



Manchester Literature Festival

9–25 October 2026



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Festival Welcome

2026 is the National Year of Reading and we're delighted to be a partner in this urgent campaign to encourage more people to Go All In. As Festival Directors, we understand the great joy reading can bring and the transformative effect it can have on our creativity, our physical and mental health and our communities. We see Manchester Literature Festival as an annual celebration of storytelling and we recognise the positive role our events play in bringing families, friends and strangers together – to listen, learn, reflect, laugh, engage and discover more.

This year's Festival includes a wealth of artists that we hope will inspire, entertain and challenge you. Alongside epic new novels from Maggie O'Farrell, Min Jin Lee, Elif Shafak and Yann Martel, our Fiction strand includes stories that transport audiences to Japan, South Korea, Australia, Brazil, Turkey, Trinidad, Ireland and the United States. It also features Brutalist landmarks, Hong Kong ghost stories, dystopian visions of the near future and a deep dive into Lee Child's bookshelves.

Our Culture strand looks at ways to navigate the uncertain world we're living in. Sarah Hall explores radical imagination as a vital weapon in the fight

for climate survival. Natasha Walter proposes a new global feminism connecting social justice and environmental action. Deborah Frances-White encourages us to pause, challenge assumptions and listen deeper. Broadcasters Marina Hyde, Paul Mason and Owen Jones examine politics, power and the decline of the West whilst Dave Haslam and special guests discuss creativity, success and failure.

Finally, our Poetry strand welcomes some of the world's most luminary poets to perform their work in Manchester's most intimate and atmospheric venues.

As ever, we are grateful to our main funders Arts Council England, Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Manchester City Council, our Higher Education Partner the University of Manchester, our Principal Hotel partner The Edwardian Manchester and all our sponsors, venues, partner organisations and volunteers for their continued support.

We hope you'll join us at this year's Festival and become part of our community.

Cathy Bolton and Sarah-Jane Roberts
Manchester Literature Festival Co-directors

Thanks to our partners, sponsors & funders

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Previews



An Evening with Mieko Kawakami

Tuesday 25 August 2026, 7pm
Central Library

International Booker-shortlisted author Mieko Kawakami (*Heaven*) launches *Sisters in Yellow*, a dark, gripping noir set in Tokyo's shadowy underbelly. Hana is fifteen, hopeful and living in a tiny apartment with her mother, with no money or security. Then Kimiko enters her life – a bright, magnetic force who offers escape. Two decades later, Kimiko stands trial for a shocking crime, and Hana must confront her past. Hosted by **Naomi Frisby**. Co-presented with the Japan Foundation.

Tickets £12 / £10



Queered Up Now

Wednesday 30 September 2026, 7pm
Contact

Celebrate Manchester's LGBTQ+ heritage through new writing co-commissioned by, and responding to, the pioneering Queer Up North Festival archive (1992 – 2002). Join **Louis Glazzard**, working-class writer and poet, **Ella Otomewo**, Manchester-based poet and performer and acclaimed novelist **Okechukwu Nzelu** as they share newly commissioned work and discuss how queer histories continue to inspire contemporary writing and creativity. Hosted by **Andrew McMillan**. In partnership with Queer Up North and Manchester Histories.

Tickets Pay What You Can

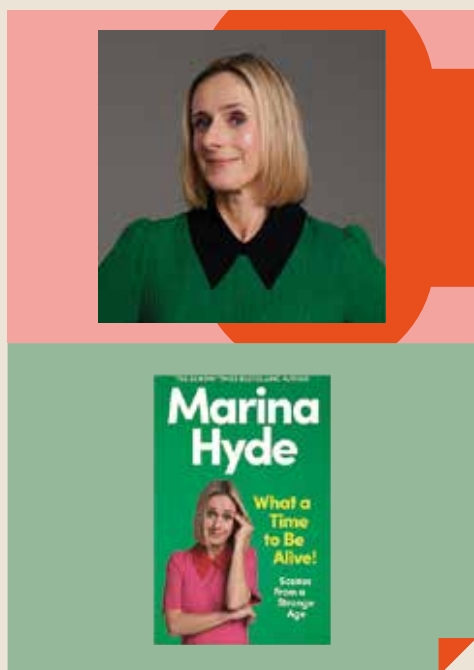
An Evening with Marina Hyde

Monday 28 September 2026, 7.30pm
RNCM (Theatre)

Bestselling author and columnist Marina Hyde explores her new book, *What a Time to Be Alive! Scenes from a Strange Age*. This wildly funny collection showcases the award-winning political commentator at her sharpest, taking readers on a journey through the absurdities of modern political life, from multiple UK Prime Ministers to the antics of Nigel Farage, Donald Trump and the Silicon Valley elite. She also offers her witty takes on popular culture and reminds us that in times like these, sometimes the only thing to do is read Marina Hyde and howl with laughter.

Marina has been named Columnist of the Year and Political Commentator of the Year multiple times. She co-hosts the smash hit podcast *The Rest is Entertainment* with Richard Osman. Join us for a brilliantly entertaining evening of sharp political insight, biting satire and irresistible humour.

