

FLEET STREET QUARTERLY

FLEET STREET
QUARTER

14TH - 17TH MAY

FESTIVAL OF WORDS SPECIAL EDITION



FLEET STREET
QUARTER

FESTIVAL

OF WORDS

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DAMIEN COLLINS AND LUCY FRENCH SHARE HOW THE FESTIVAL OF WORDS HONORS FLEET STREET’S STORYTELLING LEGACY

Daniel Dalmau and
Flora Cooper Maddocks,
Fleet Street Quarter BID

WHAT INSPIRED THE FLEET STREET QUARTER FESTIVAL OF WORDS, AND WHY NOW?

Damien Collins:
Fleet Street is the spiritual home of the printed English language. Great storytelling and smart thinking are in its DNA and those are also essential components of a successful Festival of Words. We want to bring people back to Fleet Street to celebrate that heritage and the importance of those ideals today.

Lucy French:
My dear friend Damian Collins former MP for Folkestone and bestselling author wanted to launch his second brilliant biography, this time on David Lloyd George, ‘Rivals in the Storm.’ An important part of the story was the connection to Lord Beaverbrook and so it made perfect sense to launch Rivals in the storm at the former Daily Express building, an art deco jewel on Fleet Street. It was a wonderful night and inspired by this Damian suggested the idea of literally festival and the rest, as they say, is history...

HOW DOES THE FESTIVAL OF WORDS REFLECT AND BUILD ON THE RICH LITERARY AND JOURNALISTIC HERITAGE OF THE AREA?

Damien Collins:
We’ve brought together leading journalists, historians, storytellers and investigative writers to share their insights and experience with our audiences at the Festival of Words. We also have speakers who’ve helped to make the news through their actions. The festival reflects as well the rich history of Fleet Street, with events about the lives of writers like Samuel Pepys, Dr Johnson and Charles Dickens who all worked and lived in the area.

Lucy French:
Fleet Street and its environs is the place where stories have always be born, from Wynkyn de Worde, printer and publisher here in the late 1500’s, to Samuel Pepys, Shakespeare, Dr Johnson, Oscar Wilde, Virginia Wolf and the indomitable Press for which Fleet Street will always be known. These streets have born witness to remarkable and courageous journalism, literature, words and ideas – if streets could talk, now that would be a bestseller!

THIS IS MORE THAN JUST A LITERARY FESTIVAL, IT INCLUDES JOURNALISM, CURRENT AFFAIRS, AI, AND SCREENWRITING . WHY WAS IT IMPORTANT TO TAKE SUCH A BROAD APPROACH TO ‘WORDS’?

Damien Collins:
Innovations in media create opportunities for storytelling and ideas to reach new audiences, and we wanted to reflect that in the festival. Writing for stage and screen is increasingly important to telling the stories of our times as well as reflecting on our recent past. The impact of AI and digital media are having a transformative effect on the publishing industry, as well as the lives of authors and creators. We wanted these issues to be discussed as well at the heart of our festival.

Lucy French:
But this is more than just a literary festival, it includes journalism, current affairs, AI, and screenwriting. Why was it important to take such a broad approach to ‘words’? The way in which we communicate and share ideas is changing. We wanted to encapsulate the ways we communicate through books but also

through other forms of content, exploring the positives and challenges of this fast moving space. The last few years have seen a real transformation in how we absorb information. People predicted the end of the book after Kindle launched, but it seems we can have an array of resources at our fingertips. We also wanted to celebrate the immense history of the press here in the area. They have left an indelible mark in the river of ink!

WHICH EVENTS ARE YOU BOTH MOST EXCITED ABOUT ATTENDING?

Damien Collins:
The playwright James Graham has become one of our great national storytellers from works like Dear England and Sherwood. It’s really great to have him speak at the festival, treading in the footsteps of other great Fleet Street dramatic chroniclers like Charles Dickens. Former MI6 intelligence officer Chris Steele, the author of the Trump/Russia dossier, has lived his professional life investigating threats to our freedom and security. His insights are vital to understanding the risks we now face.

