political and social certainties that once felt settled are being questioned. In such moments, societies need spaces where people can think, question, imagine and make sense of the world together. This is the work of culture.

Literature, history, faith, philosophy, science, music and the arts offer different ways of understanding the human experience. They help us navigate complexity, connect across difference and explore ideas beyond the headlines of the day.

They remind us that while circumstances change, many of the questions we ask remain timeless.

This year's programme is shaped by those questions. Across hundreds of events, we explore power and empire, democracy and freedom, faith and spirituality, memory and testimony, family and belonging, creativity and human possibility. We examine the histories that continue to shape our present while looking towards the futures we are creating through culture, technology and collective imagination.

This is a programme about possibility. About renewal, curiosity and discovery. About encountering new perspectives, listening more deeply and finding new ways of understanding ourselves and one another.

Bradford has always understood complexity. Shaped by successive waves of migration, industry and reinvention, faith, culture and community, it is a city where local stories open onto global ones. Our communities are proudly Bradford yet rooted in histories and identities that span the world. It is this understanding that has shaped the festival and made it both deeply local and confidently global.

Whether you come to hear a writer, join a debate, experience music, watch a film, take part in a workshop or share a story of your own, I hope you encounter something that challenges, inspires or stays with you long after the festival ends.

Bradford Literature Festival would not be possible without the support of the many organisations and individuals who share our belief in the power of culture, learning and public conversation. We are deeply grateful to Arts Council England, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Bradford Council, Humaniti, International Pears Foundation, the University of Bradford, El-Hibri Foundation, Rayne Foundation, Adam Foundation, Islamic Relief and Beela Productions for their support, partnership and commitment to making this festival possible.

Thank you for joining us.

**Syima Aslam**  
CEO & Artistic Director

# CONTENTS

Funders, Sponsors & Partners	2 - 3
Education Programme	5
Films	6 - 7
Exhibitions	8 - 13
<b>Events by Date</b>	<b>14 - 146</b>

## Free Family Fun Days:

Saturday 4 July	18 - 19
Sunday 5 July	58 - 59
Saturday 11 July	104 - 105
Sunday 12 July	126 - 127

At a Glance	147 - 155
Artist A–Z	156 - 157
Venue Map	158 - 159
Discounts and Concessions	160

Please note some event details may change. Visit the website for the latest listings and details.

## TICKETS START FROM JUST £7

Free tickets are available through discounts and concessions – see page 160



## BOOKING INFORMATION



**01274 044 140**

Pre-festival: Monday–Friday, 09.30–16.30  
During Festival: Daily, 09.30–Last Show



**BRADFORDLITFEST.CO.UK**



**BOXOFFICE@BRADFORDLITFEST.CO.UK**



**IN PERSON**

In person from the Festival Hub, City Park, up to 30 minutes prior to the start of the event (subject to availability)

Tickets for Bradford Literature Festival (BLF) events are sold on an individual event basis, therefore tickets must be purchased separately for each event that you wish to attend. You can buy tickets online, in person at the Box Office or over the phone.

The price of tickets may vary and will be clearly stated against each individual event listing. All ticket prices are inclusive of VAT and booking fee. Discounts and concessions apply.

# FUNDERS, SPONSORS & PARTNERS

## Funded By



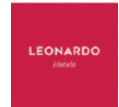
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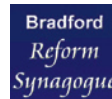
## Book Partner

## Community Broadcast Partner

## Hotel Partners



## Venue Partners



Cultural Partners



**Doha Debates**  
Production of Qatar Foundation



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Royal Literary Fund



WRITERS MOSAIC



Mercy  
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National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026



Manchester Indian  
Film Festival



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# Careers start here, from day one.

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# TELL YOUR TEACHER ABOUT BLF'S EDUCATION PROGRAMME

24 JUNE - 10 JULY 2026

## TEN DAYS OF FREE EVENTS

Interactive live performances, talks and workshops led by real writers, poets, scientists and historians. Topics will include Shakespeare, Ancient Egypt, American Independence, myths, classics and more. Tickets worth £25 - free for non-fee-paying schools.

**TAILORED TO KEY STAGE 2-4**  
ENGLISH | SCIENCE | PHSE | ART  
HISTORY | DRAMA | GEOGRAPHY



BRADFORD  
LITERATURE  
FESTIVAL

explore words  
discover worlds



@BradfordLitFest

**BOOK NOW: [BRADFORDLITFEST.CO.UK/EDUCATION-PROGRAMME](https://bradfordlitfest.co.uk/education-programme)**



## FREE & ACCESSIBLE LESSON PLANS

Explore BLF's range of ready-to-use classroom resources, available all year round. Download worksheets, videos and presentations to support teaching and bring curriculum topics to life.

**DISCOVER MORE: [BRADFORDLITFEST.CO.UK/EDUCATION-PROGRAMME](https://bradfordlitfest.co.uk/education-programme)**

# FILMS

## PALESTINE 36 + Q&A

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sat 4th July | # 26BF33**

🕒 15:00 (2 hours and 15 minutes) | **£7**

## KABHI KABHIE + INTRODUCTION BY SAEED KHAN

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sun 5th July | # 26BF25**

🕒 12:00 (3 hours) | **£7**

## MY FAVOURITE CAKE

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sun 5th July | # 26BF5**

🕒 16:45 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£7**

## A TASTE OF CHERRY

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Tue 7th July | # 26BF4**

🕒 19:00 (1 hour 40 minutes) | **£7**

## A SEPARATION

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Wed 8th July | # 26BF31**

🕒 19:00 (2 hours 5 minutes) | **£7**

## TOO DESI TOO QUEER + Q&A

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Pictureville

**Thu 9th July | # 26BF30**

🕒 18:30 (2 hours) | **£9**

## CUTTING THROUGH ROCKS

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Thu 9th July | # 26BF37**

🕒 19:45 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£7**

## CAKE

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Fri 10th July | # 26BF36**

🕒 19:00 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£7**

## IN SEARCH OF BENGALI HARLEM

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sat 11th July | # 26BF29**

🕒 11:15 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£7**

## THE LORD OF THE RINGS EXTENDED EDITIONS

📍 The Light, Screen 3

**Sat 11th July | # 26BF18**

🕒 10:00 (13 hours) | **£21**

## LETTERS FROM BAGHDAD + Q&A

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sat 11th July | # 26BF1**

🕒 13:30 (1 hour 45 minutes) | **£7**

## MAHABHARATA

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Pictureville

**Sat 11th July | # 26BR28**

🕒 14:00 (2 hours 30 minutes) | **£9**

## TESTIMONY WITH Q&A FROM DIRECTOR TONY PALMER

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sat 11th July | # 26BF38**

🕒 16:00 (3 hours) | **£7**

## 100 YEARS OF MARILYN MONROE: UK PREMIERE: SCREENING + Q&A

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sun 12th July | # 26BF6**

🕒 11:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£7**

## ALL ABOUT WEDDINGS

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sun 12th July | # 26BD35**

🕒 14:00 (1 hour 40 mins) | **£9**

## WORLD PREMIERE SCREENING: MIZAN: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Pictureville

**Sun 12th July | # 26BF40**

🕒 14:45 (1 hour 15 mins) | **£7**

## GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

**Sun 12th July | # 26BF27**

🕒 16:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£7**

## ONE BUM CINEMA CLUB

📍 City Park, Festival Hub # 26BF16

🕒 ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE**

Drop into this tiny cinema for a few surreal, funny and insightful moments.

CHECK THE  
FAMILY  
FUN DAYS  
FOR KIDS' FILMS



@BradfordLitFest



## MAQĀMĀT AL-HARIRI: THE ART OF ELOQUENCE

- 📍 City Park, Festival Hub, The Broadway Bradford & Local Libraries
  - 🕒 9.30am until last event
  - 🗨️ Exhibitions | # 226EX6
- ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

*Maqāmāt al-Harīrī: The Art of Eloquence* is an exhibition inspired by one of the great masterpieces of Arabic literature. Written in Basra in the 12th century, Al-Harīrī's *Maqāmāt* follows Abu Zayd, a dazzling trickster and performer who travels from city to city, using language to charm, deceive and survive.

The exhibition brings this literary world to life through the work of two Qatari artists. Wadha Al Athba creates miniature paintings inspired by classical Islamic visual traditions, while Zainab Al Shibani explores Arabic lettering, typography and the visual power of the written word.

Together, their work celebrates the *maqāmāt* as both storytelling and linguistic performance, showing how Al-Harīrī's playful, inventive Arabic continues to inspire artists today.

Presented in partnership with Qatar National Library.

**These exhibitions can be seen in the Festival Hub and at Broadway and local libraries. See our website for further details**



## BEYOND EXPECTATIONS: POETRY MURAL BY NABEELA AHMED & THE PEOPLE POWERED PRESS

📍 People Powered Press

📢 Exhibitions | # 26EX7

ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

Standing four metres high, this letterpress-printed mural features a new poem by Nabeela Ahmed, poet in residence at The People Powered Press. Installed in the garden at Salts Works, Shipley, it is visible from Saltaire Road.

A Bradford-based writer and spoken word artist, Nabeela writes across English, Punjabi and Urdu, exploring identity, belonging and resistance through her experiences as a British Muslim Kashmiri woman. She performed at Bradford 2025's opening ceremony and published her debut collection, *From Kashmir to Yorkshire*, with Yaffle Press.

Created by The People Powered Press, the mural reflects on Bradford's cultural year and lasting, unexpected blessings.



## BETWEEN MOOR AND SKY: SAMUEL SHARP

📍 City Park, Festival Hub

🕒 9.30am until last event

📢 Exhibitions | # 26EX3

ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

In this exhibition, you will step into the quiet, attentive world of Samuel Sharp, a Bradford-born digital painter whose work finds beauty in the overlooked corners of everyday life.

Former Artist in Residence at the Brontë Birthplace, Sharp creates luminous landscapes on an iPad, drawing inspiration from hedgerows, pavements, roadside trees, shifting skies and the fleeting views we often miss. His work is rooted in care, observation, memory and a deep connection to the Yorkshire landscape.

Following in a tradition of artists, including David Hockney, who have used colour and technology to look again at the world around them, Sharp transforms familiar places into images of tenderness, stillness and quiet emotional power.



## TELL ME SOMETHING: FAMILY STORIES WITH LEMN SISSAY

📍 City Park, Festival Hub ⌚ 9.30am until last event

🗣️ Exhibitions | # 26EX15

ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

Every family carries stories...stories passed down through generations, stories held quietly, stories shaped by love, migration, absence, memory and survival.

Throughout Bradford Literature Festival 2026, audiences across the city have been invited to share reflections, testimonies and fragments of family life as part of a living public archive created in collaboration with Lemn Sissay's *Tell Me Something* project.

In this special event, the acclaimed writer and broadcaster reflects on the stories gathered throughout the festival, exploring family as a place of inheritance, identity, fracture and belonging. Weaving together testimony, conversation and collective witnessing, this event offers a rare space for reflection on the lives, memories and human connections that shape us.

*Tell Me Something will open on 20 June until 15 July 2026.*



## VOICE OF THE FANS: 60 YEARS OF FOOTBALL FANZINES

📍 City Park, Festival Hub

🕒 9.30am until last event

🗣️ Exhibitions | # 26EX2

ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

Football fans have always been more than spectators; they are a powerful voice in the sport. Co-produced by the British Library and Leeds Libraries, the *Voice of the Fans* exhibition explored over 60 years of fan-made media that helped shape the beautiful game.

This pop-up panel display shares stories of influential UK and Ireland football zines, from Bradford's *City Gent* to *When Saturday Comes*, *The Square Ball* and *War of the Monster Trucks*. Brimming with humour, passion and activism, these grassroots publications built communities, challenged prejudice and proved that football zines remain a force for creativity and resistance.

Check out the accompanying event: *The Story of Football Fanzines* on Sunday 12 July at 15:30 in the Festival Hub.



## KALĪLA WA-DIMNA EXHIBITION

📍 City Park, Festival Hub

🕒 9.30am until last event

🗣️ Exhibitions | # 26EX5

ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

One of the most widely travelled books in human history, *Kalīla wa-Dimna* began as a Sanskrit collection of animal fables in the fourth century, was translated into Arabic in 750 CE, and passed through more than 40 languages over the centuries. Its talking animals - jackals, lions, crows, and tortoises - encode political and moral wisdom in stories that have never stopped finding new audiences. Charming on the surface, yet more unsettling underneath.

This exhibition features 12 newly commissioned, miniature-style paintings by Qatari artist Wadha Alathba, working in indigo, saffron and gold leaf—ancient fables brought into vivid, contemporary, visual life.





## MAPPING THE MAQĀMĀT: EIGHT ARTISTS, EIGHT COUNTRIES, EIGHT JOURNEYS

📍 City Park, Festival Hub

🕒 9.30am until last event

🗣️ Exhibitions | # 26EX8

ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

*Mapping the Maqāmāt* maps the journey of *Maqāmāt Al-Hariri* across eight countries, through the work of eight contemporary artists from across the Arab world. Commissioned as part of Qatar Foundation's BilAraby initiative, each poster responds to one of the great works of classical Arabic literature through the lens of the artist's own cultural identity, heritage and visual language.

Eight countries. Eight artists. Eight journeys.

Together, these digital artworks show Arabic literature not as a fixed monument, but as a living conversation, still generating new meaning across borders, traditions and generations.

Presented in partnership with Qatar National Library.



## MAQĀMĀT AL-HARĪRĪ: FACSIMILE MANUSCRIPT DISPLAY

📍 City Park, Festival Hub

🕒 9.30am until last event

🗣️ Exhibitions | # 26EX17

ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

Meaning "The Assemblies," *Maqāmāt al-Hariri* is one of the masterpieces of classical Arabic literature, written by the 12th-century scholar and poet al-Hariri of Basra, in present-day Iraq. It follows the adventures of the charismatic trickster Abū Zayd as he journeys through the cities and marketplaces of the medieval Islamic world, from Iraq and Syria to Persia and the Arabian Peninsula, using wit, eloquence, and ingenuity to navigate society.

Renowned for its dazzling rhymed prose and vivid storytelling, the work was later illustrated with some of the most celebrated images in Islamic manuscript art. This facsimile manuscript offers a rare opportunity to encounter a landmark of Arabic literary and artistic heritage.

Presented in partnership with Qatar National Library.





## WUTHERING HEIGHTS REDISCOVERED: AN EXHIBITION

- 📍 Cambridge House, Main Room
- 🕒 Jul 11, 2026 | 16.00 (3hrs 30min)
- 🎫 Exhibitions | # 26BR6

**FREE** (Drop-in)

Step into the shadows of a cinematic mystery with *Wuthering Heights Rediscovered*, an exhibition celebrating the lost 1920 silent film adaptation of Emily Brontë's timeless classic.

Drawing on the only surviving script and a remarkable collection of previously unseen photographs, the exhibition reconstructs and reimagines a film thought lost forever.

Curated by Professor Rob Shail and Irfan Shah of Leeds Beckett University's Early Cinema Research Group, and supported by the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, it offers a fascinating journey into early filmmaking, literary heritage and Yorkshire's enduring gothic landscape.

A must-see for film lovers, Brontë enthusiasts and admirers of the moors alike.



## ONE BUM CINEMA CLUB

- 📍 City Park, Festival Hub
  - 🕒 9:00 Saturday July 4 onwards
  - 🎫 Films & Screenings | # 26BF16
- ALL FESTIVAL | **FREE** (Drop-in)

Step inside the world's tiniest travelling cinema for a joyful, immersive experience unlike any other.

Taking 'one butt at a time' as its golden rule, the miniature cinema showcases a handpicked selection of animations by artists from across the globe, offering a rare platform for imaginative work often unseen by wider audiences.

Drop into this tiny cinema for a few surreal, funny and insightful moments.



Doha Debates Portal

## Are we facing the end of civilization or its rebirth?

with Johannesburg, South Africa

### ARE WE FACING THE END OF CIVILIZATION OR ITS REBIRTH?

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Debate | # 26EX16

🕒 11:00 (1 hour 30 minutes) | £10

From Ibn Khaldun to Marx, great thinkers have argued that every civilization carries the seeds of its own downfall. Does this hold true of our modern world?

Exploring cyclical patterns of history and the specific challenges we face today, this Portal debate will provide space for the Bradford Literature Festival attendees to connect with young people from South Africa and Mexico to ask whether we are witnessing civilization's collapse or renewal. Is our modern-day focus on individualism, technology and comfort leading to decline, or does this mark a pivotal moment in a larger global cycle? Does globalization make us more vulnerable or more resilient? Does technology deepen isolation or offer salvation? Or is this neither the end nor the beginning, but a transitional moment where terms like "civilization" fail to capture our global reality?



### LUNCH BITE: JANE AUSTEN IN GRAPHIC DETAIL

**Kate Evans**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Talks | # 26LB4

🕒 12:00 (45 mins) | £10

Join author and illustrator Kate Evans for a fascinating Lunch Bite celebrating *Patchwork: A Graphic Biography of Jane Austen*, her captivating new book bringing one of literature's best-loved writers vividly to life.

Inspired by the patchwork quilt Austen made in her later years, Evans stitches together scenes from her novels, moments from her life and the textures of Regency society through dynamic, richly detailed artwork, including illustrations embroidered onto cloth.

Discover a fresh, imaginative portrait of Jane Austen, hear about Evans' creative process and meet the author behind this remarkable new graphic biography. Perfect for Austen admirers and graphic novel lovers alike.



## THE LOST TRAMWAYS AND TROLLEYBUSES OF BRADFORD

**Andy Feather**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Talks | # 26HT7

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Join Andy Feather, from The Trolleybus Museum, as he explores the rise and fall of Bradford's unique transport systems through vintage photographs, personal stories and remarkable historical insights.

This engaging talk also uncovers why these beloved modes of transport disappeared as Bradford embraced more modern transit systems. Learn about the memorable routes, distinctive tram and trolleybus designs and the workers and passengers who relied on them every day.

Step back in time and discover the fascinating story of Bradford's lost tramways and trolleybuses, once the beating heart of the city's transport network.



## DOHA DEBATES PORTAL: ARE WE FACING THE END OF CIVILIZATION OR ITS REBIRTH?

📍 City Park, Doha Debates Portal

🗣️ Debate | # 26EX16

🕒 16:00 (1 hour 30 minutes) | **£10**

From Ibn Khaldun to Marx, great thinkers have argued that every civilization carries the seeds of its own downfall. Does this hold true of our modern world?

Exploring cyclical patterns of history and the specific challenges we face today, this Portal debate will provide space for the Bradford Literature Festival attendees to connect with young people from South Africa and Mexico to ask whether we are witnessing civilization's collapse or renewal. Is our modern-day focus on individualism, technology and comfort leading to decline, or does this mark a pivotal moment in a larger global cycle? Does globalization make us more vulnerable or more resilient? Does technology deepen isolation or offer salvation? Or is this neither the end nor the beginning, but a transitional moment where terms like "civilization" fail to capture our global reality?



## TEN BOOKS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE WITH MIKE PICKERING

**Mike Pickering**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub

🗣️ Talks | # 26CC12

🕒 18:15 (1 hour) | £10

Join Hacienda pioneer, DJ and broadcaster Mike Pickering for a journey through the books that have shaped his life, creativity and worldview.

Reflecting on the books that influenced his artistic outlook and understanding of creativity, community and identity, with some unexpected favourites.

Thoughtful, nostalgic and wide-ranging, this event offers a rare insight into the books that inspired the music of one of Manchester's clubland classics. Followed by an audience Q&A.



## AN EVENING OF COMEDY

**Laura Smyth, Ola Labib, Eshaan Akbar, Desiree Burch and Jack Carroll**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🗣️ Gigs & Nights Out | # 26CO1

🕒 19:30 (2 hours) | £15

Bradford Literature Festival's annual comedy night returns with a brilliant lineup of stand-up talent from across the UK, bringing sharp wit, big laughs and unforgettable stories to the stage.

A stellar lineup including the fearless and charismatic Ola Labib, sharp and insightful Eshaan Akbar and the brilliantly sharp Laura Smyth. Alongside local lad and rising comedy star Jack Carroll, who charmed audiences on *Britain's Got Talent*.

Together, they bring a mix of personal storytelling, cultural insight and laugh-out-loud observations on everyday life, identity and the world around us.

Celebrate the weekend with this lively evening of stand-up from some of the most exciting voices in UK comedy today. This is a night not to be missed.

The recommended age for this event is 16+.



## A.A. DHAND: THE KINGPIN BOOK LAUNCH

**A.A. Dhand**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Great Hall

📣 Book Launch | # 26CR6

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

A.A. Dhand, Sunday Times bestselling author and Bradford's own, returns with *The Kingpin*, the follow-up to *The Chemist*.

When Idris Khan's estranged brother walks out of prison and back into his life, the offer he brings will force Idris to make the hardest choice of his life. Raised in Bradford and trained as a pharmacist, Dhand draws on a world he knows intimately.

Join him to hear about the inspiration behind *The Kingpin*, the moral complexity at its heart and what it means to write crime fiction rooted in a city he calls home.



## A LIT NIGHT OUT

**Mike Pickering**

📍 The Underground, Main Room

📣 Gigs & Nights Out | # 26MU10

🕒 21:30 (150 minutes) | **£10**

Dance through the decades at this special late-night celebration of literature, music and culture, led by legendary Manchester DJ Mike Pickering.

A key figure in the city's world-famous music scene, Pickering brings the spirit of Manchester's dancefloor history to Lit Night Out, from iconic club sounds and unforgettable anthems to genre-defining tracks that shaped generations. Expect a vibrant festival atmosphere, timeless music and a journey through the songs, scenes and sounds that continue to influence culture and collective memory.

Whether you come to relive an era, discover something new or simply enjoy a great night out, the dancefloor stays open late.

# SATURDAY 4 JULY

Calling all heroes! Fly, zoom or wag your way into a **free** family day packed with super-powered fun. Enjoy face painting, walkabout acts, arts and crafts, storytelling and theatre in the city centre, before settling in for a screening of *Dog Man*. Capes encouraged, villains beware!

## THEATRE SHOW

 **City Park**

 11.30 | 12:45 | 14:00 | **FREE**

### Justin Credible and the Gems of Power

Justin Credible, the handsomest, most super-duper hero of them all, has to face a new threat, this time from outer space! Aided by his brilliant sidekick, Honor Mission, Justin must try with all his might to thwart the evil plans of the Prince of Trinitron, Boniface!

## PERFORMANCES

 **City Park**

### Punjabi Roots - Band Baja 11:00

Enjoy the unmistakable sound of the Punjabi Roots Academy Baja Band as it brings a burst of music, colour and celebration to Bradford.

### Dancers Bizarre 12:15 | 14:30

Experience the vibrant music, movement and traditions of Romani dance as Dancers Bizarre brings a colourful celebration of culture to the heart of Bradford.

### Punjabi Roots - Bhangra 13:30

Experience the energy and excitement of Punjabi Roots Academy as it brings the vibrant tradition of bhangra to the heart of Bradford.



National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026

## MEET THE AUTHOR

 **Hub, City Park**

 14.00 | **FREE** | Book Online

### Meet the Author: Sophie Anderson

Join Sophie Anderson for a magical reading of her children's book *The House with Chicken Legs Runs Away*, the spellbinding return to the beloved world of Marinka and her extraordinary house.

**FREE  
FAMILY  
FUN DAYS**

## STORYTELLING

**Imagination Station, City Park**

**Gav Cross**

11.00 | 12.30 | 14.00

**Tom the Tale Teller**

11.45 | 13.15 | 14.30

Hear live storytellers perform heroic adventures throughout the day, then discover storytelling tips to help unleash your own super tales.

## ARTS & CRAFTS

**Broadway & Imagination Station, City Park**

11.00 - 15.00 **FREE** | Drop in

Unleash your powers with four completely different superhero craft activities, creating something super to take home for little heroes and adventurers.

## FILM SCREENING

**Pictureville, National Science & Media Museum**

11.00 (90 mins)

**FREE** | Book Online

### Dogman

When a police officer and his loyal dog become one heroic crimefighter, super-hilarious adventures and tail-wagging chaos inevitably follow.



## PRINTS FOR PEACE: LETTERPRESS PRINTMAKING MASTERCLASS

**People Powered Press**

📍 People Powered Press, Main

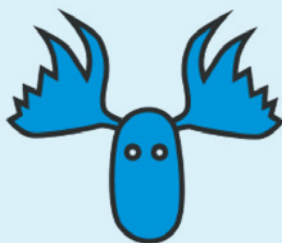
🗣️ Workshop | # 26AD2

🕒 09:30 (210 minutes) | **£25**

Create your own powerful Print for Peace in this hands-on letterpress masterclass, open to all with no experience needed. Guided by an experienced printmaker, you'll use traditional and contemporary style to design a unique print inspired by protest posters, placards and messages of hope, resistance and reflection.

Using the People Powered Press, the largest of its kind in the world, you'll learn the basics of letterpress and relief printmaking while producing a finished print in colours of your choice to take home.

You'll also have the opportunity to contribute your work to Pressing Matters, an exhibition at the Peace Museum in 2026.



## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLUEMOOSE

**Kevin Duffy**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW13

🕒 09:45 (30 minutes) | **£10**

Discover the key to a successful publishing journey with Bluemoose Books. In this one-to-one session with one of their editors, you will provide expert guidance on how to approach publishers and what makes your manuscript irresistible.

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## SALTS MILL HOCKNEY GALLERY TOUR

- 📍 Salts Mill, Meeting Point
- 🗣️ Tour | # 26HD2
- 🕒 09:45 (1 hour) | **£10**

Bradford-born painter, printmaker and photographer David Hockney, is among the greatest and most influential artists alive today.

The iconic Salts Mill, in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Saltaire, is home to one of the world's largest collections of his art, including his famous *Arrival of Spring* collection, much of which he created on his iPad.

This tour will cover Hockney's earliest pieces from his days at Bradford College of Art, through to his printmaking work and portraits.



## BRADFORD CRIME SCENES: WALKING TOUR

**Alan Whitrick**

- 📍 Bradford Police Museum, Meeting Point
- 🗣️ Tour | # 26HW10
- 🕒 10:00 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£10**

From unsolved deaths at the Midland Hotel, where staff were found dead beneath the dinner lift, to Rimmington's Pharmacy where the 'Humbug Billy' poisonings were investigated, Bradford is steeped in grisly Victorian mysteries that helped to inspire some of the 19th century's best crime writing.

This tour will take you on a tour through time to uncover the history of policing, crime and criminal justice from the 19th century to the modern day.

Dressed in authentic Victorian garb, our guides will escort you on a walking tour of historic locations that have become synonymous with crime and give you an insight into the events that shaped the dark and murky parts of the city's folklore.





## THREADS OF PALESTINE: TATREEZ EMBROIDERY MASTERCLASS

**Yorkshire Tatreez**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 2

🗨️ Masterclass | # 26AD12

🕒 10:00 (2 hours) | £10

Join us for a calming, creative workshop celebrating the rich tradition of Palestinian embroidery. Guided by the skilled team at Yorkshire Tatreez, you'll cross-stitch your own beautiful bookmark while connecting with a centuries-old practice rooted in storytelling, resistance, and cultural memory.

Tatreez is more than embroidery; it's a visual language passed through generations of Palestinian women, expressing identity, heritage, and life on the land. In 2021, UNESCO recognised this remarkable art form by adding it to its Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Take a moment for mindful embroidery and choose your own design to begin (or continue) your own tatreez journey.

The recommended age for this event is 16+. Under 18's must be accompanied by an over 18 ticket holder.



## PETAL TO PAPER: CREPE PAPER FLOWER MASTERCLASS

**Olha Zhydetska**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 1

🗨️ Workshop | # 26AD10

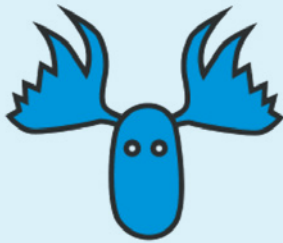
🕒 10:15 (2 hours) | £15

Discover the art of paper flower making in this hands-on workshop inspired by a centuries-old tradition. Guided step by step, you'll learn how to transform crepe paper into a delicate, lifelike orchid using simple shaping, stretching and colouring techniques, creating a beautiful flower to take home.

Originating in ancient China, paper crafting later spread across the world and became especially popular in Eastern Europe, where paper flowers decorated homes, church altars and traditional celebrations. In Ukraine, they were woven into floral wreaths worn by girls.

No experience is needed, just creativity and a willingness to try something new.

All materials are provided. Suitable for adults and teens.



## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLUEMOOSE

**Kevin Duffy**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room

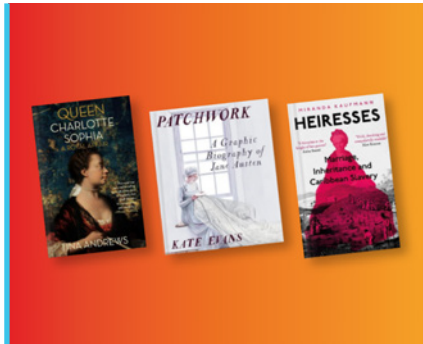
🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW13A

🕒 10:30 (30 minutes) | **£10**

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## QUEENS AND REBELS

**Kate Evans, Miranda Kaufman,  
Tina Andrews**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗣️ Panel | # 26RI5

🕒 10:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

History has always had a complicated relationship with extraordinary women, erasing them, misreading them or forcing them into stories that were never really theirs.

In this powerful conversation, Tina Andrews restores Queen Charlotte Sophia to her full, complex power, Miranda Kaufmann returns overlooked heiresses to the centre of history, and Kate Evans uses the bold, rule-breaking form of the graphic novel to ask what Jane Austen's world really looked like for women who refused to behave.



## MASTERCLASS: EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE

**Shamim Rehman**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Norcroft Centre, Norcroft Lounge

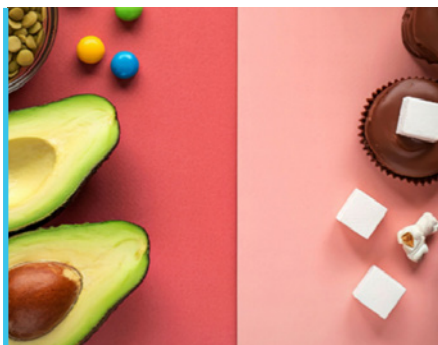
📺 Masterclass | # 26HB6

🕒 10:30 (150 minutes) | £7

Led by holistic healer Shamim Rehman, this workshop will equip you with the knowledge and skills for Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) as an alternative treatment for physical pain and emotional distress.

Learn the basics of EFT, also referred to as tapping or psychological acupressure. This technique of tapping the body is believed to create a balance in your energy system, treat pain and manage emotions and troubling thoughts.

The practice of EFT dates back to the 1960s and is now used in a variety of settings, including healthcare, pain management and general wellbeing.



## ULTRA-PROCESSED EATING

**Milli Hill, David Cox and Noreen Glaves**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

📺 Panel | # 26FO2

🕒 10:45 (1 hour) | £10

We're told what we eat is a personal choice, but is it? From the engineered addictiveness of ultra-processed food to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, gendered expectations and deep health inequalities, this panel asks the questions the food industry would rather bury.

Milli Hill, author of *Ultra-Processed Women*, Dr David Cox, neuroscientist and author of *The Age Code*, and Nureen Glaves, chef, public health nutritionist and founder of *Feed Me Good*, come together to challenge one of the biggest myths in food culture.