Tickets £22 / £37 for ticket & a copy of
What a Time to Be Alive! (RRP £20)



Culture



Sarah Hall: Burning Snowflake
The Faber Lecture 2026
 Saturday 10 October 2026, 6pm
 Manchester Museum

The natural world is burning. Time is running out. You know the story. So what possible role could something as flimsy as fiction play? From the pioneering pen of award-winning author Sarah Hall (*Helm*), *Burning Snowflake* is a fierce and rallying cry – for radical imaginings, and the literary imagination as a vital weapon in the fight for climate survival. Co-presented with Faber Members, Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

Tickets £10



Paul Mason: Reds
 Sunday 11 October 2026, 2pm
 Martin Harris Centre for Music & Drama

Writer, broadcaster and political strategist Paul Mason (*PostCapitalism*) returns to MLF to discuss *REDS: A Global History of Communism*. Exploring one of history's most influential and contested political ideas, Paul traces communism's legacy across centuries and continents and considers what it means for today's world. Expect a lively, thought-provoking conversation that connects the lessons of history with urgent questions of our time. Co-presented with Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

Tickets £14 / £12



The Observer Book Club with Deborah Frances-White
 Sunday 11 October 2026, 4.30pm
 Martin Harris Centre for Music & Drama

Author, comedian and host of *The Guilty Feminist* podcast, Deborah Frances-White joins us for a lively and illuminating conversation about her latest book, *Six Conversations We're Scared to Have*, exploring how to navigate polarisation, disagreement and the increasingly heated debates shaping public life.

Drawing on her belief in the importance of free speech, critical thinking and genuine dialogue, Deborah considers how we might approach difficult conversations with greater curiosity, nuance and openness. Exploring some of the most pressing issues of our time – from free speech and censorship to identity, activism and social change – she argues that meaningful progress depends on our willingness to listen, challenge assumptions and sometimes change our minds.

Hear fresh perspective on tackling some of society's most complex questions. Hosted by **Erica Wagner**. Co-presented with Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

Tickets £12 / £10





**An Evening with Russell T Davies
& Bernardine Evaristo**

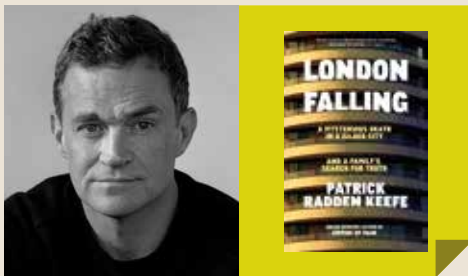
Sunday 11 October 2026, 7.30pm
RNCM (Concert Hall)

One of Britain's most influential television writers Russell T Davies joins Bernardine Evaristo to discuss his forthcoming memoir and how his extraordinary work has transformed the landscape of modern television.

Passionate, outspoken and deeply entertaining, Russell has spent the last four decades creating brilliant and transgressive television from *Queer as Folk*, *It's a Sin* and *Years and Years* to the triumphant return of *Doctor Who*. In *The Queerest of Folk*, he shares hilarious stories, hard-won insights and revelatory behind-the-scenes moments in his career. Join us for this special celebration of storytelling, creativity and the power of television to bring our nation together.

Russell's latest drama is the acclaimed thriller *Tip Toe*. Bernardine Evaristo is the author of ten books including *Girl*, *Woman*, *Other*; *Manifesto* and *Mr Loverman*, which was adapted into a BBC One television series.

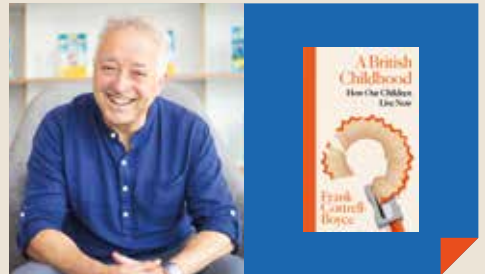
**£22 / Ticket and a copy of
The Queerest of Folk £40 (RRP £25)**



An Evening with Patrick Radden Keefe
Monday 12 October 2026, 7.30pm
Martin Harris Centre

A gripping evening with New Yorker journalist Patrick Radden Keefe exploring *London Falling*, a true story of deception, privilege and power. Following the mysterious death of a London teenager, Patrick unravels a chilling portrait of a hidden underworld and oligarch wealth with the forensic brilliance that made *Empire of Pain* an international bestseller. Hosted by **Ed Caesar**. Co-presented with Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester. Sponsored by The Edwardian Manchester.

Tickets £12 / £10



Frank Cottrell-Boyce
Tuesday 13 October 2026, 7pm
Central Library

Beloved children's author and screenwriter Frank Cottrell-Boyce brings his trademark wit and warmth to a moving conversation about books, imagination and the stories that shape our lives. Drawing on his new book, *A British Childhood*, Frank reflects on growing up and growing older, the books that have inspired him, what it means to grow up in Britain today and why storytelling remains one of the most powerful gifts we can give children.

Tickets £12 / £10

Culture



Owen Jones

Wednesday 14 October 2026, 7pm
HOME

Journalist, author and commentator Owen Jones (*Chavs*, *The Establishment*) discusses his provocative new book, *The Fall of the West*, exploring an era of political, economic and social crisis. Challenging popular explanations centred on culture wars and migration, he argues today's turmoil stems from decades of elite decision-making. Join one of Britain's most influential political commentators for a timely conversation connecting global events to the issues affecting our lives today.

**£17 / £35 for ticket and a copy
of *The Fall of the West* (RRP £25)**



Natasha Walter: Feminism for a World on Fire

Sunday 18 October 2026, 2pm
Central Library

An inspiring conversation with acclaimed author and campaigner Natasha Walter about her urgent new book, *Feminism for a World on Fire*. Exploring the connections between women's rights, social justice and environmental action, Natasha offers a hopeful vision of feminism rooted in solidarity, community and care for people and the planet. Join us for this energising event as Natasha reflects on the challenges facing women today and the power of collective action.