Lucy French:
That is so tough! I am torn totally. I want to see everything!

WHAT’S BEEN YOUR BEST READ OF 2025 SO FAR?

Damien Collins:
The diaries of my former parliamentary colleague Simon Hart – ‘The Political Diaries of a Chief Whip’ – you can hear Simon discuss these at the festival

Lucy French:
Right now I am reading Larry Lamb’s fantastic debut novel, ‘All Wrapped Up’ and of course, Damian’s ‘Rivals in the Storm’! My wish list is very long!

WHAT DOES THE FESTIVAL OF WORDS MEAN FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND THE FUTURE VISION FOR THE FLEET STREET QUARTER?

The Festival is a celebration of everything that Fleet Street stands for and I hope we can bring people back to experience its unique history as well as all that it has to offer today.

Lucy French:
Two of our key strategic themes is putting Fleet Street Quarter back in the map and Creating Connected Communities. The festival is designed to do both.

IN BETWEEN EVENTS, WHERE WOULD YOU RECOMMEND FESTIVALGOERS GO FOR A LITERARY STROLL OF THE AREA?

Damien Collins:
They should investigate the alleys and sidewalks along Fleet Street, particularly those that lead to Dr Johnson’s House in Gough Square. For refreshment they should head to that great old pub, Ye Old Cheshire Cheese, which featured in Dickens’s novel, ‘A Tale of Two Cities’ Also look up at the great old newspaper buildings and think of the ambition of those old press barons whose printworks took the news to the world.



Lucy French:

You are spoilt for choice! The remarkable Dr Johnson's house is a real gem, be inspired in the location the English dictionary was compiled – it also has some amazing architectural innovations too!

Also, the brilliant St Bride Foundation, the home of typography, printing and a repository for so much more relating to our printing history. You can even go along print something yourself at our free drop in session.

We have four Sir Christopher Wren churches to discover, some historic pubs including Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese and some great cafés, bars and restaurants. You don't even need to leave the area at all, we also have fab hotels!

WHAT DO YOU HOPE VISITORS TAKE AWAY FROM THE INAUGURAL FESTIVAL OF WORDS?

Damien Collins:

An idea worth sharing, a story to tell and determination to come back next year!

Lucy French:

I hope visitors will see, listen and be inspired by some of our leading writers and thinkers. They may discover a writer, learn something new and have some fascinating discussions and debates. Fellowship, storytelling and the sharing of ideas are your's to take away.

IF YOU HAD TO ENCAPSULATE THE FESTIVAL OF WORDS IN A QUOTE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

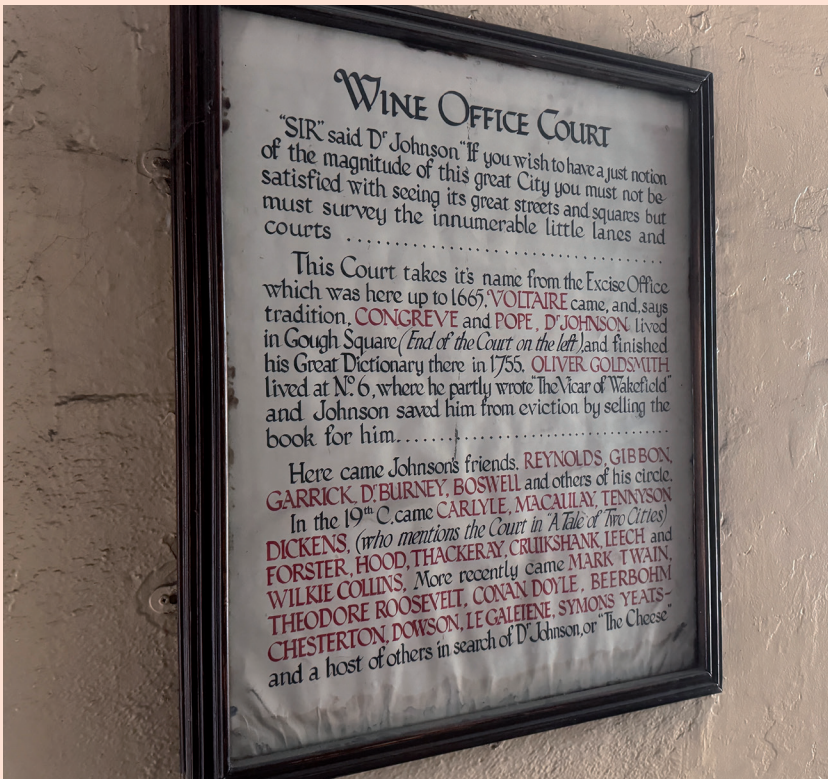
Damien Collins:

This quote from the great Dr Johnson who wrote the English Dictionary just off Fleet Street seems very relevant to our times - 'Power is not sufficient evidence of truth.' The greatest challenge to power is to question, and by championing news, storytelling and critical thinking, I hope our festival will celebrate truth in all the forms it is shared.

Lucy French:

Mine is also from our former local resident, the great Samuel Johnson always had wise words, he said:

A WRITER ONLY BEGINS A BOOK. A READER FINISHES IT.



INK-STAINED LEGENDS: THE LITERARY ROOTS OF FLEET STREET

David Harry
City of London Guide

Did you know that the idyllic rural poem "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" by WB Yeats, so popular that it is printed in all Irish Passports, was inspired in Fleet Street?

Yeats ran his own literary society 'The Rhymers Club' in Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese pub on Fleet Street, attracting the greatest writers and poets of his time.

One day, passing by a shop in the street, he heard a pleasant splashing of water from inside a shop. Looking in, he saw a ping pong ball balanced on a fountain spout – and that was it – the inspiration for this incredibly influential poem was created. He is just one of the incredible set of authors connected to Fleet Street over the centuries, well before it became synonymous with the news media and the home of the UK press industry.

Within the newspaper industry, Fleet Street was home to inspiring women writers like Elizabeth Mourant, Rachel Beer, and Sylvia Pankhurst, who broke barriers and made history in journalism.

The world's first Daily Newspaper, the Daily Courant, published in Fleet Street in 1708, was created and edited by Elizabeth Mourant using a male name and amongst other things can be said to create the modern understanding of Time as a constant.

Rachel Beer was the first female editor of a national paper, editing not one but two at the same time in the 1890s – the Sunday Times and the Observer – and she also scooped the world with the French Dreyfus scandal.

Sylvia Pankhurst edited the fiery communist organ 'The Worker's Dreadnought' in the 1910s on Fleet Street – next door to the offices of the FSQ – and was prosecuted and imprisoned for sedition, publicising alleged revolutionary uprisings in the British Navy and disrupting Memorial day events.

Moving on, Oscar Wilde edited a Women's Magazine off Ludgate Hill in the 1890s while writing The Picture of Dorian Gray – he would walk along Fleet Street every day to his office from Charing Cross Station, causing a sensation with his flamboyant style.

Ian Fleming, the creator of James Bond, had an office in Fleet Street in Mitre Court Chambers as a correspondent for the Times.

Evelyn Waugh wrote the bitter black comic novel 'Scoop' with a thinly fictionalised attack on Lord Beaverbrook, the owner of the Daily Express, whose Fleet Street office is currently under renovation.

Arthur Conan Doyle, the creator of Sherlock Holmes, was not only a regular at Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese, but also allegedly set his third favourite Holmes story, 'The Red Headed League' in Poppins Court just opposite St Bride's Church.

