

Swanwick

THE

# writers'

SUMMER SCHOOL



## PROGRAMME AND GENERAL INFORMATION

9th - 14th AUGUST 2025

[www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk](http://www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk)

Registered Charity No 1168531



# WELCOME TO THE HAYES

SPACE TO  
RELAX,  
RECONNECT  
& RECHARGE

[thehayes.org.uk](http://thehayes.org.uk)

**THE  
HAYES**  
DERBYSHIRE

CONFERENCE CENTRE

# THE WRITERS' SUMMER SCHOOL

## The 76th Writers' Summer School

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# NOTES

# WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

A very warm welcome to everyone attending this year's Swanwick, The Writers' Summer School.

We've been working hard all year to put together a packed programme of learning and entertainment, delivering a fantastic value for money experience, whilst at the same time providing Assisted Places and our TopWrite Bursary for young writers. We rely heavily on the generosity of our Swanwick Alumni to support these endeavours through, Friends of Swanwick, Easyfundraising, Give As You Live and Legacies. If you are able, please consider signing up – see pages 49-51.

The learning programme this year is truly comprehensive and valuable. There are four Specialist Courses, 12 Short Courses and 16 Workshops, covering a wide range and eclectic mix of writing subjects, providing something for everyone. And remember, you do not have to pre-book or register for anything!

The evening entertainment programme is just as packed. We have three inspirational and informative Speakers, our Fancy Dress themed disco as well as the ever-popular Page to Stage competition, and on the final night, an award-winning play – Baggy Bra. Check out all our fabulous evening events on pages 39-45.

If that wasn't enough, there are regular daily events such as morning Meditation by the Lake and Lift Up Your Hearts / Pens and in the afternoon, Unwind Your Mind. I encourage you to pay a visit to the Book Shop and also look out for Book Launches and Book Signings.

But best of all, there are countless opportunities during meals, breaks and in many settings - relaxing or lively, to meet and make like-minded writing friends.

Welcome to, what I hope you will agree will be an absolutely fabulous Writing Holiday.

**Hi-De-Hi!**

**Keith Hinchy**  
**Chair**

# ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION

## **PLEASE DO NOT ARRIVE BEFORE 15:30**

On arrival, please go to the ALLOCATED RECEPTION AREA (see your booking confirmation) as instructed. You will be given an information pack, your identification badge, your room number and keycard. Please wear your badge at all times and keep your keycard safe.

## **ROOM FACILITIES**

All rooms offer complimentary tea & coffee making facilities, a hairdryer, soap and towels. To activate the electricity in your room, place your keycard in the wall pocket. If you run out of anything or would like extra bedding or pillows etc., please see a member of The Hayes housekeeping staff. Please shut the bathroom door when taking a shower as failure to do so may set off the fire alarms!

## **ALCOHOL & SNACKS**

Due to Health & Safety regulations you are not permitted to bring your own alcohol or any perishable food. You can bring individual non-perishable snacks for yourself, but these must be kept in your room.

## **BAGGAGE HANDLING**

Unfortunately, neither the School nor The Hayes provide a baggage handling service. Assistance can be arranged for disabled delegates.

## **FREE WI-FI**

There is FREE Wi-Fi available throughout the conference centre including all the bedrooms. Sign in using your email address to access the Wi-Fi.

## **SMOKING**

There is a **STRICT NO SMOKING POLICY** throughout the whole of the conference centre and accommodations blocks. Smoking is permitted in the outdoor designated smoking areas only. This policy also includes vaping/E-cigarettes.

## **VALUABLES**

Valuables are left in your room at your own risk. The Summer School and The Hayes are not liable for any losses.

## **BAR PAYMENTS/CREDIT/DEBIT CARDS**

Please note that the Hayes is a CASHLESS facility. All transactions are by credit/debit card. You can pre order drinks at the bar.

## **HAYES MAIN RECEPTION/ADMINISTRATION OFFICE**

If you have any issues regarding the facilities at The Hayes - rooms/food etc., - these should be reported directly to The Hayes staff at the Main Reception or call the Admin Office on 01773 526 000 – option 3.

## **FIRE ALARM TEST**

Please note the fire alarm will be tested Monday morning at 08:00. You do not need to respond to this test. If the fire alarm sounds at any other time during your stay, please go to the MAIN CONFERENCE HALL.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS**

The Hayes Administration Office: 01773 526 000 – option 3

## **MEALS & SNACKS & DRINKS**

All meals are served buffet style.

### **BREAKFAST**

08:00 – 09:00                      Served in the CHATSWORTH DINING ROOM

### **MORNING COFFEE**

10:40 - 11:10                      Served in the BAR/LOUNGE area.

### **LUNCH**

12:30 – 13:30                      Served in the CHATSWORTH DINING ROOM

### **AFTERNOON TEA**

15:20 – 15:50                      Served in the BAR/LOUNGE area.

### **DINNER**

18:30 – 19:30                      Served in the CHATSWORTH DINING ROOM

## **BAR OPENING HOURS**

Lunch:                                12:00 – 13:30

Evening:                              18:00 – 00:00 - last orders are at 23:30

Pre-order drinks forms will be available on the dining room tables before dinner each day. Please take your forms and make payment at the bar

before going to the 20:00 evening session. Drinks will then be ready for collection at 21:00 when the session finishes.

## **SPECIAL DIETS**

We inform the Hayes of any special dietary requirements in advance as indicated on your booking forms. The Hayes always provide a variety of vegetarian, gluten free and dairy free meals as standard. There is always fresh fruit and tea/coffee/water available.

## **DINING ROOM & SEATING ARRANGEMENTS**

On SATURDAY evening there will be dining tables specially reserved for those who are new to the Summer School - each hosted by an *AMBASSADOR*, eager to answer any questions you may have about the week ahead. Please join us and take the opportunity to ask away and get to meet other new delegates.

Apart from the above, there is no 'pre-arranged' seating in the dining room. You may sit wherever you like, with the exception of the CHAIRMAN'S TABLE, which is reserved for hosting speakers and guests.

## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### **SCHOOL CONFERENCE OFFICE**

The Summer School Conference office is located upstairs in the Boardroom, in the MAIN HOUSE. Please note the opening times on the door. If you need assistance, please come and see us during these times. If you cannot access the office, please phone 07394 995 790 or 07927 192 121 and someone will come down to you. If the office is closed, please contact any Committee member or Ambassador who will be happy to help.

### **PHOTOGRAPHS & OTHER MEDIA**

Photographs and/or film may be taken during the week for publicity purposes and for use on our social media. More details, including how to 'opt out', can be found in the Information Room.

## **INFORMATION ROOM**

If you want to know more about any of the courses, tutors, sessions etc., please see the website or visit the Information Room located next to the Book Shop where you will find leaflets, brochures and magazines with information and material of interest. There is also Information on the AGM, committee nomination forms and SIGN-UP sheets for the evening events (Buskers, Prose, Poetry etc) will also be in the information room.

## **BOOK SHOP**

Our popular BOOK SHOP where delegates sell their books is open Sunday - Tuesday during morning coffee, before and after lunch and prior to dinner. See the timetable for opening times. Please come along to browse & buy and support your fellow writers. Payments accepted by cash / credit / debit cards. If you are an author/delegate – see below.

## **BOOK SHOP – NOTES FOR AUTHORS**

The Book Shop will be open from 16:00 – 17:00 on SATURDAY afternoon for registration of books for sale. Payment for book sales is by BACS. On WEDNESDAY the book shop will be open for authors to collect any unsold books - you will be given a time slot to collect yours. Please collect your books promptly. If you have questions, please see the Treasurer.

## **DRESS CODE**

The Summer School is proud of its relaxed and friendly atmosphere and there is no 'formal' dress code. Please wear whatever you feel comfortable in. Some of our delegates like to 'dress for dinner', but this is not compulsory. The last night's PRE DINNER DRINKS/DINNER - see page 44 - is often used as an excuse to dress up - but again, this is entirely optional.