Tickets £10 / £8



An Evening with Hugh Bonneville

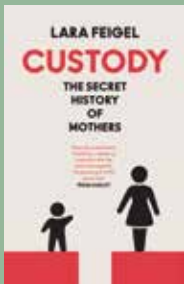
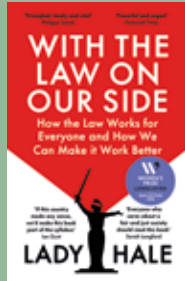
Saturday 17 October 2026, 7.30pm
HOME

Witty and engaging, esteemed British actor Hugh Bonneville is a gifted raconteur whose stories are as captivating as his performances. Celebrated for his work with the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company and in the West End, Hugh is widely known for his film and television roles, especially as the Earl of Grantham in *Downton Abbey*, which earned him Golden Globe and Emmy nominations. His many other credits include *Paddington*, *Twenty Twelve*, *The Gold* and *To Olivia*.

Hugh will reflect on his work, his passion for storytelling and his journey from stage to screen, as well as his growing success as a children's author, revealing how discovering that his mother worked for MI6 inspired his series of Rory Sparkes spy adventures.

An entertaining evening of laughter, insight and behind-the-scenes anecdotes as one of Britain's most beloved actors reflects on a remarkable career.

Tickets £20



Lady Hale & Lara Feigel

Wednesday 21 October 2026, 7pm
Central Library

Lady Hale, the first female President of the UK Supreme Court and author of the Women's Prize longlisted *With the Law on Our Side*, joins acclaimed writer Lara Feigel, author of *Custody: The Secret History of Mothers*, for a compelling conversation on law, family and power.

Drawing on real cases and lived testimony, Lady Hale opens up the legal system, revealing how people experience the law and question where justice lies. Lara Feigel explores child custody through the lives of real women who challenged convention and fought for greater freedom and justice, showing how motherhood, power and the law have shaped both family life and feminist progress.

Together they will explore how justice is experienced by children, mothers and families across history and today. Co-presented with Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester. Sponsored by Weightmans.

Tickets £12 / £10



Dave Haslam & Special Guests

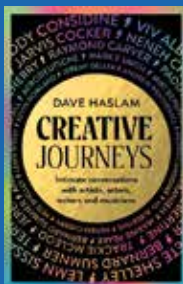
Saturday 24 October 2026, 7.30pm
HOME

Manchester DJ, writer and broadcaster Dave Haslam launches his new book, *Creative Journeys*. In conversation with two special guests from the worlds of music and theatre, Dave explores what it really means to build a creative life, navigating success, failure, negativity and resilience, while staying true to your own path.

Drawing on four decades of conversations with some of the most compelling voices in music, literature, film and art, *Creative Journeys* brings together revealing interviews with figures including Terry Hall, Neneh Cherry, Maxine Peake and Lemn Sissay. From politics and performance to art, fame, and resilience, these conversations offer personal reflections on creativity, character and the experiences that shape artistic lives.

Join Dave and his special guests for an inspiring evening. Dave Haslam's books include *Manchester England*, *Life After Dark* and the memoir *Sonic Youth Slept On My Floor*.

£20 / £35 ticket and a copy
of *Creative Journeys* (RRP £20)



Fiction



Maggie O'Farrell

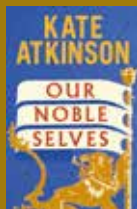
Friday 9 October 2026, 7pm
RNCM

Maggie O'Farrell makes a welcome return to MLF with her extraordinary new novel, *Land* – a sweeping, multi-generational epic inspired by her own family history and the dramatic landscapes of Ireland's Atlantic coast.

Set in 1865, in the shadow of the Great Hunger, the novel follows mapmaker Tomás and his son as they survey a devastated country. When they discover an uncharted woodland absent from every existing map, a strange encounter sets in motion a journey through buried histories, longing and survival. Join one of our greatest storytellers as she explores the way history shapes us and our landscapes.

Maggie O'Farrell is the acclaimed author of nine novels including *The Marriage Portrait* and *Hamnet*, which won the Women's Prize for Fiction 2020 and was adapted into a BAFTA-winning film. Hosted by **Alex Clark** and co-presented with Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester. Sponsored by The Edwardian Manchester.

Tickets £22

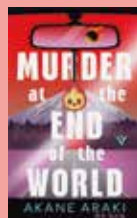


An Afternoon with Kate Atkinson

Saturday 10 October 2026, 2pm
Lowry (Quays Theatre)

One of the great chroniclers of our times, Kate Atkinson (*Life After Life*) joins us to discuss *Our Noble Selves*, her atmospheric new novel set amid the optimism of post-war Britain. In 1951, war reporter Harry Flynn is swept into the chaos of the Festival of Britain – and a troubling disappearance. Brilliantly plotted, witty and compelling, *Our Noble Selves* is vintage Kate Atkinson. Hosted by **Alex Clark**. Sponsored by The Edwardian Manchester.

£22 / £39 for ticket and a copy of *Our Noble Selves* (RRP £22)



Akane Araki

Saturday 10 October 2026, 2pm
Waterstones Deansgate

One of Japan's most exciting young crime writers, Akane Araki discusses her prize-winning debut, *Murder at the End of the World* – a wildly original, darkly funny murder mystery set days before an asteroid strikes Earth. As society unravels, Haru and her ex-police, driving instructor come together to hunt a serial killer. Discover more about Akane, her sisterhood novel and the crime writers that inspired her. Co-presented with the Japan Foundation.