Expect a frank, wide-ranging conversation about power, access and what it really takes to change the way we eat.



## DOHA DEBATES PORTAL: ARE WE THE MOST INTELLIGENT BEINGS IN THE UNIVERSE?

📍 City Park, Doha Debates Portal  
🔊 Debate | # 26EX16  
🕒 11:00 (1 hour 30 minutes) | £10

For centuries, humanity has understood itself as singular within the universe, uniquely intelligent, moral and spiritual, but what if that assumption is wrong?

The discovery of intelligent life beyond Earth would not just be a scientific breakthrough; it would force a profound reconsideration of what it means to be human. If we are not alone, are we still exceptional? Or does our place in the cosmos become less certain, less central?

This Portal debate will provide an opportunity for the Bradford Literature Festival attendees to engage with young people from Nigeria, and Brazil to explore how such a discovery might reshape our understanding of ourselves. Would it challenge the moral and spiritual frameworks that have guided civilizations for centuries, or would it deepen them?



## COMPLICIT: BRITAIN'S ROLE IN THE DESTRUCTION OF GAZA WITH PETER OBORNE

**Peter Osborne**  
📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium  
🔊 Talks | # 26WA24  
🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | £10

Award-winning journalist and former *Daily Telegraph* chief political commentator Peter Osborne joins Bradford Literature Festival to discuss his powerful new book examining Britain's response to the war in Gaza.

Drawing on original reporting and decades spent at the heart of British political and media life, Osborne explores questions of accountability, public truth, protest and the relationship between power and journalism.

Reflecting on the role of politicians, institutions and the media during one of the defining international crises of our time, this timely conversation asks what happens when public trust breaks down and who is held accountable when it does.



## BRONTË OF THORNTON WALKING TOUR

**Paul Crossley**

📍 Brontë Birthplace, Posh Parlour

🗣️ Tour | # 26HW13

🕒 11:00 (2 hours) | **£10**

Join us for our walking tour of historic Thornton, uncovering the rich cultural, industrial and architectural heritage of the Brontë children's birthplace.

For many years, Thornton has been the forgotten chapter in the Brontë story, but since the grand opening of the Brontë Birthplace, we're working to shine a light on the fascinating history of the village.

Led by a local historian and Brontë expert, Paul Crossley, and a group of local volunteers, this two-hour tour begins at the Brontë Birthplace and guides you through key sites, including the Brontë Bell Chapel ruins, Kipping House, South Square Centre and the village's iconic snickets and ginnels.



## COMBATTING THE MANOSPHERE

**Elizabeth Pearson, Kasim Ali**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Red Room

🗣️ Panel | # 26WA7

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Debates around masculinity are increasingly urgent, shaped by social media, politics and concerns about radicalisation. This timely panel brings together experts from research, community work and lived experience to explore how extreme ideas about masculinity form, spread and take hold.

Examining online influencers, peer networks and everyday conversations, the discussion will consider why certain narratives resonate with young men and how they can connect to misogyny, extremism and violence.

Moving beyond sensational headlines, this event offers a nuanced look at modern masculinity and possible pathways forward for future generations.



## SOCIETY, SHARIAH AND THE COMMON GOOD

**Mustafa Briggs, Sohail Hanif**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🗣️ Talks | # 26FMP17

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Across modern Britain, questions of loneliness, social fragmentation, economic pressure and declining community infrastructure are becoming increasingly urgent.

In this thought-provoking conversation, Sohail Hanif, CEO of National Zakat Foundation, explores what the concept of Shariah really means beyond headlines and political rhetoric, examining its ethical foundations in welfare, responsibility, justice and mutual care.

Moving beyond simplistic portrayals, the discussion considers whether faith-based moral frameworks still have something meaningful to offer societies struggling with inequality, isolation and the erosion of communal life. What happens when communities take responsibility for one another and could moral and spiritual traditions help rebuild a fractured social fabric?



## WHAT DOES BRITAIN THINK IT IS NOW?

**Humza Yousaf**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🗣️ Panel | # 26WA6

🕒 11:00 (1 hour 15 mins) | **£10**

Ten years after the Brexit referendum, Britain continues to wrestle with questions of identity, belonging and national direction. As debates around nationalism, migration, faith, protest and pluralism become increasingly charged, what story does the country now tell about itself and who feels fully included within it?

Bringing together political, historical and civic voices from across British public life, this major conversation explores the changing meaning of British identity in an era shaped by populism, economic anxiety and growing social fragmentation.

From patriotism and memory to democracy and national cohesion, the discussion asks what kind of country Britain wishes to become.



## GROWING UP AUTISTIC

**Bradley Riches, John Harris**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Richmond Building, Great Hall

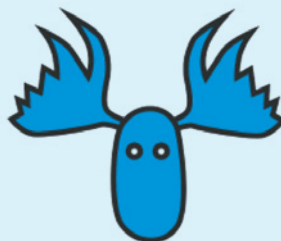
🗨️ In Conversation | # 26ND3

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Bradley Riches joins writer and journalist John Harris for a thoughtful, personal conversation exploring life across the neurodiverse spectrum.

Riches is an autistic actor, author and advocate, best known for *Heartstopper*, *Celebrity Big Brother* and *Emmerdale*. Harris is a writer and broadcaster whose recent work reflects on parenting his autistic son and the role music has played in their lives.

Drawing on lived experience, they reflect on growing up autistic, parenting autistic children, diagnosis, education, masking, identity and belonging. Honest and hopeful, this event considers how greater understanding of neurodiversity can transform lives, families and communities.



## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLUEMOOSE

**Kevin Duffy**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room

🗨️ Workshop | # 26AW13B

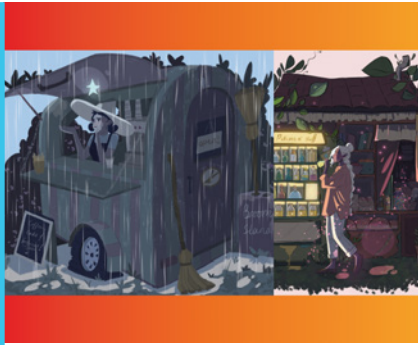
🕒 11:15 (30 minutes) | **£10**

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## CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP - LEARN TO ILLUSTRATE

**Naureen Hafeez**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW12

🕒 11:15 (1 hour) | **Free Family Event**

Calling all young storytellers and doodlers!

Join artist Nori for a fun-filled Learn to Illustrate workshop where imagination takes centre stage. This lively, hands-on session invites children to explore the magical world of illustration through drawing, storytelling and creative play. Whether you love sketching characters, inventing worlds or bringing ideas to life on paper, this workshop is the perfect place to get inspired, try new techniques and let your creativity run wild.

Grab your sketchbook and pencils and join us for an exciting adventure in illustration.

Please book an additional adult ticket when attending with your child.



## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLOOMSBURY

**Jonathan Eyers**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW4

🕒 11:30 (30 minutes) | **£10**

Discover the key to a successful publishing journey with Bloomsbury. In this one-to-one session with one of its editors, you will get expert guidance on how to approach publishers and what makes your manuscript irresistible.

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## TICK BOX: IDENTITY, BELONGING AND HOW WE LIVE NOW

**Anna Sulan Masing, Emma Slade Edmondson and Kit Fan**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

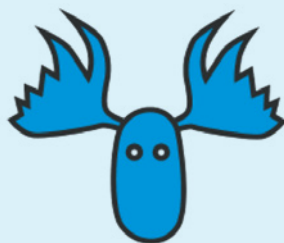
🗣️ Panel | # 26RI3

🕒 11:45 (1 hour) | £10

Join Anna Sulan Masing, Emma Slade Edmondson and Kit Fan for a timely conversation rooted in food, identity, belonging and the stories we inherit, as they explore what everyday life in Britain reveals about the world in which we live.

Drawing on *Chinese and Any Other Asian*, Masing explores East and South East Asian identity in Britain through food, history and culture, while Edmondson reflects on mixed identity and belonging through her work on *Mixed*. Fan's new novel, *Goodbye Chinatown*, brings questions of migration, family and home vividly to life through the tastes, pressures and possibilities of London's hospitality world.

Together, they ask how we live now and what our everyday lives reveal about who we are becoming.



## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLUEMOOSE

**Kevin Duffy**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW13C

🕒 12:00 (30 minutes) | £10

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B L O O M S B U R Y

## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLOOMSBURY

**Jonathan Eyers**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room

🗨️ Workshop | # 26AW4

🕒 12:15 (30 minutes) | £10

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## BLACK HISTORY AND THE FORGOTTEN WORLDS OF ISLAM

**Mustafa Briggs**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond  
Building, Great Hall

🗨️ Talks | # 26FMP18

🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | £10

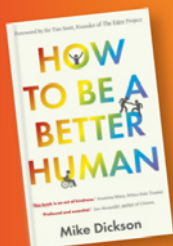
From Timbuktu and Mali to the Ottoman world and beyond, Black Muslims have played a profound role in shaping Islamic civilisation and global history. Yet many of these stories remain overlooked or absent from mainstream historical narratives.

Drawing on his internationally acclaimed *Beyond Bilal* lecture series and bestselling book, historian and scholar Mustafa Briggs explores the rich and often forgotten histories of Black Muslim communities across the centuries.

Blending historical insight with questions of identity, memory and belonging, this event re-examines the global history of Islam through voices, intellectual traditions and civilisations too often left in the margins.



B L O O M S B U R Y



## HOW TO BE A BETTER HUMAN

**Mike Dickinson**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

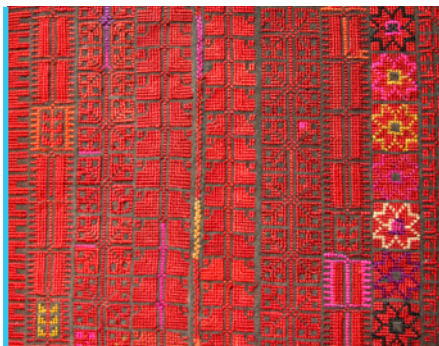
🗣️ Talks | # 26HB12

🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | £7

Mike Dickson is the entrepreneur, philanthropist and former CEO of Whizz-Kidz, the pioneering children's charity that has raised more than £150 million to support disabled young people across the UK.

Drawing on decades spent helping charities, social enterprises and individuals create meaningful change, Mike joins Bradford Literature Festival to discuss his new book, *How to Be a Better Human*, a moving reflection on kindness, purpose, generosity and what truly matters in life.

In a world shaped by noise, division and overwhelm, this promises to be a thoughtful, warm and deeply uplifting conversation about compassion, human connection and the extraordinary power of simply showing up for others.



## THREADS OF PALESTINE: TATREEZ EMBROIDERY MASTERCLASS

**Yorkshire Tatreez**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 2

🗣️ Masterclass | # 26AD12

🕒 12:30 (2 hours) | £10

Join us for a calming, creative workshop celebrating the rich tradition of Palestinian embroidery. Guided by the skilled team at Yorkshire Tatreez, you'll cross-stitch your own beautiful bookmark while connecting with a centuries-old practice rooted in storytelling, resistance, and cultural memory.

Tatreez is more than embroidery; it's a visual language passed through generations of Palestinian women, expressing identity, heritage, and life on the land. In 2021, UNESCO recognised this remarkable art form by adding it to its Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Take a moment for mindful embroidery and choose your own design to begin (or continue) your own tatreez journey.

The recommended age for this event is 16+. Under 18's must be accompanied by an over 18 ticket holder.



## DRAWING POWER: THE POLITICS OF MAPS

**Maxim Samson, Pragma Agarwal,  
Saeed Khan**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft  
Auditorium

🗣️ Panel | # 26GF2

🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | £10

This panel explores how maps are far more than tools for navigation. They are instruments of power, shaping how we see the world and how the world is controlled.

From imperial cartography to modern surveillance systems, maps have long been used to assert authority, conceal information and construct realities. It is an era when we 'unknowingly trade privacy for convenience' via our phones, bank cards and travel passes and offer up constant maps of our movement through location data.

Reconsider the maps you encounter every day - think about not just what they show, but what they hide and who has the power to draw them.



## CURRY, CROWN AND EMPIRE: AN ILLUSTRATED TALK BY RADHIKA HOWARTH

**Radhika Howarth**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Talks | # 26FO1

🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | £10

Queen Victoria had a secret. She loved curry.

In the final decades of her reign, shaped by her close relationship with Abdul Karim, her Indian secretary and confidant, dishes like daal and chicken curry found their way into the royal kitchens at Osborne House. What those recipes reveal about Britain at the height of empire is more surprising than you might expect.

Drawing on historic menus and original research, Radhika Howarth traces how curry travelled from colonial encounter to royal dining table, from early curry powders to coronation chicken. Richly illustrated, warm and witty, this is food history at its most revealing.



## THE RISE OF COSY FANTASY

**Amy Coombe, Sangu Mandanna**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

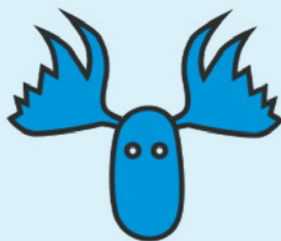
🗣️ Panel | # 26CM4

🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

Readers are increasingly turning to magical worlds shaped by friendship, belonging and everyday transformation. This panel explores the growing appeal of cosy fantasy and how it is reshaping contemporary fiction.

Join authors Amy Coombe and Sangu Mandanna as they discuss the intimate magical settings, found-family storytelling and quietly transformative journeys at the heart of their work.

From magical inns and hidden covens to unlikely friendships and spells woven into ordinary life, cosy fantasy offers readers comfort, escapism and hope, creating spaces where magic sits close to home and community is central to the story.



## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLUEMOOSE

**Kevin Duffy**

📍 University of Bradford,

Bright Building, Orange Room

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW13D

🕒 12:45 (15 mins) | **£10**

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## IN CONVERSATION WITH HANNAH SPENCER MP

**Hannah Spencer**

- 📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall
- 🗣️ In Conversation | # 26WA4
- 🕒 12:45 (1 hour) | £10

Join us for an intimate evening with Hannah Spencer, the trailblazing Green Party MP for Gorton and Denton, as she reflects on her journey from working-class tradeswoman to Westminster.

Before entering Parliament, Hannah worked as a plumber and engineer, building a career in industries where women remain underrepresented. In this candid conversation, she shares what it takes to challenge expectations, navigate male-dominated spaces and break through barriers in work and politics.

Exploring class, representation, power and the rise of alternative political voices, this event offers a bold insight into leadership shaped by lived experience and what it means to challenge the status quo from the inside.



## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLOOMSBURY

**Jonathan Eyers**

- 📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room
- 🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW4A
- 🕒 13:00 (30 mins) | £10

Discover the key to a successful publishing journey with Bloomsbury. In this one-to-one session with one of its editors, you will get expert guidance on how to approach publishers and what makes your manuscript irresistible.

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## WHODUNNIT AFTER AGATHA CHRISTIE?

**Hazell Ward, Tom Hindle, Janice Hallett**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗣️ Panel | # 26CR11

🕒 13:00 (1 hour 15 mins) | £10

Half a century after her death, Agatha Christie remains the undisputed Queen of Crime. Her plots uncracked, her characters unforgotten, her influence undiminished.

To mark the 50th anniversary, Janice Hallett, Tom Hindle and Hazell Ward, three of today's finest crime writers, come together to celebrate the woman who made the whodunnit an art form. All three have been shaped by Christie's genius: her locked rooms, her unreliable narrators, her uncanny understanding of what makes us suspect our neighbours.

Expect affectionate tribute, sharp literary debate and one urgent question: 50 years on, why can't we resist a good whodunnit?



B L O O M S B U R Y

## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLOOMSBURY

**Jonathan Eyers**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW4C

🕒 13:30 (30 mins) | £10

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## PETER SANDERS: THE ART OF CONTRIBUTION - MUSLIM PIONEERS IN THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

**Peter Sanders**

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Pictureville

🔊 Talks | # 26FMP23

🕒 13:30 (1 hour 30 minutes) | £10

Acclaimed photographer Peter Sanders presents a remarkable visual journey through three of the world's most sacred cities: Jerusalem, Makkah and Madinah.

Drawing on a lifetime spent documenting places of faith, pilgrimage and devotion, Sanders explores the spiritual significance of landscapes that have shaped the religious imagination of billions of people through the centuries. Moving beyond politics and conflict, this illustrated talk reflects on sacred geography, memory and the enduring human search for meaning, belonging and transcendence.

Through extraordinary images and personal reflection, *Sacred Earth* offers a meditation on beauty, reverence and the ties that connect humanity to the sacred.



## WHO GETS TO TELL THE STORY?

**Nafeez Ahmed, George Osborn, and Meashael al Mannai**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🔊 Panel | # 26WA19

🕒 13:45 (1 hour) | £10

A conversation exploring the relationship between media, narrative and geopolitical power in shaping national and international perceptions.

The discussion will examine how conflict, identity and political legitimacy are mediated through global information systems, alongside the growing influence that digital media, strategic communication and information warfare have in shaping public understanding.

Particular attention will be given to the tension between lived realities and externally constructed narratives, and to the question of who ultimately has the power to define how a region is seen, understood and remembered.





B L O O M S B U R Y

## MEET THE PUBLISHER: BLOOMSBURY

**Jonathan Eyers**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Bright Building, Orange Room

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AW4D

🕒 14:00 (30 mins) | £10

Discover the key to a successful publishing journey with Bloomsbury. In this one-to-one session with one of its editors, you will get expert guidance on how to approach publishers and what makes your manuscript irresistible.

Participants will be asked to submit an example of their work beforehand to ensure a focused, constructive conversation. Get insider advice on navigating the publishing landscape, refining your pitch and understanding what publishers are truly seeking in submissions.

This is a unique opportunity to get invaluable feedback and take your writing career to the next level. Book your slot promptly as places are limited for this highly sought-after opportunity.



B L O O M S B U R Y



## BEYOND TIME: PERCEPTION, CONSCIOUSNESS AND REALITY

**Akram Khan**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26FMP19

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | £10

How much of reality do human beings actually perceive? And are there dimensions of existence that lie beyond the limits of ordinary human understanding?

In this unique conversation, CERN physicist Professor Akram Khan explores some of humanity's oldest and most profound questions: the nature of consciousness, the limits of perception and the relationship between reality, uncertainty and human experience.

Bringing together physics, philosophy and contemplative traditions, the discussion reflects on causality, free will and the unseen dimensions of existence, inviting audiences into a rare dialogue on what it means to experience reality as human beings.

# Humaniti



## EMPIRE AFTER EMPIRE: POWER, DECLINE AND THE WORLD ORDER

**Dr Nafjah al Kuwairi, Saeed Khan, Vince Cable**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Great Hall

🗣️ Panel | # 26HI17

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

From Rome and the Ottomans to Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States, empires have repeatedly risen, expanded and declined throughout history.

This major conversation examines how great powers lose legitimacy, how societies experience transition and how political orders begin to fragment and transform.

Exploring imperial overstretch, symbolism, nationalism, nostalgia and the psychology of decline, the panel asks whether we are witnessing another major global transition and what history reveals about moments when established orders begin to unravel.



## MASTERCLASS: EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE

**Shamim Rehman**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre, Norcroft Lounge

🗣️ Masterclass | # 26HB9

🕒 14:00 (2hour 30 mins) | **£7**

Led by holistic healer Shamim Rehman, this workshop will equip you with the knowledge and skills for Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) as an alternative treatment for physical pain and emotional distress.

Learn the basics of EFT, also referred to as tapping or psychological acupressure. This technique of tapping the body is believed to create a balance in your energy system, treat pain and manage emotions and troubling thoughts.

The practice of EFT dates back to the 1960s and is now used in a variety of settings, including healthcare, pain management and general wellbeing.



## SALTAIRE MODEL VILLAGE: HERITAGE WALKING TOUR

**Maria Glot**

📍 Saltaire United Reformed Church,  
Meeting Point

🗣️ Tour | # 26HW6

🕒 14:00 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£10**

Celebrate Hockney Day with a journey into the past on this guided walking tour of Saltaire, the remarkable model village built around the iconic Salts Mill.

Led by Maria Glot, this insightful tour explores the history, architecture and social life of Saltaire in its 19th-century heyday, bringing to life what it meant to live and work in this pioneering community. Now home to one of the world's largest collections of David Hockney's work, Salts Mill offers a unique connection between past and present.

This is an outdoor walking tour. Please wear comfortable footwear and dress for the weather. Meet outside Saltaire United Reformed Church, BD18 3LF.



## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO BRADFORD: WALKING TOUR

📍 Saltaire United Reformed Church,  
Meeting Point

🗣️ Tour | # 26HW5

🕒 14:00 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£15**

Step beneath the surface of Bradford and uncover the stories woven into its streets on this relaxed, one-hour walking tour.

This guided walk reveals the city's hidden gems, from monuments and memorials to unexpected landmarks rich with history. Encounter figures such as Queen Victoria and J. B. Priestley, alongside curious sights including the legendary Brown Muff's sign, the Bradford Boar and the concealed route of the Bradford Beck.

Blending local history with intriguing anecdotes, this tour offers a fresh perspective on familiar places and forgotten corners of the city. Perfect for first-time visitors and seasoned locals alike, the walk concludes at Waterstones in the magnificent Wool Exchange. No hills; just history, discovery and stories waiting to be uncovered.



## PRINTS FOR PEACE: LETTERPRESS PRINTMAKING MASTERCLASS

### People Powered Press

- 📍 People Powered Press, Main
- 📍 Workshop | # 26AD3
- 🕒 14:00 (210 minutes) | £25

Create your own powerful Print for Peace in this hands-on letterpress masterclass, open to all with no experience needed. Guided by an experienced printmaker, you'll use traditional and contemporary style to design a unique print inspired by protest posters, placards and messages of hope, resistance and reflection.

Using the People Powered Press, the largest of its kind in the world, you'll learn the basics of letterpress and relief printmaking while producing a finished print in colours of your choice to take home.

You'll also have the opportunity to contribute your work to Pressing Matters, an exhibition at the Peace Museum in 2026.



## BECOMING FREQUENTLY HAPPY WITH DAVID LARBI

### David Larbi

- 📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium
- 📍 Masterclass | # 26PO3
- 🕒 14:15 (1 hour) | £10

Join us for a restorative and inspiring masterclass rooted in the uplifting wisdom of *Frequently Happy* by David Larbi. This immersive session blends reflective poetry with guided journaling exercises designed to help you notice life's small joys and nurture a more positive mindset.

Through carefully selected prompts from Larbi's work, you will explore themes of gratitude, presence and emotional awareness, leaving with practical tools to carry moments of happiness into your everyday life.

Whether you are an experienced writer or simply curious about creative reflection, this masterclass offers a welcoming space to slow down and reconnect with what makes you feel most alive.



## BEING OLD: IN CONVERSATION WITH PRUE LEITH

**Prue Leith**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🔊 In Conversation | # 26ME1

🕒 14:15 (1 hour) | £10

Prue Leith has never been one to hold back. At 85, she's not about to start.

The Great British Bake Off presenter, Great British Menu judge, restaurateur, cookery school founder and national treasure joins us for a chat about her Sunday Times bestselling memoir *Being Old and Learning to Love It*, a frank, funny and thoroughly entertaining reckoning with life in her eighties. From love and loss to assisted dying, fashion, fame and finding joy, nothing is off limits.

Warm, wise and wickedly honest, this is an afternoon in the company of a woman who has lived an extraordinary life and isn't finished yet.



## LITTLE GERMANY: HERITAGE WALKING TOUR

**Nigel Grizzard**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub Meeting Point

🔊 Tour | # 26HW4

🕒 14:30 (1 hours and 45 minutes) | £10

Explore one of the city's most striking architectural treasures and uncover the story of the German merchants who transformed Bradford into an international centre of trade during the 19th century.

Packed with historical insight and hidden details, Grizzard's tour brings this forgotten world vividly to life as you wander through the country's largest collection of listed merchant buildings.

Perfect for lovers of history, architecture and local heritage, this outdoor walking tour offers a unique glimpse into Bradford's industrial past.

Please wear comfortable footwear and weather-appropriate clothing.



## SAIMA MIR: DELIVERANCE BOOK LAUNCH

**Saima Mir**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗨️ Book Launch | # 26CR5

🕒 14:30 (1 hour) | £10

Jia Khan is back. Bradford-born, *Times* bestselling author Saima Mir returns with *Deliverance*, the electrifying new chapter in her Jia Khan series, following a woman who built an empire in a world that never wanted her to, and who will do whatever it takes to protect it.

Mir began her career as a crime reporter at Bradford's own *Telegraph & Argus* before the BBC and her debut, *The Khan* became a *Times* and *Sunday Times* Crime Novel of the Year, now optioned for TV by BBC Studios. This is a homecoming worth celebrating.

Join Mir in the city where her writing journey began, as she launches the next gripping instalment in one of crime fiction's most compelling series.

Be among the first to hear about *Deliverance*, what comes next and stay on afterwards for a walking tour of locations featured in the books.



## ONCE UPON A TIME: REIMAGINING FAIRY TALES

**Ceri Houlbrook, Georgia Leighton,  
Sam Davey and Alison Bailey**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗨️ Panel | # 26CM5

🕒 15:00 (1 hour) | £10

Co-produced with the British Library, we invite you into the evolving world of fairy tales, inspired by the Library's landmark exhibition exploring the history and power of these enduring stories.

Fairy tales were never only bedtime stories. They have always carried danger, desire, rebellion and transformation. Now, a new generation of writers is reclaiming them.

Join folklorist and cultural historian Ceri Houlbrook, alongside novelists Georgia Leighton and Sam Davey, as they explore why fairy tales continue to shape our imaginations and how contemporary retellings are reframing familiar narratives through modern lenses, with marginalised voices and complex heroines. Chairing the discussion is Alison Bailey, Co-Curator of the British Library's *Fairy Tales* exhibition.



## SCREENING: PALESTINE 36 + Q&A

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

🔊 Films & Screenings | # 26BF33

🕒 15:00 (2 hours and 15 minutes) | £7

As Palestinian villages rise against British colonial rule, Yusuf moves between his rural home and Jerusalem, caught in a decisive moment for the region.

Written and directed by acclaimed Palestinian filmmaker Annemarie Jacir, *Palestine 36* follows farmers, workers and revolutionaries as resistance grows under British mandatory control. Starring Hiam Abbass, Saleh Bakri and Jeremy Irons, this sweeping historical drama brings a pivotal chapter of Palestinian history vividly to the screen.

Palestine's official submission for Best International Feature Film at the 2026 Academy Awards.

*Arabic and English with English subtitles.*



## HOW TO GET PUBLISHED

**Finn Brown, James Rennoldson, Jonathan Eyers**

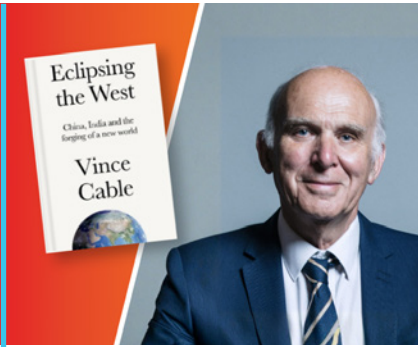
📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre, Norcroft Auditorium

🔊 Talks | # 26AW23

🕒 15:15 (1 hour) | £10

The *Writers & Artists Yearbook* has been a companion for writers looking to get published for 120 years. To celebrate, the team behind *Writers & Artists*, Bloomsbury Publishing, will be sharing its insight into different routes to publication.

From self-publishing and indie publishing to the traditional route, literary agents and perfecting both your book and your submission, this in-depth session with publishing professionals will give you the work to submit your book to agents and publishers with confidence.



## IN CONVERSATION WITH VINCE CABLE

**Vince Cable**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🔊 In Conversation | # 26GF1

🕒 15:30 (45 minutes) | £10

Join Vince Cable for a timely conversation about the shifting balance of global power. Drawing on *Eclipsing the West*, the former Secretary of State for Business and Trade argues that the 300-year era of Western dominance is giving way to a new world shaped by the rise of China and India.

As these two vast nations move towards superstate status, they are becoming both strategic rivals and indispensable partners in tackling global challenges, from climate change to pandemic prevention.

Part history, part political analysis and part strategic briefing, this event asks how the UK and its allies should navigate a multipolar future in which the West is no longer the centre of the world.



## I SWEAR: IN CONVERSATION WITH JOHN DAVIDSON

**Abbie Ross, John Davidson**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Great Hall

🔊 In Conversation | # 26ME4

🕒 15:30 (1 hour) | £10

John Davidson was a football-mad boy growing up in the Scottish Borders when, at 10 years old, his life changed.

The sudden onset of Tourette's syndrome brought bullying, isolation and a society wholly unprepared to support him. What followed was an extraordinary journey, from hospital stays and misunderstanding to activism, an MBE and a critically acclaimed film inspired by his life.

In this warm and deeply human conversation, Davidson is joined by co-author Abbie Ross to discuss *I Swear*, a memoir about resilience, neurodiversity and the transformative power of human connection.



## PUNK ROCK RUINED MY LIFE: AN EVENING WITH JOHN ROBB

**John Robb**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26ME17

🕒 15:45 (1 hour) | £10

In 1970s Blackpool, a teenager heard punk rock and his life changed forever. He never looked back. Join musician, broadcaster and writer John Robb for a riotous conversation about *Punk Rock Ruined My Life*, the memoir of a one-man cultural phenomenon.

Minister for the Counterculture, Mancunian mainstay and alternative national treasure, Robb has spent 50 years on the cultural frontline: from being the first journalist to interview Nirvana to discovering The Stone Roses for Sounds; from early encounters with The Jesus and Mary Chain and the Manics to documenting legends like Mark E. Smith and Patti Smith.

Riotous stories. Deep friendships. A triumphant blueprint for a punk rock life.



## DOHA DEBATES PORTAL: ARE WE THE MOST INTELLIGENT BEINGS IN THE UNIVERSE?

📍 City Park, Doha Debates Portal

🗣️ Debate | # 26EX16

🕒 16:00 (1 hour 30 minutes) | £10

For centuries, humanity has understood itself as singular within the universe—uniquely intelligent, moral and spiritual. But what if that assumption is wrong?

The discovery of intelligent life beyond Earth would not just be a scientific breakthrough; it would force a profound reconsideration of what it means to be human. If we are not alone, are we still exceptional? Or does our place in the cosmos become less certain, less central?

This Portal debate will provide an opportunity for the Bradford Literature Festival attendees to engage with young people from Nigeria, and Brazil to explore how such a discovery might reshape our understanding of ourselves. Would it challenge the moral and spiritual frameworks that have guided civilizations for centuries, or would it deepen them?



## FREEDOM FOR WHOM? WHEN DEMOCRACIES BECOME AFRAID

**Ebrahim Rasool, Rim-Sarah Alouane**

St George's Hall

Debate | # 26WA10

16:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Across much of the democratic world, debates around free speech, protest, surveillance, citizenship and state power are becoming increasingly common.

Bringing together legal scholar Rim-Sarah Alouane and former South African ambassador and anti-apartheid activist Ebrahim Rasool, this major conversation explores the tensions emerging at the heart of modern liberal democracies.

From securitisation and Islamophobia to selective freedoms and the shrinking space for dissent, the discussion asks whether democratic societies are becoming more fearful, more restrictive and more imbalanced in the way rights and freedoms are experienced, and who ultimately gets to feel truly free.



