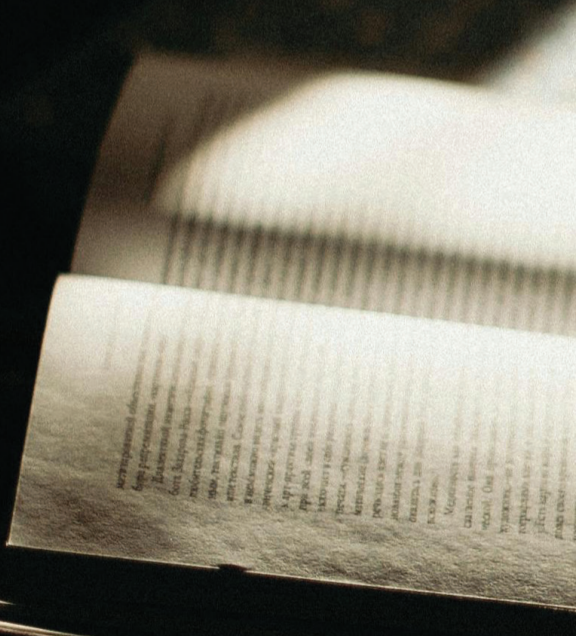


Leamington welcomes the South Warwickshire Literary Festival

September 2024

**A gathering
for writers of all
genres and readers
of all styles**

From Fenny Compton Village Hall to Harbury Village Hall, SWLF has grown and grown and now fits snugly here, in this glorious Georgian building, Victoria House. As always there is so much on offer - from our Warwickshire Young Poet Laureate May Vaughan to the internationally best selling authors Kit de Waal and Sophie Hannah, plus our talented (and probably nervous) competition winners. It certainly is a festival for everyone.



Come one, come all!

Jacci Gooding - SWLF Founder & Director

Organiser and festival director **Jacci Gooding** is delighted to be welcoming local and not quite so local authors to this year's festival.

"It's such a joy having so many people on board," she said. "Everyone is so supportive and keen to bring this

little old festival of ours to life and spread the word. And because we love our audience as much as we love our authors we offer a lunchtime open mic for those brave enough to share their work. We're also delighted to welcome back some serial festalees. Is that a word? It is now!"

NEWS Marketing

The power of a press release

Dave Musson - Festival volunteer, PR and Communications

So, you've written your book, got a cover you love, sent out advance copies for reviews, and have your social media campaign ready. What about a press release? In 2024? Really? Yes! Despite the digital age, press releases remain a useful – and free – marketing tool.

Press releases can generate publicity by reaching journalists, bloggers, and other contacts. Even a single mention in the local rag can be valuable. They also boost SEO, as publications share their content online, helping your name and book title rank higher on search engines. What's more, press releases can open doors for further media opportunities.

Top tips to make it easy for journalists: write your release like a newspaper article, with clear, concise sentences and all important information at the top. Send a complete content package with cover art, high-res author photo, and video trailer if possible. Don't forget to include your contact details and social media handles!

In brief

MEET WYPL 23/24 MAY VAUGHAN



[Full story on page 3](#)

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE PAGES



From the Festival bookshelf

Your chance to meet some of the #SWLitFest festival authors and buy a signed copy of their book/s (details on back page).

[Full story on page 4](#)



30 September – 6 October 2024

Celebrate historical writing, fact, and fiction, meet the authors, discover and discuss their work. Join us for talks, workshops, walks and much, much more.

Special Guests include:

Terry Deary, Alison Weir, Dan Jones, Nicola Tallis, Max Hastings, Estelle Paranque, James Holland plus many more ...



Sign up to our mailing list and we'll keep you up to date with all the latest Warwick Words History Festival events: www.warwickwords.co.uk

All you need to know

Main Festival: Regency room

9:45 am	Festival opens
10:00 am - 10:30 am	Warwickshire Young Poet Laureate, runners-up and Competition Winners
10:30 am - 10:40 am	BREAK
10:40 am - 11:10 am	ANTHONY FERNER reads from <i>Small Wars in Madrid</i>
11:10 am - 11:20 am	BREAK
11:20 am - 11:40 am	DR SUSAN LAW <i>Dark Side of the Cut, A History of Crime on Britain's Canals</i>
11:40 am - 11:50 am	BREAK
11:50 am - 12:20 pm	JAMES CATCHPOLE discusses disability representation in literature
12:20 pm - 12:30 pm	BREAK
12:30 pm - 1:00 pm	ANNE HARRISON <i>Call Me Auntie</i> ; Anne's search for her birth mother
1:00 pm - 2:10 pm	LUNCH EVERYONE! Plus Open Mic - Hosted by GWYNETH BOX LUNCHTIME AUTHOR INTERVIEWS WITH GROWRADIO
2:10 pm - 2:40 pm	BECKY HOLMES an expose of on-line romance fraud compered by Fran Hill
2:40 pm - 2:50 pm	BREAK
2:50 pm - 3:20 pm	ALISON MAY Submitting to agents/publishers talk
3:20 pm - 3:30 pm	BREAK
3:30 pm - 4:20 pm	KIT de WAAL - Interviewed by Beth Lucas
4:20 pm - 4:40 pm	RAFFLE ANNOUNCED
4:40 pm - 5:40 pm	AUTHORS Q&A: Alison May, Billy Ivory, Lucy & James Catchpole, Simon Whaley, Sophie Hannah. Compered by Fran Hill. Prepare Your Questions!
5:40 pm	THANK YOUS AND TA-RAS