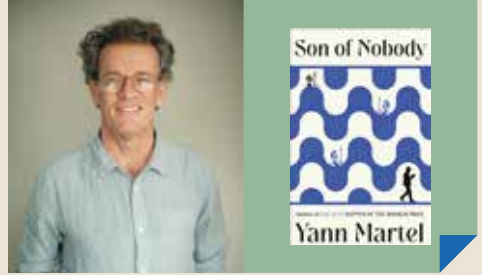
Tickets £10 / £8



Emily St. John Mandel
Saturday 10 October 2026, 7pm
Central Library

Canadian author Emily St. John Mandel (*Station Eleven*) joins us to discuss her electrifying new novel *Exit Party*. In a near-future Los Angeles emerging from conflict, a strange party links two very parallel worlds, drawing Ari into a mystery that will haunt her. Elegant, suspenseful and emotionally charged, Emily explores memory, freedom and the fragile boundaries between realities. Hosted by **Andrew McMillan**. Sponsored by Maldron Hotel Manchester City Centre.

Tickets £12 / £10



The Observer Book Club with Yann Martel
Wednesday 14 October 2026, 7.30pm
Martin Harris Centre for Music & Drama

An exclusive event with Booker Prize-winning Yann Martel, author of the internationally-renowned *Life of Pi*. Inspired by Homer's *Iliad*, his epic new novel reimagines the Trojan War through the eyes of an ordinary foot soldier. Blending myth, history and contemporary life, *Son of Nobody* is a profound exploration of storytelling, family and the enduring power of the past. Hosted by **Erica Wagner**. Co-presented with Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

Tickets £12 / £10



Louise Kennedy & Wendy Erskine
Thursday 15 October 2026, 7pm
Central Library

Two of Northern Ireland's most acclaimed contemporary writers join BBC 6 Music broadcaster **Deb Grant** for an unmissable conversation about storytelling, identity and the forces that shape our lives. Louise Kennedy (*Trespasses*) introduces her eagerly anticipated new novel, *Stations* – an immersive story of first love, friendship and reinvention, while Wendy Erskine (*Dance Move*) discusses *The Benefactors*, her Women's Fiction Prize longlisted novel and provocative portrait of class, power and privilege.

Tickets £10 / £8



Brutalist Ghost Stories
Saturday 17 October 2026, 2pm
Central Library

Join Northern novelists **Jenn Ashworth, Nicholas Royle, David Gaffney** and emerging writer **Beth Barker** for readings from *Brutalist Ghost Stories*. Inspired by Britain's post-war architecture, from Preston Bus Station and the Barbican to Forton Service Station and a substation in Sheffield, this haunting anthology blends literary fiction and the uncanny. Hear how four distinctive voices have transformed these familiar Brutalist spaces into unforgettable ghost stories.

Tickets £10 / £8

Fiction

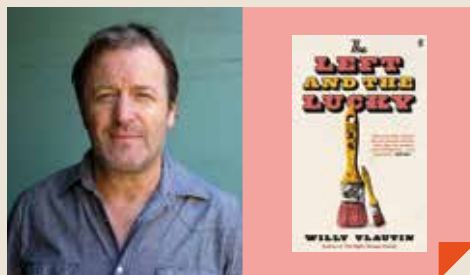


Sufiyaan Salam & Monika Radojevic

Sunday 18 October 2026, 5pm
Manchester Museum

Discover two fresh and uncompromising voices from Stormzy's #Merky Books as Sufiyaan Salam and Monika Radojevic discuss their acclaimed debut novels and the stories shaping a new generation. From the chaotic energy of a Manchester night out in Sufiyaan's *Wimmy Road Boyz*, to the globe-spanning love story at the heart of Monika's *Strangerland*, both novels explore identity, belonging and connection. Co-presented with Manchester Museum, Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

Tickets free but booking recommended

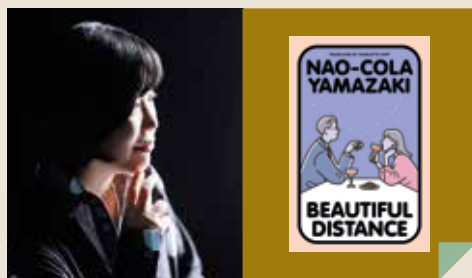


Willy Vlautin

Monday 19 October 2026, 7pm
Central Library

Acclaimed musician, songwriter and novelist Willy Vlautin (*The Night Always Comes*) joins us to discuss *The Left and the Lucky*, his moving new novel about a vulnerable young boy and the unlikely father figure who takes him under his wing. See one of contemporary American fiction's most charismatic voices discuss surprise friendships, human connection and his commitment to tell working class stories through his work.

Tickets £10 / £8

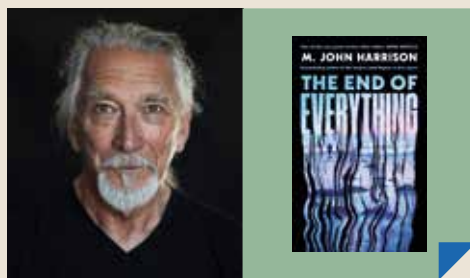


Nao-Cola Yamazaki

Monday 19 October 2026, 6.30pm
Waterstones Deansgate

Esteemed Japanese author Nao-Cola Yamazaki shares *Beautiful Distance*, their bestselling and profoundly moving novel about love, loss and human connection. Drawing on both *Beautiful Distance* and *Don't Laugh At Other People's Sex Lives*, they will explore their approach to writing love stories in all their complexity, from first love and desire to grief, memory and the quiet moments that shape us. Co-presented with the Japan Foundation.