Charles Dickens was also a pub regular, and featured many Fleet Street locations, including the Church of St-Dunstan-in-the-West and its famous bell ringing clock, in 'Barnaby Rudge' and 'David Copperfield.'

This is just a taster for the incredible literary history of Fleet Street – come on a tour to find out more!

THELONDONSPY.COM

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER FOR THE FESTIVAL OF WORDS

Tom Lambregts,
Marketing Manager
Landsec

Given that this area has been associated with print and academic professions for over five hundred years, it seemed surprising that a literary festival hadn't taken place here before. So, when the opportunity to support the Festival of Words arose, Landsec embraced it wholeheartedly.

With customers from the legal, consultancy and creative professions proliferating in our prestigious properties in New Street Square, we knew that this landmark event would resonate with our community. The Square, as it is today, was created by Landsec almost twenty years ago, and since then we've curated, supported and promoted a wonderful range of local events, including the food markets, Wimbledon tennis screenings and Christmas calendar of activities. That's why we were so excited and committed to sponsoring the Festival of Words. But we didn't stop there.

Finding the best venues in the area was essential to the team at Fleet Street Quarter. The breakfast briefings with The Times,

The Guardian and The Telegraph needed particularly professional places. Thankfully, Landsec was able to offer something exceptional: MYO New Street Square.

Only recently opened in January last year, MYO New Street Square brings premium serviced offices, with impeccably designed meeting rooms and event spaces, to the area. Full of carefully considered design details, natural materials, plenty of plants, and stunning roof terrace with views of the Big Ben and the London Eye, it's a very special place. In a particularly thoughtful tribute to local history, even the meeting rooms are named after a different elements of a printing press. Therefore, MYO's meeting and event spaces were the ideal fit for the Festival of Words' breakfast briefings, offering flexible, contemporary design with professional customer service and a powerful technology provision.

So, do make sure that you get to as many events as possible. Discover the fascinating history of the area, support the superb local cafés and restaurants, explore the unique venues, and enjoy a fantastic four day literary extravaganza. Landsec is honoured to present the Fleet Street Quarter Festival of Words.



**Events and meeting room
space for four to 150+
people across seven Central
London locations, including
New Street Square.**

Scan the QR code below to find
out more and book a space.



Bankside | King's Cross | Liverpool Street | New Street Square | Piccadilly | St Paul's | Victoria Street

CROSSWORD

Try your hand at our area themed crossword.