## WALKING TOUR: SAIMA MIR

**Saima Mir**

City Park

Walks | # 26CR17

16:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Join Bradford-born author Saima Mir for a special walking tour celebrating the launch of *Deliverance*, the gripping new instalment in her acclaimed Jia Khan series.

Moving through the streets and landmarks of Bradford, Mir reflects on the city that shaped her imagination, from its civic spaces and newsroom connections to the communities, tensions and histories that inform her bold crime fiction.

Along the way, she will explore how place becomes story, how real locations inspire fictional worlds, and why Bradford remains central to the energy, danger and ambition of Jia Khan's journey.

This outdoor tour requires comfortable footwear and weather-appropriate clothing.



## THE THINGS WE DON'T SAY: SOCIETY, SECRECY AND FORBIDDEN LOVE

**Chloe Michelle Howarth, Liz Flanagan,  
Hafsa Lodi**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗣️ Panel | # 26SC4

🕒 16:00 (1 hour 15 min) | **£10**

Behind every public expectation is a private cost. In this compelling discussion, three acclaimed novelists explore how women negotiate the pressures of family, faith and community.

Chloe Michelle Howarth (*Sunburn* and *Heap Earth Upon It*), Liz Flanagan (*When We Were Divided*) and Hafsa Lodi (*Turbulence*) each write about lives shaped by scrutiny, tradition and control. Across different settings, their characters wrestle with belonging, truth, love, loyalty and identity under pressure.

Bringing together three distinct voices, this panel examines silence and visibility, resistance and compromise, and the tension between private lives and public expectations in contemporary fiction.



## BEA FITZGERALD: BETTER THAN REVENGE BOOK LAUNCH

**Bea Fitzgerald**

📍 City Hall

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26F16

🕒 16:15 (1 hour) | **£10**

Join bestselling author Bea Fitzgerald for a special event celebrating her new novel, *Better Than Revenge*, a sharp and addictive story of competition, celebrity culture and complicated desire set against the glitz of drama school and Hollywood fame.

Following aspiring actress Nadine Heywood and her intense rivalry with the brilliant Harper Moore, the novel explores ambition, performance, public image and the fine line between hatred and attraction.

In conversation, Fitzgerald discusses writing obsession, morally messy characters and the enduring appeal of stories driven by fame, rivalry and revenge.



## CAREERS IN PUBLISHING

**Finn Brown - Writers & Artists**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre,  
Norcroft Auditorium

🗣️ Panel | # 26AW5

🕒 16:30 (1 hour) | £10

Curious about how to start a career in publishing? Whether you dream of working with authors as an editor, crafting campaigns in publicity, shaping books through production or exploring the many other roles that bring a book to life, this panel offers a clear and honest introduction to the industry.

Join representatives from Bloomsbury as they share their insights into the publishing world, the skills and qualities they look for in new talent and the realities of breaking into the field.

From understanding the variety of job pathways available to demystifying the application process, this session provides practical guidance for anyone considering a publishing career.



## YIN YOGA

**Rebecca Riley**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre,  
Norcroft Lounge

🗣️ Masterclass | # 26HB5

🕒 16:45 (1 hour) | £7

Take time to pause and reset with this guided yin yoga session designed to ease both body and mind.

Led by Rebecca Riley of Yoga Limba, this 60-minute session introduces a series of slow, floor-based stretches held for extended periods to encourage relaxation, release tension and support a sense of balance and calm. Suitable for all levels of experience, yin yoga offers a quiet and restorative space within the energy of the festival programme.

Whether you are new to yoga or returning to your practice, this session provides an opportunity to unwind and reconnect before the week continues.

Participants will need to bring their own yoga mat. This event is suitable for ages 16+. Under 18s must be accompanied by an adult ticket holder.



## RUMI LECTURE: RUMI AND THE CRISIS OF MEANING

**Jawid Mojaddedi**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🔊 Talks | # 26FMP4

🕒 17:00 (1 hour) | £10

Professor Jawid Mojaddedi, one of the world's leading scholars and translators of Rumi, returns for this year's Annual Rumi Lecture. In an age shaped by hyper-connectivity yet profound loneliness, material abundance yet spiritual uncertainty, the lecture explores why Rumi's poetry and philosophy continue to resonate so powerfully within the modern world.

Examining contemporary crises of meaning, spirituality in a post-religious age and the enduring human search for transcendence and inner transformation, Mojaddedi considers what Rumi's mystical vision may still offer societies navigating fragmentation, dislocation and the tension between information, ethics, modernity and the deeper need for connection and purpose.



## ALEX CONNER: HOW TO GET STUFF DONE WITH ADHD

**Alex Conner**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Great Hall

🔊 Talks | # 26ND4

🕒 17:00 (1 hour) | £10

Dr Alex Conner returns with a practical, empowering session on working with ADHD brains, rather than against them.

Co-founder of the award-winning charity ADHDadultUK and co-host of *The ADHD Adults podcast*, Conner explores common challenges like overwhelm, procrastination and burnout. Offering realistic strategies around energy management, motivation and self-compassion, this accessible talk is designed for people with ADHD, those exploring a diagnosis and anyone supporting neurodivergent individuals.

Thoughtful and achievable, it offers tools to reframe productivity and navigate everyday life with greater understanding and confidence.



## ROCK THE CASBAH: MUSIC AS PROTEST

**Dave Randall**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🔊 Panel | # 26CC3

🕒 17:15 (1 hour) | £10

Join rockstars come social commentators, John Robb and Dave Randall, as they trace the lineage of protest music, from punk and hip hop to contemporary artists reshaping today's political soundscape.

Through discussion and selected audio clips, they explore how musicians have challenged authority, documented lived experience and mobilised audiences, from anti-establishment anthems to personal acts of resistance.

Alongside historic movements, the conversation will look at the resurgence of politically charged music in recent years, including artists such as Paris Paloma and Kneecap, whose work speaks to gender, language, identity and power. A timely exploration of music as resistance.



## THE SUEZ CRISIS: BRITAIN'S IMPERIAL RECKONING

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🔊 Panel | # 26HI4

🕒 17:30 (1 hour) | £10

Seventy years after the Suez Crisis, this conversation reflects on the moment many historians regard as the symbolic end of Britain's imperial era.

Bringing together historians and political thinkers, the event examines the geopolitical consequences of Suez, the emergence of a US-led post-war order and the psychological impact of imperial decline on Britain's national identity and relationship with the wider world.

The discussion considers how the legacy of Suez continues to shape contemporary debates around power, sovereignty and Britain's place in global politics.



## FEMINISM, POWER AND POLITICAL NARRATIVES

**Nabila Rashid, Naz Shah, Rim-Sarah  
Alouane, Tasneem Chopra**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗣️ Panel | # 26FE6

🕒 17:30 (1 hour 15 mins) | **£10**

Which women are heard, defended and platformed within global public discourse and which stories remain politically inconvenient?

Bringing together writers, activists, political voices and legal thinkers, this conversation explores the relationship between feminism, media narratives and geopolitical power in shaping whose suffering becomes visible and whose experiences are overlooked.

From war and displacement to Islamophobia, state violence and selective solidarity, the discussion examines how political interests, cultural assumptions and media ecosystems shape contemporary feminist discourse, whilst asking what a more consistent, globally conscious and ethically grounded feminism might look like today.



## BOLLYWOOD DANCE CLASS

**Salma Zaman**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre,  
Norcroft Lounge

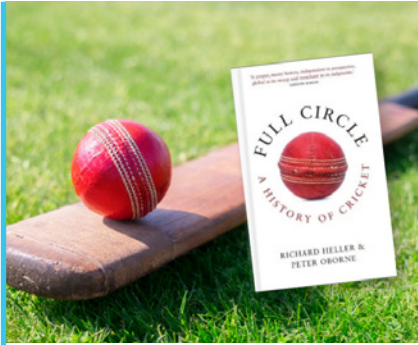
🗣️ Masterclass | # 26HB8

🕒 18:00 (1 hour) | **£7**

Discover the colour, rhythm and expressive storytelling of Bollywood dance in this energetic workshop led by Salma, founder of Yorkshire's first Bollywood Academy.

Combining lively choreography with accessible step-by-step guidance, this session introduces participants to the movement style that makes Bollywood dance so distinctive. Along the way, you will explore how dance can support confidence, wellbeing and connection through shared experience.

Suitable for complete beginners as well as those who already love to dance, this uplifting workshop offers a welcoming space to move, learn something new and embrace the joy of Bollywood music together.



## FULL CIRCLE: A HISTORY OF CRICKET

**Peter Osborne**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

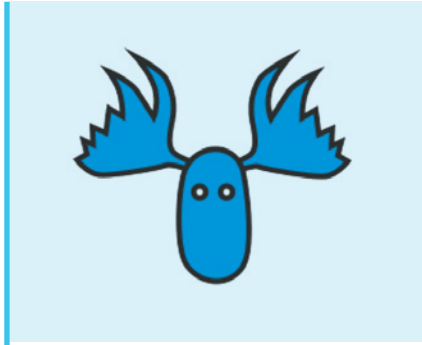
🗣️ Panel | # 26SP2

🕒 18:00 (1 hour) | £10

Cricket is often seen as a sport of tradition, fair play and gentlemanly values, but its history tells a more complex story.

Join cricket historian Peter Osborne for a fascinating discussion exploring how cricket has always been shaped by power, from its origins as an 18th-century commercial spectacle tied to gambling to its reinvention in Victorian Britain as a tool of discipline and moral order.

Osborne traces how the game was exported through empire, taking root across the world in dramatically different ways and becoming entangled with class, race and identity.



## THE POWER OF INDEPENDENT PRESS: 20 YEARS OF BLUEMOOSE BOOKS

**Kevin Duffy, Yvette Huddleston**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre, Norcroft Auditorium

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26AW6

🕒 18:00 (1 hour) | £10

Celebrate 20 years of Bluemoose Books Publishing, one of the UK's most fearless independent presses.

Founded in Hebden Bridge, Bluemoose has spent two decades championing bold, unconventional writing, amplifying regional voices and publishing stories that might otherwise go unheard. This special anniversary event explores the power of independent publishing to challenge literary norms, nurture emerging talent and resist commercial pressures.

Reflecting on Bluemoose's remarkable journey and cultural impact, the discussion asks what it means to publish bravely today and why independent presses remain vital to the future of books, creativity and cultural conversation.





## THE QASIDA BURDAH: AN EVENING OF HEALING

**Noshin Gul**

📍 University of Bradford. Richmond  
Building, Great Hall

🎫 Concerts & Performances | # 26FMP20

🕒 19:00 (3 hours) | £10

For centuries, Imam al-Busiri's *Qasida Burdah* has offered comfort, reflection and spiritual solace to communities across the Muslim world.

Revered as one of the most beloved poetic expressions of devotion to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the *Burdah* continues to be recited in moments of remembrance, difficulty and healing.

Through sacred poetry, voice and shared reflection, this special live recitation invites audiences into an atmosphere of spirituality, contemplation and collective healing, offering an opportunity to encounter one of Islam's most enduring devotional traditions in a space of beauty, presence and care.

*Women only event.*



## MUSHAIRA: AN EVENING OF URDU POETRY

**Sana Nemat**

📍 The Majestic Bradford, Main Hall

🎫 Gigs & Nights Out | # 26PO9

🕒 19:00 (4 hours) | £25

For generations, the mushaira has occupied a cherished place in the cultural life of the subcontinent, an evening where poetry, language and conversation come together in celebration of the enduring beauty of Urdu.

Rooted in centuries of literary tradition, the mushaira continues to offer a unique space for reflection, creativity and shared experience. We are delighted to once again present our annual Urdu mushaira in partnership with the Yorkshire Adabee Forum.

Join us for an evening of rich and evocative poetry from acclaimed international Urdu poets, accompanied by a three-course Pakistani buffet and a special live musical performance by celebrated Pakistani singer Sana Nemat.

*This event is not suitable for very young children or babes in arms, who will not be admitted. Please book a ticket for every member of your party. Please note this event is in Urdu. Due to the nature of this event, no discounts or concessions apply.*





## WHAT WE LEAVE WE CARRY - WRITERSMOSAIC

**John Siddique, Isabelle Dupuy**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ Panel | # 26AW7

🕒 19:00 (1 hour 15 mins) | £10

Are you a migrant? Would you associate with a migrant? For some, 'migration' is a dirty and fearful word, but *What We Leave, We Carry*, a new oral history of migration to Britain, argues that migrants are among the bravest and most inspiring people in the world.

What do we leave behind when we move to a new place? What do we carry with us, physically and emotionally, wherever we land?

Colin Grant and writers from WritersMosaic have travelled throughout Britain, listening to stories of migration, foundational tales of arriving in a new land and rarely spoken tales of love and loss. Dawn Cameron hosts storytellers from this groundbreaking oral history, namely Anni Domingo, Isabelle Dupuy and Abha Sharma, as they share the secrets of their migrant songs and objects from Sierra Leone, Haiti and India.

The evening also features live music from Rory A. Green.



## PARIS 1900: THE FORGOTTEN FEMALE ARTISTS

**David Kennedy and Suzanne Rennie**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

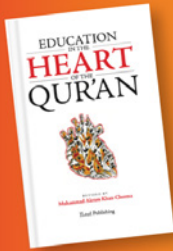
🗣️ Talks | # 26AD6

🕒 19:00 (1 hour) | £10

At the turn of the 20th century, Paris was the centre of European culture. Alongside celebrated names like Picasso, Monet and Matisse were female artists whose works filled the Salons, attracted collectors and earned critical acclaim and yet many have since been erased from history.

In this illustrated talk, author David Kennedy uncovers the hidden stories of the female artists of Paris in 1900 and explores why so many once-prominent figures were forgotten. Through archival research, visual material and cultural analysis, he examines how these artists challenged social conventions, influenced modernism and asks what it means to restore their place in art history today.

Chaired by Suzanne Rennie, this event explores wider questions about how history is written, remembered and revised.



## THE HEART OF THE QUR'AN: A SPECIAL BOOK LAUNCH WITH MUHAMMAD AKRAM KHAN-CHEEMA

**Muhammad Akram Khan-Cheema OBE**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26R110

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | **£75**

For decades, Ustadh Muhammad Akram Khan-Cheema has inspired audiences around the world through his ability to bring the teachings of the Qur'an to life with clarity, wisdom and relevance. In this special event celebrating both the launch of his new book *The Heart of the Qur'an* and his lifelong contribution to Islamic education, he reflects on the enduring significance of Surah Yasin, one of the most beloved chapters of the Qur'an. Exploring its timeless themes of faith, purpose, mercy and the human journey, the conversation offers an opportunity to engage with a treasured chapter while celebrating the work of one of Britain's most respected teachers. Presented in partnership with Mercy Mission and chaired by Azim Kidwai.

Ticket includes a signed copy of the book and a meal.



## SOUND BATH: THIS LIBERATING LIFE

**This Liberating Life**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre

🗣️ Workshop | # 26HB7

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | **£7**

Step away from the noise of everyday life and experience a restorative sound bath led by intuitive coach and sound healer Kerry Walton.

Using gongs, singing bowls and other resonant instruments, Kerry creates a calming soundscape designed to quiet the mind and ease tension in the body. Participants are invited to lie down, relax and allow the vibrations to support a sense of balance and stillness.

Suitable for all levels of experience, this session offers a gentle opportunity to rest, reset and reconnect.

Please bring comfortable clothing and a mat and/or pillow and blanket.



## NORTHERN NOIR AT THE BAR

**Bobby Cussens, Cath Staincliffe,  
Jess Kitching**

📍 Ginger Goose, Upstairs

🗣️ Panel | # 26CR3

🕒 19:30 (1 hour 30 mins)

£15 Ticket (No Concessions)

The moors don't forgive. The terraces keep secrets. And round here, everyone knows your business, which is precisely the problem. Grab a drink and settle in for one of Bradford Literature Festival's most beloved evenings.

Bobby Cussens, Cath Staincliffe and Jess Kitching, three writers who know that the north is as much a state of mind as a place on a map. Join them as they explore why this landscape breeds the darkest, sharpest, most compulsive crime fiction anywhere.

Expect grit, gallows humour and the particular pleasure of fiction that feels like it knows exactly where you live.



## LYRICAL MEHFIL

**Catherine Redford, Hanan Issa, John  
Siddique, Len Pennie**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🗣️ Concerts & Performances | # 26PO5

🕒 19:30 (150 minutes) | £15

Join us for the return of the much-loved Lyrical Mehfil, an annual celebration of lyrical poetry inspired by the rich tradition of South Asian mehfil, intimate gatherings of music, verse and storytelling once held in the courts and homes of nobility.

This year's event brings together a dazzling line-up of acclaimed poets whose powerful voices and innovative styles promise an unforgettable evening of performance and connection. Set within an intimate atmosphere, Lyrical Mehfil offers audiences the chance to experience poetry at its most moving, musical and personal.

Celebrate language, culture and creativity at one of the festival's most popular events.

# SUNDAY 5 JULY

Step into the wonderful world of the 100 Acre Wood for a **free** family day packed with stories, creativity and adventure. With face painting, walkabout acts, crafts, theatre and film across the city centre, there's plenty to keep little ones busy. Don't Pooh-pooh it, come along and join the fun!

## THEATRE SHOW

 **City Park**

 11.30 | 12:45 | 14:00 | **FREE**

### The 100 Acre Wood Bear Hunt

Once there was a bear of very little brain. And he had lost something. He knew it was important, because he knew it was missing, but it didn't matter how much he puzzled and pondered. He simply couldn't for the life of him remember what it was. There was only one thing for it; he was going to have to go on a Bear Hunt! After all, what else is a bear to do when they have lost something important?

## PERFORMANCES

 **City Park**

### Punjabi Roots - Band Baja 11:00

Enjoy the unmistakable sound of the Punjabi Roots Academy Baja Band as it brings a burst of music, colour and celebration to Bradford.

### Khula Arts 12:15 | 14:30

Feel the rhythm and energy of Khula Arts as it brings a vibrant celebration of African music, dance and culture to the heart of Bradford.

### Punjabi Roots - Bhangra 13:30

Experience the energy and excitement of Punjabi Roots Academy as it brings the vibrant tradition of bhangra to the heart of Bradford.

**GO  
ALL  
IN.**

National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026

## MEET THE AUTHOR

 **Hub, City Park**

 14.00 | **FREE** | Book Online

### Zimarina Sarwar

Join author Zimarina Sarwar as she explores the themes of faith, self-discovery and spiritual growth at the heart of her book *Journey of the Soul*, sharing insights from the Islamic tradition and the lessons that inspired her writing.



**FREE**  
**FAMILY**  
**FUN DAYS**



## STORYTELLING

 **Imagination Station, City Park**

 **Gav Cross**

11.00 | 12.30 | 14.00

**Noel Watkins**

11.45 | 13.15 | 14.30

Listen with wonder as live storytellers share 100 Acre Wood-inspired adventures throughout the day, plus tips for telling your own.

## ARTS & CRAFTS


 **Broadway & Imagination Station, City Park**

 11.00 - 15.00 **FREE** | Drop in

Get creative with four different 100 Acre Wood-inspired craft activities, little adventurers can make something special to take home.

## FILM SCREENING

 **Pictureville, National Science & Media Museum**

 11.00 (90 mins)

**FREE** | Book Online

### Winnie the Pooh

Join Pooh and his friends in the Hundred Acre Wood for a gentle, adventure-filled with friendship, fun and honey.



## NUREMBERG AT 80: THE PEOPLE WHO MADE JUSTICE POSSIBLE

**Helen Fry, Tim Willasey-Wilsey**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗣️ Panel | # 26HI2

🕒 9:45 (1 hour) | **£10**

Marking the 80th anniversary of the Nuremberg Trials, we look beyond the headlines of history and into the lives of those who made justice possible.

As Nazi Germany fell, a complex and urgent task emerged: to gather the evidence needed to hold perpetrators accountable for unprecedented crimes. This discussion brings to light the untold, often overlooked stories of interpreters, investigators, legal aides and survivors who worked tirelessly behind the scenes.

Through personal accounts and historical insight, the event offers a deeply human perspective on a defining moment in modern history, reminding us that justice is shaped not only by leaders, but also by the many individuals who stand up to defend it.



## TAI CHI

**Bar**

📍 City Park, Centenary Square

🗣️ Masterclass | # 26HB4

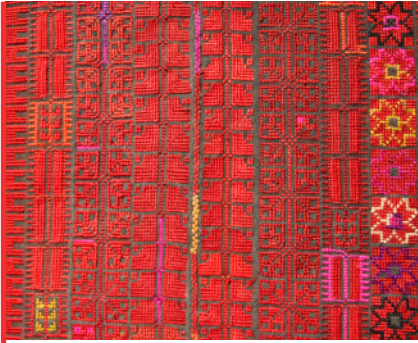
🕒 10:00 (1 hour) | **£7**

Reinvigorate your mind and spirit with this special tai chi session, led by an expert practitioner from Yorkshire Tai Chi.

The art of tai chi was a closely guarded secret, with its mysterious origins debated for centuries, but it is thought to date back to the practice of a 14th-century Taoist monk.

Thanks to its health benefits being promoted by several famous names in the 20th century, it developed a global following, with its focus on gentle movements bringing a sense of clarity and calm.

Please note this event will take place outside, so please wear suitable and comfortable clothing.



## THREADS OF PALESTINE: TATREEZ EMBROIDERY MASTERCLASS

### Yorkshire Tatreez

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 2

🗨️ Masterclass | # 26AD12

🕒 10:00 (2 hours) | **£10**

Join us for a calming, creative workshop celebrating the rich tradition of Palestinian embroidery. Guided by the skilled team at Yorkshire Tatreez, you'll cross-stitch your own beautiful bookmark while connecting with a centuries-old practice rooted in storytelling, resistance, and cultural memory.

Tatreez is more than embroidery; it's a visual language passed through generations of Palestinian women, expressing identity, heritage, and life on the land. In 2021, UNESCO recognised this remarkable art form by adding it to its Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Take a moment for mindful embroidery and choose your own design to begin (or continue) your own tatreez journey.

The recommended age for this event is 16+. Under 18's must be accompanied by an over 18 ticket holder.



## JEWISH MANNINGHAM: HERITAGE WALKING TOUR

### Nigel Grizzard

📍 Bradford Reform Synagogue, Meeting Point

🗨️ Tour | # 26HW7

🕒 10:00 (2 hours) | **£10**

Led by local historian Nigel Grizzard, this fascinating tour explores the lives, achievements and lasting influence of the German Jewish families who helped shape Bradford from the early 19th century onwards.

Along the route, hear the stories of influential merchant dynasties and notable figures, including acclaimed war poet Humbert Wolfe and celebrated artist Sir William Rothenstein.

Covering approximately two miles, the walk offers a unique opportunity to explore Bradford's history through place, memory and heritage, uncovering the legacy of a community whose impact can still be felt today. This outdoor tour requires comfortable footwear and weather-appropriate clothing.



## MAKE YOUR OWN MOTANKA DOLL!

**Olha Zhydetska**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 1

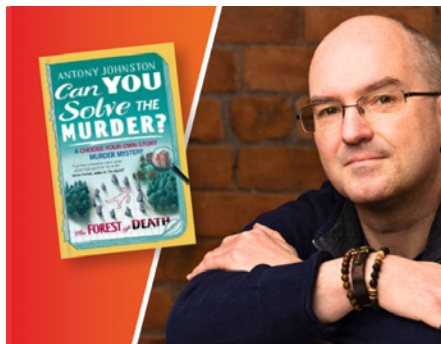
🗨️ Workshop | # 26AD13

🕒 10:15 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£15**

Step into a centuries-old tradition and discover the art of Motanka in this 90-minute, hands-on workshop led by Olha Zhydetska.

Dating back over 5,000 years, Motanka dolls are traditional yarn figures believed to embody women's wisdom and serve as protective family amulets. Created through winding and knotting rather than sewing, each doll carries symbolic meaning through its colours, threads and patterns. In this workshop, you'll learn traditional Motanka-making techniques while creating your own unique doll infused with personal intention.

Join us for a mindful and creative exploration of this ancient folk craft. No prior experience is needed, just curiosity and a willingness to create.



## CAN YOU SOLVE THE MURDER LIVE: THE FOREST OF DEATH

**Antony Johnston**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗨️ Panel | # 26CR2

🕒 10:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

Antony Johnston, the master of crime, conspiracy and the perfectly placed red herring, invites you into his most dangerous case yet.

*The Forest of Death* is no ordinary author event. Armed with fresh clues, unusual evidence and a shadowy woodland full of unreliable witnesses, you and your fellow detectives must think fast, trust no-one and piece together the truth before it disappears into the dark.

Guided by Johnston himself, this is a gripping, fully immersive whodunnit where every decision shapes the investigation. Perfect for puzzle lovers, crime fiction fans and anyone who has ever shouted at a detective novel. Do you have what it takes?



## DOHA DEBATES PORTAL: WILL AI BRING US TOGETHER OR DRIVE US APART?

- 📍 City Park, Doha Debates Portal
- 🔊 Debate | # 26EX16
- 🕒 11:00 (1 hour 30 minutes) | £10

Artificial intelligence systems often reflect the priorities, biases and beliefs of the people who designed and created them. It's critical to determine the sources of AI's worldview as it continues to influence how we think, learn and even love.

This Portal debate will bring together Bradford Literature Festival attendees and young people from Iraq and Rwanda to discuss whether AI will decrease or widen social divides. Can we create AI models that truly reflect cultural and ideological diversity? Or are we heading into an era of "AI tribes," each with its own moral code?



## AMERICA AND THE STORIES IT FORGOT

**Mustafa Briggs**

- 📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio
- 🔊 Talks | # 26HI9
- 🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | £10

As the United States marks 250 years since the Declaration of Independence, debates around race, identity and historical memory continue to shape the American story. But whose histories became central to the national narrative and whose were forgotten, erased or pushed to the margins?

Historian and scholar Mustafa Briggs explores the relationship between power, memory and nationhood, examining how histories of Black experience, migration, faith and global connection complicate traditional understandings of America's past.

Moving beyond simplified narratives, this conversation asks how nations construct identity through memory, and what happens when forgotten histories begin to re-emerge.



## THE MAKING OF THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST

**Saeed Khan, Meashael al Mannai**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Great Hall

🔊 Panel | # 26HI18

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

A historical exploration of how the modern Middle East was shaped through empire, partition, colonial administration and political realignment during the 20th century.

Examining the legacy of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, mandate systems, nationalism and post-colonial state formation, the discussion considers how borders, external intervention and competing visions of political identity continue to shape the region today.

The event offers historical context for many of the conflicts, alliances and tensions that continue to define the contemporary Middle East.



## PURIFYING THE HEART

**Mohammed Isaaq**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

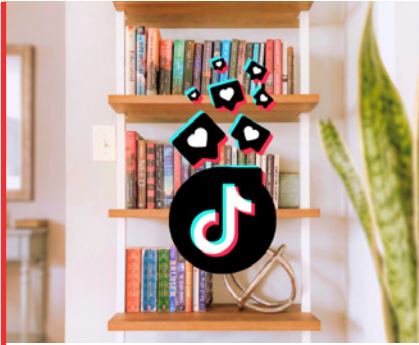
🔊 Workshop | # 26FMP1

🕒 11:00 (2 hours) | **£10**

Islamic tradition has long emphasised the importance of understanding and refining the inner self. From arrogance and envy to resentment, false hope and spiritual laziness, the 'diseases of the heart' are seen not only as personal struggles, but barriers to living with clarity, sincerity and compassion.

Join educator Mohammed Isaaq for a reflective programme exploring the inner vices that shape human behaviour and the spiritual practices developed to confront them. Rooted in the Islamic tradition and made accessible for a contemporary audience, you are invited to think deeply about self-awareness, discipline, intention and personal transformation.

Through discussion, reflection and practical insight, the programme offers a thoughtful exploration of the inner life and the ongoing process of spiritual refinement.



## THE BOOKTOK EFFECT

**Lydia Silver**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗨️ Panel | # 26AW3

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

The digital age has transformed not only how we read, but who shapes literary culture. From BookTok creators and Instagram reviewers to online book clubs and reader-led communities, literary influence is no longer confined to newspaper critics or publishing gatekeepers. This event explores how social media has democratised literary criticism, creating new pathways for readers to champion books, spark global conversations and drive publishing success.

As viral recommendations rival traditional reviews, the discussion asks: who holds power in today's literary landscape? Bringing Lydia Silver, Head of Children's at Soho Agency, together with a BookTok content creator, this conversation will examine how online platforms are redefining literary value, visibility and influence in real time.

Timely and thought-provoking, join us as we delve into the evolving relationship between readers, writers and the digital communities reshaping the publishing industry.



## DESIGNING DIGITAL LANDSCAPES WITH SAMUEL SHARP

**Samuel Sharp**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre, Norcroft Lounge

🗨️ Workshop | # 26HD1

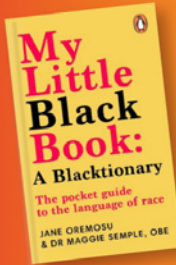
🕒 11:00 (2 hours) | **£10**

Join digital painter Samuel Sharp for a creative workshop that introduces you to the art of digital landscape drawing. A gentle and thoughtful session that encourages you to slow down, pay attention and rediscover the beauty of the places around you.

Focusing on the distinctive beauty of the Yorkshire landscape, this session invites you to explore familiar places through colour, light and expressive mark making.

In this workshop, Sharp will guide you through the essentials of digital drawing, helping you create your own expressive study of Yorkshire's landscape.

Please note, you will need to bring your own smartphone or tablet to this session with the free app Brushes Redux downloaded.



## MY LITTLE BLACK BOOK: A BLACKTIONARY

**Jane Oremosu, Maggie Semple**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ Panel | # 26R11

🕒 11:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£10**

Join Maggie Semple OBE and Jane Oremosu for the Northern premiere of *The Blacktionary*, a powerful live exploration of the words that shape how we understand race, identity and allyship.

Based on their acclaimed book, *My Little Black Book: A Blacktionary*, this engaging and thought-provoking pair brings vital lexicon to life with wit, wisdom and lived experience.

From gaslighting to intersectionality, Semple and Oremosu unpack the terminology of modern conversations around race and inclusion, offering not only definitions, but also routes into deeper understanding, dialogue and change.



## WHO DECIDES THE FUTURE? CLIMATE, POWER AND ACTION

**Jonathon Porritt, Karen Lloyd, PB Anand**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗣️ Panel | # 26GF4

🕒 12:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Bringing together voices from environmental activism, policy, data and storytelling, this vital panel explores how climate change is understood, experienced and acted upon today.

Jonathon Porritt draws on decades of work in sustainability and climate advocacy, Karen Lloyd reflects on land, justice and ecological struggle through *Earthworks* and Dr Hannah Ritchie brings a data-led perspective on climate, progress and possibility.

From grassroots action and protest to policy, evidence and lived experience, the panel asks what drives people to act, where power really lies and how we balance urgency with hope in the fight for meaningful change.



## SCREENING: KABHI KABHIE + INTRODUCTION BY SAEED KHAN

- 📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema
- 🗣️ Films & Screenings | # 26BF25
- 🕒 12:00 (3 hours) | £7

A poet and his muse. A love story cut short by duty, expectation and the pull of family. Directed by Yash Chopra, *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976) is one of Hindi cinema's great romances, starring Amitabh Bachchan, Shashi Kapoor, Raakhee, Waheeda Rehman, Rishi Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor.