## **CONDUCT**

The Summer School expects all delegates, visitors and tutors to treat each other, staff at The Hayes and any other groups sharing the facility with respect, courtesy and consideration. We are committed to a culture which promotes equality, values diversity and provides a learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all are respected.

## CONFERENCE ROOMS

Please note that other conferences might be in residence during our stay and may share communal areas. See the map and the at-a-glance timetable (in your welcome pack). Abbreviations as follows:

Main Conference Hall	MCH
Butterley Hall 1	BLY1
Butterley Hall 2	BLY2
Tissington Room	TR
Derbyshire Suite	DS
Derwent Room	DER
Main Lounge	ML
Book Room	BR
Vinery	VIN
Chapel	CH

## NOTES & COURSE HANDOUTS

Any handouts and notes from courses taught during the week will be downloadable from the website following the Summer School. To access visit: [www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk/downloads](http://www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk/downloads)

## COMPUTERS / LAPTOPS / WI-FI

FREE Wi-Fi is available throughout the whole conference centre, including all the bedrooms. We suggest that you bring an extension lead for your laptop for use in your room and if you need to charge your laptop during sessions.

## RAFFLE

Every year we hold a raffle in aid of the school. The winner gets a FREE PLACE at the following year's Summer School. There are also a variety of runner-up prizes. Raffle tickets are on sale for £1 each. We prefer cash payments if possible and you can buy them from our Raffle Ticket Sellers who will be roaming around during the week. The draw is held at the FAREWELL on the last night.

# DAILY PROGRAMME GUIDE

## SATURDAY

### FROM 15:30

#### WELCOME TO THE WRITERS' SUMMER SCHOOL

Please go to the Reception Area for your chosen accommodation block to register and collect your welcome pack, room keycard and your identification badge. ***Please wear your badge at all times.***

### 16:30-17:00

#### AFTERNOON TEA

After you have dropped your bags in your room, you are invited to join us for the traditional Summer School welcome with Afternoon Tea served in the terrace overlooking the lawn in the Main House.

### 17:30 -18:00

#### FIRST YEAR WELCOME & RECEPTION

If this is your first time at the Summer School, you are warmly invited to come along to **BUTTERLEY HALL 1/2** for a special welcome to first time delegates, followed by a complimentary glass of wine and a chance to meet the Committee, Ambassadors, Course Tutors and other first timers, before we go into dinner. Please see the invitation in your welcome pack.

### 18:00-00:00

#### BAR OPEN

### 18:30-19:30

#### DINNER

Dinner is served buffet style in the Chatsworth Dining Room. Special tables are reserved tonight for first timers. See pages 7-8.

**20:00**

**MAIN WELCOME**

MCH

Everyone is invited to join us in the **MAIN CONFERENCE HALL** for a warm welcome for the week ahead, followed by our evening speaker.

**20:15-21:00**

**EVENING SPEAKER** - see page 39

MCH

Simon Hall

**21:00-23:30**

**DRINKS IN THE BAR**

A perfect first night opportunity to relax in the bar and catch up with old friends or chat to new ones before the weeks begins.

**23:30**

**LAST ORDERS AT THE BAR**

**00:00**

**BED!**

Busy week ahead 😊



# NEWSLETTER

Sign up for our bi-monthly NEWSLETTER!  
Keep up-to-date with all the LATEST news.  
Sign-up forms are in the INFORMATION ROOM

[www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk](http://www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk)



# SUNDAY

**08:00**

**LIFT UP YOUR PENS**

**MEDITATION BY THE LAKE** - see page 46

**08:00-09:00 BREAKFAST**

**09:30-10:30**

**SPECIALIST COURSES PART 1 of 4** - see pages 23-25

A Novel in Four Sessions – Anne Hamilton MCH

Writing Short Stories to Make Money - Della Galton BLY1

The Crafty Art of Creative Non-Fiction - Simon Whaley BLY2

Learning from The Laureates (Poetry) - Alison Chisholm TR

**10:30-11:00 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**10:40-11:10 MORNING COFFEE**

**11:15-12:15**

**SPECIALIST COURSES PART 2 of 4** - see pages 23-25

A Novel in Four Sessions – Anne Hamilton MCH

Writing Short Stories to Make Money - Della Galton BLY1

The Crafty Art of Creative Non-Fiction - Simon Whaley BLY2

Learning from The Laureates (Poetry) - Alison Chisholm TR

**12:20-12:50 SUNDAY WORSHIP** - see page 46 CH

**12:00-13:30 BAR OPEN**

**12:20-12:50 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**12:30-13:30 LUNCH**

**13:30-14:00 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

## COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

*Nominations for committee MUST be posted in the BALLOT BOX in the INFORMATION ROOM before **14:00 TOMORROW**.*

*See pages 47-48*

**14:15-15:15**

**WORKSHOPS** - see pages 32-38

Flash Fiction - Esther Chilton

MCH

The Comedy Tour - Phil Collins

BLY1

Becoming a Freelance Editor - Liz Hurst

BLY2

Performance & Drama - Bear Stephenson

TR

**15:20-15:50 AFTERNOON TEA**

**16:00-17:00**

**WORKSHOPS** - see pages 32-38

Public Speaking for Writers – Simon Hall

MCH

The Social Media Game - Jennifer Page

BLY1

Writerly Well-Being - Katherine Bolton

BLY2

Fulfilling Fillers – Maggie Cobbett

TR

**17:15-18:00**

**PAGE TO STAGE** - see page 42-44

MCH

**UNWIND YOUR MIND** - see page 46

BLY1

**18:00-00:00 BAR OPEN**

**18:00-18:30 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**18:30-19:30 DINNER**

**20:00-21:00**

**EVENING SPEAKERS** see page 39-42

MCH

Emma Purshouse & Steve Pottinger

**21:30-22:30**

**PROSE OPEN MIC** - see page 43

MCH

**THE BIG QUIZ** - see page 43

BLY1

**23:30**

**LAST ORDERS AT THE BAR**

# MONDAY

**08:00**

**LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS / LIFT UP YOUR PENS**

**MEDITATION BY THE LAKE** - see page 46

**08:00-09:00 BREAKFAST**

**09:30-10:30**

**SHORT COURSES PART 1 of 2** - see pages 25-32

When Life Happens – Write It! – Sharon Cook

MCH

Writing Romance – Jennifer Page

BLY1

Poetry Competitions – Emma Purshouse & Steve Pottinger

BLY2

How To Write for Screen – Izzy Searle

TR

**10:30-11:00 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**10:40-11:10 MORNING COFFEE**

**11:15-12:15**

**SHORT COURSES PART 2 of 2** - see pages 25-32

When Life Happens – Write It! – Sharon Cook

MCH

Writing Romance – Jennifer Page

BLY1

Poetry Competitions – Emma Purshouse & Steve Pottinger

BLY2

How To Write for Screen – Izzy Searle

TR

**12:00-13:30 BAR OPEN**

**12:20-12:50 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**12:30-13:30 LUNCH**

**13:30-14:00 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

## COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

*Nominations for committee MUST be posted in the BALLOT BOX in the INFORMATION ROOM before **14:00 TODAY**.*