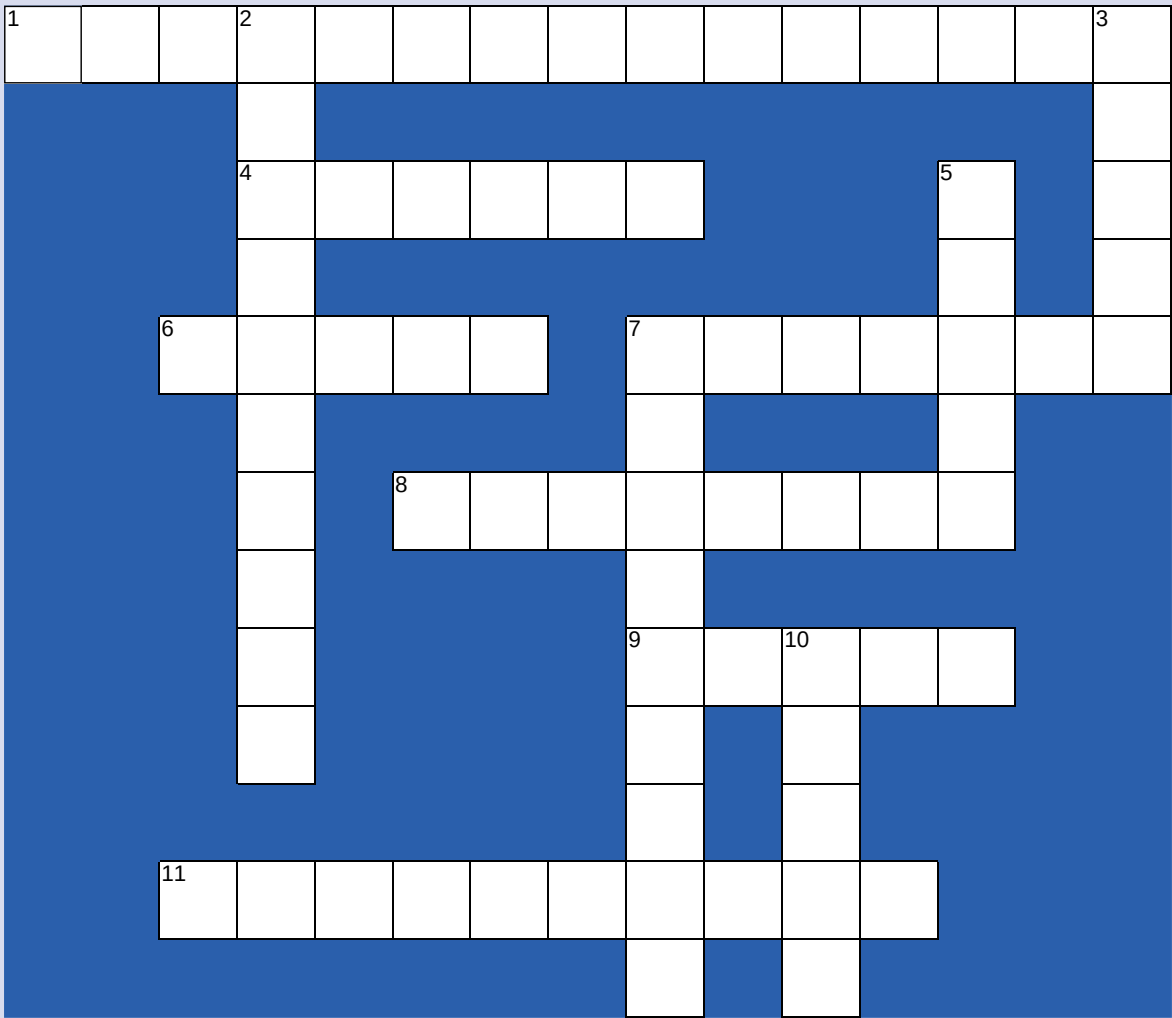
Clues are scattered throughout this paper, with answers available on the back cover.

ACROSS

- 1 Lexicographer's lodgings open to the public (2,8,5)
- 6 Woman in white and a historic printing site (5)
- 7 Green campaigner and a gin flavour (7)
- 8 Irish drink with a record-breaking name (8)
- 9 Location of Ian Fleming's office, connected to law, _____ Court (5)
- 11 Leisurely steeds and a spy thriller (4,6)

DOWN

- 1 Famous playwright and wit, known for Dorian Gray (5,5)
- 3 Crime fiction writer and founder of the Company of Newspaper Makers, _____ Wallace (5)
- 5 Writer and politician, 2025 marks 200 years since their diary's first publication (5)
- 7 Loose Women journalist sharing Fleet Street memories (4,5)
- 10 Paper that reports on the hour (5)



STATIONERS' HALL: THE BEATING HEART OF LONDON'S BOOK TRADE FOR CENTURIES

Giles Fagan
Clerk, The Stationers' Company

Follow Fleet Street towards St Paul's Cathedral, and just off Ludgate Hill, tucked away behind Club Quarters Hotel, you'll find Stationers' Hall. It has stood here, at the heart of the City's historic book trade, for 350 years, although the Stationers' Company itself predates that by over two centuries.