Tickets £10 / £8



M. John Harrison

Tuesday 20 October 2026, 7pm
Central Library

One of Britain's most influential writers, M. John Harrison (*Wish I Was Here*) joins **Helen Mort** for a fascinating conversation about storytelling, uncertainty and how we navigate a world where crisis has become the backdrop to everyday life. His unsettling and darkly funny new novel, *The End of Everything*, is set in a fractured near-future and explores a haunting landscape where mysterious new life forms emerge from the sea.

Tickets £10 / £8



The Observer Book Club with Min Jin Lee

Wednesday 21 October 2026, 7.30pm

Contact

Acclaimed Korean American author Min Jin Lee, internationally celebrated for the bestselling *Pachinko*, discusses her long-awaited new novel, *American Hagwon*. Spanning 1992 to 2007, this sweeping contemporary epic follows three generations of one family as they navigate migration, identity, sacrifice and the enduring pursuit of a better life.

Beginning in South Korea before moving through Australia and the United States, *American Hagwon* is a panoramic novel of profound emotional richness, exploring the bonds of family, the transformative power of education and the choices we make for those we love.

One of today's most acclaimed and insightful novelists, Min will reflect on her exploration of family and diaspora and the themes that have captivated readers since *Pachinko*. Hosted by **Erica Wagner**. Co-presented with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

'Immersive, engrossing ... brilliantly imagined' – Colm Tóibín

£15 / £32 for ticket and a copy of *American Hagwon* (RRP £22)

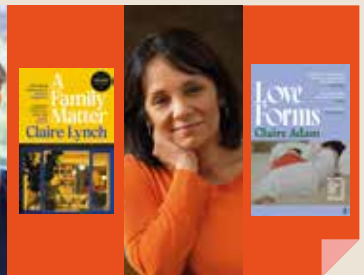


Hernan Diaz

Thursday 22 October 2026, 7pm
Central Library

See Pulitzer Prize-winning author Hernan Diaz (*Trust*) introduce his brilliant new novel *Ply*. Set centuries from now, *Ply* is a wildly original thriller that follows an orphan navigating a dangerous city as she pinches electricity and is drawn into a maze of paranoia, shifting identities and world-altering discoveries. Both gripping and deeply humane, *Ply* explores technology, capitalism and the fragile boundaries of selfhood. Hosted by **Tom Gatti**, Literary Editor at the Observer.

Tickets £10 / £8



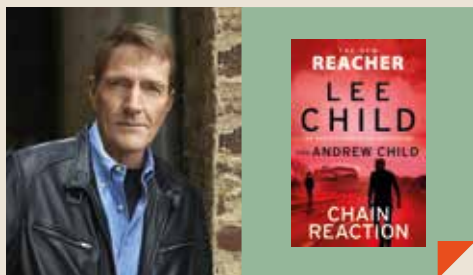
Claire Lynch & Claire Adam

Friday 23 October, 6.30pm
Waterstones Deansgate

Award-winning writers Claire Lynch and Claire Adam come together for a compelling conversation about their acclaimed novels *A Family Matter* and *Love Forms*, exploring mothers and daughters, hidden truths and the enduring consequences of choices that shape generations. Together, they discuss writing emotionally resonant family stories inspired by love and belonging. *A Family Matter* won the Nero Gold Book of 2025 Award. *Love Forms* was longlisted for the 2025 Booker Prize.

Tickets £10 / £8

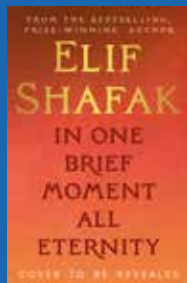
Fiction



Lee Child: My Life in Books
Friday 23 October 2026, 7pm
HOME

One of the world's most celebrated crime writers, Lee Child joins us for an evening of insight and storytelling as he discusses the inspirations behind his work and the books that have shaped and influenced him as a writer. Exploring his love of crime fiction, his early days as a writer and the enduring popularity of Jack Reacher, he will offer an early look at his gripping new novel *Chain Reaction*.

£20 / £32 ticket and a copy of *Chain Reaction* (RRP £22)



Eliza Chan & Sunyi Dean:
Hong Kong Ghost Stories
Saturday 24 October 2026, 6pm
Waterstones Deansgate

A fascinating conversation with bestselling fantasy authors Eliza Chan and Sunyi Dean about ghosts, folklore and the stories we inherit. Drawing on their acclaimed new novels – *Harbour of Hungry Ghosts* and *The Girl with a Thousand Faces* – they will explore women's histories, generational trauma and the enduring power of myth, while reflecting on writing across cultures and bringing Hong Kong's rich past vividly to life. Co-presented with Waterstones.

Tickets £10 / £8

An Afternoon with Elif Shafak
Sunday 25 October 2026, 3pm
RNCM

Join us for a special afternoon with one of today's most influential and much-loved literary voices. Elif Shafak returns to celebrate her extraordinary new novel, *In One Brief Moment All Eternity*. Spanning decades and continents, from revolutionary 19th-century France to Istanbul, Egypt and Beirut, this luminous and deeply moving story explores creativity and resistance in times of political upheaval and war. Reimagining the life of Gustave Flaubert through the real and fictional women who shaped him, Elif builds a fascinating bridge between Western prose and Eastern poetry offering a powerful meditation on literature's enduring role in a fractured world.

Elif Shafak is an award-winning British-Turkish novelist and storyteller. Her books include *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* and *The Island of Missing Trees*. She is President of the Royal Society of Literature. Co-presented with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

Tickets £22 / £37 for ticket and a copy of *In One Brief Moment All Eternity* (RRP £20)

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Centre for **New Writing**

The Centre for New Writing at The University of Manchester is proud to be the Higher Education Partner of the Manchester Literature Festival.