*See pages 47-48*

**14:15-15:15**

**SPECIALIST COURSES PART 3 of 4** - see pages 23-25

A Novel in Four Sessions – Anne Hamilton MCH

Writing Short Stories to Make Money - Della Galton BLY1

The Crafty Art of Creative Non-Fiction – Simon Whaley BLY2

Learning from The Laureates (Poetry) – Alison Chisholm TR

**15:20-15:50 AFTERNOON TEA**

**16:00-17:00**

**SPECIALIST COURSES PART 4 of 4** - see pages 23-25

A Novel in Four Sessions – Anne Hamilton MCH

Writing Short Stories to Make Money - Della Galton BLY1

The Crafty Art of Creative Non-Fiction – Simon Whaley BLY2

Learning from The Laureates (Poetry) – Alison Chisholm TR

**17:15-18:00**

**PAGE TO STAGE REHERSALS** see page 42-44 MCH

**UNWIND YOUR MIND** - see page 46 BLY1

**18:00–18:30** Volunteers & Friends reception

ML

**18:00-00:00 BAR OPEN**

**18:00-18:30 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**18:30-19:30 DINNER**

**20:00–21:00**

**EVENING SPEAKER**

MCH

Dr Russell Wate – see pages 41-42

**21:30-22:30**

**BUSKERS NIGHT** – see page 44

MCH

**POETRY OPEN MIC** - see page 43

BLY1

**23:30 LAST ORDERS AT THE BAR**

## TUESDAY

**08:00**

**LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS / LIFT UP YOUR PENS**

**MEDITATION BY THE LAKE** - see page 46

**08:00-09:00 BREAKFAST**

**09:30-10:30**

**SHORT COURSES PART 1 of 2** - see pages 25-32

Authentic Crime Fiction – Dr Russell Wate

MCH

Own the Stage – Rob Gee

BLY1

Writer Beware! – Gerald Hornsby & Anita Belli

BLY2

Erotic Short Stories – Lucy Felthouse

TR

**10:30-11:00 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**10:40-11:10 MORNING COFFEE**

**11:15-12:15**

**SHORT COURSES PART 2 of 2** - see pages 25-32

Authentic Crime Fiction – Dr Russell Wate

MCH

Own the Stage – Rob Gee

BLY1

Writer Beware! – Gerald Hornsby & Anita Belli

BLY2

Erotic Short Stories – Lucy Felthouse

TR

**12:00-13:30 BAR OPEN**

**12:20-12:50 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**12:30-13:30 LUNCH**

**13:30-14:00 BOOK SHOP OPEN**

**14:15-15:15**

**WORKSHOPS** - see pages 32-38

Writing Competitions – Morgen Bailey

MCH

Reviewing the Situation – Julia Pattison

BLY1

Conversational Poetry – Glenis Moore

BLY2

Songs Spiration – Maria Hennings Hunt

TR

**15:20-15:50 AFTERNOON TEA**

**16:00-17:00**

**PAGE TO STAGE REHEARSALS (16:00 – 18:00)**

DS

**FREE TIME**

**17:15-18:00**

**UNWIND YOUR MIND** - see page 46

BLY1

**18:00-00:00 BAR OPEN**

**18:00-18:30 BOOK SHOP OPEN** (last chance to buy books!)

**18:30-19:30 DINNER**

**20:00-21:00**

**PAGE TO STAGE PERFORMANCES** - see page 44

DS

Our hugely popular scriptwriting competition performances. Vote for your favourites!

**22:00-00:00**

**FANCY DRESS EVENING & DISCO** - see page 44

BLY1/2

Theme **THE WILD WILD WEST** Prizes for Best Costumes!

**23:30**

**LAST ORDERS AT THE BAR**

# WEDNESDAY

**08:00**

**LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS / LIFT UP YOUR PENS**

**MEDITATION BY THE LAKE** - see page 46

**08:00-09:00 BREAKFAST**

**09:30-10:30**

**WORKSHOPS** - see pages 32-38

AI for Authors – Simon Hall

MCH

T'ai Chi & Qigong – Zana Frood

BLY1

Cosy Fantasy – Elizabeth Hopkinson

BLY2

Effective Listening – Heather Swash

TR

**10:40-11:10 MORNING COFFEE**

**11:15-12:15**

**SHORT COURSES PART 1 of 2** - see pages 25-32

Magic in the Archives – Dr Erica Canela

MCH

Through the Sensory Gates – Calvin Niles

BLY1

Editing Your Fiction – Morgen Bailey

BLY2

Write the Rainbow – Eden Stokes

TR

**12:00-13:30 BAR OPEN**

**12:30-13:30 LUNCH**

**14:15-15:15**

**SHORT COURSES PART 2 of 2** - see pages 25-32

Magic in the Archives – Dr Erica Canela

MCH

Through the Sensory Gates – Calvin Niles

BLY1

Editing Your Fiction – Morgen Bailey

BLY2

Write the Rainbow – Eden Stokes

TR

**15:20-15:50 AFTERNOON TEA**

**15:20-15:50 FIRST YEAR'S FEEDBACK SESSION**

ML

**16:00-17:00**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** - see page 48

MCH

**17:15-18:00**

**FREE TIME**

**18:00-00:00 BAR OPEN**

**18:00-18:30 PRE DINNER DRINKS** - see page 44

LWN/BAR/VIN

**18:30-19:30 LAST NIGHT DINNER**

**20:00-21:00**

**FAREWELL EVENING** - see page 45

MCH

**AWARDS**

**PRIZE GIVING**

**RAFFLE**

**BAGGY BRA** – Award Winning short play - see page 45

**COLLECTION FOR THE HAYES** – if you have some spare cash, please pop it in the collection buckets as you leave the hall as a 'thank you' to all the Hayes staff.

**21:30**

**LAST NIGHT & FIREPIT SINGALONG** - see page 45

Make the most of the last night to share a few drinks and, if you fancy it – a bit of a sing song with old & new Summer School friends.

**23:30**

**LAST ORDERS AT THE BAR**

# THURSDAY

**07:45–08:45**

## **EARLY BREAKFAST**

**09.00**

## **ON THE BUSES!**

If you're travelling on the coach, please ensure that you are ready outside the MAIN HOUSE reception by this time. If you're not traveling by coach – come down to wave off your new friends! The coach WILL depart sharply at 09:15 as many delegates have ongoing train connections.

**10:00**

## **CHECK OUT TIME**

Check that you have not left any valuables in your room. Please leave your KEYCARD in the reception area of your accommodation block – or at the front desk in the Main House. Please pop your unwanted lanyards/name card holders in the box in reception.

## **HAVE A SAFE JOURNEY HOME & SEE YOU NEXT YEAR!**

The Summer School will be held between the 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> August 2026. Bookings open on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

Look out for our **EARLY BIRD OFFER** on social media or subscribe to our Newsletter.

## **FEEDBACK**

We value ALL feedback on your Writers' Summer School experience. You will be emailed a special link to our FEEDBACK FORM in the week following the school. Please take a few minutes to fill it in and give us your thoughts and suggestions.

If you write a blog – we invite you to write a review of your week and remember to post the link onto our social media pages too.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

We love social media for keeping in touch with everyone! Following us on social media and sharing information helps us reach a wider audience and spread the word about this unique writers' holiday experience. We are active on FACEBOOK, XITTER and INSTAGRAM. We can't remember the log-in for Linked-in – if you know who might know, let us know!

### **FACEBOOK GROUP:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/170718598398>

### **FACEBOOK PAGE:**

<https://www.facebook.com/SwanwickWriters>

### **XITTER:**

@swanwickwriters

### **INSTAGRAM:**

swanwickwritersschool

### **LINKED-IN:**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/swanwick-writers-979198163/>

### **WEBSITE:**

<https://www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk/>



# LEARNING PROGRAMME

## COURSES & WORKSHOPS PROGRAMME

Due to the limitations of space in this Programme Guide – we recommend you check the website for more detailed information on each course and Tutor Bio's or visit the Information Room.

## SPECIALIST COURSES (4 PARTS)

Our Specialist Courses form the backbone of the learning programme. There are FOUR to choose from. Specialist courses are made up of four 60-minute sessions. Sessions 1 & 2 on Sunday and Sessions 3 & 4 on Monday. Choices this year are:

### A NOVEL IN FOUR SESSIONS

MCH

#### Course Tutor: Anne Hamilton

'The Skeleton Story' technique helps the author create an outline comprising setting, character(s) and quest. This is the forerunner of a synopsis and a framework to build upon.