Formed in 1403 from the misteries of Textwriters and Limners, and 'other good people, citizens of London, who used to bind and sell books', the Company received an unexpected boost with Caxton's introduction of the printing press to England. Granted a Royal Charter in 1557, the Stationers' Company – and their Hall – soon dominated English book production. Sixteenth-century legislation to curb the circulation of seditious

literature meant that before a text could be printed, the publisher needed to secure a licence from the Crown. Duly approved, the publisher then headed for Stationers' Hall to register their exclusive right to print and distribute the text, known as the 'right to copy'.

From the beginning, many Stationers kept printing presses along Fleet Street, including Richard Tottell, printer of the first poetry anthology in English (1557). Stationer Samuel Richardson drafted the first English novel, Pamela, in the backroom of his printing house on Salisbury Court in 1739. As newspapers took over Fleet Street, the Stationers' Company maintained its associations with the street, amalgamating in 1935 with the Company of Newspaper Makers, whose

founding members included Edgar Wallace and Daily Express editor-in-chief R.D. Blumenfeld.

Today, the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers welcomes all professionals of the content and communication industries into its lively community and historic Hall. The Hall, recently refurbished to improve accessibility, flexibility and sustainability, offers public tours and is available for commercial hire.

For information on Company activities and membership, see www.stationers.org, and for tours and Hall hire, see www.stationershall.co.uk

FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

WEDNESDAY 14 MAY

8:30 - 9:30AM

BREAKFAST WITH THE GUARDIAN

Join leading journalists from The Guardian as they review the headlines of the day. Ticket includes tea or coffee and a pastry.

1:00 - 3:00PM

HOW TO START YOUR NOVEL

Have you always wanted to write a novel but don't know where to start? Join this interactive workshop with editor Flora Rees to find out how

4:00 - 5.30PM

WORD WALK WITH TIMOTHY FOX AND DRAGON CAFÉ IN THE CITY

In this creative stroll we will look, listen, and note down words. Then with Timothy's prompts and support, write our own poems.

5:45 - 7.00PM

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP WITH DRAGON CAFÉ IN THE CITY

Join Naomi, Wordsmiths for this pressure-free supportive workshop! The goal is enjoyment.

6:00 - 7.00PM

BEYOND THE BOOK: FINDING THE BEST FORMAT FOR YOUR IDEA

A panel of industry experts offer their thoughts and advice on the various routes to content creation in the modern world.



6:00 - 7.00PM

BEN OKRI ON HEARTBREAK, TRANSFORMATION & THE HUMAN CONDITION

A panel of industry experts offer their thoughts and advice on the various routes to content creation in the modern world.



6:30 - 7.30PM

THE REAL WOLF HALL: THE LIFE AND INTERESTING TIMES OF THOMAS CROMWEL

Chief Historian of Historic Royal Palaces, Tracy Borman throws light on one of the most powerful and fascinating men of the Tudor period.

6:30 - 9.30PM

THE TEMPLE SHAKESPEARE CUP

Inner and Middle Temple go head-to-head in competition, each performing an hour of Shakespeare before a winner is declared!!

7:00 - 8.00PM

JAMES GRAHAM IN CONVERSATION: SCRIPT TO SCREEN

Join the preeminent James Graham in conversation with journalist Helen Lewis - in partnership with The Royal Television Society



7:30 - 8.30PM

RUSSIA: IN CONVERSATION WITH CHRIS STEELE & STEPHANIE BAKER

Join Chris Steele, a former British intelligence officer, and Stephanie Baker, senior writer at Bloomberg News, to discuss Russia.

7:45 - 8.45PM

JEREMY VINE AND SIMON MAYO IN CONVERSATION WITH JULIA WHEELER

Julia Wheeler speaks to broadcasters Jeremy Vine and Simon Mayo about their recently published books, Murder on Line One and Black Tag.

THURSDAY 15 MAY

8:30 - 9:30AM

BREAKFAST WITH THE TIMES

Join leading journalists from The Times as they review the headlines of the day. Ticket includes tea or coffee and a pastry.