Our team of award-winning novelists, poets, playwrights, screenwriters and non-fiction writers can help you develop your craft and confidence as a writer through intensive workshops and seminars, with access to expert industry guidance and contacts.

Find out more about our programmes, including:

- **MA in Creative Writing**
- **MA in Playwriting**
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www.manchester.ac.uk/cnw



Poetry



Ian McMillan

Monday 12 October 2026, 6.30pm
Central Library

Beloved poet, performer and host of Radio 4's *The Verb*, Ian McMillan launches his moving and inventive new collection *Red River Valley*. Drawing on family life, everyday absurdities and life in South Yorkshire, these poems are funny, poignant and deeply humane. Renowned for his warmth and wit, join one of Britain's most treasured poets for a celebration of storytelling, community and the power of words. Co-presented with Manchester Poetry Library.

Tickets £12 / £10



Manchester Multilingual City Poets:

Jeremy Pak Nelson & Nóra Blascsóková

Thursday 15 October 2026, 6pm
Manchester Poetry Library

A celebration of language, memory and storytelling with Manchester's Multilingual City Poets, Jeremy Pak Nelson and Nóra Blascsóková, as they debut new commissions exploring *What We Inherit*, *What Haunts Us*. Commissioned by MLF and Manchester City of Literature, these original poems reflect on heritage, ancestral memory and stories carried across borders. Performing in English, Hungarian and Mandarin, they will explore how traditions survive, change and endure in a multilingual city.

Tickets free but booking recommended



The Brown Sugar RAP Party

Thursday 15 October 2026, 8pm
Contact

To mark the first anniversary of D'Angelo's passing, The RAP Party invites you to *Brown Sugar*. Hosted by Inua Ellams, this special event gathers 10 incredible contemporary poets from Greater Manchester to create and share new verse in response to *Brown Sugar*. One of the most important R&B records of the 1990s, *Brown Sugar* established D'Angelo as one of the most gifted artists of his generation.

What might eloquent voices from contemporary poetry have to say about our present realities? What could be the soundtrack to our day-to-day lives? Come chill and find out at Inua Ellams' Rhythm And Poetry Party, a nostalgic, no-clutter, no-fuss, night of live poetry and music. Featuring Jason Allen-Paisant, P.A. Bitez, Griot Gabriel, Kadijah Ibrahim, Keisha Thompson, Yusra Warsama and more.

Join us for fresh perspectives on the timeless journeys, questions and reflections raised by D'Angelo. Presented by 05 Events in partnership with Manchester Literature Festival and Contact.

Tickets £16 / £14 / £10





Carolyn Forché & Kwame Dawes
Friday 16 October 2026, 6.30pm
Central Library

An unmissable opportunity to hear two of the world's most visionary poets read and discuss their sublime poetry, exploring political engagement, survival and testimony.

Over five decades, American poet Carolyn Forché has established herself as both 'a poet of witness' and an indefatigable human rights activist. Beautifully crafted, her poems are testimonies, enquiries and wonderments. *Otherwhere: New & Selected Poems 1976-2026* brings together poems from her five collections as well as urgent new work.

Kwame Dawes is the author of numerous books of poetry, essays and works of fiction, most recently the collection *Sturge Town*. He is the Poet Laureate of Jamaica and the Artistic Director of the Calabash International Literary Festival. His poetry has been described by Martín Espada as 'the music of survival and transcendence.' In partnership with Manchester Poetry Library, Bloodaxe Books and Renaissance One.

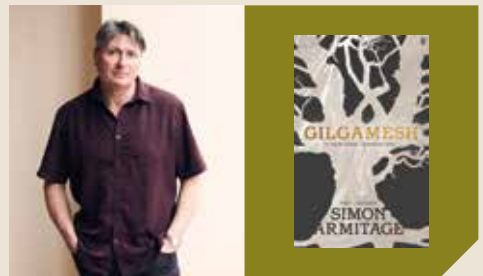
Tickets £12 / £10



Cabaret for Freedom
Malika Booker, Mali Hayes, Shirley May, Clive Hunte & Young Identity
Saturday 17 October 2026, 7.30pm
St John's Church, Old Trafford

Join us for a celebration of strength, activism and community as poets and musicians pay homage to unsung women campaigners such as Olive Morris, Louise Da-Cocodia and Kath Locke who have been guiding lights to generations. Enjoy rousing poetry from Malika Booker, Shirley May and members of Young Identity with music from bassist Clive Hunte and singer-songwriter Mali Hayes.

Tickets £10 / £8



Simon Armitage
Sunday 18 October 2026, 4.30pm
Central Library

The Poet Laureate Simon Armitage returns to present his exhilarating new verse translation of *Gilgamesh*, the ancient Mesopotamian epic of power, friendship, love and loss. A Festival favourite and outstanding live performer, Simon brings fresh energy and emotional depth to one of the world's oldest and most compelling, surviving works of literature. Join him for a captivating journey to the very origins of storytelling.

Tickets £14 / £12

Poetry



Jorie Graham

Tuesday 20 October 2026, 7pm
Manchester Museum

A rare chance to see one of America's most acclaimed poets Jorie Graham, perform work from her powerful collections, *Killing Spree* and *To 2040*. Within these urgent, deeply engaging poems, Jorie reflects on some of the most acute challenges today – from climate change, technology and political conflict to the future of our shared humanity and how to stay connected in uncertain times. Co-presented with the Centre for New Writing and Creative Manchester.