'Writing The End' (or a draft of it) at an early stage is a psychological boost. It offers the author a clear endpoint to work towards. Participants will write a good ending - and consider the importance of that good ending being also a beginning.

'Pre-Emptying Saggy Centres' interrogates plot. The author will develop 4-6 key scenes that hold the story and in doing so ensure that character (development) is integral.

'Beginning A Beginning' deliberately comes last. Understanding the difference between The Beginning and A Beginning is essential, especially if the author is a perfecter or a procrastinator. It will allow a participant to progress to becoming a 'finisher'.

Participants will be encouraged to use their own material throughout, so that at the end of the four sessions they will have a clear body of work and a plan for going forward. Each session will be workshop-based with the opportunity to write and to share that writing within the group.

'Homework' will be set following each session. This is not obligatory but will enhance the course experience by allowing participants to seek feedback on their writing.

## **WRITING SHORT STORIES THAT MAKE MONEY**

BLY1

**Course Tutor: Della Galton**

This is a course of practical tips and hints to help you write your best stories and increase your chances of success. It's an interactive course, workshop based. Be prepared to have fun.

Suitable for beginners or more experienced writers. Covering the following:

1. Where can I sell a short story these days?
2. Markets for fiction.
3. Good short story competitions, and how to improve your chances.
4. What's the X Factor and how can I get it?

## **THE CRAFTY ART OF CREATIVE NON-FICTION**

BLY2

**Course Tutor: Simon Whaley**

The Crafty Art of Creative Non-Fiction will explore how to bring true stories to life to make them more engaging, fun, and interesting to readers.

Whether you write memoir, travel, nature and landscape, food, true crime, or other non-fiction genres, drawing upon creative non-fiction techniques can make your writing zing!

This four-part course is suitable for those who are new to creative non-fiction, as well as those who want to explore the genre further.

There will be writing opportunities in each workshop to put into practice the lessons learned.

We'll explore what creative non-fiction is and isn't, and focus on four key creative non-fiction writing blocks that will bring drama to your work.

Creative non-fiction is about true stories, told well.

## **LEARNING FROM THE LAUREATES (POETRY)**

TR

**Course Tutor: Alison Chisholm**

This course will offer fresh ideas and techniques to new and experienced poets, linking them to the work of poets laureate from John Dryden to Simon Armitage.

This course is intended for anyone who enjoys poetry, regardless of their level of experience. Each session stands alone, so people who wish to attend just one or two sessions will benefit from them.

Everyone who attends will find their poetry skills enhanced by the points of technique being addressed, information about beginning and developing new poems, and consideration of putting a fresh spin onto their work, and a final polish.

Tuition includes talks, discussions, text study, group work and individual exercises. The course will end with a final Q&A opportunity.

## **SHORT COURSES (2 PARTS)**

There are 12 Short Courses to choose from during the week. Short Courses are two hours long in total – each session is an hour with a morning or afternoon break in between them.

## **WHEN LIFE HAPPENS – WRITE IT!**

MCH

**Course Tutor: Sharon Cook**

Life happens ... As writers we often try to make sense of the why, the what ifs and the how comes. But what if we could write it down, shape it into prose, even a book, help other people by sharing our own experiences?

There are some incredible memoirs out there, and many of them are not written by celebrities, but by ordinary people like you and me.

During this two-part course you will have the opportunity to explore the possibilities of your own memoir, learn some simple approaches to coax out your own story and gain inspiration from others as we share approaches to life writing.

This two-part course will include crafting a short piece of memoir to share, along with discussion about mainstream memoirs and moral dilemmas, how memory plays a part in shaping what we write. At the very least, by drilling down into our own experiences, we can help deepen character development in our fiction.

Your story has value. Are you brave enough to share it with others?

## **WRITING ROMANCE**

BLY1

### **Course Tutor: Jennifer Page**

In this intensive two-hour workshop, we'll explore how to write romance that stands out in today's crowded market. We'll focus on creating genuine characters and emotional connections that resonate with readers. We'll explore different tropes, and discuss how to use them in fresh, original ways. Through practical exercises and discussion, we'll discover how to create realistic obstacles that keep our couples apart whilst keeping our stories grounded in truth.

We'll learn to write sizzling chemistry that leaps off the page, craft meet-cutes that hook readers from the first scene, and develop character arcs that lead to deeply satisfying emotional payoffs. We'll explore how to balance internal and external conflicts, write dialogue that crackles with tension, and create those vital moments that tug at readers' heartstrings.

By the end of this workshop, we'll have the tools to craft romance that feels both inventive and true-to-life, with characters readers can't help falling in love with and stories that linger in their hearts.

Suitable for both aspiring and intermediate writers looking to take their romance writing to the next level.

## **POETRY COMPETITIONS**

BLY2

### **Course Tutors: Emma Purshouse & Steve Pottinger**

How should you approach poetry competitions? What goes on behind the scenes? Why do we have to pay fees to enter? What does a judge actually do? These competitions, they make a fortune, don't they!? A workshop designed to answer some of your questions about the business of poetry competitions. We'll also be honing our work to give it

the best chance in a competition, considering some of the competitions currently open for entries, and having a go at a simulated judging activity with a view to considering how that experience might help us to see the potential for success in our own work.

First hour: a discussion about the nature of poetry competitions; considering rules and regulations; practical judging activity.

Second hour: a chance to prepare poems for entry into current competitions.

## **HOW TO WRITE FOR SCREEN**

TR

### **Course Tutor: Izzy Searle**

Love TV and films but don't know how to write them?

This course by award-winning writer Izzy Searle will teach you all the screenwriting basics - from learning the strict scriptwriting format, to brainstorming what ideas make a hit short film, to finding out how a crew onset uses a script to create a film.

This short course will begin with an introduction to screenwriting, guiding you through slug lines, action lines, and dialogue. Izzy will workshop how to write natural dialogue that follows realistic imperfect idiolects. She will also discuss suggested structures and how exciting locations can bring a fresh energy to a scene. Next, the class will bounce around ideas for a 2-3 hander short film.

Participants will brainstorm characters and plots for their script. Everyone will leave with an idea they could develop further at home. Next, Izzy will discuss how scripts are broken down and used on set. A screenplay is a recipe and the director is the chef. Filmmaking is collaborative, ever-changing, creative yet technical.

This short course will give you an insight into the filmmaking process from script to screen. Finally, Izzy will share some screenwriting opportunities: recommended competitions, upcoming submissions, and links to curated writing opportunity lists.

## **AUTHENTIC CRIME FICTION**

MCH

### **Course Tutor: Dr Russell Wate**

Russell will outline the fundamentals of a murder investigation and get the course delegates to participate in working through various investigation strategies, thinking about writing about a victim, offenders, interviews, court cases etc. This will allow delegates to walk in a homicide detective's shoes.

To support the learning, it will include a section on the high-profile cases Russell has been involved in and the investigation into the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman by Ian Huntley, which he played a lead role in.

The second part will talk through Russell's methodology for writing his crime fiction books and discuss the different crime investigations involved in the books that he has had published in the DCI Alexander McFarlane series (four books in the series).

Discussions through this section will also include any books delegates are working on and hopefully suggestions on how to write an authentic crime mystery will be discussed.

## **OWN THE STAGE**

BLY1

### **Course Tutor: Rob Gee**

Hone your performance skills and deliver the performance your writing deserves.

The session contains numerous practical exercises designed to improve confidence when talking to groups of people.

All styles of writing welcome.

Bring your material to life with an armoury of ideas and exercises designed to improve your confidence in all manner of public speaking. Includes handy hints for managing anxiety and channelling stage fright.