Workshops

10:00 am - 11:30 am	WORKSHOPS 1 & 2 Ekphrastic Poetry with Gwyneth Box - Binswood Room Starting Your Novel with Alison May - Lansdowne Room
11:35 am - 1:00 pm	WORKSHOPS 3 & 4 Travel Writing with Simon Whaley - Binswood Room Dream Author with Sophie Hannah - Lansdowne Room
2:00 pm - 3:15 am	WORKSHOP 6 Script Writing with Billy Ivory - Lansdowne Room

Festival seeks authors!

If you like a crowd and aren't shy about coming forward, we want to hear from you!

Applications open on the 1st of October for next year's festival and we are particularly keen to hear from authors who are proactive on X, Instagram and Facebook - for obvious reasons! All local authors are urged to apply. Send us your pitch and a little note about yourself to southwarwickshirelitfest@gmail.com and let us know why you think you'd be a great fit for the festival.

NEWS Volunteering

Could you be a member of Team SWLF?

Join the fun, join the team!

Fancy being involved? If you're motivated and energetic and love the idea of being part of a busy volunteer team then drop us an email telling us a little about yourself and what you can offer. And if you're busy on Instagram and X, please shout!

NEWS Gratitude

We owe a huge **thank you** to all the SWLF volunteers, here at the festival and behind the scenes.

Without you, the festival couldn't happen!





SHELLEY WILSON
WRITING MENTOR

Are You Ready to Write Your Book?
I'm here to help you go from idea to first draft.

HOW TO WORK WITH ME

- 6-Month 1:1 Writing Mentorship
- Group Writing Programmes
- Accountability Club for Writers
- Writing Workshops


shelleywilsonwritingmentor.com

At the Graham Adams Centre from 11am:

Southam Book Festival

Sunday 13th October 2024

* Speakers * Flash Fiction * Quiz * Café
* Exhibitors * Book in the Window
* Book binding * Second hand books



You write, we design!

Whether you're an established writer or a first-time author, your work deserves professional design.

#SWLitFest offer:

Book design & production package

£895
usual price
£1,800

- ◆ Customised print book layout
- ◆ Customised ebook layout
- ◆ Bespoke cover design (Print & ebook)
- ◆ Amazon submission (Print on demand & ebook)

Transform your manuscript into a polished, market-ready book!

tantamount.com/swlitfest
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NEWS WYPL

WYPL Read all about it

The search is on for the county's tenth Young Poet Laureate

For the last 8 years Warwickshire Libraries have appointed a Young Poet Laureate. The competition is run by Warwickshire Libraries and supported by Poetry on Loan, an initiative supported by Arts Council England that promotes contemporary poetry throughout public libraries in the West Midlands.

The Warwickshire Young Poet Laureate is appointed each year in November and for the year of their appointment they are invited to take part in a variety of opportunities from poetry commissions, to running workshops, to performances and talks.

Applications are now open for 13-17 year olds living in Warwickshire.

NEWS Experience



Meet the incumbent WYPL May Vaughan

May Vaughan

One poem that I've been particularly enjoying lately is *The Applicant*, by Sylvia Plath. Some of the exciting things I've gotten up to this year include filming a video about how brilliant libraries are, visiting Page Turners, performing at Coleshill's open mic, and much more. In the coming months, I'll be giving more talks about poetry, writing commissions, and attending South Warwickshire Lit fest!

Why did I apply?

I applied for the role because I love poetry, and being YPL gives me an opportunity to share my passion. I truly feel that poetry can be powerful. Whether it's a piece of writing that makes you feel seen, or something you write yourself, as an outlet after a bad day, poetry is important. I've had positive experiences with it that have shown me that it's something I can take part in. However, I know for many people, especially my age,

this isn't the case. I wanted to be an advocate for something I love, and maybe to be that positive experience for someone else, that encourages them to explore poetry

What have I learnt?