Tickets £12 / £10



Karen Solie: Rylands Poetry Reading

Thursday 22 October 2026, 7pm (Drinks Reception 6pm)

John Rylands Library, University of Manchester

This year's annual Rylands Poetry Reading is delivered by Karen Solie. Her latest collection *Wellwater*, exploring the profound impact of economic and environmental crises on human culture alongside vivid childhood memories of growing up in rural Canada, won both the T.S. Eliot Prize and Forward Prize for Best Collection in 2025. Don't miss this opportunity to hear one of the most astonishing and vital voices in world poetry.

Tickets free but booking recommended



An Evening with Jackie Kay

Sunday 25 October 2026, 7.30pm
HOME

One of poetry's most engaging live performers, Jackie Kay brings warmth, wit and extraordinary humanity to every reading. Join us for this special event as the acclaimed poet, novelist and former Scottish Makar performs a selection of poems from her landmark new collection, *Selected Poems 1991-2026*, spanning more than three decades of extraordinary work.

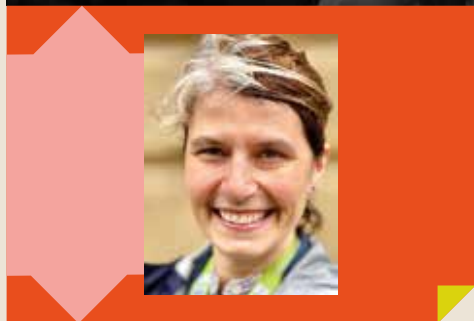
From the groundbreaking *The Adoption Papers* to the acclaimed *May Day*, Jackie's poetry explores love and loss, childhood and family, activism and community, history and the present day, all bound together by the compassion, humour and emotional insight that define her work.

Experience one of our finest writers reading from a body of work that has moved and inspired generations. An uplifting and memorable final event to the 2026 Festival.

Tickets £17 / £29 ticket and a copy of *Selected Poems 1991-2026* (RRP £14.99)

Workshops

Book on manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk



Brave Bold Women History Forgot: A Writing & Walking Tour

Monday 12 October 2026, 1 – 4.30pm
Friday 23 October 2026, 1 – 4.30pm
Victoria Station (Starting Point)

A walking tour & writing workshop taking inspiration from women changemakers in nursing, war, poverty, literature – and football!

What connects the National Football Museum with the Marble Arch Inn and the Sacred Trinity church a few minutes away? On this walking-tour and writing workshop led by tour guide **Emma Fox** and writer **Tania Hershman**, we will meet the radical women connected with each of these locations – from the early trailblazers of women's football to Sister Elizabeth Prout, known as the 'Mother Teresa of Manchester' and Edith Cavell, the British nurse executed for helping Allied soldiers escape from occupied Belgium during WWI. The work and lives of these pioneers will be our inspiration for writing exercises along the route. The walking pace will be slow, and the writing exercises are suitable for all, no writing experience necessary.

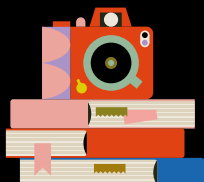
Tickets £30 / £25

Support Manchester Literature Festival

Manchester Literature Festival is a registered charity. Your support will encourage more people to discover the joy of reading, writing, imagination and creativity. Here's a few ways you can help us to survive and thrive.

- Become a Get Closer Member
- Sponsor an event
- Make a regular or one-off donation of £10, £25 or £50

Find out more
manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk/support-us



Writing Creative Non-Fiction with Dave Haslam

Friday 23 October 2026, 1 – 3pm
Central Library

Dave Haslam, author of the memoir *Sonic Youth Slept on My Floor* and books including *My Second Home: Sylvia Plath in Paris, 1956*, leads us through strategies to express a true story or life events in a way that incorporates imagination, subjectivity, novelistic elements, and unconventional structures. The workshop is aimed at aspiring and early career writers and will include works by the likes of Tom Wolfe and Deborah Levy.

Tickets £20

WATERSTONES

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- Take part in local and global events at Manchester Poetry Library and through our connections with the UNESCO City of Literature network.

Register for updates: mmu.ac.uk/writingschoolmasters



Professor Dame Carol Ann Duffy OBE CBE

Every story deserves a great ending

Celebrate the festival with award-winning
Japanese and Mexican cuisine at
Peter Street Kitchen, Free Trade Hall.

Peter
Street
Kitchen



peterstreetkitchen.co.uk

Get Closer Manchester Literature Festival Membership



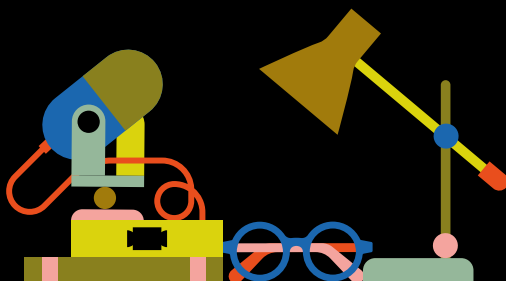
If you share our passion for literature and spoken word, why not become a member?
Most of our events with high profile authors sell out in advance. **With our Get Closer Membership, be the first to hear the latest news and get:**

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- Occasional ticket offers and discounts from MLF and our partners
- Festival brochure posted to your home
- Membership card

Membership starts at £25 per annum

Your support helps us to showcase emerging and diverse talent, commission new work and upskill children and young people through creativity

**For full details and to join visit
manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk
or call Quaytickets on 0161 876 2015**