Clever ways to win over audiences and tips on how to read without stumbling, memorising your words and even handling unexpected events and hecklers.

## **WRITER BEWARE!**

BLY2

### **Course Tutors: Gerald Hornsby & Anita Belli**

We all love writing, but writing with a purpose or goal can sometimes be difficult. Thankfully, there is help available - through a plethora of devices, software programmes or services. But which of these can be trusted? You may think you can spot a scam at a hundred paces, but some organisations have developed clever ways to separate you from your money!

Gerald Hornsby and Anita Belli, with decades of writing and publishing experience between them, will chart a course through this maze, highlighting the good and the not-so-good, and hopefully help you to protect yourselves from unscrupulous ne'er-do-wells!

We will discuss and explain some of the ways in which companies, and sometimes other writers, try to separate you from your money. What computer software / hardware do you need? Is an editor necessary? What's the point of an agent? How much does it cost to be an author in 2025? How much should I invest in my writing?

And then we'll move onto the thorny issue of publication. So many of us want a traditional publishing deal, but is it the best option for all of us? Is the publishing decision a simple trad / self-pub choice, but should we think of other, perhaps hybrid, options?

We will discuss openly and honestly the potential costs of getting a book published, and are they good value?

## **EROTIC SHORT STORIES**

TR

### **Course Tutor: Lucy Felthouse**

Are you looking to try your hand (or should that be pen?) at something different? Perhaps even risqué? Maybe you've written erotic short stories before but haven't been successful at getting any published. Whatever your circumstances, if you're looking to make your erotic short stories stand out (in a good way) then this short course is for you.

The sessions will be led by long-time writer and editor, Lucy Felthouse. With well in excess of one hundred erotic short stories published, and countless others edited, Lucy has plenty of experience in this field. Pick

up hints and tips, hear some examples, take part in some fun exercises to get your creative juices flowing, and have the opportunity to ask questions.

The first session will consist of an introduction, some hints and tips, an example and some time for working on your own piece. The second session will provide the opportunity for another exercise, group discussion and a Q&A section.

*\*Note: Expect bad language and sexual references. This course will be a safe space, nothing will be shared outside of it, and delegates will not be expected to read out their work unless they want to.*

## **MAGIC IN THE ARCHIVES**

MCH

### **Course Tutor: Dr Erica Canela**

Magic in the Archives is a short course that will inspire you to explore the endless possibilities that lie waiting in local archives, museums, and online repositories like The National Archives. This course is for fiction and non-fiction writers, across all genres.

When we think about archives, we often think of dusty basements and dusty books. Some may see these as places for academics and genealogists only. This could not be further from the truth. Archives are treasure troves of primary sources (documents and objects) and untapped creative writing potential.

Erica will share her own discoveries of wild and wonderful stories she has accidentally discovered in her years as an academic historian. She will show you how to make the most of these incredible resources and how to approach the people behind the desks, the gatekeepers, otherwise known as Archivists. She will show you how to start and which source materials will provide the most inspiration.

You can create a backstory for a defendant in a 17th century trial or write from the perspective of a widow whose husband left their eldest son a failing farm and a nice set of silver spoons. A collection of wartime photos can inspire a short story... when she says the possibilities and inspiration are endless, she means it!

## **THROUGH THE SENSORY GATES**

BLY1

### **Course Tutor: Calvin Niles**

Discover the untapped potential of your senses to elevate your storytelling. In these transformative sessions, you'll be guided on a journey beyond sight and mind to the rich sensory landscape that shapes your narratives. Learn to deeply listen to the stories woven into the world around you and awaken a vibrant, creative connection to your work.

Part 1: For many, vision dominates—but storytelling thrives when all senses are engaged. Together, we'll embark on a playful, deliberate exploration of touch, sound, smell, and taste to uncover hidden channels where fresh stories are waiting to emerge.

Part 2: Transform your sensory discoveries into vibrant words. Whether creating new pieces or re-imagining existing work, you'll share and workshop your narrative developments with a supportive group.

The sessions will be novel for many, fun for most and engaging for all. Leave feeling reinvigorated and ready to channel new energy into your projects.

## **EDITING YOUR FICTION**

BLY2

### **Course Tutor: Morgen Bailey**

A fun way to learn some of the most common 'mistakes' writers make and 'make your writing shine'.

Over the course of editing 300+ manuscripts, Morgen Bailey quickly learned that many writers, especially early in their career, make similar 'mistakes'. With the simple tools Morgen provides, you can make your writing shine.

This short course will focus on points of view, tenses and characters – clarification and improvement exercises and discussions, grabbing your reader (beginnings and pacing) –

How to write a gripping opening; making readers turn the page and writing techniques – showing not telling (discussion and highlighter pen exercise!) for creating dazzling description and dynamic dialogue.

We'll also look at quick editing techniques; from a purpose-written piece and discover what is vital to maintain the integrity of the story and what can be discarded.

## **WRITE THE RAINBOW**

TR

**Course Tutor: Eden Stokes**

Dedicated to introducing and expanding knowledge of diversity and inclusion in writing, this course will help you to navigate writing characters who fall within the LGBTQ+ community.

With key information about up-to-date terminology and a judgement free environment to explore writing queer characters, this course promises a deeper understanding of writing protected characteristics.

## **WORKSHOPS**

### **FLASH FICTION FUNDAMENTALS**

MCH

**Tutor: Esther Chilton**

So, what is flash fiction, and how does it differ to other types of short story? We'll take a look at what it is, together with some examples of very short flash fiction. Then we'll delve into some longer flash fiction pieces, before going into them in more depth.

Even though it's flash fiction, you still need to pull the reader in at the beginning, build tension through the middle as you head towards the climax and then finish with a bang.

Lots of tips will be offered along the way to guide you in creating a flash fiction masterpiece. There will be an opportunity to share your work with other course participants, with prizes on offer, as well as a Q&A session. The emphasis is on fun and you'll be able to have a go at writing a few of your own stories.

### **THE COMEDY TOUR**

BLY1

**Tutor: Phil Collins**

In this workshop Phil Collins will act as your tour guide as we take a ride through the basics of comedy and ask: how do I write something funny?

We'll start off with puns and have a go at creating some ourselves. We'll look at the structure of jokes, how we use misdirection and punch lines as well as the magic of three. We'll look at the importance of delivery and test out what works best.

Then open the comedy toolbox and see what else we can use other than dialogue. We'll look at characters, what traits make for good comedy and generate ideas to create some of our own.

If you have an interest in how comedy works, or you want to inject a little humour into your writing, then come along for the ride with some laughs along the way

## **BECOMING A FREELANCE EDITOR**

BLY2

**Tutor: Liz Hurst**

Are you fed up with the corporate 9-5?

Do you resent the time you spend at work because you'd rather be doing something else?

Have you thought about a change of career into a creative life?

Freelance editing and/or proofreading might well be the change you're looking for.

Join freelance editor, Liz Hurst, as she teaches you all the tips and tricks of the trade such as is freelance editing right for you? What training and qualifications do you need? Setting up your business and finding clients, as well as marketing, rates, and how to follow a client brief.

The workshop will also include resources, overcoming challenges and taking care of yourself.

## **WRITING FOR PERFORMANCE & DRAMA**

TR

**Tutor: Bear Stephenson**

Want to know where to start with writing for film, theatre or performance art? Then step this way and discover the endless possibilities of drama and performing today!

This course has been designed to bring to life and demystify what it “might” actually mean to write for performance and how the spheres of writing and performing are connected.

Can writing a book be an act of performance? What makes something performative? Can performance help to heal the world? Where does performance end and reality begin? Is reality the same as truth?

This workshop offers a thoughtful and accessible journey through the meaning and making of performance from multiple perspectives.

## **PUBLIC SPEAKING FOR WRITERS**

MCH

**Tutor: Simon Hall**

Publishers love authors who are happy to go out and talk about their work. But speaking to a crowd can be scary.