Its celebrated soundtrack, featuring poetry by Sahir Ludhianvi and music by Khayyam, won three Filmfare Awards and remains beloved across generations.

Marking the film's 50th anniversary, this special screening will be introduced by Saeed Khan of Wayne State University, exploring its cultural significance and enduring place in Hindi cinema history for audiences old and new.



## ISRAEL'S SECURITY TRAP

Hassan Abedin, Paul Rogers

- 📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Great Hall
- 🗣️ Panel | # 26WA15
- 🕒 12:15 (1 hour 15 mins) | £10

For decades, Israeli security policy has been shaped by military dominance, deterrence and the pursuit of strategic control.

Yet despite overwhelming military superiority, the region remains locked in recurring cycles of violence and instability.

Bringing together leading historians and geopolitical thinkers, this conversation examines the long-term consequences of security-driven statecraft, the evolution of Israeli strategic doctrine and the question of whether military power alone can ever produce lasting peace or security in the region.



## FROM PAGE TO SCREEN: THE ART OF ADAPTATION

**Tony Patrick**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🔊 Panel | # 26AW1

🕒 12:15 (1 hour) | £10

From page to screen, what happens when stories evolve beyond their original form? Understand how writers and screen creatives balance staying true to a story's core while allowing it to grow into something new.

Tony Patrick, screenwriter and co-author of DC's *Batman* and *The Signal*, joins us in conversation to explore the creative tensions and collaborations that shape storytelling across media. From reimagining beloved characters to navigating differing perspectives, the discussion will explore the responsibilities and rewards of adaptation.

Expect honesty, inspiration and a deeper understanding of storytelling's transformative power.



## THE CYRUS CYLINDER: EMPIRE, POWER AND MEMORY

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

📣 Lecture | # 26HI20

🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | £10

A special illustrated lecture exploring the history, symbolism and enduring political significance of the Cyrus Cylinder, one of the most important surviving artefacts of the ancient world.

Moving from ancient Persia and imperial governance through to modern debates around memory, legitimacy and national identity, the lecture examines how Cyrus the Great and the Persian Empire have been remembered, interpreted and politically reimagined throughout history.

The event offers a rare opportunity to reflect on empire, power and civilisation through one of history's most enduring symbols.



## THE BIG PAYBACK: IN CONVERSATION WITH MARCUS RYDER

**Marcus Ryder**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Small Hall

📣 In Conversation | # 26RI8

🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | £10

What does Britain owe for the enduring legacy of slavery and what might meaningful reparations look like today? Join us for a vital conversation about race, history, power and repair.

Journalist, author and cultural leader Marcus Ryder MBE joins Bradford Literature Festival to discuss *The Big Payback*, co-authored with Sir Lenny Henry. Exploring Britain's history of slavery and colonialism, Ryder makes the case for acknowledgement, justice and structural change.

Drawing on his wider work championing diversity and representation across media and culture, he considers how Britain might reckon more honestly with its past and present.



## PETER SANDERS: SEARCHING FOR LIGHT - A RETROSPECTIVE

**Peter Sanders**

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Pictureville

🗣️ Talks | # 26AD23

🕒 13:00 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£10**

Through the lens of acclaimed photographer Peter Sanders, this illustrated talk revisits one of the most transformative cultural moments of the 20th century.

Featuring extraordinary images of musicians, artists and visionaries including Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, The Rolling Stones and The Doors, Sanders reflects on a generation searching for meaning, freedom and transformation.

Moving beyond nostalgia, the event explores the spiritual and cultural awakening that shaped the era and asks what today's world might learn from its spirit of creativity, conviction and possibility. How do societies renew themselves and where might we find hope in an age of uncertainty?



## A SOMALI VILLAGE IN LISTER PARK: EXHIBITION TOUR

**Fozia Bora**

📍 Cartwright Hall, Gallery 4

🗣️ Tour | # 26HT12

🕒 13:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

This guided tour, led by curator Fozia Bora, explores a powerful and often overlooked chapter in Bradford's history.

Revisiting the 1904 Great Exhibition in Lister Park, the exhibition highlights the Somali Village, where 57 Somali men, women and children were exhibited for six months as part of a colonial display. While the original exhibition celebrated industry and innovation, this event asks how empire shaped Bradford's cultural institutions, public spaces and collective memory.

Through stories, artworks and archival material, the tour invites audiences to look beyond the spectacle, question whose histories are remembered and reflect on how these legacies continue to shape the city today.



## FUTURE WORLDS PRIZE

**Andy Ryan**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

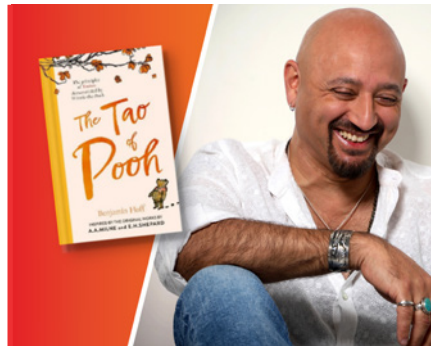
🗣️ Panel | # 26CM9

🕒 13:15 (1 hour) | £10

Join us for a lively panel discussion celebrating the very best in science fiction and fantasy (SFF), featuring former Future Worlds Prize finalists.

Our panel will nominate the books they believe deserve a place in the ultimate Future Worlds Prize dream library, championing everything from epic fantasy and dark academia to contemporary speculative fiction, romantasy and groundbreaking new voices in SFF.

Expect passionate pitches, spirited debate and plenty of brilliant recommendations as our panellists argue for the stories that have shaped, surprised and inspired them. You're guaranteed to leave with a towering TBR pile and a long shopping list for the bookshop.



## THE TAO OF WINNIE THE POOH

**John Siddique**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

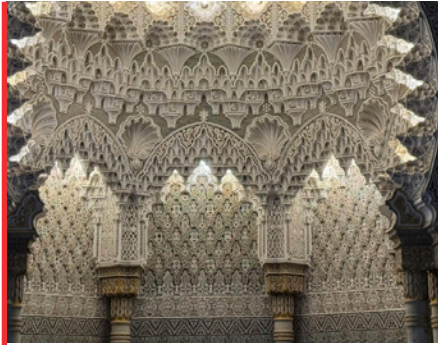
🗣️ In Conversation | # 26FMP25

🕒 13:30 (1 hour) | £10

What can a bear of very little brain teach us about living well? Drawing on Benjamin Hoff's beloved classic *The Tao of Pooh* as well as the *Tao Te Ching*, author, poet and spiritual teacher John Siddique explores the timeless wisdom hidden within the Hundred Acre Wood.

Through the characters of Pooh, Piglet, Tigger, Eeyore and Owl, this engaging and thought-provoking event reflects on simplicity, presence, acceptance and the art of moving with, rather than against, the flow of life.

Blending storytelling, philosophy and gentle humour, Siddique invites audiences to reconsider what it means to find contentment, navigate uncertainty and live with greater ease in a restless world.



## BEYOND SECTARIANISM: SUNNI, SHIA AND THE FUTURE

- 📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite
- 🗣️ In Conversation | # 26FMP14
- 🕒 13:30 (1 hour) | £10

For centuries, Sunni and Shi'a traditions have existed not only in tension, but also in dialogue, coexistence and shared intellectual and spiritual exchange. Yet in the modern era, political conflict, state rivalry and regional instability have increasingly hardened sectarian identities and deepened inherited divisions.

This conversation explores the historical, political and emotional forces that have shaped Sunni–Shi'a relations across the modern Muslim world, whilst asking whether new forms of coexistence, solidarity and shared future-building remain possible.

Moving beyond polemic and simplification, the discussion reflects on memory, identity, power and the challenge of imagining a future that does not remain trapped within inherited fracture.



## BIOMORPHIC PATTERNS AND ISLAMIC ILLUMINATION WITH MUNISE EMETULLAH

**Munise Emetullah Akhtar**

- 📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre, Norcroft Lounge
- 🗣️ Masterclass | # 26AD11
- 🕒 13:30 (150 minutes) | £15

Join artist Munise for a captivating workshop exploring the rich traditions of Tazhib (Islamic illumination) and biomorphic pattern design.

Through centuries-old techniques, participants will uncover the symbolism, intricate detail and sacred beauty at the heart of these timeless art forms. This immersive session offers a unique opportunity to engage with traditional methods while reflecting on creativity, heritage and contemporary expression.

Guided in a calm and inspiring environment, participants will experiment with pattern, composition and mindful making.

Suitable for all levels, the workshop invites you to slow down, connect deeply with artistic tradition, and create meaningful work with intention, focus and care.



## AMERICA AT 250: EMPIRE, DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL POWER

**Melissa Butcher, Saeed Khan, Nabeela Rashid**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Great Hall

🗣️ Panel | # 26WA8

🕒 13:45 (1 hour 15 mins) | £10

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the United States' Declaration of Independence.

This major conversation explores the origins of modern America and the country's evolving role within the international order over the past century.

From democracy and soft power to intervention, global leadership and internal fragmentation, the panel will examine how America understands itself, how it is perceived by the wider world and whether the assumptions underpinning American global primacy are now being fundamentally reshaped.



## POPULISM AND THE POLITICS OF DIVISION

**David Edgar, Jon Bloomfield**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond Building, Small Hall

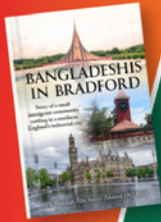
🗣️ Panel | # 26WA3

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | £10

From Washington to Westminster, the populist right has moved from the fringes to the centre of public debate. With Donald Trump's return to the White House and Reform UK's growing influence in post-Brexit Britain, national populist movements are reshaping political agendas.

This timely panel features Jon Bloomfield and David Edgar, co-authors of *The Little Book of the Populist Right*, who will examine why these narratives resonate, how mainstream parties have responded and what this changing landscape means for democracy.

Join us for a thought-provoking discussion on the forces shaping modern politics.



## BANGLADESHIS IN BRADFORD: STORIES OF MIGRATION, COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

**Shaukat Ahmed and Irna Qureshi**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🗣️ Talks | # 26HT9

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Since the mid-20th century, Bangladeshis have played an important role in shaping the social, cultural and economic life of Bradford. In his book, *Bangladeshis in Bradford*, Dr Shaukat Ahmed traces the experiences of generations who arrived in the city seeking work, opportunity and connection, and who went on to establish businesses, organisations and lasting community networks.

In conversation, Ahmed will reflect on the research and personal experiences behind the book, exploring stories of migration, anti-racist organising, community activism and the changing identity of Bradford itself.

Drawing on decades of community leadership and lived experience, Ahmed will share the untold histories behind one of Bradford's most influential migrant communities.



## THE FUTURE ISN'T HUMAN

**M R Carey and Tony Patrick**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

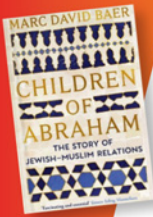
🗣️ In Conversation | # 26CM7

🕒 14:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

What happens when we stop imagining the future through human eyes?

Join M R Carey and Tony Patrick for a fascinating exploration of how contemporary science fiction reimagines intelligence, civilisation and survival beyond the limits of the human perspective. From evolving ecosystems and parallel realities to radically different forms of consciousness, their work challenges assumptions about what it means to think, feel and exist.

Together they explore why writers turn to non-human perspectives to grapple with questions of identity, responsibility and adaptation, and what these imagined futures reveal about the hopes, anxieties and possibilities of our own age.



## CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM: IN CONVERSATION WITH MARC DAVID BAER

**Marc David Baer**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🔊 In Conversation | # 26R111

🕒 14:45 (1 hour) | **£10**

Muslims and Jews have lived alongside one another for more than 1,400 years, in relationships shaped by coexistence, exchange and conflict. Yet contemporary debate often reduces this complex history to antagonism alone.

Historian Marc David Baer joins us to discuss *Children of Abraham: The Story of Jewish-Muslim Relations*, his timely new account of two communities whose intertwined histories continue to shape our world.

From seventh-century Arabia and the aftermath of the Spanish Reconquista to the modern Middle East, Baer challenges myths and counter-myths, offering a vital conversation about history, memory and understanding.



## THE ART OF BEING ALONE

**Giles Goddard, Mohammed Isaaq and  
Shanon Shah**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🔊 In Conversation | # 26FMP8

🕒 15:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Solitude...what does it mean to be alone in an age of constant connection? In this panel event, we ask how experiences of loneliness, reflection and identity are changing in contemporary life.

Islamic educator Mohammed Isaaq and Vicar Giles Goddard reflect on how different faiths, traditions and perspectives understand the value of solitude and the pressures of modern hyper-connectivity. Together, they consider the difference between chosen solitude and unwanted isolation and the role reflection plays in shaping a sense of self.

At a time when conversations around loneliness, burnout and belonging continue to grow, this discussion offers a thoughtful exploration of how space for stillness and self-knowledge can be sustained today.



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## THE ANATOMY OF STATE COLLAPSE

**Paul Rogers**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond  
Building, Great Hall

🔊 Panel | # 26WA20

🕒 15:15 (1 hour 15 mins) | **£10**

From Gaza and Lebanon to Syria, Sudan and Iran, this conversation examines what happens when states and societies begin to systematically unravel.

Exploring war, sanctions, infrastructural destruction, financial collapse and humanitarian breakdown, the panel will consider the political and human consequences of prolonged instability and institutional erosion.

Bringing together geopolitical analysis with humanitarian and economic perspectives, the discussion asks how modern societies survive under sustained pressure, and what the collapse of civic and economic life reveals about the changing nature of power and conflict in the 21st century.



## BEYOND THE FRACTURE: REIMAGINING HUMAN FUTURES

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond  
Building, Small Hall

🔊 In Conversation | # 26SC12

🕒 15:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

After decades shaped by conflict, polarisation, technological acceleration, ecological anxiety and the erosion of trust in institutions, many societies are increasingly confronting deeper questions around meaning, belonging and the future of human life itself.

As political, cultural and economic systems come under growing strain, what kind of future are we actually moving towards, and what kind of future do we wish to build?

Bringing together interdisciplinary thinkers, writers and cultural voices, this conversation explores how humanity might begin to imagine new forms of community, ethics, creativity and human flourishing beyond the fractures of today.



## TRIAL BY MEDIA: IN CONVERSATION WITH LOUIS CHARALAMBOUS

**Louis Charalambous**

- 📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space
- 🔊 Panel | # 26SC5
- 🕒 15:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

In an age when headlines shape reputations, how do we separate justice from spectacle? Join media lawyer Louis Charalambous and a leading journalist for a timely discussion exploring high-profile cases like Johnny Depp v. The Sun and the Bashir/Diana interview scandal.

Drawing on real-life examples, the panel will examine how media narratives are constructed, challenged and amplified, as well as the legal frameworks that govern reporting.

With growing scrutiny of media treatment of women, including Chappell Roan and Amber Heard, alongside renewed attention on figures like Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, this conversation asks whether “trial by media” is more pervasive than ever.



## EVERGREEN SONGS OF BENGAL

- 📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio
- 🔊 Concerts & Performances | # 26MU9
- 🕒 15:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

A live celebration of Bangladeshi culture through song and music, this special afternoon concert brings together beloved folk songs, Baul music, river songs and devotional traditions.

Led by folk singer and poet Ahmed Kaysher with a live ensemble of musicians, the performance features many of the songs audiences will remember, recognise and want to sing out loud.

From familiar folk melodies to enduring classics, the afternoon celebrates the memories and shared experiences carried through these songs across generations.



## THE MADNESS OF MANY: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FOLK HORROR

**Andrew Michael Hurley, David Barnett, Katie Evans**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🔊 Panel | # 26F11

🕒 15:45 (1 hour 15 mins) | **£10**

From isolated villages and inherited rituals to creeping paranoia and collective fear, folk horror explores the unsettling power of community and the dangers that emerge when belonging comes at a cost.

Join acclaimed writers David Barnett and Andrew Michael Hurley alongside therapist and horror psychology speaker Katie Evans for a fascinating discussion on folklore, fear and the psychology of the collective.

Together, they explore why stories of superstition, moral panic and communal hysteria continue to captivate us, transforming ordinary landscapes and close-knit communities into places of unease, while revealing what these stories say about belief, identity and the human need to belong.



## MUZAKARA: THE ART OF URDU POETRY

**Manzar Bhopali**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Norcroft Auditorium

🔊 In Conversation | # 26PO10

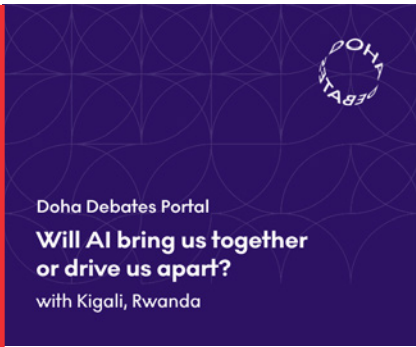
🕒 15:45 (1 hour) | **£10**

This special muzakara offers a rare opportunity to hear acclaimed Indian Urdu poet Manzar Bhopali in conversation exploring how poetry is written, shaped and brought into language, alongside the ideas, influences and creative process behind his work.

Moving between discussion and spontaneous recitation, Bhopali will reflect on the craft of Urdu poetry, the making of verses and the literary traditions that continue to inform his work, sharing poetry and moments of tarannum as the conversation unfolds.

Warm, reflective and deeply rooted in the culture of Urdu poetry, this event offers an intimate alternative to the formal setting of the mushaira.

*Please note this event is in Urdu.*



## DOHA DEBATES PORTAL: WILL AI BRING US TOGETHER OR DRIVE US APART?

📍 City Park, Doha Debates Portal

🔊 Debate | # 26EX16

🕒 16:00 (1 hour 30 minutes) | £10

Artificial intelligence systems often reflect the priorities, biases and beliefs of the people who designed and created them. It's critical to determine the sources of AI's worldview as it continues to influence how we think, learn and even love.

This Portal debate will bring together Bradford Literature Festival attendees and young people from Iraq and Rwanda to discuss whether AI will decrease or widen social divides. Can we create AI models that truly reflect cultural and ideological diversity? Or are we heading into an era of "AI tribes," each with its own moral code?



## PSYCHEDELICS: A MUSLIM PERSPECTIVE

**Fawad Kalsi**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🔊 Talks | # 26FMP13

🕒 16:00 (1 hour) | £10

Join Fawad Kalsi, CEO of Penny Appeal Canada, for a candid and thought-provoking exploration of faith, addiction, healing and the growing conversation around psychedelics.

Drawing on his own extraordinary journey from imam to opioid addict and back again, Kalsi reflects on the role psychedelics played in his recovery and how those experiences intersected with questions of spirituality, consciousness and belief.

Exploring mental health, Islamic perspectives on altered states and the search for meaning in moments of crisis, this deeply personal conversation invites audiences into an open discussion about suffering, transformation and the complex relationship between faith, healing and human experience.



## SONGS FROM THE PAGE: A LITERARY CHORAL EXPERIENCE

**Leeds Guild of Singers**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🎵 Concerts & Performances | # 26MU1

🕒 16:00 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£15**

Experience the magic of choral music inspired by some of literature's most powerful voices, performed live by the Leeds Guild of Singers.

This specially curated programme features musical settings of texts by William Blake, William Shakespeare, Emily Brontë and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, alongside contemporary compositions that continue the dialogue between poetry and music.

Spanning centuries of writing and a rich range of choral styles, the performance explores how composers return to literary texts for inspiration, reinterpretation and emotional depth. Moving between sacred reflection, folklore and lyric poetry, this is an evening where literature is not only read, but heard in harmony.



## WRITERSMOSAIC PRESENTS: THE MOSAIC MONOLOGUES

**Ishy Din, Rory A. Green, Tahmina Ali and John Siddique**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🎵 Concerts & Performances | # 26AW8

🕒 16:30 (1 hour 15 mins) | **£10**

Monologues have long held a magical appeal, inviting audiences into a character's inner life and forging an intimate connection between writer, performer, reader and listener.

WritersMosaic's series of *The Mosaic Monologues* brings character-led storytelling into the global majority literary space, with six writers creating fictional figures who speak directly about their dreams, fears and hopes.

Series producer John Siddique is joined by award-winning playwright and director Ishy Din, and poet Tahmina Ali, who shares *Shifting Shadows*, the story of Anika, a woman navigating motherhood, marriage and expectation while rediscovering herself. The evening also features live music from Rory A. Green.





## IRAN, THE GULF AND THE NEW MIDDLE EAST ORDER

**Paul Rogers, and Professor P.B Anand**

📍 University of Bradford, Richmond  
Building, Great Hall

🗣️ Panel | # 26WA16

🕒 16:45 (1 hour 15 mins) | £10



## SCREENING: MY FAVOURITE CAKE

📍 The National Science and Media  
Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

🗣️ Films & Screenings | # 26BF5

🕒 16:45 (1 hour 30 mins) | £7

A major geopolitical conversation examining the changing balance of power across the Middle East and the wider implications for international order.

The discussion will explore Iran's evolving regional role, Gulf dynamics, proxy conflict, diplomacy, sanctions and the growing influence of global powers like the United States, China and Russia.

Bringing historical context together with contemporary analysis, the event will examine how decades of intervention, conflict and strategic competition are reshaping the political architecture of the region and contributing to a rapidly changing global landscape.

Mahin is a 70-year-old widow living alone in Tehran. On a quiet impulse, she decides she has been solitary long enough. She finds an old phone book, makes a call and invites a man she barely knows to dinner. What follows is a tender, funny and quietly devastating evening for two people navigating desire, companionship and loss in a country that makes such freedoms difficult.

Written and directed by Maryam Moghaddam and Behtash Sanaeaha, *My Favourite Cake* (2024) premiered in competition at the Berlin Film Festival. The filmmakers were prevented from attending by the Iranian authorities, who later sentenced them to suspended jail terms for making the film. Their courage makes this a film worth seeing.

*My Favourite Cake* is in Persian (Farsi), with English subtitles.

This film is part of a season exploring Iranian cinema.



## ZAKHM KHANDAN: URDU HUMOUR AND SATIRE

**Muhammad Hanif Shiwani**

📍 University of Bradford,  
Norcroft Auditorium

🗣️ In conversation | # 26CO2

🕒 17:00 (1 hour) | £10

The tradition of Urdu tanz-o-mazah has long used humour and satire to examine society and the ways people make sense of the world around them.

In his latest collection, *Zakhm Khandan* (The Laughing Wound), Muhammad Hanif Shiwani turns his attention to subjects including language, politics, family life and belonging, finding comedy and insight in everyday situations.

In conversation, Shiwani will discuss the place of tanz-o-mazah within Urdu literature, the writers who have shaped his thinking and the experiences that inspire his work. Reflecting on all three of his collections, he will explore how an observation or a conversation can become the starting point for an essay, while sharing the ideas behind his latest book.

*Please note this event is in Urdu.*



## HOW AI REASONING MODELS ARE RESHAPING POWER, KNOWLEDGE AND TRUTH

**Hassan Ugail**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗣️ Panel | # 26GF3

🕒 17:15 (1 hour) | £10

AI is not just a technological revolution, it is a question of power. Built on human choices, shaped by bias and increasingly operating beyond easy scrutiny, it is transforming how knowledge is created, controlled and believed.

Join leading AI expert Hassan Ugail for a thought-provoking exploration of the technologies shaping our future, from machine learning and image generation to the ethical questions raised by rapid innovation.

Drawing on his pioneering work in artificial intelligence, computer vision and digital creativity, Ugail examines what AI means for society, creativity and the future of human knowledge.



## THE TEA WITH MYRIAM FRANÇOIS

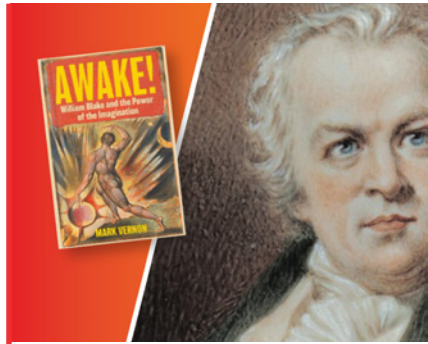
**Myriam François**

- 📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio
- 🎧 Podcast Recording | # 26POD1
- 🕒 17:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

Join us for a live recording of *The Tea* with Myriam François, truth teller and political commentator.

From global politics and democracy to patriarchy, identity and power, François challenges complacency and cuts through misinformation. Expect deep dives that unpack the 'why' behind the headlines, and energy grounded in nuance context and clarity.

Get ready for honest dialogue that provokes thought and sparks change, pull up a seat and book now.



## INSIDE THE MIND OF WILLIAM BLAKE

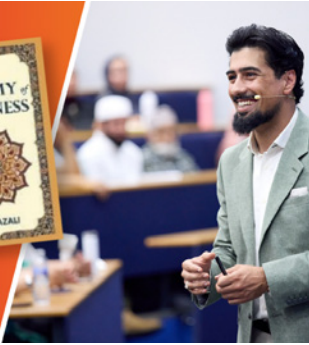
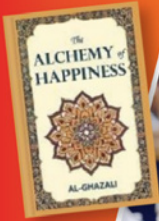
**Mark Vernon**

- 📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite
- 🎧 Lecture | # 26FMP5
- 🕒 17:45 (1 hour) | **£10**

William Blake saw the world differently and he believed we could, too. His visions, symbols and prophecies were not only artistic expressions, but windows into the nature of the mind itself.

In this illuminating lecture, philosopher and psychotherapist Mark Vernon explores Blake's inner world, examining how imagination shapes reality, how perception can be transformed and why Blake felt that 'the mind itself is a universe.'

Drawing on Vernon's work in *Awake* and contemporary psychology, this talk delves into Blake's understanding of consciousness, vision and the human spirit. An accessible and richly insightful journey into one of literature's most extraordinary minds.



## ALCHEMY OF HAPPINESS: FINDING MEANING BEYOND MODERN SELF-HELP

📍 University of Bradford,  
Richmond Building, Great Hall

🎤 Masterclass | # 26FMP2

🕒 18:15 (2 hours) | **£10**

Long before the rise of modern self-help and psychology, scholars were already asking: what does it mean to live a fulfilled life?

In this reflective talk, Mohammed Isaaq draws on Imam al-Ghazali's *Alchemy of Happiness* to explore enduring questions around happiness, sorrow, love and meaning. Rooted in the classical Islamic tradition, the text offers a deeply holistic understanding of the human condition, one that speaks as powerfully today as it did centuries ago.

Through this lens, the session invites audiences to reconsider where true fulfilment comes from, and what it means to live with purpose in a fast-paced distraction-filled world.



## GOD IS A WOMAN BY LUISA OMIELAN

**Luisa Omielan**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🎤 Concerts & Performances | # 26FE1

🕒 18:15 (2 hours) | **£15**

Imagine if the Bible had been translated by women.

From British BAFTA Breakthrough comedian Luisa Omielan comes a bold, beautiful and soul-stirring reimagining of the story of Mary Magdalene...from a woman's perspective. Think 'Female Book of Mormon' meets *Sister Act*, but written for a world in crisis.

This show is more than just a musical; it is a pitch for a musical. It is part stand-up, part rave, part sermon and all heart.



## POLARI LITERARY SALON

**Alice Denny, Chitra Ramaswamy,  
Dillon Jaxx, Jay Gadhia**

- 📍 Ginger Goose, Upstairs
- 🎤 Concerts & Performances | # 26PO8
- 🕒 18:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£10**

Polari, the multi-award-winning LGBTQ+ literary salon, returns to Bradford for an evening of live literature, performance and celebration.

Bringing together established and emerging LGBTQ+ writers, this vibrant event offers a cabaret-style mix of storytelling, poetry, spoken word and conversation. Bold, funny, moving and original, each performance showcases the richness and diversity of contemporary queer voices.

Far from a traditional literary panel, Polari creates a lively, inclusive space where writers connect directly with audiences through powerful storytelling and memorable performances. Whether a long-time fan or discovering Polari for the first time, expect wit, warmth, insight and imagination.



## DON'T LET YOUR FIGS ROT: SYLVIA PLATH'S LIFE IN WRITING

**Amanda Golden, Iona Murphy**

- 📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite
- 🎤 Panel | # 26PO1
- 🕒 19:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Sixty years after the publication of *The Bell Jar*, this special event celebrates Sylvia Plath's enduring legacy and the remarkable impact of her writing.

Bringing together poetry, prose and publishing history, the discussion explores Plath's literary achievements and her continuing influence on conversations around identity, ambition, creativity and mental health. From *The Bell Jar* and *Ariel* to *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*, her work continues to resonate through generations.

Featuring renowned Plath scholars Dr Amanda Golden and Dr Iona Murphy, this event marks new publications and explores why Plath's words remain powerful and relevant today.



## FREE WORD LECTURE: MISAN HARRIMAN

**Misan Harriman**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🔊 Talks | # 26FW2

🕒 19:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Photographer, filmmaker and cultural commentator Misan Harriman is one of the defining visual storytellers of our time. From documenting historic moments of protest and social change to creating some of the most widely recognised images of the past decade, his work has explored the relationship between visibility, dignity and human connection.

In this special Free Word Lecture, Harriman reflects on the power of stories, images and testimony to shape how societies see themselves and remember their histories.

Exploring questions of representation, public memory and the responsibility of bearing witness, he considers what it means to tell human stories in an age saturated with images, information and competing narratives.

Presented in partnership with Free Word.



## TIMELESS GHAZALS

**Priti Kaur**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🔊 Concerts & Performances | # 26MU5

🕒 19:30 (150 minutes) | **£15**

An evening of unforgettable poetry, melody and emotion, *Timeless Ghazals* celebrates one of South Asia's most cherished poetic and musical traditions. Performed by acclaimed vocalist Priti Kaur, the concert brings together beloved classics that have captivated audiences across generations.

From verses of love, longing and separation to songs that have travelled from intimate mehfilis to concert halls and cinema screens, these timeless compositions continue to resonate with remarkable power.

Accompanied by live musicians, Kaur recreates the warmth, elegance and intimacy of the traditional ghazal gathering, inviting audiences into an evening of lyrical beauty and enduring artistry.





## CURSED OR CELEBRATED? YORKSHIRE'S WITCHES REVISITED

**Rosie Barrett**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗨️ Talks | # 26HT1

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Uncover Yorkshire's haunting and spellbinding witchcraft history in this enthralling talk. From the mysterious carved 'witch posts' of Ryedale Folk Museum to tales of magic, superstition and fear, discover the hidden traditions woven through the county's past.

Writer curator and storyteller Rosie Barrett explores divination, love, magic, illness, and protection against dark forces, revealing the stories behind extraordinary surviving objects and the people who once lived on the edge of suspicion and belief.

Blending folklore with social history, this captivating event shines a light on Yorkshire's enduring fascination with witches and the powerful myths that continue to enchant us today.



## BEYOND THE PAGE: MARY SHELLEY 175 YEARS ON

**Andrew McInnes**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗨️ Talks | # 26FI7

🕒 18:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Step into the dark and dazzling world of Mary Shelley in this gripping illustrated talk marking 175 years since her death.

Hosted by Dr Andrew McInnes, co-director of EHU19 at Edge Hill University, this talk journeys through Shelley's extraordinary life, from the radical influence of her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, to secret meetings with Percy Bysshe Shelley in graveyards, and the stormy night that sparked one of literature's most enduring monsters.

Don your cloaks, pull up a seat, and gather with us as we celebrate the life death and legacy of Mary Shelley.



