

PRESS RELEASE Thu 29 July 2021



Wimbledon BookFest returns for “Sunset Festival” from 15 – 19 September - its second in-person festival of 2021 featuring over 40 live events

Wimbledon BookFest is back with its second live in-person festival of the summer. Sunset Festival is a five-day event comprising more than 40 talks, workshops and activities for public and schools audiences. It follows the huge success of Sunrise Festival in June – one of the first arts festivals to return to in-person events.

Sunset Festival will follow the same Covid-secure protocols used for Sunrise, taking place in reduced-capacity, open-sided marquees on Wimbledon Common. Pre-allocated seating and other safety measures remain in place to ensure the comfort and safety of audiences, artists and staff.

Sunset Festival offers a diverse programme catering to a wide range of interests. This year sees a particular focus on memoir and life writing, alongside fiction, poetry, current affairs, history, science, performing arts, the return of our popular sports night, an expanded programme for young people, and a number of participatory events:

- The “poet laureate of punk” **John Cooper Clarke** looks back over an extraordinary career as a musician, performer and fashion icon in his memoir, *I Wanna Be Yours*.
- At the age of 80, BAFTA-winning veteran of stage and screen **Miriam Margolyes OBE** presents her autobiography, which is as naughty and entertaining as you would expect.
- Continuing the theme of memoir, award-winning TV and radio presenter **Anita Rani** shares her personal story of growing up in Yorkshire and navigating multiple identities in *The Right Sort of Girl*. **Ify Adenuga**, mother of grime musicians Skepta and JME, shares a stage with **Yvonne Bailey-Smith**, mother of author Zadie Smith and rapper Doc Brown - two women following their children into the world of publishing.
- Much-loved celebrity chef and restaurateur **Rick Stein** has travelled the world in search of culinary perfection. Now he invites you into his own kitchen to share his favourite home-cooked recipes in his latest release, *Rick Stein at Home*.
- Labour MP **Jess Phillips** shares the realities of the House of Commons in her book, *Everything You Really Need to Know About Politics*. Political journalist **Robert Peston** and former Labour Deputy Leader **Tom Watson** go behind the scenes at Westminster. Former Liberal Democrat leader **Vince Cable** and journalist **Ian Williams** discuss the role of China as a global superpower.
- Regarded as the one of the greatest historical novelists of his generation, **Sebastian Faulks**, author of multi-million-selling *Birdsong*, introduces his latest book, the gripping *Snow Country*.

- Up-and-coming fiction writers include performance poet **Salena Godden** presenting her debut novel; **Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi** winner of the 2021 Jhalak Prize; bestselling author of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*, **Christy Lefteri**; and Turkey's most widely read female writer, **Elif Shafak**.
- Philosopher **A.C. Grayling** examines what we know about science, history and psychology – and what we are yet to discover – in his latest book *The Frontiers of Knowledge*. We also welcome the **QI Elves** – the team of writers and researchers behind the hit TV quiz show.
- Virtuoso cellist **Steven Isserlis CBE** discusses Bach's much-loved Cello Suites in an event for classical music fans. Russian ballet dancer **Sergei Polunin** talks about his remarkable career as the Royal Ballet's youngest ever principal dancer. British actor **Giles Terera MBE**, winner of an Olivier Award in 2018 for his role in hit musical *Hamilton*, appears alongside other members of the cast.
- Rugby legend and Wimbledon BookFest Patron **Brian Moore** returns for an informal evening of stories and conversation about the sport. Dog lovers and those new to dog ownership are sure to enjoy an event with Britain's best dog trainer **Graeme Hall** and dog walker **Kate McDougall**.
- Workshops and participatory events include an embroidery masterclass from the **Royal School of Needlework**; a guided meditation by 'shamen to the stars' **Jo Bowlby**; and the return of mindful pottery with **Lucy Davidson**. Audiences can take part in guided walks focusing on birdsong with **Charlie Corbett**, and a new walk by Peter Walker that shines a light on Wimbledon's historical links to slavery.
- This year's programme includes an expanded number of events for young people, including illustrator and former Children's Laureate **Chris Riddell** (best known for the *Ottoline, Goth Girl* and *Edge Chronicles* series); children's author and food writer **Sophie Dahl**; and author **Eoin McLaughlin** with illustrator **Polly Dunbar**.
- Sunset Festival will also feature the prize-giving ceremony for our **Young Writers 2021 Competition**, hosted by celebrated local author Michelle Paver. This year, entries were received from 72 schools across London in 15 categories. The overall winner is **Jonathan Esenga**, a Year 9 pupil at Raynes Park High School, for his powerful poem about the pandemic, *My Name is 2020*.
- A number of events for school audiences will be simultaneously live streamed, including **Emma Carroll** on the Cuban missile crisis; **Jess Phillips MP** on politics; and spoken word artist **Sophia Thakur** on contemporary British icons. Wimbledon BookFest also takes part in footballer **Marcus Rashford's** campaign *You Are A Champion* by encouraging customers to donate a book to primary schools in Merton. Finally, **Critical Minds** will offer higher education taster talks to sixth form students – delivered in partnership with BookFest's Principal Partner, University of Roehampton.