The biggest lesson from this is to do things you're scared to do. When I applied, at no point did I think that I would get the role. I thought that applying was hugely scary. But I knew that this was something that I really wanted, so I went for it anyway, and here I am! A big takeaway for me has also been that you should never be afraid to be passionate. I love poetry. I love writing it, I love reading it, and I definitely have a collection to recommend to you -whether you've asked or not!

I'm so grateful for the opportunity I've been given, and I hope to share my love of poetry with more people throughout this coming year.

NEWS Experience

I was that author

Competition shortlister Rachel Hopley writes

I just wanted to send over a quick line to say thank you so much for Gwyneth's detailed judge's report following the SWLF competition. It was insightful and kind in equal measure and I've learnt a lot just by reading it. I was the writer sat on the north of Skye wondering about whales and meeting Jeremy! This was my first competition and your feedback has given me a lot to work on for the future.

NEWS Podcast

GROW Radio lunchtime interviews

Your chance to be heard!

Yep! Quickety Quick! During the lunch break Gary of SWLF sponsor **GROWradio** will be offering authors the chance of an interview for his daily podcast (up to 10 mins) upstairs in the Newbold Room.

You can sign up at the Raffle table in the reception area. Places are limited so now's your chance!

NEWS Competition

The 2025 SWLF writing competition

Boost your writing CV

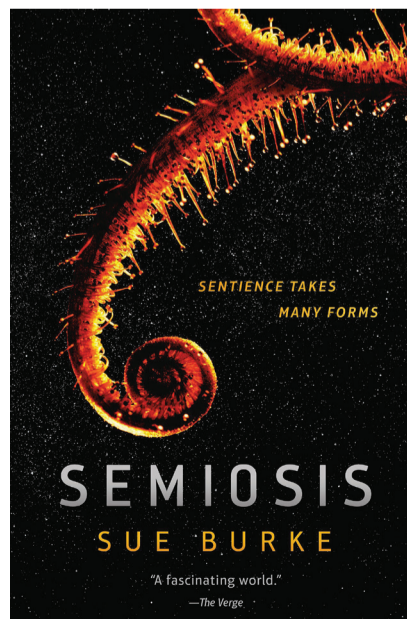
Open for entries Monday **January 13th** until Friday **March 28th**.

Fiction, Creative Non-Fiction, Poetry, Flash. **£3.80** to enter, Word or PDF only please, any subject, and the rules will be on the website – please read 'em! And do check the 2024 Judges' Reports on our website for guidance and advice in abundance.

NEWS Competition

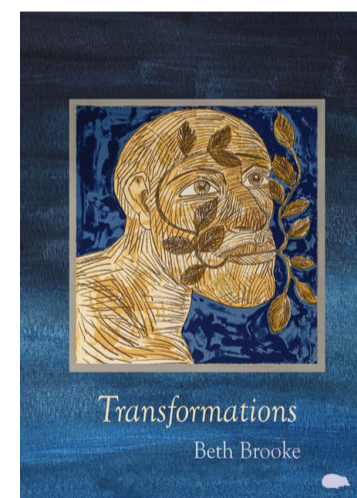
Sue Burke

We were very proud when award-winning American author Sue Burke agreed to judge the fiction category of our competition. Her first book *Semiosis* was recently included on Esquire's list of "The 75 Best Sci-Fi Books of All Time" alongside such masters of science fiction as Douglas Adams, Ursula K. Le Guin, Philip K. Dick, Ray Bradbury and Robert Heinlein. *Usurpation*, the third in the *Semiosis* series, is due out in October.



NEWS Competition

Beth Brooke



This year our Poetry competition judge was Beth Brooke. Beth lives and writes amongst the chalky downs of Dorset. We are delighted to share one of her poems here.

Metamorphosis

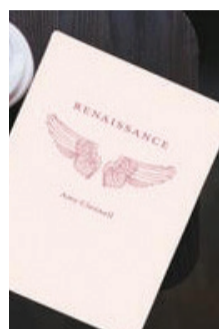
Caterpillar spins, stills itself,
becomes chrysalis, dissolves into liquid
a sac of visionary cells that waits for the sun to tell it now is the time to imagine wings and the scent of sea thrift carried on the wind.

We're all about books!

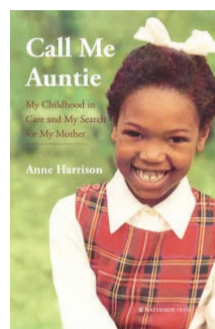
Get signed copies direct from the authors today



Alison May
 "I loved it! Clever, romantic, funny and completely different!"
 – Katie Fforde



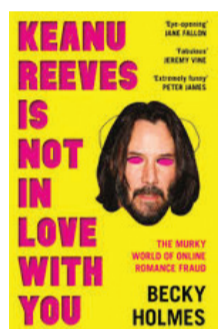
Amy Clenell
 "Renaissance" is a book of accessible poems. Versions of some pieces are available on Amy's YouTube channel.