Discover the secrets of success for public speaking, so you can go out and promote your books with substance and style... Leading to lots of lovely sales!

## **THE SOCIAL MEDIA GAME**

BLY1

**Tutor: Jennifer Page**

Join author and former BBC TV producer Jennifer Page for this workshop adventure that will transform your online presence from a monotonous monopoly into a thrilling, multi-dimensional game of engagement!

Forget unboxing videos and review sharing - we're talking DIY book-themed crafts, recipes inspired by your stories, and interactive quizzes that'll have your readers rolling the dice to engage with your content.

Get ready to turn your social media strategy into a best-selling game!

## **WRITERLY WELL BEING**

BLY2

**Tutor: Katherine Bolton**

The aim of this workshop is to bring harmony and joy to your writing practice, and balance both the physical and emotional sides to our lives, and therefore our writing.

By assessing, recognising and understanding how our brains work, we can use this knowledge to our advantage so that we can start to work as a team with our brain. This then enables us to overcome procrastination.

You'll be given tools to learn how to let go of unimportant things, events and thoughts so we can concentrate on the project in hand. We will be using CBT Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, some EFT Emotional Freedom Technique (Also known as Tapping) to understand how we can move away from the constant and distracting chatter in our brains to have a more focussed and creative approach to our writing and also our life.

Understanding and learning the benefits of our physical health while spending so long sitting and using our minds and hands to create our writing projects. Learn how writing is also a physical challenge and the impact this has on our body and posture.

## **FULFILLING FILLERS**

TR

**Tutor: Maggie Cobbett**

Anecdotes? Cuttings? Jokes? Opinions? Photos? Queries? Tips?

These are just some of the types of 'fillers' not only welcomed but also rewarded with cash or useful prizes by a wide range of publications.

We shall look at examples of each and then how to give yours the best possible chance of success in the current market.

## **WRITING COMPETITIONS**

MCH

**Tutor: Morgen Bailey**

There is a lot more to writing competitions than writers realise.

What kind of competitions are there? Why should you enter? What are the typical rules? Why is there a fee? What kind of prizes are there?

What are the judges looking for? What should you avoid? What makes a great competition story?

Join competition judge, columnist and entrant Morgen Bailey who shares her experiences of competitions from both sides.

## **REVIEWING THE SITUATION**

BLY1

**Tutor: Julia Pattison**

Back in 2001 I was asked by one of the journalists at my local paper, The Pocklington Post, if I'd like to review plays occasionally in York, as she was often not able to attend, and I haven't looked back since.

In this workshop I'll share my experience of writing reviews and will give you the inside story on what's involved. I'll show you what to look for when reviewing. You'll hear examples of my own reviews and then get the chance to write a review of your own using tips I've suggested. You might like to send reviews to your local paper, or create a Blog!

## **CONVERSATIONAL POETRY**

BLY2

**Tutor: Glenis Moore**

Not many people seem to read and enjoy poetry nowadays and some complain that the language and/or structure used can be incomprehensible.

This workshop will, therefore, discuss 'conversational' poetry, which uses everyday language and images in a poetic way.

The session will start off by looking at 'conversation' poetry as written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, and then at the 'conversational' style employed by such poets as Robert Frost.

'Conversational' poetry can have a hidden theme or idea within it but every reader should, nevertheless, be able to read and enjoy it even if they do not get the hidden idea.

Those attending will be encouraged to attempt a conversational style poem written as to a friend who is not a poet, using everyday language and images that the 'recipient' would understand.

## **SONGS SPIRATION**

TR

**Tutor: Maria Hennings Hunt**

Did you know that hidden inside the average three-and-a-half-minute pop song are brilliant story ideas, plot lines, characters, settings and even whole stories – if you know where to look?

If you are after some inspiration for a short story, novel or poem, or maybe you're after a setting? A plot line? A captivating character? Then look no further than the humble song lyric.

This is a fun, creative and interactive workshop where we get to listen to some fabulous music designed to get your juices flowing (so to speak). Bring along a pen and a notebook and be prepared to be AMAZED!

PS: This is NOT about writing songs lyrics!

## **AI FOR AUTHORS**

MCH

**Tutor: Simon Hall**

Artificial intelligence is the hot topic of our time, and it can be very useful for writers.

But!

You have to know how to use it - and how very much not to use it - to create content.

As we'll discover in this workshop, with the good, the bad, and the downright ugly of generative AI for authors.

## **T'AI CHI & QIJONG – WRITERS THAT MOVE**

BLY1

**Tutor: Zana Frood**

Writers often sit for long hours. A relaxed posture is important as this can prevent repetitive strain injuries for anyone spending a great deal of time at the computer, but.....movement is just as important.

Mobilising and maintaining energy plays a vital part in a writer's success and the process of writing can take tremendous concentration and perseverance. Some days this is harder than others.

Short, simple T'ai Chi (and Qigong) exercises can enhance energy that is flagging whilst at the same time inducing a pleasant state of relaxation that allows for flow. T'ai Chi leads to the integration of complementary things – left brain (logic) and right brain (intuition), form and function, body and mind and the increased creativity is derived from this. Many people who practice T'ai Chi are also involved in the creative arts.

## **COSY FANTASY**

BLY2

**Tutor: Elizabeth Hopkinson**

Cosy fantasy is having a moment. Titles like *Legends & Lattes* and *Dallergut Dream Department Store* are giving us a gentle escape from everyday life, where the adventure is all about the friends you make along the way.

Join veteran Swanwicker Elizabeth Hopkinson for a cosy fantasy workshop using prompts from *Wanderhome* by Jay Dragon - a pastoral fantasy role-playing game about travelling animal folk.

Will you be a crocodile peddler of clouds and dreams, your fingers adorned with rings? Or a donkey accompanied by a beetle, carrying fish, pearls and a small, forgotten god on its back? Maybe you'll arrive in a university for dormice, with a witchy professor of the healing arts. Or an island monastery of hermit crabs that knit jumpers from seaweed. You might run into an old friend in an unexpected place. Or find the perfect spot to finally settle down.

Join us around the virtual campfire as we create characters and settings that can travel home with you.

## **EFFECTIVE LISTENING**

TR

**Tutor: Heather Swash**

Listening. . . apparently we've been doing it since the womb. But are we as good at listening as we could, or indeed should be?

Research shows that on the whole we're not.

We live in a world of endless distractions and it's a proven fact that attention spans are shrinking across the board.

This one hour workshop will show the importance of effective listening for everyone and highlight why it's imperative for writers.

We'll pool ideas for sharpening these skills and look at the impact that Audio Books can have on our writing, at the same time as providing a pleasurable, painless work out for overloaded brains.

# EVENING SPEAKERS

## EVENING SPEAKERS

Please be seated in the **MAIN CONFERENCE HALL** by 20:00. The Vice Chair will make any announcements before the speaker. Once the speaker has started, you will not be allowed into the hall. Please remain seated until the speaker has left the hall. Most speakers will go directly from the hall to the **INFORMATION ROOM** for book signing.

## SATURDAY: Simon Hall



### A WRITING LIFE IS A STORYTELLING LIFE.

In this talk, we'll celebrate the remarkable power of stories to move us, inspire us, absorb us and entertain us. With anecdotes ranging from a poignant insight into the secret of success, to the most ridiculous extremes required to get a news story on TV... Writing Stories will explore the art of how to write stories, along with the stories of writing life.

### ABOUT SIMON

Simon Hall created and leads an award-winning course in writing, storytelling and public speaking skills at the University of Cambridge.

He has 20 books published, ranging from crime fiction to business. The most recent, *Compelling Communication* (Cambridge University Press, 2024) accompanies his university course.

One of Simon's proudest achievements is the number of aspiring writers he has helped into publication, including many from Swanwick.