1:00 - 2:00PM

DICTATORS: WARNINGS FROM HISTORY

Broadcaster and author Iain Dale joins authors from his timely new book, 'The Dictators: 64 Dictators, 64 Authors, 64 Warnings from History'

1:00 - 3:00PM

HOW TO SELF EDIT YOUR NOVEL

Join editor Flora Rees for a workshop guiding you through the crucial stages of editing and polishing your manuscript.



1:00 - 2:00PM

IN CONVERSATION WITH KATE LOVEMAN: STRANGE HISTORY OF SAMUEL PEPYS' DIARY

2025 marks 200 years of the famous diary. Kate Loveman unveils its history, secrets & cultural impact with Julia Wheeler.

1:00 - 2:00PM

GAME CHANGERS: LEADERSHIP IN SPORT AND LIFE

Sue Campbell, a pioneer in sport & leadership, shares her journey from PE teacher to FA Director in The Game Changer with Tracey Crouch.

6:15 - 7:15PM

INSIDE BOOK PUBLISHING: FROM IDEA TO PUBLICATION

Diane Banks & Martin Redfern share expert tips on landing a publishing deal, drawing from years in literary agencies & major publishers.

6.15 - 7.15PM

RIVALS AND ALLIES: THE PACTS THAT CHANGED HISTORY

Damian Collins, author of 'Rivals in the Storm: How Lloyd George Seized Power, Won the War and Lost his Government', talks to Tim Bouverie.



6:30 - 7:30PM

JANE MOORE: MY LIFE ON FLEET STREET

Journalist, writer, television personality and 'Loose Women' regular, Jane Moore, talks to John Nicolson about her life and career..

7:00 - 8:00PM

THE FUTURE OF NEWS

Financial Times editor Roula Khalaf is joined by Festival of Words director Damian Collins for a fireside chat about the future of news.



7:45 - 8:45PM

SLOW HORSES: WRITING FOR PAGE AND SCREEN WITH ED DOCX AND MICK HERRON

Screenwriter Ed Docx and author Mick Herron discuss adapting Slow Horses for TV, exploring creative input, challenges, and inspirations.

FRIDAY 16 MAY

8:30 - 9:30PM

BREAKFAST WITH THE TELEGRAPH

Join leading journalists from The Telegraph as they review the headlines of the day. Ticket includes tea or coffee and a pastry.



1:00 - 2:00PM

INSIDE WESTMINSTER: SECRETS FROM THE CORRIDORS OF POWER

Graham Brady & Simon Hart share memoirs on keeping discipline, advising PMs, and managing crises as 1922 Committee Chair & Chief Whip.

1:00 - 2:00PM

AI AND THE FUTURE OF CREATIVITY

Damian Collins joins experts to discuss the future of creators in the AI age, from child safety to publishing and storytelling.

6:15 - 7:15PM

THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY

Barrister Sam Fowles discusses 'Overruled', his book on defending democracy, including his case against Boris Johnson, with John Nicolson.



6:15 - 7:15PM

EXPOSED: INFECTED BLOOD, THE POST OFFICE SCANDAL, AND DEPP V HEARD

Nick Wallis & Caroline Wheeler discuss investigative journalism's role in exposing The Post Office & NHS Blood Scandals.

6:30 - 7:30PM

LIVING WITH JANE AUSTEN

In Austen's 250th year, Janet Todd & Rebecca Jones explore her legacy, relevance today, and shifting cultural significance.

SATURDAY 17 MAY

10:45 - 11:45AM

THE FINAL TEST WITH HUW TURBERVILL & DEREK PRINGLE

T20's rise threatens Test cricket's future. Huw Turbervill discusses with ex-pro Derek Pringle and journalist Jonathan Legard.



11:00 - 12:00PM

70 YEARS OF RECORD- BREAKING: CELEBRATING GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

Celebrate 70 years of Guinness World Records with Editor-in-Chief Craig Glenday! Explore the history and epic feats + try to set a record!