The continued ability of Wimbledon BookFest to deliver its annual live festivals, and year-round programme of education and outreach work has been made possible thanks to the ongoing of audiences, BookFest Friends, sponsors (including lead partners University of Roehampton and Baillie Gifford) and Arts Council England.

Festival Director Fiona Razvi said: *"We exceeded all our expectations with our Sunrise Festival in June, so it's wonderful to be running another five-day event this year with such a fabulous range of writers and speakers. Audience safety remains our priority at the Sunset Festival in September, and although capacities have been increased, we are continuing to run on reduced levels in open-sided marquees to ensure everyone feels safe."*

Tickets for Sunset Festival go on sale to BookFest Friends on Friday 30 July 2021 and to general public on Friday 6 August 2021.

Ends.

PRESS ENQUIRIES

For interview requests, please contact **Rasheed Rahman**
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[Download press images here >](#)

LISTINGS INFORMATION

Sunset Festival

15 - 19 September 2021

Friends' priority booking: Friday 30 July 2021
On general sale: Friday 6 August 2021

Wednesday 15 September

5pm Anne Sebba
6pm Jess Phillips MP
7pm Elif Shafak
8pm China: Friend or Foe with Vince Cable & Ian Williams

Thursday 16 September

11am Guided Meditation Workshop with Jo Bowlby
1pm Embroidery Workshop with Royal School of Needlework
6pm Georgia Pritchett
6pm Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi & Salena Godden
8pm Robert Peston & Tom Watson

Friday 17 September

10am Radical Walk with Peter Walker
11am Workshop on the Seasons with Lia Leendertz
1pm Mindful Pottery Workshop with Lucy Davidson
5pm Sergei Polunin
6pm Sebastian Faulks
7pm QI Elves
8pm Brian Moore's Rugby Night

Saturday 18 September

10am Creative Writing Workshop with Juan Tafur

10am Polly Dunbar & Eoin McLaughlin

10.30pm, 1.30pm & 4.30pm

Bird Walks with Charlie Corbett

11am Sophie Dahl

12pm Chris Riddell

1pm Ify Adenuga & Yvonne Bailey-Smith

2pm Creative Writing Walk with Saira Niazi

2pm Graeme Hall & Kate MacDougall

3pm Anita Rani

4pm Tristram Hunt

5pm Christy Lefteri

6pm Miriam Margolyes

7pm Dr Ed Patrick

8pm John Cooper Clarke

Sunday 19 September

11am Wimbledon and Slavery Walk with Peter Walker

11am Rob Biddulph

12pm A.C. Grayling

1pm Open Minds with University of Roehampton

2pm Rick Stein

3pm Johnjoe McFadden

4pm Steven Isserlis

5pm Giles Terera: Hamilton & Me

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Wimbledon BookFest is London's leading literary festival in the community. Founded in 2006 by Fiona Razvi and Tony Kane, the Festival's aim is to develop the role of arts and culture in the area, working with community groups, schools and businesses to do this. Embracing all art forms in its programming, Wimbledon BookFest showcases and nurtures new local talent alongside bringing high-profile writers, artists and speakers.

In previous years Wimbledon BookFest has taken place over a ten-day period in October, offering more than 100 events in the much-loved BookFest marquee on Wimbledon Common. In October 2020, Wimbledon BookFest presented "The Last Days of Summer" in a reduced-capacity roof-only marquee with special safety protocols. This successful format has been used once again in 2021 for "Sunrise" (9 – 13 June) and "Sunset" (15 – 19 Sep).

Word Up is Wimbledon BookFest's year-round education programme, which aims to harness the power of reading, writing and literature to improve educational opportunities for young people in South London across all socio-economic groups. The diverse programme is designed to appeal to the differing needs and interests of early primary years through to sixth form. Over 100 schools from the state, independent and SEN sectors in Merton and across South London have taken part in Wimbledon BookFest activities to date.

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