Anne Harrison
 "A compelling account. I read it in one sitting and could not put it down."
 – Retired Judge Robert Zara



Anthony Ferner
 "A short read, but one that wrenched my heart from its moorings and set it adrift. Beautifully written." – Liz T.



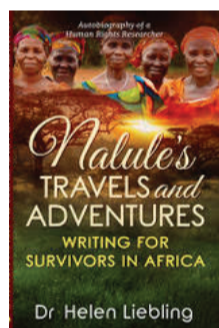
Becky Holmes
 They say not to judge a book by its cover but come on, this is pretty damn good!



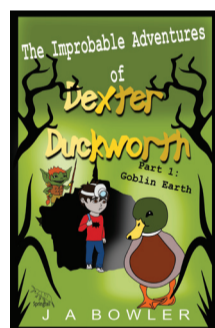
Fran Hill
 Paul Torday Memorial Prize runner-up; a fostered teenager finds not everyone in her new home welcomes her. Funny and poignant.



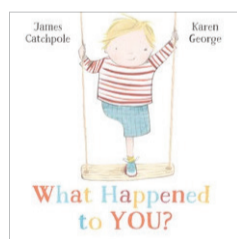
Gwyneth Box
 "Spot on advice without a word wasted. The themes covered are relevant to writers of any genre."
 – Margaret E.



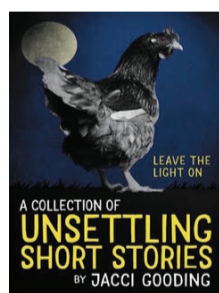
Dr Helen Liebling
 "A literary testament to resilience, hope, and the unwavering human spirit."
 – Mount Kenya Times



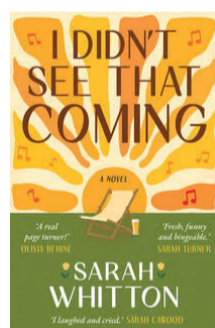
J A Bowler
 "Nobody wants to be eaten by goblins."



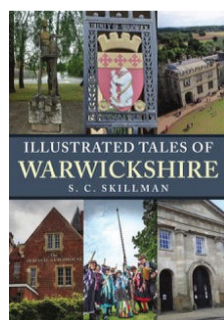
James Catchpole
 Shortlisted for Little Rebels and UKLA. Winner of a Schneider Family Honor from the ALA.



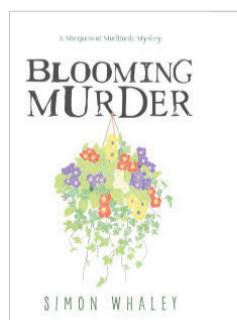
Jacqui Gooding
 "A collection of unsettling short stories all right! Spine-tinglingly scary and creepy and yes, I left the light on!"



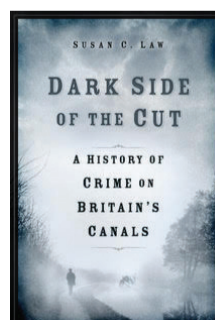
Sarah Whitton
 "Funny, thought provoking, heart warming and heartbreaking in equal measure."
 – J K Davies



S C Skillman
 A trilogy of fascinating tales and full colour images from Shakespeare's county of Warwickshire.



Simon Whaley
 "This is the first book in the series and it has me completely hooked and wanting more. Such a joy to read."
 – Sophie Narey



Dr Susan C Law
 "A trove of human drama from a less explored facet of the Industrial Revolution"
 – Historical Novel Society

Writing, of course

Katie Rickett - Festival volunteer and Funding Application Manager

Until 2022 I hadn't taken any kind of writing class since my English Literature A-Level, for which I scored a disappointing C grade. There were university essays, and then the odd bit of marketing copy or a blog post for work, but I had no thoughts of actually writing for myself and was convinced that writing was just a childish dream.

Until I found myself doom-scrolling on the sofa one afternoon, searching for anything that would get me out of the house and into society. What finally brought me out of my phone fugue was an advert for a short story writing workshop, happening that very evening, at a local café.

It was the best hour and a half I had probably ever spent in a café. Which is really saying something as I love croissants. I knew almost nothing about short stories before that evening, but the immediacy of flash fiction, and the joy of being around others who loved to write, set off a creative domino-effect which is yet to stop tumbling.

Over the next year I took a ten-week Adult Learning course on creative writing, attended fifteen short story and poetry workshops, multiple online seminars and self-led courses on improving my prose, quit my job, and am now half-way through an MA in Creative Writing. From prose to poetry, and memoir to script, there are so many courses out there to choose from. It doesn't matter if you have been writing for years and years, or haven't picked up a pen in over a decade, there will always be something new to learn, take-away, and apply to your own writing. Every single time.



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