Previously, Simon was a BBC Television and Radio News Correspondent and presenter for 20 years.

You might be interested to know that Simon also once played football for the same manager who coached the legendary Pele, although to rather less impressive effect.

## **SUNDAY: Emma Purshouse & Steve Pottinger**

### **LIFE IN A 21st CENTURY**

#### **GARRET - THE ADMIN YEARS!**

Writers...they laze around all day, gazing through windows, writing the occasional bon mot and quaffing laudanum, don't they? Award-winning writers Emma Purshouse and Steve Pottinger talk about making a living as poets and performers at a grassroots level.



In this entertaining talk they'll blow the lid off the jar of popular myths associated with writing, wax lyrical about their punk attitude towards the arts, and share one or two poems along the way.

### **ABOUT EMMA**

Emma Purshouse is a writer, performance poet, experienced workshop facilitator and poetry competition judge. She performs at spoken word nights and festivals across the UK, often using her native Black Country dialect. She was the first Poet Laureate for the City of Wolverhampton.

Her children's poetry collection 'I Once Knew a Poem Who Wore a Hat' (Fair Acre Press) won the poetry section of the Rubery Book award in 2016. Her poetry publication 'Close' (Offa's Press) was shortlisted for the same award in 2018. Her debut novel 'Dogged' is published by Ignite Books.

She is one third of the poetry collective 'Poets, Prattlers, and Pandemonialists' who run slams, poetry nights, workshops, and poetry projects across the English Midlands.

Emma's poem 'Catherine Eddowes Tin Box as a Key Witness' came 3rd in the National Poetry Competition in 2021. Her latest collection is called 'It's Honorary, Bab' (Offa's Press 2022).

Emma is currently editor of The Blackcountryman magazine.

## ABOUT STEVE

Steve Pottinger is a writer, poet, and workshop facilitator, as well as being a founding member of Wolverhampton arts collective Poets, Prattlers, and Pandemonialists, who run poetry competitions on behalf of literary festivals in the North and Midlands.

He has performed the length and breadth of the country – including appearances at StAnza, WOMAD, Ledbury, and Morecambe Poetry Festival – and his work regularly appears online in CultureMatters, Yorkshire Bylines, and the Morning Star.

His poetry – in written, video, or audio format – has won prizes or been commended in multiple poetry competitions.

His seventh volume of poems, 'snapshots from the fall of home' published by Ignite Books, is out now.

## MONDAY: Dr Russell Wate



### HOW TO CATCH A MURDERER

This talk covers a little bit about Russell's career, firstly as a uniform officer and then as a detective. In particular as a homicide detective, covering techniques used including the Soham murders and the deaths of Holly and Jessica.

The talk concludes with how his fiction books incorporate the techniques of a real homicide detective in his fictional detective DCI McFarlane

## ABOUT RUSSELL

Russell is a very experienced, now retired senior homicide detective. He worked as the senior investigating officer in over 100 major crime cases, not only murders but also international kidnapping cases and large-scale paedophile enquiries. He has received 14 commendations from judges and chief police officers for some of these cases.

He is best known both nationally and Internationally for his work on safeguarding but also in relation to the investigation into the deaths of

Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman - the two ten-year-old girls who were murdered by Ian Huntley in 2002.

He is also well-known both in the UK and abroad for his work relating to the investigation of child deaths and safeguarding children. He completed a doctorate where his thesis was on, 'The Investigation of Child Death: a balanced approach between sensitivity and the investigative mindset'. It has been published and read widely. He carries out safeguarding reviews on high profile cases around the country.

Russell is also the author of four crime novels 'The DCI Alexander McFarlane crime series' where his investigative knowledge, and his love of travel comes to the fore. He is frequently being asked to and carries out after dinner talks and training sessions on his investigative career and also how to write an authentic crime novel.

## EVENING ENTERTAINMENT

Throughout the week we have a wide variety of evening events for you to enjoy. These range from our Big Quiz, to informal writing themed events, as well as open mic nights and the much anticipated Fancy Dress Evening (we writers know how to dress up!).

### **HOW TO SIGN UP for PROSE, POETRY or BUSKERS**

Due to the popularity of the open mic nights – would be performers and participants are asked to SIGN UP for a slot. If you would like to read, sing or play, please visit the INFORMATION ROOM and pop your details into the relevant box. Names will be drawn at random and those names selected to perform will be posted on the NOTICE BOARD.

## PAGE TO STAGE

Page to Stage is our 'play in three days' event, where we take six short scripts, submitted and selected in advance by attending delegates, we cast them, add a director and then over the course of three days prepare a rehearsed reading/performance for Tuesday evening. If you would like to take part – either as an actor or director – please come along to the Main Conference Hall on Sunday afternoon to find out how you can get involved – no experience is necessary! We present our own awards

called the 'Swannies', to the BEST ACTORS, BEST DIRECTORS and WRITERS – as voted by the audience on Tuesday evening.  
Hosts: Neil Zoladkiewicz, Phil Collins and Lesley Deschner.

## SATURDAY

### CATCH UP TIME

A perfect first night opportunity to relax in the bar after the main welcome and evening speaker and catch up with old friends or chat to new ones before the week begins. Or take the chance to have an early night – we all have a busy week ahead!

## SUNDAY

### PROSE OPEN MIC

MCH

Calling all those who consider their work to fall somewhere between Poetry and Song. Our popular Prose Open Night offers a brilliant opportunity to share your work with others. If you would like to read (up to 300 word/five minutes max), please see page 42 for sign up details. Hosted by: Jennifer Wilson & Maggie Cobbett

### THE BIG QUIZ

BLY1

No dimmed lights, black armchairs or starters for ten – just an entertaining and wide-ranging quiz. Come and test both your Literary knowledge and your General Knowledge in our popular quiz! Teams of four – six (we can make up teams on the night) are put to the challenge in this fun and easy (well, relatively!) quiz night. There will be prizes for the best team. Bring a drink join the fun! Quizmaster: Cathy Grimmer

## MONDAY

### POETRY OPEN MIC

BLY1

Calling all poets! Our 'open mic' session is a fantastic opportunity to share your work with other poets or an ideal opportunity to be entertained. Bring a drink, find a seat and enjoy this relaxed and informal read-around. If you would like to read (up to 300 word/five minutes max). Please see page 42 for sign-up details.  
Hosted by Alison Chisholm

## **BUSKERS' NIGHT**

MCH

Our Buskers' Night is one of our most popular evening events. Grab yourself a drink from the bar and come along to watch. If you would like to perform - sign up (see page 42) and if your name is picked you will be invited to perform one song – possibly two – depending on time and popularity. A PA is provided if you need one and we have a few talented 'resident' guitar/instrument players who would be happy to accompany you. Newcomers most welcome! Hosted by Phil Collins & Julia Pattison

## **TUESDAY**

### **PAGE TO STAGE PERFORMANCES**

DS

Our hugely popular scriptwriting competition where the winning plays that were cast on Sunday are performed tonight in the **DERBYSHIRE SUITE**. There are six five-minute plays for you to enjoy – three comedy and three drama. At the end of the performances, you will get the opportunity to vote for your favourites. Please come along and support the actors, directors and writers.

### **THEMED FANCY DRESS EVENING & DISCO**

BLY1/2

Our Fancy Dress Evening theme this year is the **WILD WILD WEST**. We encourage everyone to get into the spirit – from full on dressing up to perhaps just a hat or scarf – but it is not compulsory. Pop along for a bit of a boogie whatever you are wearing. Requests welcome. There will be prizes for the best costumes. DJ: Tiger Pine

## **WEDNESDAY**

### **PRE DINNER 'PRINKS' PARTY**

On our last evening we traditionally all gather for pre-dinner drinks (Prinks) on the LAWN at the back of the main house (weather permitting!). If it's raining, we hold it the BAR / MAIN LOUNGE / VINERY. Please join us and feel free to 'dress-up' for this event if you would like to.