## SHOPPING THROUGH TIME: BRADFORD THEN AND NOW

**Colin Neville**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Talks | # 26HT8

🕒 10:30 (1 hour) | £10

Step back into Bradford's retail past and rediscover Busbys, the city's iconic department store, in this nostalgic journey through the golden age of shopping. From dazzling window displays and bustling fashion floors to festive traditions shared through generations, explore how shopping was once a social occasion at the heart of city life.

Reflecting on Bradford's evolving retail culture, the event also looks ahead to the opening of the new Darley Street Market and the future of shared public spaces in the city centre.

Discover how Bradford's shopping traditions continue to shape community, connection and everyday life today.



## A HISTORY OF BRADFORD CITY IN OBJECTS

**John Dewhirst**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Talks | # 26HT3

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | £10

Step into the story of Bradford City AFC as told through the objects, memorabilia and mementos that have shaped the club's identity for more than a century.

Join author John Dewhirst as he shares the remarkable story of The Bantams. Based on his book *A History of Bradford City AFC in Objects*, this illustrated talk explores more than 100 years of change and continuity at Valley Parade.

From supporter artefacts to forgotten relics, Dewhirst reveals how each item tells a powerful story of passion, resilience and community in Bradford's rich football history.



## IMAGINING UNQUIET SLUMBERS: HAUNTOLOGY AND BRONTË COUNTRY

**Anna Gibson**

📍 Brontë Birthplace, Posh Parlour

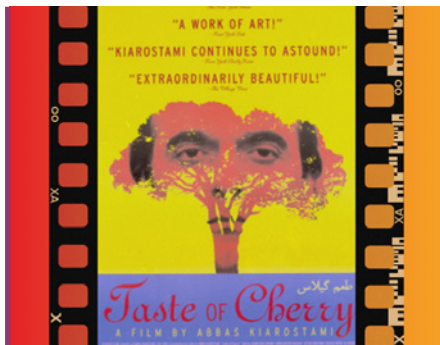
🗣️ Talks | # 26BR8

🕒 18:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | £10

Heritage researcher and Brontë Birthplace General Manager Anna Gibson explores the uncanny pull of Brontë Country, a landscape shaped as much by longing and myth as by history.

Drawing on her experiences living, working and walking across Brontë Country, she examines how moors, memories and cherished objects become charged with meaning.

Join her to discuss how the Brontës' presence continues to haunt cultural memory, tourism and heritage practice today.



## SCREENING: A TASTE OF CHERRY

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

🗣️ Films & Screenings | # 26BF4

🕒 19:00 (100 minutes) | £7

*In memory of Abbas Kiarostami, 10 years after his death.*

A middle-aged man drives through the hills on the outskirts of Tehran. He has decided to take his own life and he is looking for someone willing to bury him afterwards. Over the course of a day, he stops to talk to three strangers, a soldier, a seminarian and a taxidermist, each of whom responds differently to his request.

It was the first Iranian film to win the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1997, *A Taste of Cherry* is a spare, quietly devastating meditation on mortality, choice and the reasons we find, or fail to find, to go on living.

Abbas Kiarostami was one of the great filmmakers of the 20th century and this is his masterpiece. A landmark of Iranian cinema and essential viewing.

This film is part of a season exploring Iranian cinema.



## FROM VISION TO IMPACT: 60 YEARS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD

**Alan Johnson, Nick Braisby**

📍 University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre,  
Norcroft Lounge

🗣️ Panel | # 26H18

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | £10

This lively and thought-provoking conversation will explore how bold political vision and shifting social attitudes opened the doors to higher education for generations and why that legacy still matters today.

Author and Labour politician, Alan Johnson, joins the Vice Chancellor of the University to reflect upon the attitudes towards higher education during Wilson's time and his pivotal role in advancing opportunity. From its roots as Bradford College to becoming home to the UK's first Peace Studies centre, the University has consistently pushed boundaries.

Join us for a unique opportunity to reflect on the past, engage with the present and be inspired by what comes next in Bradford.



## FROM DEEPER IN THE FOREST: DARKER TALES & FAIRY STORIES FOR GROWN-UPS

**Gav Cross**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ Concerts & Performances | # 26CM6

🕒 19:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | £10

Fairy tales were not always bedtime stories. Long before they were written down, these tales travelled through oral storytelling traditions as stories of danger, transformation and survival.

Experience an evening of traditional fairy tales as they were once told, rich with dark forests, impossible bargains and unexpected endings. Drawing on folklore from across Europe and beyond, this live storytelling performance explores the power and complexity of stories that have shaped imaginations for centuries.

All good stories get better the later and darker it becomes. Join storyteller Gav Cross and perhaps a late night ghost or two. Certainly a twist on some old classics. Almost certainly a smile. Perhaps a nervous glimpse over the shoulder? As we scratch our way into the darker roots of the stories we think we know.



## LUNCH BITE: 100 YEARS OF FIDEL CASTRO

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Talks | # 26LB5

🕒 12:00 (45 minutes) | £10

One hundred years after the birth of Fidel Castro, this timely conversation reflects on the life, legacy and enduring global symbolism of one of the 20th century's most influential and divisive political figures.

For some, Castro represented anti-imperial resistance, national dignity and revolutionary hope; for others, authoritarianism, repression and the failures of ideological rule.

Bringing together history, politics and questions of power, the discussion explores Cuba's place within the modern world, the global legacy of revolutionary movements and the complicated relationship between liberation, authority and political myth in an age still shaped by the afterlives of empire and revolution.



## YORKSHIRE'S ROLE IN A RUTHLESS EMPIRE

**Edmond Smith**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Talks | # 26HT5

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | £10

Join historian Edmond Smith for a compelling exploration of how West Yorkshire's ingenuity helped shape Britain's rise to global prominence.

Drawing on his acclaimed book *Ruthless*, Smith examines how the pursuit of profit and expansion transformed economic life between 1660 and 1800, from the mills and mines of Yorkshire to far-reaching global trade networks.

Insightful and thought-provoking, this event offers a fresh perspective on Yorkshire's place in global history, showing how local innovation and ambition helped reshape the world and leaving audiences with a deeper understanding of the forces behind Britain's rise.



## SCREENING: A SEPARATION

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

🎬 Films & Screenings | # 26BF31

🕒 19:00 (125 minutes) | £7

Simin wants to leave Iran with her husband, Nader, and their daughter to build a better life abroad. Nader refuses to go, unwilling to leave behind his elderly father who has Alzheimer's disease. When Simin moves out and Nader hires a caregiver, a small incident sets in motion a chain of events that draws two families into conflict, forcing everyone, including the audience, to weigh truth, duty and moral responsibility against one another.

Written and directed by Asghar Farhadi and starring Leila Hatami, Peyman Maadi and Shahab Hosseini, *A Separation* (2011) won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival and the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Farhadi is one of only a handful of directors to have won that award twice and one of the most significant filmmakers working today.

Fifteen years on, this remains one of the finest films of the 21st century.

Insert This film is part of a season exploring Iranian cinema.



## MARYVILLE: AN EVENING WITH JOELLE TAYLOR

**Joelle Taylor**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🎪 Concerts & Performances | # 26PO12

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | £10

Join award-winning poet Joelle Taylor for a powerful solo performance inspired by *Maryville*, winner of the T. S. Eliot Prize and Polari Book Prize.

Through vivid poetry and captivating storytelling, Taylor brings to life the forgotten histories, fierce resilience and underground communities of queer London. Centred on the legendary Maryville butch bar, this moving performance explores oppression, intimacy, solidarity and joy within dyke counterculture and the queer underground.

Filmic, lyrical and deeply immersive, *Maryville* is both celebration and remembrance, reclaiming voices too often pushed to the margins through defiance, humour, tenderness and survival.



## LOUD POETS SLAM HEAT

**Kevin Mclean**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ Slam Heat | # 26PO2

🕒 19:30 (2 hours) | £10

The electrifying Loud Poets Slam Series returns to Bradford Literature Festival for an unforgettable evening of spoken word, performance and poetic fire. Watch some of Bradford's most exciting poets compete in one of 10 heats across Scotland and England as part of the UK's biggest slam poetry prize.

Presented by award-winning organisation I Am Loud, the series is renowned for showcasing bold voices, unforgettable performances and the best in contemporary poetry. Hosted by the vivacious Kevin Mclean, expect an evening packed with energy, creativity and fierce competition as poets take to the stage with work that challenges, moves and inspires.

A must-see event for poetry lovers and live performance fans alike.



## GREAT ART EXPLAINED WITH JAMES PAYNE

**James Payne**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26AD7

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | £10

Join artist, curator and YouTube creator James Payne for a captivating, illustrated talk exploring the stories behind some of the world's most famous artworks.

Best known for his series *Great Art Explained*, Payne brings masterpieces to life through compelling storytelling and sharp insight. In this special event, he will guide audiences through the remarkable lives of the artists, the drama behind the paintings and the fascinating details that make these works so enduring.

Expect an entertaining and illuminating journey into the human stories behind great art.



## LUNCH BITE: FINDING STILLNESS IN GRIEF

**Martyn Watson**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

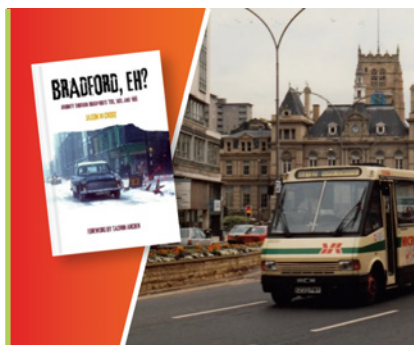
🔊 Talks | # 26LB5

🕒 12:00 (45 minutes) | £10

Join poet Martyn Watson for a deeply moving Lunch Bite exploring *Nancy*, his collection of poems written in memory of his much-loved sister, who died by suicide. Through writing, Martyn began to process grief, revisit memories and find moments of stillness and connection after profound loss.

In conversation, he will share the story behind the collection, the place of poetry in navigating bereavement, and the hope that Nancy's memory can help others feel less alone.

All profits from sales of *Nancy* support Suicide Prevention UK, helping fund vital support for people in crisis and those bereaved by suicide.



## 'EY UP BRADFORD: A JOURNEY THROUGH BRADFORD'S '70S, '80S AND '90S

**Jay Croot**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🔊 Talks | # 26HT2

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | £10

Take a nostalgic journey through three unforgettable decades of Bradford with local author and filmmaker Jason M. Croot, as he shares stories from *Bradford, Eh?*

With humour, warmth and honesty, Croot brings to life what it was like growing up in a city shaped by change, from bustling high streets and legendary nights out to football highs and a thriving music and community scene.

More than a look back, we celebrate the people and places that defined Bradford's identity, told through vivid storytelling and lived experience. Whether you remember the '70s, '80s and '90s or are discovering them for the first time, join us for an engaging session of conversation and reflection.



## RED HOT CHILLI WRITERS LIVE: WITH SPECIAL GUEST ANDREW TAYLOR

**Abir Mukherjee, Vaseem Khan,  
Andrew Taylor**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🎧 Podcast Recording | # 26CR7

🕒 17:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

Three masters of historical crime fiction. One live podcast recording. Zero survivors.

Abir Mukherjee and Vaseem Khan, hosts of the wildly popular *Red Hot Chilli Writers* podcast, bring their wit, warmth and encyclopaedic knowledge of murder to Bradford Literature Festival, with highly acclaimed crime writer Andrew Taylor as a special guest.

Between them, they'll be discussing three brand-new releases, taking readers from 1920s Calcutta steeped in colonial tension to 1950s India on the brink of change, and a crumbling English girls' school haunted, literally, by its secrets.

Expect the sharp banter and stellar conversation that have made *Red Hot Chilli Writers* essential listening, plus three brilliant new books and the authors who wrote them.



## HAUNTED HISTORIES: A GHOSTLY TOUR OF BRADFORD

**Irene Lofthouse**

📍 Bradford Cathedral, Meeting Point

🎧 Tour | # 26HW8

🕒 18:00 (0 minutes) | **£10**

Step into the shadows of Bradford on this spine-tingling walking tour that blends the city's rich history with its most enduring ghost stories.

Guided by local historian and expert storyteller Irene Lofthouse, you'll journey through some of Bradford's most iconic landmarks, uncovering chilling tales of mystery, tragedy and the unexplained. From restless spirits to eerie encounters, these stories reveal a darker side of the city, one that lingers just beneath the surface.

As you wander historic streets and hidden corners, you'll discover how the past continues to echo through the present, bringing Bradford's history vividly and hauntingly to life. Comfortable footwear and weather-appropriate clothing are recommended.



## SCREENING: TOO DESI TOO QUEER + Q&A

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Pictureville

🎫 Films & Screenings | # 26BF30

🕒 18:30 (2 hours) | £9

This dynamic and thought-provoking programme brings together a selection of short films exploring the lives, experiences and well-being of South Asian LGBTQIA+ communities across the Subcontinent and diaspora.

Through powerful storytelling, the programme amplifies underrepresented voices, creating space for reflection, connection and conversation. The screening will be accompanied by discussion exploring the films' themes, the importance of representation and community wellbeing.

Audiences are invited to experience a rich and resonant showcase of queer South Asian stories, celebrating creativity, identity and belonging, while shining a light on voices and perspectives too rarely seen on screen.

Presented in partnership with Manchester Indian Film Festival.



## WOMEN WHO KILL

**C.J. Skuse, Asia Mackay, Laura Marshall**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🎫 Panel | # 26CR12

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | £10

She's not the victim. She's not the sidekick. She's the one you should fear.

C.J. Skuse, Asia Mackay and Laura Marshall, three of crime fiction's sharpest voices, come together to explore a thrilling shift in the genre: women who don't just survive the story, but they drive it. From Skuse's darkly comic serial killer *Sweetpea* to Mackay's murderous suburban wife to Marshall's psychological knife-edge thrillers, these authors write women who are complex, dangerous and utterly compelling.

Expect a frank and funny conversation about female rage, moral ambiguity and why readers can't stop rooting for characters who cross every line.



## POETRY WITH A PUNCH

**Carys Clempner, Kinan Salaam, Maxine Meixner, Tariq, Thea Lungu**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🎵 Concerts & Performances | # 26PO6

🕒 19:30 (150 minutes) | £15

Join us for an electrifying evening of political poetry and fearless spoken word as powerful voices take to the stage to confront the social issues shaping our world. Blending sharp wit, raw honesty and high-energy performance, this annual showcase promises poetry that inspires, provokes and challenges audiences in equal measure.

Featuring an exciting mix of emerging talent and acclaimed spoken word artists, each performer brings their own distinctive style and perspective to this dynamic celebration of language and activism.

Bold, passionate and unapologetically thought-provoking, this larger-than-life event offers a powerful reminder of poetry's ability to spark conversation, resistance and change.



## POETS INC

**Gav Cross, Maria Ferguson**

- 📍 People Powered Press, Main
- 🔊🎤 Concerts & Performances | # 26AW22
- 🕒 19:30 (2 hours) | **Free Event**

The People Powered Press in Saltaire, Shipley returns with its regular Poets Inc night, curated for the first time by Bradford Literature Festival.

Joined by award-winning poet and performer Maria Ferguson, and storyteller Gav Cross, People Powered Press present an evening of live poetry and performance.

This popular 'Pay as You Feel' event showcases established and emerging voices, alongside a chance to make your own letterpress print to take away, featuring the words from poems read on the night.



## SCREENING: CUTTING THROUGH ROCKS

- 📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema
- 🔊🎤 Films & Screenings | # 26BF37
- 🕒 19:45 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£7**

Sara Shahverdi is the first woman elected to the council of her rural Iranian village. A divorced former midwife who rides a motorcycle, she is determined to challenge child marriage, champion girls' education and fight for women's rights.

Filed over several years by Sara Khaki and Mohammadreza Eyni, *Cutting Through Rocks* is an intimate portrait of courage, resistance and the personal cost of confronting patriarchal power.

Winner of the World Cinema Grand Jury Prize: Documentary at Sundance and nominated for Best Documentary Feature Film at the 2026 Academy Awards.

*Cutting Through Rocks* is in Azerbaijani and Persian (Farsi), with English subtitles.

This film is part of a season exploring Iranian cinema.



## BABY RAVE

### Boomchikkaboom

📍 City Park, The Imagination Station

🎵 Dance

🕒 10:00 (1 hour 30 mins)

Get ready to dance and groove with your little ones at BoomChikkaBoom's exciting Baby Rave. Our fun and lively event brings families together with great music and good vibes, creating a unique and memorable experience for all.

Not only is a Baby Rave a fantastic way to socialise with other families, but it's also great for your child's development. The sights and sounds they'll encounter at our event are guaranteed to stimulate their senses and encourage their growth.

Baby Rave is an entertaining session that is sure to get little and large feet moving! Join us for a fun and interactive experience that will bring joy and happiness to you and your little ones.

Please book separate tickets for yourself and any children attending.

*Suitable for children aged 0 to 5 years old.*



## LUNCH BITE: DARLING BUD BOOK LAUNCH WITH C.J. SKUSE

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🎤 Talks | # 26LB2

🕒 12:00 (45 minutes) | £10

Join bestselling author C.J. Skuse to celebrate the launch of *Darling Bud*, her darkly funny new thriller from the world of the hit *Sweetpea* series.

Meet Ivy, an ordinary 16-year-old with an extraordinary family history: her mother is Rhiannon Lewis, the infamous *Sweetpea* killer. When Ivy's football coach is found dead, she is forced to confront the rage within her, and the question of whether murder runs in the family.

Hear C.J. discuss creating this wickedly sharp new protagonist, returning to the *Sweetpea* universe, and balancing humour, suspense and bloodshed in her unmissable new novel.



## LIVES THAT SHAPED A CITY: POLISH AND UKRAINIAN STORIES IN BRADFORD

**Tim Smith**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Talks | # 26HT6

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Photographer Tim Smith explores the deep connections between Poland, Ukraine and Britain through the communities that have shaped Bradford for over 70 years.

Polish is among the most widely spoken languages in the Bradford district. Following the Second World War, Bradford became home to significant Polish and Ukrainian populations, including one of the largest Ukrainian communities in Western Europe. More recently, new arrivals from Poland following EU expansion, alongside those fleeing the war in Ukraine, have added new layers to this evolving story.

Through photography and personal testimony, Tim brings these stories to life, highlighting the histories, identities and contributions of these communities.



## STEVE STANWORTH: KEEPING THE BRONTË STORY ALIVE

**Steve Stanworth**

📍 Brontë Birthplace, Posh Parlour

🗣️ Talks | # 26BR9

🕒 18:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£10**

Bradford-born heritage champion Steve Stanworth shares his remarkable 26-year journey restoring and celebrating Thornton's extraordinary Brontë legacy.

From transforming the Old Bell Chapel, where Patrick Brontë served as perpetual curate from 1815 to 1820, to creating the St James' Church Brontë exhibition, which includes the font at which all the Brontë children, except Maria, were baptised.

Stanworth explains how he helped to return the Brontë Birthplace on Market Street to its Regency character, Steve brings together the story of three landmark Brontë projects and the passion that has driven them.





## SCREENING: CAKE

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

🔊 Films & Screenings | # 26BF36

🕒 19:00 (1 hour 30 mins) | £7

When a father is taken ill, two estranged sisters are drawn back together under the same roof. Zareen has remained in Karachi, carrying the responsibility of ageing parents and the family estate. As the family reunites, affection and resentment collide and long-held secrets begin to surface.

Written and directed by Asim Abbasi and starring Aamina Sheikh, Sanam Saeed and Adnan Malik, *Cake* is a tender, sharply observed family drama about love, duty and the choices that shape us.

Pakistan's official submission for Best Foreign Language Film at the 91st Academy Awards.

*Cake (2018)* is in Urdu and Sindhi, with English subtitles.



## THE POETRY OF MEMORY: REMEMBERING KARBALA

**Owais ul Hassan**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🔊 Concerts & Performances | # 26PO14

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | £10

An immersive evening exploring how poetry, ritual and oral tradition have preserved the memory of Karbala across generations and cultures.

Bringing together recitation, reflection and historical conversation, the event explores the role of noha, marsiya and devotional poetry in transmitting grief, resistance, identity and collective memory.

Moving between performance and discussion, the evening reflects on how histories survive not only through archives and institutions, but through sound, emotion, ritual and the repeated act of remembrance.



## IN CONVERSATION WITH HUSAM ZOMLOT

### Husam Zomlot

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26WA22

🕒 19:30 (1 hour) | £10

Returning to Bradford Literature Festival following the formal elevation of the Palestinian mission in London to embassy status, Ambassador Husam Zomlot joins us for a major conversation on Palestine, diplomacy and the shifting political landscape of the Middle East.

As Head of the Palestinian Embassy to the United Kingdom and one of the most prominent Palestinian diplomatic voices internationally, Zomlot reflects on questions of statehood, identity, international law and the human realities of conflict and displacement.

Spanning history, politics and personal experience, the discussion explores the evolving global response to Palestine and the enduring search for justice, dignity and peace in one of the world's most contested regions.

# SATURDAY 11 JULY

Ahoy, adventurers! Dive into a **free** family day of underwater fun and pirate mischief in the city centre. Enjoy face painting, walkabout acts, arts and crafts, storytelling and theatre, then set sail for a screening of *Finding Nemo*. Come aboard for a fin-tastic day of treasures, tales and family fun!

## THEATRE SHOW

 City Park

 11.30 | 12:45 | 14:00 | **FREE**

### Pirate Pandemonium

Join Captain Catt, the most feared pirate on the Spanish Main, and his bumbling first mate, Bo'Sun Brains, as they set off in search of adventure, lost islands and Trevor (whoever he is....sorry?...Oh! Ahem...) Treasure! Together, they learn what it takes to be a real-life pirate with sword-fighting practice, map reading training and plenty of "Arrrs."

## PERFORMANCES

 City Park

### Punjabi Roots - Bhangra 14:30

Experience the energy and excitement of Punjabi Roots Academy it brings the vibrant tradition of bhangra to the heart of Bradford.

### The Peace Artistes 12:15 | 13:30

Experience the infectious energy of The Peace Artistes, a vibrant street band bringing irresistible samba rhythms and powerful brass sounds to the heart of Bradford.

**GO  
ALL  
IN.**

National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026

## MEET THE AUTHOR

 Hub, City Park

 14.00 | **FREE** | Book Online

### Uzma Akser

Join Uzma Akser for a heartwarming family reading of *The Boy Who Loved Vacuum Cleaners*, a story about embracing the things that make us unique.

**FREE**  
FAMILY  
FUN DAYS



## STORYTELLING

**Imagination Station, City Park**

**Gav Cross** 11.00 | 12.30 | 14.00

**Sue Dyde** 11.50 | 13.20 | 14.35

Dive into live storytelling throughout the day, enjoying ocean adventures and learning tips to create your own sea-soaked underwater tales.

## ARTS & CRAFTS

**Broadway & Imagination Station, City Park**

11.00 - 15.00 **FREE** | Drop in

Dive into creativity with four completely different under-the-sea craft activities for little pirates, mermaids and ocean adventurers.

## FILM SCREENING

**Pictureville, National Science & Media Museum**

11.00 (90 mins)

**FREE** | Book Online

### Finding Nemo

A worried clownfish crosses the ocean to find his missing son, meeting unforgettable friends and discovering courage along the way.



## BRONTË HERITAGE BUS TOUR

**Christa Ackroyd**

📍 The Midland Hotel, Meeting Point

🗨️ Tour | # 26BR2

🕒 09:00 (480 minutes) | **£35**

Bradford Literature Festival's much-loved Brontë tour returns for another unforgettable journey into the lives and legacy of one of literature's most celebrated families.

Led by broadcaster and Brontë enthusiast Christa Ackroyd, this specially curated experience includes travel by vintage coach to the Brontës' childhood home in Thornton village and lunch at Branwell Brontë's favourite haunt, The Lord Nelson pub.

Journey through the dramatic Yorkshire moors that inspired *Wuthering Heights* while uncovering fascinating stories from your expert guide.

The tour also includes entry to the Brontë Parsonage Museum and an exclusive talk from museum staff exploring the enduring brilliance of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë.



## LOOMING 'ECK! A LOOMING MASTERCLASS

**Agnis Smallwood**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 1

🗨️ Masterclass | # 26AD1

🕒 09:30 (210 minutes) | **£25**

Design and weave your own one-of-a-kind dust jacket in this hands-on workshop with Agnis Smallwood.

Using a table loom set up and ready to go, you'll be guided through the weaving process while exploring colour, texture and pattern. Choose from a vibrant selection of yarns to create a bespoke textile piece. This workshop focuses on the joy of making, allowing you to immerse yourself in the rhythm of weaving without the need for complex setup. Along the way, you'll gain a basic understanding of weaving techniques and how different materials come together on the loom.

Suitable for complete beginners, this is a relaxed and creative session with no prior experience required. All materials are provided.



## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BRONTËS

**Michael Stewart**

📍 The Old Bell Chapel, Meeting Point

🎧 Tour | # 26BR3

🕒 10:00 (300 minutes) | **£10**

Join Brontë Stones project creator Michael Stewart for a guided walking tour tracing the footsteps of the Brontë sisters from their birthplace in Thornton village to the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth.

Crossing the stunning Yorkshire landscape, the walk explores specially commissioned responses to the Brontës by celebrated writers like Carol Ann Duffy, Kate Bush, Jackie Kay and Jeanette Winterson.

This nine-mile linear trek takes around five hours and includes narrow styles, uneven ground and slippery surfaces.

Appropriate footwear and weatherproof clothing are essential. Participants should also bring a packed lunch and plenty of water for a picnic stop along the route.



## MOVIE MARATHON: THE LORD OF THE RINGS EXTENDED EDITIONS

📍 The Light, Screen 3

🎧 Films & Screenings | # 26BF18

🕒 10:00 (13 hours) | **£21**

Celebrate 25 years since the first *Lord of the Rings* film with an epic, one-day screening of the extended editions. Journey from the Shire to Mordor with Frodo, Sam, Gandalf and the Fellowship as we relive every battle, betrayal, emotional farewell, dramatic horseback moment and suspiciously perfect hairstyle in glorious big-screen detail.

Bring your stamina, your love of second breakfast and possibly a cushion. Whether you're a seasoned Tolkien fan or just here for the orcs, elves and heroic speeches, this is your chance to spend one unforgettable day in Middle-earth.

One does not simply watch *The Lord of the Rings*.



## FEMINISM IN THE AGE OF THE ALGORITHMS

**Clare McGlynn, Natasha Walter**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ Panel | # 26FE4

🕒 10:15 (1 hour) | **£10**

Across social media and digital platforms, a new battleground for feminism is emerging. The rise of the manosphere, the resurgence of 'tradwife' ideals and the increasing visibility of extreme and algorithm-driven sexual content are all influencing how gender, power and identity are understood, particularly by younger audiences.

This panel explores how these forces intersect, asking what happens when misogyny is not only visible, but amplified.

Bringing together writers, researchers and cultural commentators, we unpack the systems behind these trends and consider how feminism can respond, resist and evolve in an era defined by technology.



## 9/11 AND THE WORLD IT CREATED

**Saeed Khan, Nabeela Rasheed**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🗣️ Panel | # 26H119

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Twenty five years after September 11, this conversation examines how a single moment reshaped global politics, security, foreign policy and public life across the world.

The discussion will explore the lasting impact of the War on Terror, the expansion of surveillance and security states, the transformation of public discourse around Islam and identity, and the geopolitical consequences of intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The event asks how politics, culture and international relations continue to be shaped in the post-9/11 world.



## F1 INSIDER: NOTES FROM THE PIT LANE WITH TED KRAVITZ AND MATT MAJENDIE

**Matt Majendie, Ted Kravitz**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🔊 In Conversation | # 26SP1

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Join pit-lane reporter Ted Kravitz in conversation with Matt Majendie for a thrilling look inside the fast-paced world of Formula 1.

Drawing on decades at the heart of the paddock, Kravitz shares the drama, innovation and personalities that define modern F1, from the split-second decisions on race day to the engineering, strategy and rivalries that shape a season. With Majendie, former Head of Sport at the *Evening Standard*, he explores how access, trust and sharp storytelling reveal what really happens behind the scenes.

Fascinating, insightful and full of insider perspective, this is essential for fans of F1, sport and great journalism.



## LAHORE AFTER MODERNISM: ARCHITECTURE AND ITS HISTORIES IN PAKISTAN

**Chris Moffat**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🔊 Panel | # 26AD5

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Lahore is a city layered with history, craft and architectural brilliance, where streets and buildings carry the traces of empires, communities and centuries of cultural exchange. Bringing together perspectives from history, architecture and urban culture, the discussion explores Lahore not only as a city of monumental structures, but also as a living and constantly changing place where heritage, tradition and modernity meet.

In this event, historian Chris Moffat reflects on the ideas explored in his book *Learning from Lahore* and opens up a conversation about how cities remember, evolve and shape the way we understand the past.

From Mughal masterpieces and colonial institutions to contemporary urban transformations, we will examine how Lahore's built environment tells stories of identity, belonging and aspiration. Join us as we unravel what architecture teaches us about culture, memory and ourselves.



## TRADITIONAL OTTOMAN BOOKBINDING TALK

**Demet Tokbay**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AD21

🕒 11:15 (1 hour) | £10

Join conservator, restorer and traditional parchment maker Demet Tokbay for an illuminating introductory talk exploring the rich history and artistry of Ottoman bookbinding.

Supported by the Yunus Emre Institute, this fascinating session offers insight into the techniques, materials and decorative traditions behind centuries of manuscript-making and Islamic book arts. Trained in Türkiye and now based in Norfolk, Demet is one of only two active parchment makers in the UK practising this critically endangered craft.

Through stories, images and expert knowledge, discover the cultural significance of Ottoman book arts and gain a rare glimpse into a heritage tradition that continues to inspire contemporary creativity today.



## SCREENING: IN SEARCH OF BENGALI HARLEM

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

🗣️ Films & Screenings | # 26BF29

🕒 11:15 (1 hour 30 mins) | £7

As a teenager in 1980s Harlem, Alaudin Ullah was swept up in the revolutionary energy of early hip hop and turned away from his Bangladeshi Muslim heritage. Years later, facing the Islamophobia of post-9/11 Hollywood, he sets out to understand the parents and history he never fully knew.

Travelling from New York to rural Bangladesh, Ullah uncovers a remarkable, largely forgotten story of Bengali Muslim migrants who, navigating racist Asian Exclusion Laws, made homes, marriages and communities alongside African American and Puerto Rican New Yorkers.

Blending family memory, migration history and music, this award-winning documentary is a powerful exploration of identity, inheritance and belonging across generations and continents.



## THE WOMEN OF CAMELOT

**Sam Davey, Sophie Keetch, Tasha Suri**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗨️ Panel | # 26CM8

🕒 11:30 (1 hour) | £10

For centuries, Arthurian legend has been shaped by kings, knights, prophecy and war. But what happens when the women of Camelot step out of the margins and tell the story themselves?

Across fantasy fiction, feminist and queer retellings are reclaiming women long reduced to symbols, temptresses or footnotes, reshaping one of Britain's most enduring legends for modern audiences.

Join Sophie Keetch, Sam Davey and Tasha Suri as they explore power, fate, ambition and desire through *Storm Over Camelot*, *The Chosen Queen* and *The Isle in the Silver Sea*, asking who gets remembered and who shapes the legend now.



## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES AND ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY

**Soraya Syed Sanders**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗨️ Tour | # 26AD8

🕒 11:30 (1 hour) | £10

Join acclaimed artist and calligrapher Soraya Syed as she explores Arabic calligraphy from manuscript page to contemporary art.

The first Briton to receive an Ijazah from master Turkish calligraphers, Syed reflects on a living tradition that shaped the visual worlds of masterpieces such as *Maqāmāt al-Harīrī* and *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

Featuring insights into her specially commissioned holographic work, currently exhibited as part of *Global Perspectives and Islamic Calligraphy* at Cartwright Hall, this event traces the Arabic script through heritage, spirituality, creativity and innovation, revealing its continuing power to speak across language, culture, and time.



## IRAN, KARBALA AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RESISTANCE

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio  
🗣️ In Conversation | # 26WA21  
🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | £10

A major conversation exploring the relationship between history, memory and political identity within modern Iran.

Moving beyond conventional geopolitical analysis, the discussion examines how Karbala, martyrdom, sacrifice and collective historical memory have shaped Iranian political consciousness, national resilience and responses to conflict and external pressure.

From the Iran–Iraq War to contemporary tensions with the West, the event considers how theology, trauma and civilisational memory continue to influence the psychology of resistance within the Islamic Republic and beyond.



## THE TUDOR HEART: LOVE, POWER AND A ROYAL DISCOVERY

**Rachel King**  
📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite  
🗣️ Talks | # 26H11  
🕒 12:30 (1 hour) | £10

In 2019, an amateur metal detectorist made an extraordinary discovery in a Warwickshire field: a 24-carat gold pendant now known as the Tudor Heart. Engraved with the intertwined initials of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon and adorned with the Tudor rose and pomegranate, this remarkable jewel had lain hidden for over 500 years.

Join Dr Rachel King as she brings this once-in-a-lifetime find to life. Through vivid imagery and expert analysis, she will uncover the craftsmanship, symbolism and meaning behind a pendant that speaks to both personal devotion and royal authority.

Offering a rare glimpse into the splendour of the early Tudor court, this fascinating talk reveals how a single object can illuminate one of history's most powerful and complex partnerships.



## FROM BENIGHTED TO ROCKY HORROR: GOTHIC LINEAGE

**Duncan Gates, Xavier Aldana Reyes**

📍 City Park. Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ Panel | # 26JB1

🕒 12:45 (1 hour) | £10

Bringing together leading voices in Gothic studies and performance, the discussion examines how J.B. Priestley's eerie country house setting, psychological tension and unsettling atmosphere helped shape the enduring 'haunted house psychodrama.'

Duncan Gates, director of the 2016 stage adaptation of *Benighted* at the Old Red Lion Theatre, joins Dr Xavier Aldana Reyes, founding member of Manchester Metropolitan University's Centre for Gothic Studies, to explore the defining elements of the Gothic mode, from fear and the uncanny to architecture and isolation.

The panel will also consider the novel's influence on later adaptations and cult classics, including *The Old Dark House* and even *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.



## TRADITIONAL OTTOMAN MASTERCLASS

**Demet Tokbay**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 2

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AD19

🕒 13:00 (3 hours) | £15

Discover the exquisite art of traditional Ottoman bookbinding in this hands-on masterclass, supported by the Yunus Emre Institute.

Led by Demet Tokbay, a conservator, restorer and traditional parchment maker, the session introduces the materials, techniques and decorative traditions behind centuries of Ottoman manuscript-making. Participants will learn about this rich heritage craft before creating their own hand-bound piece to take home. Based in Norfolk and trained in Türkiye, Demet is one of only two active UK parchment makers practising this critically endangered craft.

Perfect for anyone interested in heritage, Islamic art or mindful making, no experience is needed and all materials are provided.

*Please note all tickets purchased for this event also give the ticket holder a complimentary place at the accompanying Traditional Ottoman Bookbinding Talk.*



## A SOMALI VILLAGE IN LISTER PARK: EXHIBITION TOUR

**Fozia Bora**

📍 Cartwright Hall, Gallery 4

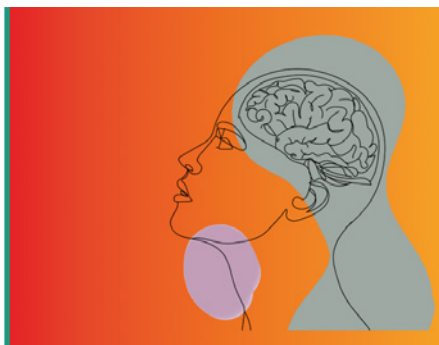
🗨️ Tour | # 26HW14

🕒 13:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

This guided tour, led by curator Fozia Bora, explores a powerful and often overlooked chapter in Bradford's history.

Revisiting the 1904 Great Exhibition in Lister Park, the exhibition highlights the Somali Village, where 57 Somali men, women and children were exhibited for six months as part of a colonial display. While the original exhibition celebrated industry and innovation, this event asks how empire shaped Bradford's cultural institutions, public spaces and collective memory.

Through stories, artworks and archival material, the tour invites audiences to look beyond the spectacle, question whose histories are remembered and reflect on how these legacies continue to shape the city today.



## OVERLOOKED AND MISUNDERSTOOD: NEURODIVERGENT WOMEN

**Gina Rippon, Kate Fox, Lucy Rose**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗨️ In Conversation | # 26ND5

🕒 13:15 (1 hour) | **£10**

Many women spend years feeling different without knowing why. Autism and ADHD are still often diagnosed through a male-centred lens, leaving countless women overlooked, misdiagnosed or recognised as neurodivergent later in life.

Bringing together writers, clinicians and voices with lived experience, this event explores late diagnosis in women and its impact on identity, relationships, mental health and self-understanding.

From masking and burnout to mislabelling and missed signs in childhood, the discussion examines why so many women fall through the cracks and what greater awareness could change for future generations. Honest, insightful and empowering.



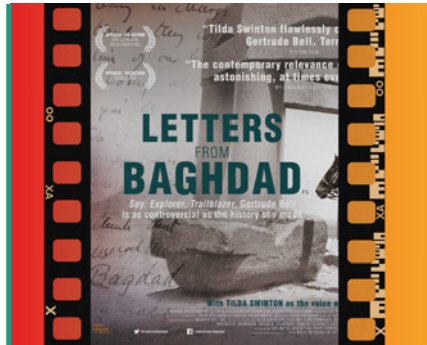
## THE FINAL STEP: TRIAL BY JURY WITH BRADFORD POLICE MUSEUM

### Bradford Police Museum

- 📍 City Hall, The Chamber
- 🎪 Concerts & Performances | # 26CR4
- 🕒 13:30 (2 hours) | £7

Join us for an immersive re-enactment where you become part of the story. Step into the shoes of a jury member in a real Victorian courtroom, hear testimonies from witnesses and weigh the evidence to decide for yourself the fate of the accused charged with murder.

You don't have to be part of the jury, of course; you can also come along to the event as a court spectator, where you can witness the entire drama unfold from the public gallery as the trial reaches its gripping conclusion. However, that doesn't mean you won't be part of the action! Thanks to new technology, you'll be able to cast your verdict on the fate of the prisoner on trial.



## SCREENING: LETTERS FROM BAGHDAD + Q&A

### Bob Richmond, Mark Jackson, Valentina Flex

- 📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema
- 🎪 Films & Screenings | # 26BF1
- 🕒 13:30 (105 minutes) | £7

Gertrude Bell mapped the Arabian desert, advised kings and helped shape modern Iraq, yet her influence remains too little known.

Voiced and executive produced by Academy Award winner Tilda Swinton, and directed by Zeva Oelbaum and Sabine Krayenbühl, this acclaimed documentary draws on archival footage, letters and photographs to illuminate Bell's life as an archaeologist, writer and political operator.

The screening will be followed by a panel with Professor Mark Jackson, Valentina Flex of Newcastle University's Gertrude Bell Archive, and Bob Richmond, exploring Bell's legacy and enduring geopolitical significance amid contemporary debates around empire, borders and the Middle East.



## THE VOICE INSIDE: CHANGING THE WAY YOU TALK TO YOURSELF

### Ro Mitchell

- 📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite
- 🔊 In Conversation | # 26CC1
- 🕒 13:45 (1 hour) | **£10**

In a world shaped by filters, comparison and constant pressure, how do we learn to truly value ourselves? Mental health advocate and content creator Ro Mitchell joins us for an honest and empowering conversation about self-worth in the digital age.

Drawing on her personal recovery journey, Ro explores how social media influences confidence, identity and wellbeing, while sharing practical tools to challenge negative self-talk and build healthier habits with compassion rather than shame.

This interactive session includes a participative Q&A, offering space to reflect, ask questions and leave with actionable strategies for developing a kinder, more confident relationship with yourself and your inner voice.



## SCREENING: MAHABHARATA

- 📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Pictureville
- 🔊 Films & Screenings | # 26BR28
- 🕒 14:00 (150 minutes) | **£9**

Newly restored in 8K, Peter Brook's *The Mahabharata* is a landmark stage-to-screen adaptation of one of the world's great epics.

Centred on the rivalry between the Pandavas and Kauravas, two branches of a royal family whose struggle for power leads to devastating war, the film explores duty, morality, love, kinship and fate. With an international cast and Brook's distinctive, elemental visual style, this extraordinary work transforms an ancient tale into a powerful meditation on human conflict, responsibility and the fragile balance of the world.

A rare opportunity to experience a monumental, cinematic event on the big screen.

Presented in partnership with Manchester Indian Film Festival.





## LOOMING 'ECK! A LOOMING MASTERCLASS

**Agnis Smallwood**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 1

🔊 Masterclass | # 26AD18

🕒 14:30 (240 minutes)

**£25 Ticket (No Concessions)**

Design and weave your own one-of-a-kind dust jacket in this hands-on workshop with Agnis Smallwood.

Using a table loom set up and ready to go, you'll be guided through the weaving process while exploring colour, texture and pattern. Choose from a vibrant selection of yarns to create a bespoke textile piece. This workshop focuses on the joy of making, allowing you to immerse yourself in the rhythm of weaving without the need for complex setup. Along the way, you'll gain a basic understanding of weaving techniques and how different materials come together on the loom.

Suitable for complete beginners, this is a relaxed and creative session with no prior experience required. All materials are provided.



## WITCHCRAFT AND THE PATRIARCHY

**Claire Mitchell , Zoe Venditozzi**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🔊 Podcast Recording | # 26FE3

🕒 14:45 (1 hour) | **£10**

Witchcraft has long been bound up with fear, power and control. Accusations of witchcraft have been used to police women's bodies, beliefs and behaviours, particularly those who defied social, religious or patriarchal norms.

From early modern witch trials to modern spiritual practice, the panel asks what the witch represents today and why she continues to challenge systems of power.

Drawing on history, folklore and contemporary culture, the discussion examines how the figure of the witch became a symbol of misogyny and moral panic and why she has since been reclaimed as an icon of feminist resistance.



## LIFE AND AFTERLIFE: BETWEEN THE MATERIAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

**Shaykh Muhammad al-Yaqoubi**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🔊 Talks | # 26FMP24

🕒 15:00 (1 hour 30 mins) | £10

What does it mean to live a meaningful life in a world increasingly shaped by material concerns? And how does an awareness of the afterlife influence the way we understand purpose, responsibility and the human condition?

In this special conversation, Shaykh Muhammad al-Yaqoubi explores the relationship between the material and spiritual dimensions of existence, drawing on the rich wisdom of the Islamic tradition.

Reflecting on faith, mortality, the soul and the search for meaning, the discussion invites audiences to consider life not as an isolated journey, but as part of a larger spiritual reality that extends beyond the visible world.



## ANDALUSIA INVISIBLE WITH ROB DOYLE

**Rob Doyle, Saeed Khan**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗣️ Talks | # 26FM12

🕒 15:15 (1 hour) | £10

Andalusia has long held a powerful place in the cultural imagination as a meeting point of philosophy, mysticism, poetry and intellectual exchange. Over centuries, it became associated with artistic and scientific flourishing, spirituality, beauty and coexistence.

In this special event, Rob Doyle explores Andalusia's symbolic and intellectual legacy and why it continues to inspire writers, thinkers and seekers today.

Drawing on literature, mysticism, Islamic philosophy, Sufi thought and cultural history, the discussion reflects on Andalusia's influence on transcendence, creativity, cultural memory and the relationship between spiritual and material worlds, considering its enduring place within the literary and philosophical imagination.



## BEYOND CAUSE AND EFFECT

**Ousama Alshurafa**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🗣️ Panel | # 26FMP27

🕒 15:30 (1 hour) | £10

Ousama Alshurafa presents life as something encrypted, decoded by recognising that the dunya tests whether we trust appearances or God's deeper truth. Money, medicine and people may help, but they are only means, powerless without their Source.

Drawing on Quranic teaching and prophetic stories, he shows how to turn first to God in need, hardship and fear, while still taking practical action.

His grounded philosophy is to set the heart's compass before acting, use worldly means without relying on them and understand difficulties as invitations to return. In doing so, belief steadies, actions improve and life begins to align.





## SCREENING: TESTIMONY WITH Q&A FROM DIRECTOR TONY PALMER

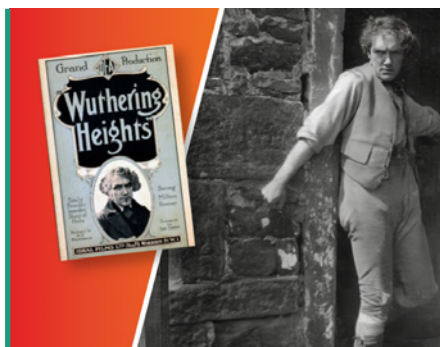
- 📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema
- 🎬 Films & Screenings | # 26BF38
- 🕒 16:00 (3 hours) | £7

Under Stalin's rule, composer Dmitri Shostakovich lived with the constant threat of denunciation, imprisonment and death. Tony Palmer's extraordinary *Testimony*, starring Ben Kingsley, explores the life of an artist navigating fear, censorship and survival.

Inspired by Solomon Volkov's controversial book, presented as Shostakovich's memoirs, the film interweaves stark black-and-white drama with the composer's powerful music.

Following this special screening, acclaimed director Tony Palmer, whose films include portraits of Leonard Cohen, Benjamin Britten and Maria Callas, discusses making *Testimony*, its disputed source material and Shostakovich's enduring legacy.

Screening from a 35mm print.



## WUTHERING HEIGHTS REDISCOVERED: CURATOR TALK

- 📍 Cambridge House, Main Room
- 🎤 Talks | # 26BR7
- 🕒 16:00 (1 hour) | **Free Event**

Step into a cinematic mystery and uncover the story behind the first-ever screen adaptation of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Though no prints of the 1920 silent film are known to survive, fragments remain through photographs, newspaper cuttings and a single surviving screenplay.

Drawing on these rare materials, researcher and writer Irfan Shah pieces together how the lost film may have looked and how Brontë's dark and passionate novel was brought to the screen over a century ago.

Part literary history, part detective story, this illustrated talk is perfect for cinephiles, Brontë enthusiasts and lovers of forgotten cinema alike.



## FANTASY AS A POLITICAL MIRROR

**Eliza Chan, Soraya Bouazzaoui**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ Panel | # 26CM2

🕒 16:00 (1 hour) | **£10**

Fantasy fiction has long been a space for writers to explore politics, power and social conflict through myth, folklore and imagined worlds.

Join Soraya Bouazzaoui and Eliza Chan for a fascinating discussion on how contemporary fantasy uses speculative storytelling to examine identity, resistance and the tensions shaping society.

Through ghosts, mythology, shifting political systems and richly imagined worlds, their novels explore the forces that shape communities and the people living within them. Together, they discuss why fantasy remains such a powerful literary space for reflecting the anxieties and complexities of the modern world.



## HAVE I SAID TOO MUCH? IAIN DALE IN CONVERSATION WITH NAZ SHAH

**Iain Dale and Naz Shah**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26WA23

🕒 16:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

Broadcaster, author and LBC political commentator Iain Dale joins us to reflect on a life spent at the heart of British politics and media.

Drawing on his candid new memoir, *Have I Said Too Much?*, Dale discusses the triumphs, failures and defining moments that shaped his journey from political hopeful to one of the UK's most recognisable radio voices.

In conversation with Naz Shah MP, the discussion will explore political culture, public discourse, media responsibility and the changing nature of British public life, alongside more personal reflections on identity, ambition, resilience and the pressures of life lived in the public eye.



## SWIMMING THE SEASONS WITH POLLY ATKIN

**Polly Atkin**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26NE6

🕒 16:45 (1 hour) | £10

What does it mean to pay close attention to a place, to enter it, season after season, with your whole body?

Polly Atkin joins us to discuss her lyrical exploration of year-round wild swimming in the rivers, lakes and tarns of the Lake District. Blending nature writing, memoir and reflective essay, *Swimming the Seasons* traces the rhythms of landscape and the shifting relationship between body and water across time.

Atkin also speaks candidly about disability and embodiment, reframing wild swimming not as a feat of endurance, but as an act of attention, continuity and joy.

A quiet, powerful book. An unmissable conversation.



## THE GOTHIC BODY: QUEERNESS, DISABILITY, AND DEFIANCE

**Charlotte Paradise, Jessie Elland,  
Lucy Rose**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ Panel | # 26SC1

🕒 17:30 (1 hour 15 mins) | £10

For centuries, queer people, women and disabled bodies have been cast as unnatural, hysterical, excessive and made the essence of horror. But what happens when we reclaim the monster?

Bestselling authors Lucy Rose (*The Lamb*), Jessie Elland (*The Ladie Upstairs*) and Charlotte Paradise (*Overspill*) join us for a fierce conversation on the gothic as a battleground for bodies that refuse to behave. Together, they explore how gothic fiction turns stigma into power, rage into art and otherness into defiance.

Dark, unsettling and unapologetically political, this event asks who gets to be human, and who is called monstrous.



## THE HOUR OF THE WOLF: IN CONVERSATION WITH FATIMA BHUTTO

**Fatima Bhutto**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗣️ Panel | # 26ME5

🕒 17:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

One of the most compelling writers of her generation turns her unflinching gaze on her own life. In *The Hour of the Wolf*, Fatima Bhutto, novelist, poet and member of one of Pakistan's most celebrated and turbulent political dynasties, offers an intimate memoir of love, coercion and survival.

Tracing her escape from a manipulative relationship, she moves between personal experience and wider reflections on grief, myth, nature and the stories we tell ourselves to heal.

Heartbreaking and ultimately hopeful, this is a conversation about trauma, resilience and the quiet courage it takes to reclaim your own life.



## IN PRAISE OF DARKNESS

**Dan Richards, Jean Sprackland,  
Sally Coulthard**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🗣️ Panel | # 26NE7

🕒 17:45 (1 hour 15 mins) | **£10**

When did we stop trusting the dark? From twilight skies and nocturnal wildlife to insomnia and night work, three writers explore what happens after the sun goes down.

Jean Sprackland turns to moths, bats and birds, asking what is lost as artificial light erases darkness and reshapes our attention. Sally Coulthard uncovers the folklore and ecological rhythms of dawn and dusk, thresholds where landscape, wildlife and imagination transform. Dan Richards, author of *Overnight*, explores night shifts, sleepless hours and journeys after dark.

Blending nature writing, memoir and cultural reflection, this conversation asks how we might protect, and reconnect with, darkness.



## SUFIYANA KALAAM

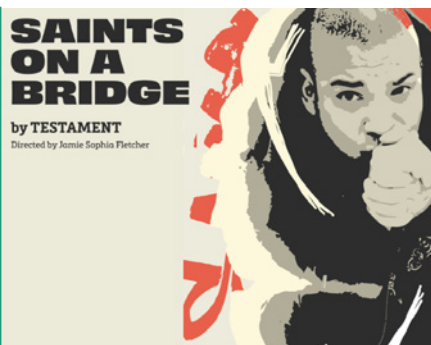
### Orchestral Qawwali Project

- 📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall
- 🎵 Concerts & Performances | # 26MU6
- 🕒 19:30 (2 hours and 30 minutes) | £25

Experience an extraordinary evening of music as Royal Albert Hall Associate Artists Abi Sampa and Rushil Ranjan bring their internationally acclaimed Orchestral Qawwali Project back to Bradford Literature Festival, where the ensemble made its debut performance.

Blending the devotional power of Qawwali with sweeping orchestral arrangements and soaring choral vocals, this pioneering production creates a breathtaking dialogue between South Asian spiritual traditions and contemporary musical expression. Rooted in the timeless poetry of love, longing and transcendence, the performance honours the rich legacy of Qawwali music while reimagining it for new audiences.

A powerful and uplifting celebration of beauty, connection and our shared human experience.



## SAINTS ON A BRIDGE

- 📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium
- 🎵 Concerts & Performances | # 26MU2
- 🕒 20:00 (1 hour) | £10

Award-winning writer, rapper and beatboxer Testament brings his electrifying new show to the stage, blending spoken word, hip hop, beatboxing, song and theatre.

Set within a small church community, *Saints on a Bridge* explores identity, connection and division in 21st-century Britain through the voices of a youth worker, church warden, teenage boy, police officer and long-suffering vicar. Drawn together by a single event, their faith and fellowship are pushed to the brink.

Funny, raw and deeply human, this powerful production reflects on race, faith, community and what happens when silence can no longer hold.





**YOUR EVENT. YOUR STAGE.**

**BRADFORD**

**LIVE**

**BRING YOUR EVENT INTO THE SPOTLIGHT**  
**BRADFORDLIVE.CO.UK**



# SUNDAY 12 JULY

Calling all witches, wizards and magical creatures! Grab your wands and head to the city centre for a **free** family day filled with spellbinding fun, including face painting, walkabout acts, arts and crafts, storytelling and theatre, plus a screening of everyone's favourite ogre, *Shrek*. Magic, mischief and happily ever laughter await!

## THEATRE SHOW

 **City Park**

 11.30 | 12:45 | 14:00 | **FREE**

### The Battle of the Wizards

In a parallel reality to our own, the ancient wizard Master Skerrold and his apprentice welcome non-magical folk to join them in a celebration of magic! But not everything is as it seems. An agent of dark magic, Septimius Silvertongue, has heard that Skerrold is hiding a powerful magical artefact that would allow his evil master to win the war of light vs dark.

## PERFORMANCES

 **City Park FREE**

### Punjabi Roots - Band Baja 11:00

Enjoy the unmistakable sound of the Punjabi Roots Academy Baja Band as it brings a burst of music, colour and celebration to Bradford.

### Punjabi Roots - Bhangra 13:30

Experience the energy and excitement of Punjabi Roots Academy as it brings the vibrant tradition of bhangra to the heart of Bradford.

### Fat Cat Brass 12:15 | 14:30

Fat Cat Brass is a Yorkshire-based brass band known for their lively performances, bringing together popular tunes, big brass sounds and plenty of audience engagement.

**GO  
ALL  
IN.**

National  
Year of  
Reading  
2026

## MEET THE AUTHOR

 **Hub, City Park**

 14.00 | **FREE** | Book Online

### Olivia Mulligan

Join Olivia Mulligan for a delightful reading of her children's book *Reggie from the Hedgie*, a curious little hedgehog with a big personality.



**FREE  
FAMILY  
FUN DAYS**



## STORYTELLING

📍 **Imagination Station, City Park**

🕒 **Gav Cross** 11.00 | 12.30 | 14.00

**Storybees** 11.45 | 13.15 | 14.30

**FREE**

Listen with wonder as live storytellers perform magical tales throughout the day, sharing spellbinding tips for creating your own stories.

## ARTS & CRAFTS

📍 **Broadway & Imagination Station, City Park**

🕒 11.00 - 15.00 **FREE** | Drop in

Create magical keepsakes with four completely different spellbinding craft activities for little wizards and imaginative creatures.

## FILM SCREENING

📍 **Pictureville, National Science & Media Museum**

🕒 11.00 (90 mins)

**FREE** | Book Online

### Shrek

A grumpy ogre's swamp is overrun by fairytale creatures, so he must rescue a princess to get his home back.

Warm, cheeky and packed with brilliant jokes, *Shrek* remains one of the great animated comedies. Celebrate its 25th anniversary with this big-screen family favourite. Don't miss it!



## QIGONG

### Bar

📍 City Park, Centenary Square

🎫 Masterclass | # 26HB3

🕒 10:00 (1 hour) | £7

Developed thousands of years ago as part of traditional Chinese medicine, Qigong combines mindful movement, controlled breathing and focused intention to enhance energy flow and overall wellbeing.

In this practical workshop, participants will learn simple, accessible techniques to calm the mind, strengthen the body and improve balance and vitality.

Guided by an experienced instructor, you will explore both dynamic and meditative forms of Qigong, from slow, fluid movements to quiet moments of breath and stillness. Leave feeling centred, relaxed and refreshed, with tools you can bring into your daily life to restore focus, energy and inner peace.

No previous experience is required and all abilities are welcome.



## SHADOW PUPPET MAGIC: KARAGÖZ & HACIVAT PUPPET SHOW

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🎫 Kids & Family | # 26MU12

🕒 10:15 (1 hour) | **Family Fun Days**

Experience the magic of traditional Turkish shadow puppetry in this interactive workshop and performance led by theatre practitioner Mengü Türk, an expert in the Ottoman art of *Karagöz and Hacivat*.

This centuries-old form of storytelling blends humour, folklore, and vibrant characters projected onto a screen using handmade puppets. You will enjoy a live performance followed by a hands-on workshop, where you'll learn how these intricate figures are made and brought to life.

Suitable for all ages and no prior experience needed. A rare opportunity to engage with one of Türkiye's most beloved theatrical traditions.



## LITTLE GERMANY: HERITAGE WALKING TOUR

**Nigel Grizzard**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub Meeting Point

🗣️ Tour | # 26HW4

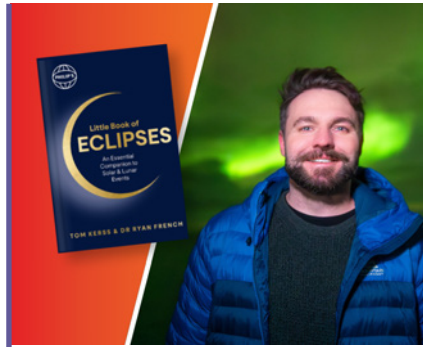
🕒 10:30 (2 hours) | £10

Explore one of the city's most striking architectural treasures and uncover the story of the German merchants who transformed Bradford into an international centre of trade during the 19th century.

Packed with historical insight and hidden details, Grizzard's tour brings this forgotten world vividly to life as you wander through the country's largest collection of listed merchant buildings.

Perfect for lovers of history, architecture and local heritage, this outdoor walking tour offers a unique glimpse into Bradford's industrial past.

Please wear comfortable footwear and weather-appropriate clothing.



## SEVEN WONDERS OF THE SKY WITH TOM KERSS

**Tom Kerss**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

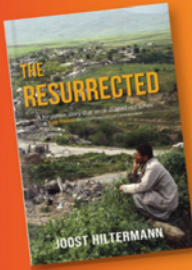
🗣️ Talks | # 26TA3

🕒 10:45 (1 hour) | £10

Step into the wonders of the night sky with astronomer and 'Chief Aurora Chaser' Tom Kerss.

In this inspiring talk, Kerss takes audiences on a tour of seven of the most spectacular celestial events, from the mesmerising Aurora Borealis to dramatic solar and lunar eclipses, including this August's eagerly anticipated event. Kerss blends ancient mythology, modern science, vivid storytelling and stunning astrophotography to bring the skies to life.

Discover how these extraordinary sights have shaped human curiosity for centuries, and how many can be experienced without travelling far from home.



## THE RESURRECTED: MEMORY, SURVIVAL AND THE AFTERLIFE OF VIOLENCE

**Eugene Rogan**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

🗣️ Panel | # 26WA25

🕒 10:45 (1 hour) | **£10**

Partly inspired by true events, Joost Hiltermann's *The Resurrected* traces the lives of two young Kurdish survivors of Saddam Hussein's 1988 Anfal campaign as they escape Iraq and attempt to rebuild their lives in America.

Blending testimony, fiction and historical memory, the novel explores genocide, exile, trauma and the enduring weight of the past. In this special conversation, Hiltermann reflects on the relationship between literature and historical violence, the complexities of survival and diaspora and the ways memory continues to shape lives long after conflict ends.

A powerful exploration of displacement, identity and the human struggle to live beyond catastrophe.



## ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY MASTERCLASS

**Esma Ceylan**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 1

🗣️ Workshop | # 26AD20

🕒 11:00 (3 hours) | **£15**

Discover the contemplative art of Ottoman and Islamic calligraphy in this introductory hands-on workshop, supported by the Yunus Emre Institute.

Led by artist Esma Ceylan, who trained under master calligrapher Mustafa Cemil Efe and holds an Ijazah in Thuluth, Naskh and Rika scripts, the session explores patience, balance and the beauty of the written word.

Following a short introduction and live demonstration, participants will practise basic strokes before creating a single letter, such as *waw* or *alif*, to take home.

Suitable for beginners aged 16 and over. All materials will be provided.



## A WISH TO SPEAK WITH RONA HURST AND SIMON BEECH

**Rona Hurst, Simon Beech**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

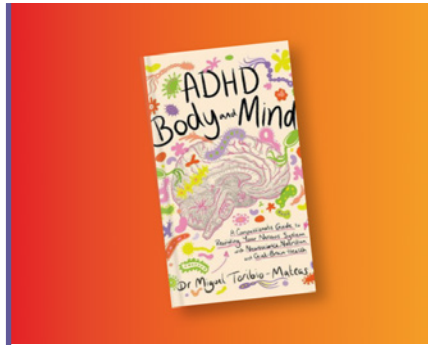
🗣️ Talks | # 26ME19

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | £10

Join Rona Hurst and Barnsley poet Simon Beech for a moving celebration of *A Wish to Speak*.

Born in Barnsley in 1967 with cerebral palsy, Rona has spent a lifetime challenging the low expectations placed upon her and finding ways for her voice to be heard. In this powerful new biography, written with Simon, her story of determination, dignity and resilience comes vividly to life.

Simon is a Barnsley writer and poet whose work has appeared in *Black Bough*, *Dream Catcher* and *Dreich*. Hear how this remarkable book came together and meet the author behind Rona's inspiring story.



## ADHD BODY AND MIND WITH DR MIGUEL TORIBIO-MATEAS

**Miguel Toribio-Mateas**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗣️ Talks | # 26ND1

🕒 11:00 (1 hour) | £10

Blending science with accessible, real-world advice, this practical, illustrated talk offers tools and insights for anyone living with ADHD, supporting someone who is, or interested in how body and mind work together.

Dr Miguel Toribio-Mateas explores the connection between brain health, nutrition and neurodiversity, offering new ways to understand and support the ADHD experience. Drawing on the latest research, the session looks at how diet, gut health and lifestyle can influence focus, mood, energy and emotional regulation.

Thoughtful and interactive, this session empowers audiences to better understand the brain and take small, meaningful steps towards improved wellbeing.



## UNDERCLIFFE VICTORIAN CEMETERY: HERITAGE WALKING TOUR

**John Jackson**

📍 Undercliffe Cemetery, Meeting Point

📻 Tour | # 26HW12

🕒 11:00 (2 hours) | £10

Step back into Victorian Bradford on this atmospheric, guided tour of Undercliffe Cemetery, one of the city's most remarkable heritage sites. Led by expert guide John Jackson, this engaging walk explores the cemetery's fascinating history.