Festival Diary

Tuesday 25 August	7pm	An Evening with Mieko Kawakami / Central Library	Page 3
Monday 28 September	7.30pm	An Evening with Marina Hyde / RNCM (Theatre)	Page 3
Wednesday 30 September	7pm	Queered Up Now: Louis Glazzard, Okechukwu Nzelu, Ella Otomewo / Contact	Page 3
Friday 9 October	7pm	Maggie O'Farrell / RNCM (Theatre)	Page 8
Saturday 10 October	2pm	Akane Araki / Waterstones Deansgate	Page 8
	2pm	An Afternoon with Kate Atkinson / Lowry (Quays Theatre)	Page 8
	6pm	Sarah Hall: The Faber Lecture 2026 / Manchester Museum	Page 4
	7pm	Emily St. John Mandel / Central Library	Page 9
Sunday 11 October	2pm	Paul Mason: Reds / Martin Harris Centre for Music & Drama	Page 4
	4.30pm	The Observer Book Club with Deborah Frances-White / Martin Harris Centre for Music & Drama	Page 4
	7.30pm	An Evening with Russell T Davies & Bernardine Evaristo / RNCM (Concert Hall)	Page 5
Monday 12 October	1 – 4.30pm	Brave Bold Women History Forgot: A Writing & Walking Tour / Victoria Station (Starting Point)	Page 17
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	7.30pm	An Evening with Hugh Bonneville / HOME	Page 6
	7.30pm	Cabaret for Freedom / St John's Church, Old Trafford	Page 15

Sunday 18 October	2pm	Feminism for A World on Fire: Natasha Walter / Central Library	Page 6
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	7pm (Drinks 6pm)	Karen Solie: Rylands Poetry Reading / John Rylands Library, University of Manchester	Page 16
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	1 – 4.30pm	Brave Bold Women History Forgot: A Writing & Walking Tour / Victoria Station (Starting Point)	Page 17
	6.30pm	Claire Lynch & Claire Adam / Waterstones Deansgate	Page 11
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Saturday 24 October	6pm	Eliza Chan & Sunyi Dean: Hong Kong Ghost Stories / Waterstones Deansgate	Page 12
	7.30pm	Dave Haslam & Special Guests / HOME	Page 7
Sunday 25 October	3pm	An Afternoon with Elif Shafak / RNCM	Page 12
	7.30pm	An Evening with Jackie Kay / HOME	Page 16



The Festival Team

Festival Co-Directors:

Cathy Bolton and Sarah-Jane Roberts

Children and Young People's

Programme Manager:

Miriam Wild

Marketing and Audience

Development Manager:

Claire Saville

Digital Engagement Coordinator:

Angie Lee

Volunteer Coordinator:

Liz Coupe

Festival Chair:

Gwen Oakden

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Company Registration No. 4369668

Charity Registration No. 1121276

Printed using vegetable-based inks on FSC®-certified paper. Carbon balancing offsets the emissions from printing, helping protect and restore important rainforest habitats.



Events for Children and Families

Our special programme of events and participatory activities for children and families includes an action-packed book launch with freestyle football superstar and YouTube sensation **Ben Nuttall**, a comic creating event to celebrate 75 years of the Beano's **Dennis the Menace**, interactive theatre adaptations of classic stories **The Elves and the Shoemaker** and **The Enormous Turnip**, an opportunity to strut your stuff with author **Robert Tregoney** (*Dylan, Daisy and the Disco Ball*) and meet beloved actor **Hugh Bonneville** as he launches his latest children's adventure book *Rory Sparkes and the Spy Who Loved Tea*.

For full details please check
manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk

How to book

Please check event listings for booking details.

Tickets for most Manchester Literature Festival events can be booked through our main Box Office agent Quaytickets. Tickets are sold subject to terms and conditions available at quaytickets.com

For all events booked through Quaytickets there is a one-off e-ticket transaction charge of £1.75 but no additional booking fees on tickets.

Tickets for some MLF events at Contact, HOME and Z-arts are sold directly through the venue and additional booking fees may apply.

**contactmcr.com
homemcr.org / 0161 200 1500
z-arts.org / 0161 226 1912**

Online 24 hours:
manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk
Quaytickets: quaytickets.com/mlf

Telephone:
Quaytickets on 0161 876 2015
Box office is open Monday – Friday: 9am – 6pm, Saturday & Sunday: 10am – 6pm.

If an event is not sold out, tickets will be available for walk-up customers at the venue just prior to an event starting. Check social media for updates on ticket availability.

Most Festival events have unreserved seating, except for events at Contact, HOME, Lowry and RNCM.

Latecomers may be admitted at a suitable break in an event; however, this is at the discretion of the venue and Festival. Tickets cannot be refunded except on the cancellation or substantial alteration of an event.

Access

The Festival aims to be as accessible as possible and welcomes disabled people. If you have any enquiries about Festival venues, you can contact the venue directly using the venue links on our webpage.

If you would like to request a BSL interpreter for an event or have any other special assistance requirements, please don't hesitate to email the Festival team at **office@manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk**

Festival staff and volunteers will be on hand to provide information and assist at events.

For a map and list of disabled parking bays in Manchester city centre, please visit the Manchester City Council website: **manchester.gov.uk**

For information about Changing Places toilet facilities, please visit: **changing-places.org**

Concessions and Discounts

Where a concessionary ticket is listed for an event, this is available to: recipients of Pension Credit, full-time students, jobseekers, and disabled people. A carer or assistant attending with a disabled person can attend for free but please advise when booking.

Event Changes and Updates

To the best of the Festival's knowledge, all programming information is correct at the time of going to print. Please check the following for event updates:

manchesterliteraturefestival.co.uk
@McrLitFest



Fiction
Culture
Poetry
Workshops