## LAST NIGHT AWARDS & FAREWELL

MCH

Come along and join us after dinner for our last evening together. We will be presenting the 'Swannies' to the winners of our Page to Stage scriptwriting competition and performances, plus all the other awards for competitions run during the week. We also draw our **RAFFLE** for a FREE place next year, plus other surprise prizes for the runners up. A fitting end to what we are sure has been a fantastic week. ☺ The Awards Presentation will be followed by our special last night sketch:

### BAGGY BRA



This warm and light-hearted short play explores the importance of giving breasts the care and attention they deserve - set against a backdrop of rising economic pressures.

Written by returning TOPWRITER, Izzy Searle, Baggy Bra has sold out in venues across the country and has won several awards as well as raising awareness and money for breast cancer charities.

### FIREPIT SING-A-LONG

Last chance to get together with all your writing friends – old and new and have a good old fashioned sing song around the firepit. If it's raining – bring an umbrella! Hosted by Andy Cain.

## OTHER EVENTS

### **MEDITATION BY THE LAKE**

**Led by Katherine Bolton**

Each morning at 08:00, enjoy a short tranquil meditation in the fresh and beautiful air surrounding the lake. A chance to set your mind and body ready for the day with some gentle breathing and stillness. If it's raining this session will be held in the TISSINGTON ROOM,

### **LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS**

BLY1

**Co-ordinator: Maria Dorman**

Every morning at 08:00 – except Sunday (see below), we invite you to share 15 minutes of relaxed, non-denominational reflection. Each day is different - anything from traditional hymns and readings to sharing a particular poem, prayer or piece of music.

### **LIFT UP YOUR PENS**

BLY2

**Co-ordinator: Phil Collins**

Four pre-breakfast sessions aimed at anyone who enjoys – or even relishes – early morning writing. The 08:00 sessions will be in the general areas of creative expression, writing development, personal empowerment, sheer inspiration and fun!

### **UNWIND YOUR MIND**

BLY1

**Led by Zana Lamont**

Is your head buzzing after all the courses and workshops? Join Zana as we listen to some beautiful music, perhaps do some gentle movement or stretching and replenish body, mind and soul. Visit that deep place of peace and tranquillity where the seeds of creativity lie. You will leave relaxed, refreshed, energised and maybe even inspired. Sessions are held Sunday, Monday & Tuesday at 17:15.

### **SUNDAY WORSHIP**

**Led by Fiona Lloyd**

A short Christian non-denominational service will be held in the CHAPEL on Sunday between 12:20 and 12:50 for those who would like to come along.

# YOUR 2025 COMMITTEE

The Writers' Summer School is a Registered Charity (No.1168531) and we strive to uphold the original ethos of the School which means that all our tutors and delegates gather together to share knowledge, passion and enthusiasm for the craft of writing, giving support to others on their writing journeys and forming lasting friendships with other writers.

The School is run entirely by volunteers and operates on a 'not-for-profit' basis. The committee is made up of just eight people who work throughout the year to put together the learning timetable, engage the speakers and tutors, organise all the extracurricular events, including all the morning activities and the evening entertainment. The committee also negotiate contracts with The Hayes, write and publish the programme booklet, maintain the website and promote the school through social media. During the School week - we are supported by a whole army of willing volunteers - which we are very grateful for.

## **CHAIR**

Keith Hinchy

## **VICE CHAIR**

Maria Hennings Hunt

## **SECRETARY**

Sarah Moore

## **TREASURER**

Sally Warr

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Phil Collins

Martin Lake

Andrew Roberts

Mary Latter

For more information on the committee, please see the website.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 76th Writers' Summer School ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**WEDNESDAY 13th AUGUST 2025 AT 16.00**

MCH

## Agenda

1. Chairman's introduction
2. Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising (not arising elsewhere)
4. Election of Officers and Committee
5. Secretary's report
6. Adoption of Secretary's report
7. Treasurer's report
8. Adoption of Treasurer's report
9. The 77th Writers' Summer School
10. Any other business

Any delegate may stand for committee if they meet the following criteria:

- attended the Writers' Summer School on at least three occasions within the preceding seven years - including the School at which they have been nominated and the immediately preceding School.

Nominations must:

- be signed by the Nominee
- include the signatures of a Proposer and Seconder
- be submitted using the ballot box in the Information Room before

**14:00 on MONDAY 11<sup>th</sup> August.**

All Committee Members also act as Trustees of the School and are required to meet the eligibility criteria set out by the Charity Commission.

The 2024 A.G.M. Minutes, a copy of the School's Constitution, the balance sheet for the year ending 30th September 2024 and the details of the Charity Commission's eligibility criteria will be posted in the Information Room.

For more information on how to join the committee – see the website or talk to any existing committee member.

# GIVE SOMETHING BACK

The Writers' Summer School is a Registered Charity (No.1168531) – and run entirely by volunteers. If you loved your time at the Summer School and would like to give something back, see below for the many ways you can support us.

## **COURSE & WORKSHOP LEADERS**

Do you have the skills to lead a course or workshop? We pay for all courses & workshops. See the [PITCH A COURSE](#) page on the website.

## **AMBASSADORS & VOLUNTEERS**

Every year we need a wide range of willing helpers. From book shop assistants to raffle ticket sellers, evening event hosts and facilitators etc., and tech savvy helpers to ensure the power-points, presentations and mics are all working. If you would like to volunteer for a future School, please get in touch or tick the box on the **FEEDBACK FORM**.

## **STAND FOR COMMITTEE**

We need committee members with many different skills and experiences to make the Summer School dynamic and successful. More information is on page 47-48 - or talk to any of the current committee members.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

Sharing, liking or commenting on our social media helps us reach a wider audience. We are active on most of the social platforms, especially FACEBOOK - where you can like our PAGE and join our GROUP, which is exclusively for delegates past and present to keep in touch throughout the year. See page 22 for more information.

## **FLYERS**

We have a variety of promotional flyers and leaflets that you can download and print from the website and take to your writing group or local library.

## **WORD OF MOUTH**

Remember to tell other writers how good the Writers' Summer School is! A recommendation from a happy customer is the best form of advertising there is.

# FUNDRAISING

As a charity – we are always looking for ways to raise money for the school, so that we can continue to provide an affordable, inclusive and accessible experience for everyone. To support this endeavour, we have a variety of ways you can help.

## **GIVE AS YOU LIVE / EASYFUNDRAISING**

This is one of the easier ways to support us. You sign up and then shop online as normal with your favourite stores and they'll donate to us - all without charging you a penny more. Over the last few years, we have raised almost £2,000 from donations made through these schemes.

Just log onto the website: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> and search for *The Writers Summer School* and sign up – it's that easy!

If you're already supporting us this way – thank you! Keep on shopping!

## **FRIENDS OF SWANWICK**

Friends of Swanwick is a donation programme that supports the funding for our TopWrite scheme for younger writers and the Assisted Places scheme. You can make just a one off payment or you can donate regularly by standing order.

## **LEGACIES**

By leaving us a gift in your will or making a donation in memory of a loved Summer School friend, you can support us too. We have forms available for you to sign up for FRIENDS of SWANWICK and other donations located in the INFORMATION ROOM – or please speak to the Treasurer – Sally Warr.

## **THANK YOU**

The Committee would like to say a huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who supports us and volunteered to help out at this years' Summer School. Especially our ambassadors, bookshop staff, raffle ticket sellers, the tech team and all our evening and morning event hosts and facilitators. Thank you so much. We couldn't do it without you.



**DATES  
2026  
8th - 13th  
AUGUST**

**DATES  
2027  
7th - 12th  
AUGUST**

[www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk](http://www.swanwickwritersschool.org.uk)



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