Wander among towering monuments dedicated to Bradford's wealthy industrial elite and uncover the stories behind the grand memorials that reflect the city's prosperity and ambition.

Blending rich historical insight with vivid storytelling, this thought-provoking walk offers a unique perspective on the people and histories remembered within Undercliffe Cemetery.



## 100 YEARS OF MARILYN MONROE: UK PREMIERE: SCREENING + Q&A

**Suzie Kennedy**

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

📻 Films & Screenings | # 26BF6

🕒 11:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | £7

A century after her birth, Marilyn Monroe remains one of the most recognisable figures in cinema history, yet the woman behind the image is still too often obscured by myth.

This new feature documentary explores Monroe's life, career and enduring legacy, tracing her journey from a troubled childhood to global stardom through rare archival footage and expert insight. Moving beyond the familiar iconography, this UK premiere reveals a complex, gifted performer whose influence continues to shape cinema, celebrity and popular culture.

The screening will be followed by a Q&A with Suzie Kennedy, who appears in the film and is internationally recognised for her work portraying Monroe across stage, screen and live appearances.



## WHERE ARE WE AFTER OCTOBER 7?

**Daniel Levy, Wadah Khanfar**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26WA17

🕒 12:00 (1 hour) | £10

A major conversation examining how the Middle East and wider international order have shifted in the time since October 7 and the regional escalations that followed.

Bringing together two of the most thoughtful voices on diplomacy, mediation and political transformation, the discussion will explore regional realignment, international legitimacy, media narratives, shifting alliances and the changing role of global powers within the region.

The event will consider how the conflict has reshaped political discourse, public consciousness and geopolitical relationships across the Middle East, Europe and the wider world.



## BE MORE BRONTË

**Mark Musolf**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗣️ Talks | # 26BR10

🕒 12:00 (1 hour) | £10

Join volunteer Mark Musolf as he reflects on his remarkable journey at the Brontë Birthplace, growing from casual helper to committee member, acclaimed tour guide and a cornerstone of the Birthplace community.

As part of the Brontë Birthplace team, he shares the fascinating stories of the Brontë family and this special house, helping others to connect with the Brontës' legacy and leave with a deeper appreciation of both the family's story and the place where it began.

In this insightful talk, Musolf charts the history of the project, its evolving aims and the tremendous successes achieved through dedication, collaboration and local pride.





## MO'S STAR 20 YEARS ON WITH MAHNAZ MALIK

**Mahnaz Malik and Alexandra Pringle,  
Hon FRSL**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

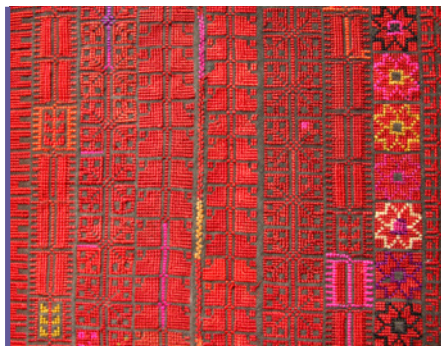
🗨️ In Conversation | # 26AW24

🕒 12:15 (1 hour) | £10

Twenty years ago, while still a young student herself, international lawyer and World Bank judge Mahnaz Malik wrote *Mo's Star*, a children's book inspired by the power of hope, imagination and education.

Created to raise funds for children in need in Pakistan, the book went on to support access to schooling for underprivileged children and has now been republished by Oxford University Press in English, Urdu and Arabic.

In this special event, Malik reflects on the remarkable journey of the book, the importance of aspiration and storytelling and the enduring belief that every child deserves the opportunity to dream, learn and shape their future.



## THREADS OF PALESTINE: TATREEZ EMBROIDERY MASTERCLASS

**Yorkshire Tatreez**

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 2

🗨️ Masterclass | # 26AD12

🕒 12:30 (2 hours) | £10

Join us for a calming, creative workshop celebrating the rich tradition of Palestinian embroidery. Guided by the skilled team at Yorkshire Tatreez, you'll cross-stitch your own beautiful bookmark while connecting with a centuries-old practice rooted in storytelling, resistance, and cultural memory.

Tatreez is more than embroidery; it's a visual language passed through generations of Palestinian women, expressing identity, heritage, and life on the land. In 2021, UNESCO recognised this remarkable art form by adding it to its Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Take a moment for mindful embroidery and choose your own design to begin (or continue) your own tatreez journey.

The recommended age for this event is 16+. Under 18's must be accompanied by an over 18 ticket holder.





## WORLD OF ISLAM: FESTIVAL 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**Paul Ahmed Keeler, Stefan Williamson,  
Warwick Pethers**

📍 The National Science and Media  
Museum, Pictureville

🔊 Talks | # 26AD21

🕒 13:00 (1 hour 45 minutes)

**£10 Ticket (No Concessions)**

In 1976, the World of Islam Festival opened in London, bringing together extraordinary exhibitions, lectures, seminars, films and publications that reshaped how Islamic art, science and culture were understood in Britain and beyond.

Fifty years on, its founder and curator Ahmed Paul Keeler reflects on the vision, ambition and impact of this landmark cultural moment.

Through an illustrated presentation, conversation and audience Q&A, this event explores how the festival came together, how it was received, and why its call to understand Islamic civilisation on its own terms remains urgent, influential and profoundly relevant today.



## JEREMY CORBYN: THE GAZA TRIBUNAL

**Jeremy Corbyn**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🔊 In Conversation | # 26WA18

🕒 13:30 (1 hour) | **£10**

Jeremy Corbyn discusses the Gaza Tribunal and the growing debate around accountability, international law and the humanitarian consequences of conflict in Gaza.

The conversation will reflect on the role of public testimony, political activism and legal scrutiny in shaping international awareness and response.

Whilst exploring wider questions around justice, diplomacy and the responsibilities of the international community in moments of humanitarian crisis.



## FEMINIST ICON: 100 YEARS OF MARILYN MONROE

**Cathy Lomax, Julie Owen Moylan, Suzie Kennedy and Saeed Khan**

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🔊 Panel I # 26FE2

🕒 13:30 (1 hour 15 mins) | £10

Often reduced to a symbol of glamour, Marilyn Monroe was far more than the image projected onto her. Beneath the spotlight was a woman navigating power, control and expectation in a deeply patriarchal industry.

This event reexamines Monroe as a feminist icon, exploring her intelligence, agency and resistance to the roles imposed upon her. From her struggle for creative control to her complex relationship with fame, we look at how Marilyn challenged ideas of femininity, sexuality and authorship and why her legacy continues to resonate in contemporary feminist conversations.

Reclaiming the woman behind the myth, this panel asks what Marilyn Monroe can still teach us about autonomy, image and gendered power today.



## SCREENING: ALL ABOUT WEDDINGS

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

🔊 Films & Screenings I # 26BD35

🕒 14:00 (1 hour 40 mins) | £9

A warm and witty Bengali social comedy, *All About Weddings* takes a lively look at love, marriage and the family expectations that surround one of South Asia's biggest social rituals. Set within the colourful, emotionally charged world of wedding preparations, the film explores relationships, tradition and the pressures that come with tying the knot. With humour and heart, it captures the joy, chaos and complexity of bringing families together, while reflecting on what marriage means in a changing society. Playful, relatable and full of cultural detail, *All About Weddings* is an affectionate celebration of romance, ritual and family life.

Presented in partnership with the Manchester Indian Film Festival





## PSYCHEDELICS AND THE BRAIN: REIMAGINING MENTAL HEALTH

**David Luke, Sarah Tilley**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🗨️ Panel | # 26HB1

🕒 14:00 (1 hour) | £7

As mental health challenges continue to rise, researchers and practitioners are revisiting a controversial question: could psychedelics play a role in modern therapy?

Once confined to counterculture movements, substances such as psilocybin and LSD are now the focus of serious scientific research. Early studies suggest potential in treating depression, PTSD and addiction, yet concerns remain around safety, ethics and regulation.

Bringing together voices from research and practice, we explore the evidence behind psychedelic therapy, the risks involved and what their growing mainstream interest means for the future of mental healthcare. Are psychedelics a breakthrough in treatment, a cultural trend or something more complex?



## DARK ROMANCE: THE LIVES AND LEGACY OF WUTHERING HEIGHTS

**Claire O'Callaghan, Jo Parsons**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗨️ Panel | # 26BR1

🕒 14:45 (1 hour) | £10

Step into the shadowed world of passion, obsession and moral ambiguity in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*.

Join acclaimed Brontë scholar Dr Claire O'Callaghan and popular literary culture specialist Dr Jo Parsons for a thought-provoking discussion exploring the novel's dark romantic legacy and its influence on contemporary phenomena, such as *Twilight*, *After* and *The Vampire Diaries*. Together, they will examine the enduring appeal of dark romance tropes including longing, intensity and toxicity, while questioning the ethics behind these narratives.

Is Heathcliff a romantic hero or something far more troubling? Discover why stories of destructive love continue to captivate audiences across generations and popular culture today.



## WORLD PREMIERE SCREENING: MIZAN: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

**Paul Ahmed Keeler and Ambassador  
Fahad Al-Attiya**

📍 The National Science and Media  
Museum, Pictureville

🎬 Films & Screenings | # 26BF40

🕒 14:45 (1 hour 15 mins) | £7

Ahmed Paul Keeler, originator and director of the World of Islam Festival, joins Ambassador Fahad Al-Attiya for a special evening event launching *Mizan: Changing the Narrative*, a new film produced by Caravane Earth Foundation with award-winning filmmaker Colin Ramsey.

The film explores Keeler's Mizan Thesis, first introduced in his book *Rethinking Islam & The West: A New Narrative for the Age of Crises*, offering a powerful framework for understanding balance, justice and scale in a time of global crisis.

Taking place 50 years after the World of Islam Festival, this event reflects on Islam's civilisational legacy and its urgent relevance today.

Introduced by His Excellency Fahad Bin Mohammed Al-Attayah, founder of Caravane Earth and former Ambassador of Qatar to the United Kingdom.



## ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY MASTERCLASS

📍 City Hall, Reception Room 1

🎬 Workshop | # 26AD20

🕒 15:00 (3 hours) | £15

Discover the contemplative art of Ottoman and Islamic calligraphy in this introductory hands-on workshop, supported by the Yunus Emre Institute.

Led by artist Esmā Ceylan, who trained under master calligrapher Mustafa Cemil Efe and holds an Ijazah in Thuluth, Naskh and Rika scripts, the session explores patience, balance and the beauty of the written word.

Following a short introduction and live demonstration, participants will practise basic strokes before creating a single letter, such as *waw* or *alif*, to take home.

Suitable for beginners aged 16 and over. All materials will be provided.



## TELL ME SOMETHING: FAMILY STORIES WITH LEMN SISSAY

### Lemn Sissay

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26R19

🕒 15:00 (1 hour) | £10

Every family carries stories, stories passed down across generations, stories held quietly, stories shaped by love, migration, absence, memory and survival. From June 20th online and throughout Bradford Literature Festival 2026, audiences across the city have been invited to share reflections, testimonies and fragments of family life as part of a living public archive created in collaboration with Lemn Sissay's Tell Me Something project.

In this special event, acclaimed writer and broadcaster Lemn Sissay reflects on the stories that have been gathered, exploring family as a place of inheritance, identity, fracture and belonging. Weaving together testimony, conversation and collective witnessing, this event offers a rare space for reflection on the lives, memories and human connections that shape us.



## INTO THE WILD: IN CONVERSATION WITH LUCY SHEPHERD

### Lucy Shepherd

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🗣️ In Conversation | # 26TA1

🕒 15:00 (1 hour) | £10

Join explorer Lucy Shepherd for a conversation about *Into the Wild*, the story of her journey to become an explorer and her world-first expedition across the Amazon's Kanuku Mountains.

Inspired by the adventurers who came before her, Shepherd set out to discover what it takes to travel beyond maps, certainty and comfort. Leading a small all-Indigenous Amerindian team through one of Earth's most remote environments, she confronted hunger, injury, illness, treacherous rivers and the dangers of the rainforest.

Thrilling, honest and inspiring, she explores resilience, teamwork, fear and wonder, asking why wild places still matter to the planet and ourselves.



## EVER LAND: IN CONVERSATION WITH AMY ABDELNOOR

**Amy Abdelnoor and Alexandra Pringle**

📍 City Hall, The Chamber

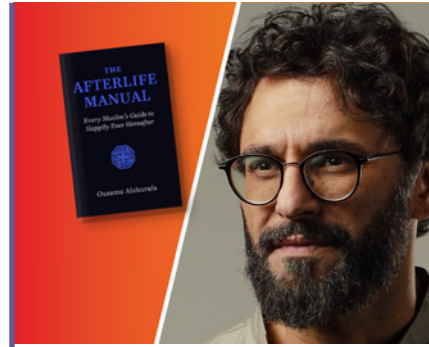
🔊 In Conversation | # 26F12

🕒 15:15 (1 hour) | £10

Set between London, Israel and Palestine, *Ever Land* is a haunting and deeply human debut novel exploring memory, grief, belonging and the unresolved weight of history.

Moving between past and present, the novel follows Dinah, a Jewish teenager adjusting to a new life in Israel, and Safa, a Palestinian girl killed decades earlier during the Six-Day War, whose spirit remains suspended between worlds in search of her lost sister.

In conversation with Alexandra Pringle, Amy Abdelnoor reflects on fiction, inheritance, displacement and the emotional landscapes that exist beneath political conflict, exploring the power of storytelling to illuminate lives shaped by history, loss and the enduring search for home.



## THE AFTERLIFE MANUAL

**Ousama Alshurafa**

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🔊 Talks | # 26FMP22

🕒 15:30 (1 hour) | £10

Drawing on his book, *The Afterlife Manual*, Ousama Alshurafa explores a transformative, Islamic idea: the world we perceive is not the reality that governs our lives.

Bringing together the Qur'an, Sunnah and insights of classical scholars, he considers space and time as a divine display, while all benefit and harm rest with Allah alone. Through vivid everyday examples, he reveals how trusting Allah beyond appearances, detaching the heart from worldly things and treating each moment as a test can transform ordinary actions into light for the hereafter.

This practical, profound talk offers a roadmap for presence, certainty and submission.



## VOICES OF THE FANS: THE STORY OF FOOTBALL FANZINES

**Cameron Huggett, Ryan March,  
Mike Harrison**

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🗨️ Panel | # 26SP3

🕒 15:30 (1 hour) | £10

Co-produced with the British Library and linked to their Voice of the Fans pop-up exhibition in the Festival Hub, this panel discussion celebrates and explores the extraordinary history of football fanzines.

For more than 60 years, fan-made magazines have given supporters a voice beyond the mainstream, shaping the culture of the game through wit, passion, and activism. From the terraces to the printers, these publications challenged authority, championed inclusion, and amplified campaigns against racism, sexism and homophobia.

This conversation brings together leading editors and writers to discuss how fanzines transformed football, the communities they built, and their lasting influence on today's digital fan culture.

BRITISH  
LIBRARY



## MYTHOLOGY OF THE BRONTËS

**Claire O'Callaghan, Lucasta Miller**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🗨️ Panel | # 26BR4

🕒 16:00 (1 hour) | £10

With new adaptations and viral discussions bringing classic literature to new audiences, the Brontë sisters are once again at the centre of cultural conversation.

Join acclaimed author Lucasta Miller and renowned Brontë scholar Dr Claire O'Callaghan as they explore how our understanding of Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë continues to evolve in the 21st century.

From *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* to modern film and television adaptations, this engaging discussion examines why the Brontës' stories of passion, ambition and rebellion still resonate today.

Discover how contemporary audiences are reshaping the myths, legacy and enduring appeal of one of literature's most celebrated families.



## YUNUS EMRE AND THE TURKISH SUFI TRADITION

### Yunus Emre

📍 City Hall, Banqueting Suite

🔊 Talks | # 26FMP15

🕒 16:30 (1 hour) | £10

Discover the poetic and spiritual legacy of Yunus Emre, one of the most celebrated voices in Turkish Sufi literature, in this illuminating talk with Professor Nurullah Koltaş.

Exploring Yunus Emre's enduring themes of love, humility, unity and the search for the divine, Professor Koltaş will consider his place within the wider Turkish Sufi tradition and the continuing resonance of his poetry today.

Accessible yet thought-provoking, this event, supported by the Yunus Emre Institute, offers an inviting introduction to a profound literary and spiritual heritage, revealing how Yunus Emre's words continue to speak across cultures and centuries.



## SCREENING: GENTLEMEN PREFER BLONDES

📍 The National Science and Media Museum, Cubby Broccoli Cinema

🔊 Films & Screenings | # 26BF27

🕒 16:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | £7

Lorelei Lee wants to marry a millionaire. Her best friend, Dorothy, wants to marry for love. Together, they are one of Hollywood comedy's most formidable double acts.

Directed by Howard Hawks and starring Marilyn Monroe and Jane Russell, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* is far sharper than its reputation suggests. Monroe's Lorelei is no mere dazzling blonde; she is a woman who understands exactly how the world works and how to play it. Its most famous sequence, *Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend*, remains one of cinema's great set pieces.

Glamorous, witty and quietly subversive, this is Monroe at the height of her powers, perfectly matched by Russell.



## PEG ALEXANDER: MATCHING RUCKSACKS - A TRAVELOGUE LOVE STORY BOOK LAUNCH

### Peg Alexander

📍 City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space

🔊 Book Launch | # 26TA2

🕒 16:45 (1 hour) | £10

Join broadcaster, journalist and proud northerner Peg Alexander as she launches *Matching Rucksacks*, a warm, honest and uplifting travel memoir.

After unemployment, miscarriages, a house fire and a struggling marriage, Peg and her husband Jimmy gave up everything to embark on a life-changing gap year around the world. Returning home brought both excitement and challenges they never expected. A decade later, they retraced part of their journey through Asia, carrying the scars and joy of the years between.

From Bradford to Asia, this is a story of adventure, resilience, mental health, love and hard-won healing, told with warmth, humour and hope.



## FREE WORD LECTURE: TAWAKKOL KARMAN

### Tawakkol Karman

📍 Alhambra Theatre, The Studio

🔊 Book Launch | # 26FW4

🕒 17:00 (1 hour) | £10

Join us for this Free Word Lecture, one of Bradford Literature Festival's flagship events celebrating free expression and the power and politics of words.

Continuing the legacy of the Free Word Centre, these special lectures offers a platform for a leading writer, journalist or thinker to challenge assumptions and explore how language can shape the world.

We are honoured to welcome Ms. Tawakkol Karman, Yemeni journalist, human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate. A leading voice of the Arab Spring, her lecture will explore the democratising force of words and why freedom of expression matters now more than ever.

*Presented in partnership with Free Word*



## IN CONVERSATION WITH AHMED PAUL KEELER

📍 The National Science and Media  
Museum, Pictureville

🔊 Films & Screenings | # 26AD22

🕒 17:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | **£10**

Cultural visionary, Ahmed Paul Keeler, reflects on a lifetime spent exploring the relationship between Islam, civilisation, culture and the modern world.

From the countercultural movements of the 1960s to the creation of the landmark World of Islam Festival and the development of the Mizan philosophy, the conversation traces a remarkable intellectual and spiritual journey shaped by questions of meaning, beauty, balance and belonging.

Intimate, reflective and wide-ranging, the discussion offers a rare opportunity to hear one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary Islamic thought reflect on the crises and possibilities of our age.



## REIMAGINING THE CLASSICS

**Elle Machray, Essie Fox, Kat Dunn**

📍 Loading Bay, Auditorium

🔊 Panel | # 26F12

🕒 17:30 (1 hour 15 mins) | **£10**

Some characters linger in the shadows of the stories that made them famous. Ophelia, Catherine Earnshaw and Miss Havisham are iconic, but in their original texts, their voices were filtered through the expectations, morality and constraints of their eras. Today, a new generation of writers is reclaiming them.

Join authors Kat Dunn, Essie Fox and Elle Machray as they reimagine these women from *Hamlet*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations*. Through bold feminist and queer perspectives, they revisit characters who were denied complexity, agency or the chance to tell their own story.

Our panel will explore why these figures still captivate us, what the canon left unsaid and how contemporary retellings allow the silenced and misunderstood to speak anew.



## TURKISH CLASSICAL AND SUFI MUSIC CONCERT

**Koray Arısan, Tolga Öter, Murat Ferhat Yegül, Eray Cinpir, Serda Türkel Öter**

📍 St George's Hall, Main Hall

🎵 Concerts & Performances | # 26MU11

🕒 18:30 (1 hour 30 mins) | £15

Experience the mesmerising beauty of Turkish classical and Sufi music in an intimate live concert featuring five accomplished performers.

Led by the evocative voices of Serda Türkel Öter and Eray Cinpir, the ensemble brings together the rich, contemplative sounds of the ney, performed by Murat Ferhat Yegül, the warm resonance of the oud, played by Tolga Öter, and the delicate, intricate tones of the qanun, performed by Koray Arısan.

Rooted in centuries of musical and spiritual tradition and supported by the Yunus Emre Institute, this special concert invites audiences into a world of poetry, devotion and deep expression. Through soaring vocals and exquisite instrumental performances, the ensemble will celebrate the elegance of Turkish classical music and the transcendent spirit of Sufi musical heritage.



## SACRED MUSIC

📍 Bradford Cathedral, Nave

🎵 Concerts & Performances | # 26MU3

🕒 18:30 (2 hours) | £10

Bradford Literature Festival comes to a spectacular close with a celebration of devotional music from across the religious spectrum.

Bradford Cathedral provides a fitting backdrop, as prayerful music in a multitude of languages will fill the space, offering audiences a rare opportunity to experience a wide variety of sacred music traditions together in one beautiful setting.

Bringing together performers from different faith backgrounds in a shared programme of live devotional music, the evening offers audiences a chance to experience sacred traditions side by side in one shared space.

## EXHIBITIONS

ALL FESTIVAL	Maqāmāt Al-Hariri: The Art of Eloquence	City Park, Festival Hub, The Broadway Bradford & Local Libraries	8
ALL FESTIVAL	Beyond Expectations: Poetry Mural by Nabeela Ahmed & The People Powered Press	People Powered Press	9
ALL FESTIVAL	Between Moor and Sky: Samuel Sharp	City Park, Festival Hub	9
ALL FESTIVAL	Tell Me Something: Family Stories with Lemn Sissay	City Park, Festival Hub	10
ALL FESTIVAL	Voice of the Fans: 60 Years of Football Fanzines	City Park, Festival Hub	11
ALL FESTIVAL	Kaifla wa Dimna Exhibition	City Park, Festival Hub	11
ALL FESTIVAL	Mapping the Maqāmāt: Eight Artists, Eight Countries, Eight Journeys	City Park, Festival Hub	12
ALL FESTIVAL	Maqāmāt al-Hariri: Facsimile Manuscript Display	City Park, Festival Hub	12
ALL FESTIVAL	Wuthering Heights Rediscovered: An Exhibition	Cambridge House, Main Room	13
ALL FESTIVAL	One Bum Cinema Club	City Park, Festival Hub	13

## FRIDAY 3 JULY

11:00 - 12:30	Are we facing the end of civilization or its rebirth?	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	14
12:00 - 12:45	Lunch Bite: Jane Austen in Graphic Detail	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	14
14:00 - 15:00	The Lost Tramways and Trolleybuses of Bradford	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	15
16:00 - 17:30	Are we facing the end of civilization or its rebirth?	City Park, Doha Debates Portal	15
18:15 - 19:15	Ten Books that Changed my Life with Mike Pickering	City Park, Festival Hub	16
19:30 - 21:30	An Evening of Comedy	St George's Hall, Main Hall	16
19:30 - 20:30	A.A. Dhand: The King Pin Book Launch	University of Bradford, Great Hall	17
21:30 - 00:00	A Lit Night Out	The Underground, Main Room	17

## SATURDAY 4 JULY

11:00 - 15:00	Family Fun Day	Various Venues	18
09:30 - 11:30	Prints for Peace: Letterpress Printmaking Masterclass	People Powered Press, Main	20
09:45 - 10:15	Meet the Publisher: Bluemoose	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	20
09:45 - 10:45	Salts Mill Hockney Gallery Tour	Salts Mill, Meeting Point	21
10:00 - 11:30	Bradford Crime Scenes: Walking Tour	Bradford Police Museum, Meeting Point	21
10:00 - 12:00	Threads of Palestine: Tatreez Embroidery Masterclass	City Hall, Reception Room 2	22
10:15 - 12:15	Petal to Paper: Crepe Paper Flower Masterclass	City Hall, Reception Room 1	22
10:30 - 11:00	Meet the Publisher: Bluemoose	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	23
10:30 - 11:30	Queens and Rebels	City Hall, The Chamber	23
10:30 - 13:00	Masterclass: Emotional Freedom Technique	University, Norcroft Lounge	24
10:45 - 11:45	Ultra Processed Eating	Loading Bay, Auditorium	24
11:00 - 12:30	Are we the most intelligent beings in the universe?	City Park, Doha Debates Portal	25
11:00 - 12:00	Complicit: Britain's Role in the Destruction of Gaza	Loading Bay, Auditorium	25

## 3 JULY - 12 JULY 2026

SATURDAY 4 JULY			
11:00- 12:00	Brontës of Thornton Walking Tour	Brontë Birthplace, Posh Parlour	26
11:00- 12:00	Combating the Manosphere	University, Bright Building, Red Room	26
11:00- 12:00	Society, Shariah and the Common Good	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	27
11:00- 12:15	What Does Britain Think It Is Now?	St George's Hall, Main Hall	27
11:00- 12:00	Growing Up Autistic	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	28
11:00- 11:30	Meet the Publisher: Bluemoose	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	28
11:15 - 12:15	Children's Workshop - Learn to Illustrate	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	29
11:15 - 12:15	Meet the Publisher: Bloomsbury	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	29
11:45 - 12:45	Tick Box: Identity, Belonging and How We Live Now	City Hall, The Chamber	30
12:00- 12:30	Meet the Publisher: Bluemoose	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	30
12:15 - 13:15	Meet the Publisher: Bloomsbury	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	31
12:30- 13:30	Black History and the Forgotten Worlds of Islam	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	31
12:30- 13:30	How To Be a Better Human	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	32
12:30- 14:30	Threads of Palestine: Tatreez Embroidery Masterclass	City Hall, Reception Room 2	32
12:30- 13:30	Drawing Power: The Politics of Maps	University, Norcroft Auditorium	33
12:30- 13:30	Curry, Crown and Empire: An Illustrated Talk	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	33
12:30- 13:30	The Rise of Cosy Fantasy	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	34
12:45 - 13:15	Meet the Publisher: Bluemoose	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	34
12:45 - 13:45	In Conversation with Hannah Spencer MP	St George's Hall, Main Hall	35
13:00 - 13:30	Meet the Publisher: Bloomsbury	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	35
13:00 - 14:15	Whodunnit After Agatha Christie?	City Hall, The Chamber	36
13:30 - 14:30	Meet the Publisher: Bloomsbury	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	36
13:30 - 15:00	Peter Sanders: The Art of Contribution	Pictureville	37
13:45 - 14:45	Who Gets to Tell the Story?	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	37
14:00- 14:30	Meet the Publisher: Bloomsbury	University, Bright Building, Orange Room	38
14:00- 15:00	Beyond Time: Perception, Consciousness and Reality	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	38
14:00- 15:00	Empire After Empire: Power, Decline and the World Order	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	39
14:00 - 16:30	Masterclass: Emotional Freedom Technique	University, Norcroft Lounge	39
14:00 - 15:30	Saltaire Model Village: Heritage Walking Tour	Saltaire United Reformed Church	40
14:00 - 15:30	A Beginner's Guide to Bradford: Walking Tour	Saltaire United Reformed Church	40
14:00 - 17:00	Prints for Peace: Letterpress Printmaking Masterclass	People Powered Press, Main	41
14:15 - 15:15	Becoming Frequently Happy with David Larbi	Loading Bay, Auditorium	41
14:15 - 15:15	Being Old: In Conversation with Prue Leith	St George's Hall, Main Hall	42
14:30 - 16:15	Little Germany: Heritage Walking Tour	City Park, Festival Hub Meeting Point	42

## SATURDAY 4 JULY

14:30 - 15:30	Saima Mir: Deliverance Book Launch	City Hall, The Chamber	43
15:00 - 16:00	Once Upon a Time: Reimagining Fairy Tales	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	43
15:00- 17:15	Screening: Palestine '36 + Q&A	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	44
15:15- 16:15	How to Get Published	University, Norcroft Auditorium	44
15:30 - 16:15	In Conversation with Vince Cable	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	45
15:30 - 16:30	I Swear: In Conversation with John Davidson	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	45
15:45 - 16:45	Punk Rock Ruined My Life: An Evening with John Robb	Loading Bay, Auditorium	46
16:00 - 17:30	Are we the most intelligent beings in the universe?	City Park, Doha Debates Portal	46
16:00 - 17:00	Freedom for Whom? When Democracies Become Afraid	St George's Hall	47
16:00 - 17:00	Walking Tour: Saima Mir	City Park	47
16:00 - 17:15	The Things We Don't Say: Society, Secrecy, and Forbidden Love	City Hall, The Chamber	48
16:15 - 17:15	Bea Fitzgerald: Better than Revenge Book Launch	City Hall	48
16:30 - 17:30	Careers in Publishing	University of Bradford, Norcroft Auditorium	49
16:45 - 17:45	Yin Yoga	University of Bradford, Norcroft Lounge	49
17:00 - 18:00	Rumi Lecture: Rumi and the Crisis of Meaning	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	50
17:00 - 18:00	Alex Conner: How to get stuff done with ADHD	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	50
17:15 - 18:15	Rock the Casbah: Music as Protest	Loading Bay, Auditorium	51
17:30 - 18:30	The Suez Crisis: Britain's Imperial Reckoning	St George's Hall, Main Hall	51
17:30 - 18:45	Feminism, Power and Political Narratives	City Hall, The Chamber	52
18:00- 19:00	Bollywood Dance Class	University, Norcroft Lounge	52
18:00- 19:00	Full Circle: A History of Cricket	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	53
18:00- 19:00	The Power of Independent Press: 20 Years of Bluemoose Books	University, Norcroft Auditorium	53
19:00 - 22:00	The Qasida Burdah: An Evening of Healing	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	54
19:00 - 23:00	Mushaira: An Evening of Urdu Poetry	The Majestic Bradford, Main Hall	54
19:00 - 20:15	What We Leave We Carry - Writers Mosaic	Loading Bay, Auditorium	55
19:00 - 20:00	Paris 1900: The Forgotten Female Artists	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	55
19:30 - 20:30	The Heart of the Qur'an: A Special Book Launch with Muhammad Akram Khan-Cheema	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	56
19:30 - 20:30	Sound Bath: This Liberating Life	University of Bradford, Norcroft Centre	56
19:30 - 21:00	Northern Noir at the Bar	Ginger Goose, Upstairs	57
19:30 - 22:00	Lyrical Mehfil	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	57

## SUNDAY 5 JULY

11:00 - 15:00	Family Fun Day	Various Venues	58
9:45 - 10:45	Nuremberg at 80: The People Who Made Justice Possible	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	60
10:00 - 11:00	Tai Chi	City Park, Centenary Square	60
10:00 - 12:00	Threads of Palestine: Tatreez Embroidery Masterclass	City Hall, Reception Room 2	61
10:00 - 12:00	Jewish Manningham: Heritage Walking Tour	Bradford Reform Synagogue	61