11:00 - 12:00PM

THE END OF AN ERA: MARK FIELD ON SCANDAL AND SURVIVAL IN WESTMINSTER

Mark Field reflects on two decades in politics, scandals, and controversies, from Piggate to protests, in conversation with Andrew Pierce.

11:00 - 12:00PM

REVIEW OF THE SATURDAY PAPERS CHAIRED BY PADDY O'CONNELL

Join our stellar line-up for a canter through the Saturday paper's headlines.



11:00AM - 3:00PM

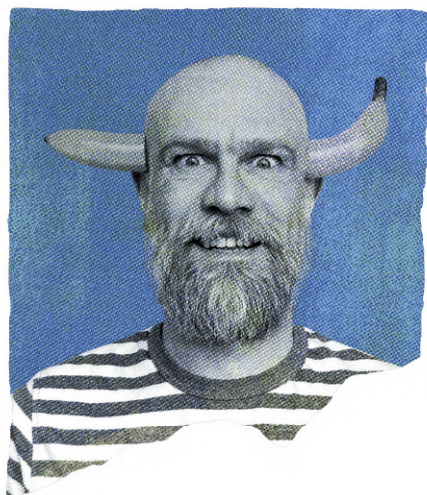
EXPLORE THE ST BRIDE FOUNDATION PRINT WORKSHOP

St Bride Foundation will be opening the doors to their historic print workshop to experience the craft and history of letterpress printing.

12:30 - 1:30PM

FOOD PORN: THE EVOLUTION OF FOOD MEDIA AND HOW WE CONSUME IT

From Insta snaps to podcasts, food media has changed. Jimi Famurewa, Melissa Thompson, and Leyla Kazim share insights into food writing.



1:00 - 2:00PM

OLAF FALAFEL LIVE!

Join Olaf Falafel for a funny, arty event with Blobfish and Trixie Pickle! Expect jokes, drawings, and bum-faced snails! Suitable for age 7+



2:00 - 3:00PM

FUNMI FETTO, STYLE EDITOR AT BRITISH VOGUE IN CONVERSATION

Join British Vogue's Funmi Fetto & Stylist's Shahed Ezaydi as they discuss 'Hail Mary', Funmi's debut novel on Nigerian female liberation.

2:00 - 3:00PM

FIXED: MY SECRET LIFE AS A FOOTBALL MATCH-FIXER

Former footballer Moses Swaibu discusses Fixed, his memoir about match-fixing, prison, and redemption, with sports journalist Jonathan Legar

3:30 - 4:30PM

CHANGE THE WORLD, SAVE THE PLANET: A HOPEFUL GUIDE

Tony Juniper and Natalie Bennett discuss their books on climate solutions, equality, and practical steps for a fairer, sustainable future.

3:30 - 4:30PM

JOJO MOYES & MIKE GAYLE: THE ART OF CRAFTING COMPELLING CHARACTERS

Authors Jojo Moyes and Mike Gayle discuss their latest books, writing relationships, and creating memorable characters with Laura Hacket.



5:00 - 6:00PM

LARRY LAMB AND CAMILLA BARNES: OUR WRITING JOURNEYS

Larry Lamb & Camilla Barnes discuss their paths to publication, from Larry's 'All Wrapped Up' to Camilla's debut 'The Usual Desire to Kill'

6:00 - 7:00PM

BLACK LACQUER DIALOGUE BOOKS PROOF PARTY

Join Dialogue Books for a celebration of fresh talent! Discover Sarvat Hasin, Kuba Shand-Baptiste, and Piotr Cieplak's upcoming debut novels.



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CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Down:

1. Oscar Wilde, 3. Edgar, 5. Pepys, 7. Jane Moore, 10. Times

Across:

1. Dr Johnsons House, 6. Bride, 7. Juniper, 8. Guinness, 9. Mitre, 11. Slow Horses

PLEASE RECYCLE ME