## 3 JULY - 12 JULY 2026

## SUNDAY 5 JULY

10:15 - 11:45	Make Your Own Motanka Doll!	City Hall, Reception Room 1	62
10:30 - 11:30	Can You Solve the Murder Live: The Forest of Death	City Hall, The Chamber	62
11:00 - 12:30	Will AI bring us together or drive us apart?	City Park, Doha Debates Portal	63
11:00 - 12:00	America and the Stories it Forgot	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	63
11:00 - 12:00	The Making of the Modern Middle East	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	64
11:00 - 13:00	Purifying the Heart	St George's Hall, Main Hall	64
11:00 - 12:00	The Booktok Effect	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	65
11:00 - 13:00	Designing Digital Landscaped with Samuel Sharp	University, Norcroft Lounge	65
11:30 - 13:00	My Little Black Book: A Blacktionary	Loading Bay, Auditorium	66
12:00 - 13:00	Who Decides the Future? Climate, Power and Action	City Hall, The Chamber	66
12:00 - 15:00	Screening: Kabhi Kabhie + Introduction by Saeed Khan	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	67
12:15 - 13:30	Israel's Security Trap	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	67
12:15 - 13:15	From Page to Screen: The Art of Adaptation	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	68
12:30 - 13:30	The Cyrus Cylinder: Empire, Power and Memory	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	69
12:30 - 13:30	The Big Payback: in conversation with Marcus Ryder	University of Bradford, Small Hall	69
13:00 - 14:30	Peter Sanders: Searching for Light - a retrospective	Pictureville	70
13:00 - 14:00	A Somali Village in Lister Park: Exhibition Tour	Cartwright Hall, Gallery 4	70
13:15 - 14:15	Future Worlds Prize	City Hall, The Chamber	71
13:30 - 14:30	Beyond Sectarianism: Sunni, Shia and the Future	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	72
13:30 - 16:00	Biomorphic Patterns and Islamic Illumination with Munise Emetuliah	University, Norcroft Lounge	72
13:45 - 15:00	America at 250: Empire, Democracy and Global Power	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	73
14:00 - 15:00	Populism and the Politics of Division	University, Richmond Building, Small Hall	73
14:00 - 15:00	Bangladeshis in Bradford: Stories of Migration, Community and Belonging	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	74
14:05 - 14:45	The 100 Acre Wood Bear Hunt	City Park	58
14:05 - 14:30	Storytelling with Gav Cross	City Park, The Imagination Station	58
14:30 - 15:00	Khula Arts	City Park, The Imagination Station	58
14:30 - 15:00	Storytelling with Noel Watkins	City Park, The Imagination Station	58
14:30 - 15:30	The Future Isn't Human	City Hall, The Chamber	74
14:45 - 15:45	Children of Abraham: In Conversation with Marc David Baer	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	75
15:00 - 16:00	The Art of Being Alone	Loading Bay, Auditorium	75
15:15 - 16:30	The Anatomy of State Collapse	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	76
15:30 - 16:30	Beyond the Fracture: Reimagining Human Futures	University, Richmond Building, Small Hall	76
15:30 - 16:30	Trial by Media: In Conversation with Louis Charalambous	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	77
15:30 - 16:30	Evergreen Songs of Bengal	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	77
15:30 - 16:30	Muzakara: The Art of Urdu Poetry	University, Norcroft Auditorium	78
15:45 - 17:00	The Madness of Many: The Psychology of Folk Horror	City Hall, The Chamber	78
16:00 - 17:30	Doha Debates Portal: Will AI bring us together or drive us apart?	City Park, Doha Debates Portal	79
16:00 - 17:00	Psychedelics: A Muslim Perspective	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	79
16:00 - 17:30	Songs from the Page: A Literary Choral Experience	St George's Hall, Main Hall	80

## SUNDAY 5 JULY

16:30 - 17:45	WritersMosaic Presents: The Mosaic Monologues	Loading Bay , Auditorium	80
16:45 - 18:00	Iran, the Gulf and the New Middle East Order	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	81
16:45 - 18:15	Screening: My Favourite Cake	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	81
17:00 - 18:00	Zakhm Khandan: Urdu Humour and Satire	University, Norcroft Centre, Norcroft Auditorium	82
17:15 - 18:15	How AI Reasoning Models Are Reshaping Power, Knowledge and Truth	City Hall, The Chamber	82
17:30 - 18:30	The Tea with Myriam Francois	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	83
17:45 - 18:45	Inside the Mind of William Blake	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	83
18:15 - 20:15	The Alchemy of Happiness	University, Richmond Building, Great Hall	84
18:15 - 20:15	God is a Woman by Luisa Omelian	Loading Bay , Auditorium	84
18:30 - 20:00	Polari Literary Salon	Ginger Goose, Upstairs	85
19:00 - 20:00	Free Word Lecture: Misan Harriman	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	85
19:00 - 20:00	Don't Let Your Figs Rot: Sylvia Plath's Life in Writing	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	86
19:30 - 22:00	Timeless Ghazals	St George's Hall, Main Hall	86

## MONDAY 6 JULY

10:30 - 11:30	Alberta Vickridge: The Bradford Bardess Poet	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	87
12:00 - 12:45	Lunch Bite: Words That Travel the World	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	87
14:00 - 15:00	Cursed or Celebrated? Yorkshire's Witches Revisited	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	88
18:00 - 19:00	Beyond the Page: Mary Shelley 175 Years On	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	88

## TUESDAY 7 JULY

10:30 - 11:30	Shopping Through Time: Bradford Then and Now	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	89
14:00 - 15:00	A History of Bradford City AFC in Objects	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	90
18:30 - 20:00	Imagining Unquiet Slumbers	Brontë Birthplace, Posh Parlour	90
19:00 - 20:40	Screening: A Taste of Cherry	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	90
19:30 - 20:30	60 Years of the University of Bradford	University, Norcroft Lounge	91
19:30 - 21:00	From Deeper in the Forest:	Loading Bay , Auditorium	91

## WEDNESDAY 8 JULY

12:00 - 12:45	Lunch Bite: 100 Years of Fidel Castro	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	92
14:00 - 15:00	Yorkshire's Role in a Ruthless Empire	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	92
19:00 - 21:05	Screening: A Separation	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	93
19:30 - 20:30	Maryville: An Evening with Joelle Taylor	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	93
19:30 - 21:30	Loud Poets Slam Heat	Loading Bay , Auditorium	94
19:30 - 20:30	Great Art Explained with James Payne	St George's Hall, Main Hall	94

# 3 JULY - 12 JULY 2026

## THURSDAY 9 JULY

12:00 - 12:45	Lunch Bite: Finding Stillness in Grief	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	95
14:00 - 15:00	'Ey Up Bradford	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	95
17:30 - 18:30	Red Hot Chilli Writers Live	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	96
18:00 - 19:30	Haunted Histories: A Ghostly Tour of Bradford	Bradford Cathedral, Meeting Point	96
18:30 - 20:30	Screening: Too Desi Too Queer + Q&A	Pictureville	97
19:30 - 20:30	Women Who Kill	City Hall, The Chamber	97
19:30 - 22:00	Poetry with a Punch	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	98
19:30 - 21:30	Poets Inc	People Powered Press, Main	99
19:45 - 21:15	Screening: Cutting Through Rocks	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	99

## FRIDAY 10 JULY

10:00 - 11:30	Baby Rave	City Park, The Imagination Station	100
12:00 - 12:45	Lunch Bite: Darling Bud Book Launch with C.J. Skuse	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	100
14:00 - 15:00	Lives that Shaped a City	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	101
18:30 - 20:00	Steve Stanworth: Keeping the Brontë Story Alive	Brontë Birthplace, Posh Parlour	101
19:00 - 20:30	Screening: Cake	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	102
19:30 - 20:30	In Conversation with Husam Zomlot	St George's Hall, Main Hall	102
19:30 - 20:30	The Poetry of Memory: Remembering Karbala	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	103

## SATURDAY 11 JULY

9:00 - 17:00	Brontë Heritage Bus Tour	The Midland Hotel, Meeting Point	106
9:30 - 13:00	Looming 'eck! A Looming Masterclass	City Hall, Reception Room 1	106
10:00 - 15:00	In the Footsteps of the Brontës	The Old Bell Chapel, Meeting Point	107
10:15 - 11:15	Feminism in the Age of the Algorithms	Loading Bay , Auditorium	107
11:00 - 11:30	Punjabi Roots - Band Baja	City Park	104
11:00 - 12:00	9/11 and the World It Created	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	108
11:00 - 11:25	Storytelling with Gav Cross	City Park, The Imagination Station	104
11:00 - 12:00	F1 Insider: Notes from the Pit Lane	St George's Hall, Main Hall	109
11:00 - 12:40	Screening: Finding Nemo	Pictureville	104
11:00 - 12:00	Lahore After Modernism: Architecture and its Histories in Pakistan	City Hall, The Chamber	109
11:15 - 12:15	Traditional Ottoman Bookbinding Talk	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	110
11:15 - 12:45	Screening: In Search of Bengali Harlem	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	110
11:30 - 12:10	Pirate Pandemonium	City Park	104
11:30 - 12:30	The Women of Camelot	Loading Bay , Auditorium	111
11:30 - 12:30	Global Perspectives and Islamic Calligraphy	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	111

SATURDAY 11 JULY			
11:50 - 12:15	Storytelling with Sue Dyde	City Park, The Imagination Station	104
12:15 - 12:45	The Peace Artistes	City Park	104
12:30 - 13:30	Iran, Karbala and the Psychology of Resistance	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	112
12:30 - 13:30	The Tudor Heart: Love, Power, and a Royal Discovery	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	112
12:35 - 13:00	Storytelling with Gav Cross	City Park, The Imagination Station	104
12:45 - 13:45	From Benighted to Rocky Horror: A Gothic Lineage	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	113
12:50 - 13:30	Pirate Pandemonium	City Park	104
13:00 - 16:00	Traditional Ottoman Bookbinding Masterclass	City Hall, Reception Room 2	113
13:00 - 15:00	Bradford Bus Stories	City Park, Bradford Stories Bus	104
13:00 - 14:00	A Somali Village in Lister Park: Exhibition Tour	Cartwright Hall, Gallery 4	114
13:15 - 14:15	Overlooked and Misunderstood: Neurodivergent Women	Loading Bay , Auditorium	114
13:20 - 13:45	Storytelling with Sue Dyde	City Park, The Imagination Station	104
13:30 - 14:00	The Peace Artistes	City Park	104
13:30 - 15:30	The Final Step: Trial by Jury with Bradford Police Museum	City Hall, The Chamber	115
13:30 - 15:15	Screening: Letters from Baghdad + Q&A	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	115
13:45 - 14:45	The Voice Inside: Changing the Way You Talk to Yourself	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	116
14:00 - 14:40	Pirate Pandemonium	City Park	116
14:00 - 17:00	Screening: Mahabharata + Q&A	Pictureville	117
14:00 - 15:00	Meet the Author: Uzma Akser	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	104
14:05 - 14:30	Storytelling with Gav Cross	City Park, The Imagination Station	XX
14:30 - 18:30	Looming 'eck! A Looming Masterclass	City Hall, Reception Room 1	117
14:35 - 15:00	Storytelling with Sue Dyde	City Park, The Imagination Station	104
14:45 - 15:45	Witchcraft and the Patriarchy	Loading Bay , Auditorium	104
15:15 - 16:15	Andalusia Invisible with Rob Doyle	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	119
15:30 - 16:30	Beyond Cause and Effect	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	119
16:00 - 19:00	Screening: Testimony with Q&A from Director Tony Palmer	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	120
16:00 - 17:00	Wuthering Heights Rediscovered: Curator Talk	Cambridge House, Main Room	120
16:00 - 17:00	Fantasy as a Political Mirror	Loading Bay , Auditorium	121
16:30 - 17:30	Have I Said Too Much? Iain Dale in Conversation with Naz Shah	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	121
16:45 - 17:45	Swimming the Seasons with Polly Atkin	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	122
17:30 - 18:30	The Hour of the Wolf	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	123
17:30 - 18:45	The Gothic Body: Queerness, Disability, and Defiance	Loading Bay , Auditorium	122
17:45 - 19:00	In Praise of Darkness	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	123
19:30 - 22:00	Sufiyana Kalaam	St George's Hall, Main Hall	124
20:00 - 21:00	Saints on a Bridge	Loading Bay , Auditorium	124

## 3 JULY - 12 JULY 2026

## SUNDAY 12 JULY

10:00 - 11:00	Qigong	City Park, Centenary Square	128
10:15 - 11:15	Shadow Puppet Magic: Karagöz & Hacivat Puppet Show	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	128
10:30 - 12:30	Little Germany: Heritage Walking Tour	City Park, Festival Hub Meeting Point	129
10:45 - 11:45	Seven Wonders of the Sky with Tom Kerss	Loading Bay , Auditorium	129
10:45 - 11:45	The Resurrected: Memory, Survival and the Afterlife of Violence	City Hall, The Chamber	130
11:00 - 11:30	Punjabi Roots- Band Baja	City Park	126
11:00 - 15:00	Bradford Bus Stories	City Park, Bradford Stories Bus	126
11:00 - 14:00	Islamic Calligraphy Masterclass (1)	City Hall, Reception Room 1	130
11:00 - 12:00	A Wish To Speak with Rona Hurst and Simon Beech	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	131
11:00 - 11:30	Storytelling with Gav Cross	City Park, The Imagination Station	126
11:00 - 12:00	ADHD Body and Mind with Dr Miguel Toribio-Mateas	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	131
11:00 - 13:00	Undercliffe Victorian Cemetery: Heritage Walking Tour	Undercliffe Cemetery, The Lodge	132
11:00 - 12:30	Screening: Shrek	Pictureville	127
11:30 - 12:10	The Battle of the Wizards	City Park	126
11:30 - 13:00	100 Years of Marilyn Monroe: UK Cinema Premiere	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	132
11:45 - 12:15	Storytelling with Storybees	City Park, The Imagination Station	127
12:00 - 13:00	Where Are We After October 7	St George's Hall, Main Hall	133
12:00 - 13:00	Be More Brontë	Loading Bay , Auditorium	133
12:15 - 12:45	Fat Cat Brass (1)	City Park,	XX
12:15 - 13:15	Mo's Star 20 Years on with Mahnaz Malik	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	134
12:30 - 13:00	Storytelling with Gav Cross	City Park, The Imagination Station	127
12:30 - 13:30	Islam Between East and West	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	135
12:30 - 13:30	Imposter Syndrome Explained	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	135
12:45 - 13:25	The Battle of the Wizards	City Park	127
13:00 - 14:15	World of Islam: Festival 50th Anniversary + Q&A	Pictureville	136
13:15 - 13:45	Storytelling with Storybees	City Park, The Imagination Station	127
13:30 - 14:00	Punjabi Roots- Bhangra	City Park	126
13:30 - 14:30	Jeremy Corbyn: The Gaza Tribunal	St George's Hall, Main Hall	136
13:30 - 14:45	Feminist Icon: 100 Years of Marilyn Monroe	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	137
14:00 - 14:40	The Battle of the Wizards	City Park	126
14:00 - 14:30	Storytelling with Gav Cross	City Park, The Imagination Station	127
14:00 - 16:00	Screening: All About Weddings	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	137
14:00 - 15:00	Meet the Author: Olivia Mulligan	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	126
14:00 - 15:00	Psychedelics and the Brain: Reimagining Mental Health	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	138

## 3 JULY - 12 JULY 2026

SUNDAY 12 JULY			
14:30 - 15:00	Fat Cat Brass	City Park	126
14:30 - 15:00	Storytelling with Storybees	City Park, The Imagination Station	127
14:45 - 16:15	World Premiere Screening: Mizan: Changing The Narrative Pictureville		139
15:00 - 18:00	Islamic Calligraphy Masterclass	City Hall, Reception Room 1	139
15:00 - 16:00	Tell Me Something: Family Stories with Lemn Sissay	St George's Hall, Main Hall	140
15:00 - 16:00	Into the Wild: In Conversation with Lucy Shepherd	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	140
15:15 - 16:15	Ever Land: In Conversation with Amy Abdelnoor	City Hall, The Chamber	141
15:30 - 16:30	The Afterlife Manual	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	141
15:30 - 16:30	Voice of the Fans: The Story of Football Fanzines	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	142
16:00 - 17:00	Mythology of the Brontës	Loading Bay , Auditorium	142
16:30 - 17:30	Yunus Emre and the Turkish Sufi Tradition	City Hall, Banqueting Suite	143
16:30 - 18:00	Screening: Gentlemen Prefer Blondes	Cubby Broccoli Cinema	143
16:45 - 17:45	Peg Alexander: Matching Rucksacks	City Park, Festival Hub, Event Space	144
17:00 - 18:00	Free Word Lecture: Tawakkol Karman	Alhambra Theatre, The Studio	144
17:30 - 19:00	In Conversation with Ahmed Paul Keeler	Pictureville	145
18:30 - 20:00	Turkish Classical and Sufi Music Concert	St George's Hall, Main Hall	146
18:30 - 20:30	Sacred Music	Bradford Cathedral, Nave	146

## ARTIST A-Z

ARTIST	PAGE
A.A. Dhand	16
Abbie Ross	45
Abha Sharma	55
Abir Mukherjee	96
Agnis Smallwood	117
Akram Khan	38,56
Alan Johnson	91
Alan Whitrick	21
Alex Conner	50
Alex Ross-Shaw	50
Alexandra Pringle	134, 141
Alice Denny	85
Alison Bailey	43
Amanda Golden	85
Ambassador Fahad Al-Attiya	139
Amy Abdelnoor	141
Amy Coombe	34
Andrew McInnes	88
Andrew Michael Hurley	78
Andrew Taylor	96
Andy Feather	15
Andy Ryan	71
Anna Gibson	90
Anna Sulan Masing	30
Anni Domingo	55
Antony Johnston	62
Asia Mackay	97
Bea Fitzgerald	48
Bob Richmond	115
Bobby Cussens	57
Boomchikkaboom	100
Bradford Police Museum	21, 115
Bradley Riches	28
C.J. Skuse	97, 100
Cameron Huggett	142
Carys Clempner	98
Cath Staincliffe	57
Catherine Redford	57
Cathy Lomax	137
Ceri Houlbrook	43
Charlotte Paradise	122
Chitra Ramaswamy	85
Chloe Michelle Howarth	48
Chris Moffat	109
Christa Ackroyd	106
Claire Mitchell	117
Claire O'Callaghan	138, 142

ARTIST	PAGE
Clare McGlynn	108
Colin Neville	89
Dan Richards	123
Dancers Bizarre	18
Daniel Levy	133
Dave Randall	51
David Cox	24
David Edgar	73
David Kennedy	55
David Larbi	41
David Luke	138
David Barnett	78
Dawn Cameron	55
Demet Tokbay	110, 113
Desiree Burch	16
Dillon Jaxx	85
Duncan Gates	113
Ebrahim Rasool	47
Edmond Smith	92
Eliza Chan	121
Elizabeth Pearson	26
Elle Machray	145
Emma Slade Edmondson	30
Eray Cinpir	146
Eshaan Akbar	16
Eσμα Ceylan	130, 139
Eugene Rogan	130
Fat Cat Brass	126
Fatima Bhutto	123
Fawad Kalsi	79
Finn Brown	44, 49
Fozia Bora	70
Gav Cross	19, 59, 91, 99, 105, 127
George Osborn	37
Georgia Leighton	43
Giles Goddard	75
Gina Rippon	114
Hafsa Lodi	48
Hanan Issa	57
Hannah Spencer	35
Hassan Abedin	67
Hassan Ugail	82
Hazell Ward	36
Helen Fry	60
Humza Yousaf	27
Husam Zomlot	103
Iain Dale	121
Iona Murphy	85



ARTIST	PAGE
Irene Lofthouse	87, 96
Irna Gureshi	74
Isabelle Dupuy	55
Ishy Din	80
Jack Carroll	16
James Payne	94
James Rennoldson	44
Jane Oremosu	66
Janice Hallett	36
Jawid Mojaddedi	50
Jay Croot	95
Jay Gadhiaa	85
Jean Sprackland	123
Jeremy Corbyn	136
Jess Kitching	57
Jessie Elland	122
Jo Parsons	138
Jodie Matthews	23
Joelle Taylor	93
John Davidson	45
John Dewhirst	89
John Harris	28
John Jackson	132
John Robb	48, 51
John Siddique	55, 57, 71, 80
Jon Bloomfield	73
Jonathan Eyers	29, 31, 35, 36, 38, 44
Jonathon Porritt	66
Joost Hiltermann	130
Julie Owen Moylan	137
Karen Lloyd	66
Kasim Ali	26
Kat Dunn	145
Kate Atkin	135
Kate Evans	14, 23
Kate Fox	114
Katie Evans	78
Kevin Duffy	20, 23, 28, 30, 34, 53
Kevin Mclean	94
Khula Arts	59
Kinan Salaam	98
Kit Fan	30
Koray Arisan	146
Laura Marshall	97
Laura Smyth	16
Leeds Guild of Singers	80
Lemn Sissay	10, 140
Len Pennie	57

ARTIST	PAGE
Liz Flanagan	48
Louis Charalambous	77
Lucasta Miller	142
Lucy Rose	114, 122
Lucy Shepherd	140
Luisa Omielan	84
Lydia Silver	65
M R Carey	74
Maggie Semple	66
Mahnaz Malik	134
Marc David Baer	75
Marcus Ryder	69
Maria Ferguson	99
Maria Glot	40
Mark Jackson	115
Mark Musolf	133
Mark Vernon	83
Martyn Watson	95
Maryam Al Kuwairi	81
Matt Majendie	109
Maxim Samson	33
Maxine Meixner	98
Meashael al Mannai	37, 64
Melissa Butcher	73
Mengü Türk	128
Michael Stewart	107
Miguel Toribio-Mateas	131
Mike Dickson	32
Mike Harrison	142
Mike Pickering	16, 17
Milli Hill	24
Miranda Kaufmann	23
Misan Harriman	86
Mohammed Isaaq	64, 84
Muhammad Akram Khan-Cheema	56
Muhammad al-Yaqoubi	118
Muhammad Hanif Shiwani	82
Munise Emetullah Akhtar	72
Murat Ferhat Yegül	146
Mustafa Briggs	21, 31, 63
Myriam Francois	83
Nabeela Ahmed	9
Nabeela Rashid	73
Nafeez Ahmed	37
Natasha Walter	108
Naureen Hafeez	29
Naz Shah	52, 121

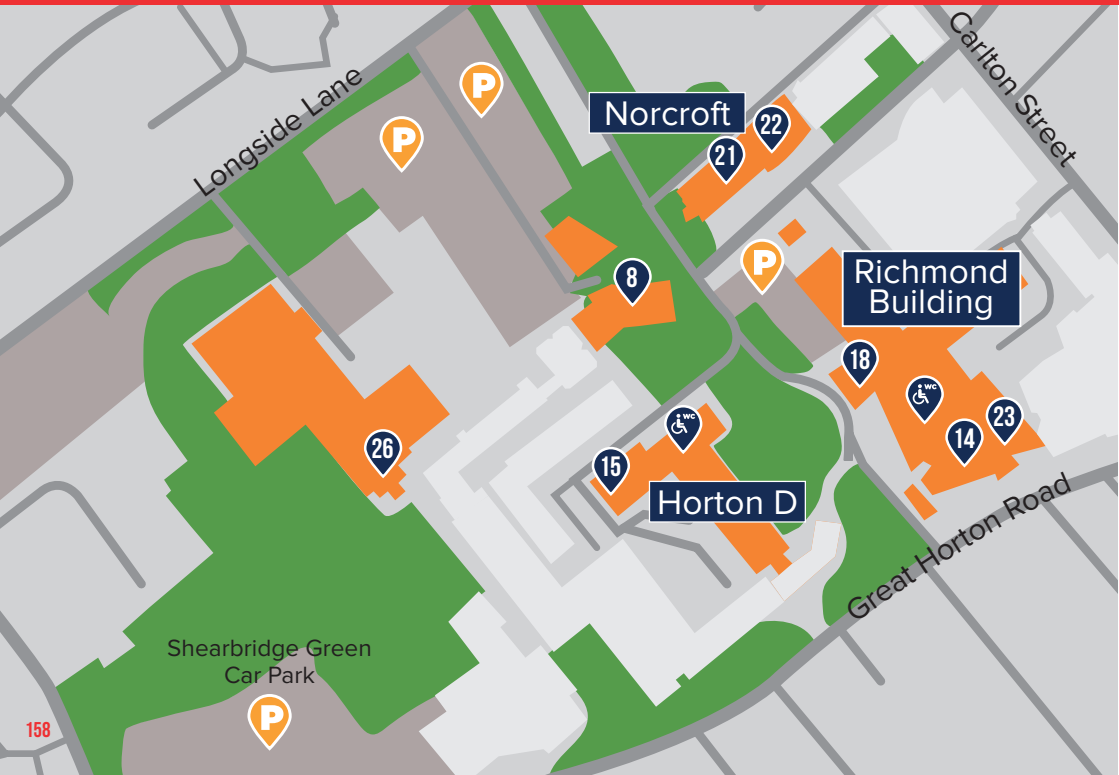
ARTIST	PAGE
Nick Braisby	91
Nigel Grizzard	42, 61, 129
Noel Watkins	59
Noshin Gul	54
Nureen Glaves	24
Nurullah Koltaş	143
Ola Labib	16
Olha Zhydetska	22, 62
One Bum Cinema Club	13
Orchestral Qawwali Project	124
Ousama Al Shurafa	119, 141
Owais ul Hassan	102, 146
Paul Ahmed Keeler	136, 139
Paul Crossley	26
Paul Rogers	67, 76, 81
P.B. Anand	66, 81
Peg Alexander	144
People Powered Press	9, 20, 41, 99
Peter Osborne	25, 53
Peter Sanders	37, 70
Polly Atkin	122
Pragya Agarwal	33
Priti Kaur	86
Prue Leith	157
Punjabi Roots	9, 20, 41, 99
Rachel King	112
Radhika Howarth	33
Rebecca Riley	49
Rim-Sarah Alouane	47, 52
Ro Mitchell	116
Rob Doyle	119
Rona Hurst	131
Rory A. Green	55, 80
Rosie Barrett	88
Ryan March	142
Saeed Khan	33, 64, 67, 73, 108
Saima Mir	43, 47
Sally Coulthard	123
Salma Zaman	52
Salman Shaikh	81
Sam Davey	43, 111
Samuel Sharp	9, 65
Sana Nemat	54, 157
Sangu Mandanna	34
Sarah Tilley	138
Serda Türkel Öter	146
Shamim Rehman	24, 39
Shanon Shah	75

ARTIST	PAGE
Shaukat Ahmed	74
Simon Beech	131
Sohail Hanif	27
Sophie Anderson	18
Sophie Keetch	111
Soraya Bouazzaoui	121
Soraya Syed	111
Stefan Williamson Fa	137
Steve Stanworth	101
Sue Dyde	105
Suzanne Rennie	55
Suzie Kennedy	132, 137
Tahmina Ali	80
Tariq	98
Tasha Suri	111
Tasneem Chopra	52
Tawakkol Karman	144
Ted Kravitz	109
Testament	124
The Peace Artistes	104
Thea Lungu	98
This Liberating Life	56
Tim Smith	101
Tina Andrews	23
Tolga Öter	146
Tom Hindle	36
Tom Kerss	129
Tony Palmer	120
Tony Patrick	68, 74
Valentina Flex	115
Vaseem Khan	96
Vince Cable	45
Wadah Khanfar	133
Warwick Pethers	136
Xavier Aldana Reyes	113
Yorkshire Tatreez	22, 32, 61, 134
Yvette Huddleston	53
Zainab Al Shibani	8
Zimarina Sarwar	58
Zoe Vendittozzi	117

# VENUE MAP

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>1</b> National Science & Media Museum | <b>11</b> City Hall, Western Entrance (Accessible)  | <b>21</b> Norcroft Auditorium   |
| <b>2</b> Bradford Cathedral              | <b>12</b> Darley Street Market  | <b>22</b> Norcroft Lounge   |
| <b>3</b> Bradford Forster Square Station | <b>13</b> Festival Hub  | <b>23</b> Small Hall  |
| <b>4</b> Bradford Interchange            | <b>14</b> Great Hall  | <b>24</b> St George's Hall  |
| <b>5</b> Bradford Playhouse              | <b>15</b> The Great Victoria Hotel  | <b>25</b> Storytelling Bus  |
| <b>6</b> Bradford Police Museum          | <b>16</b> The Light   | <b>26</b> Student Central   |
| <b>7</b> Bradford Reform Synagogue       | <b>17</b> The Imagination Station   | <b>27</b> The Studio, Alhambra Theatre  |
| <b>8</b> Bright Building                 | <b>18</b> John Stanley Bell Lecture Theatre   | <b>28</b> Sunbridge Wells   |
| <b>9</b> The Broadway Shopping Centre    | <b>19</b> Loading Bay   | <b>29</b> The Underground   |
| <b>10</b> City Hall, Main Entrance       | <b>20</b> The Midland Hotel   | <b>30</b> Waterstones, The Wool Exchange  |
| <b>P</b> Parking                         |  Train Station |  Public Toilets with Disabled Facilities |

## UNIVERSITY OF BRADFORD



# BRADFORD CITY CENTRE



# DISCOUNTS AND CONCESSIONS

Bradford Literature Festival is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible programme, which is why our ticket prices remain low and why many of our events are free, ensuring that as many people as possible can access the festival.

**Concession tickets** can be booked for free. Simply visit the event web page and select the appropriate concession tickets for your party. Where free tickets are available, this will be clearly displayed on the ticket-purchasing page alongside the standard pricing options.



## DISABILITIES

Anyone in receipt of a disability benefit or other support.



## STUDENTS

Anyone over the age of 16 who is in full-time education.



## SENIOR CITIZENS

Anyone over the age of 65 – if a state pension is your sole source of income.



## TEACHERS AND EDUCATORS

Tickets may be free or discounted.



## BENEFIT RECIPIENTS

Anyone in receipt of a government-issued benefit or living in social housing.



## REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Anyone with current UK refugee or asylum-seeker status.



## CARERS

If you are accompanying a disabled audience member who requires additional support.



## SPONSORS

Employees of sponsor organisations can benefit from discounted tickets.

**Community codes** are available to groups and service providers in West Yorkshire that support marginalised and underrepresented communities, from community centres to local grassroots groups, community faith organisations to networking groups. Eligible community groups receive a unique booking code which may be shared with members so they can book free tickets for events.

To register for a code or find out more information about our Discounts and Concessions visit our website: [bradfordlitfest.co.uk/concessions](http://bradfordlitfest.co.uk/concessions). Alternatively, you can call Box Office on **01274 044140** (Monday–Friday, 09:30–16:30 excluding bank holidays) or email [BoxOffice@bradfordlitfest.co.uk](mailto:BoxOffice@bradfordlitfest.co.uk).

ART LITERATURE HISTORY FILM MUSIC DEBATE POETRY COMEDY



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FESTIVAL

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MUSIC POETRY COMEDY ART LITERATURE HISTORY FILM MUSIC DEB

“A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies...  
The man who never reads lives only one.”

**George R.R. Martin**

**[bradfordlitfest.co.uk](http://bradfordlitfest.co.uk)**

     @BradfordLitFest