



Todmorden Book Festival

7-15 November 2025

todmordenbookfestival.co.uk

Landscapes, people and stories

Early bird
tickets
available

featuring
John Harris
Denise Mina
Bobby Joseph
Kate Evans

Full programme inside

Friday 7 Nov, 19.30-19.45pm, Hippodrome Theatre, Halifax Road, OL14 5BB

**MUSIC
for the
MANY**

Introductory musical interlude from Music for the Many.

Tickets £12
Early bird £10
Concessions
available



Friday 7 Nov, 8-9pm, Hippodrome Theatre, Halifax Road, OL14 5BB

John Harris

Maybe I'm Amazed

In this extraordinary memoir, a father tells the story of how music has opened up the world to his son, James, one song at a time.

Maybe I'm Amazed describes how the music of The Beatles, Kraftwerk, Funkadelic, The Velvet Underground, Amy Winehouse and many more were soon woven into the fabric of James's life, becoming an essential part of who he is. It takes us through the struggles of raising an autistic child in a prejudiced world, and uncovers a hidden history of neurodivergence and creativity that casts new light on why notes, chords and lyrics speak so powerfully to the human mind.

Anyone who has fallen in love with a band or heard their life reflected back to them by a song will recognise themselves in the story of this father and his son. And in considering the intense and transcendent way James absorbs and connects with music, it has lessons in listening and living for us all.

John Harris is a writer, journalist and presenter. He has a weekly column in The Guardian, writes regularly for the music magazine Mojo and is the author of the acclaimed pop culture history of the 1990s The Last Party and is a past winner of the Orwell Prize for political journalism.

Chair: Susan Press

Two Modern Novelists in Conversation

Kerry Andrew & Rozie Kelly

In an event you won't see anywhere else, two West Yorkshire based novelists discuss their genre-bending approaches to fiction with Bec Evans.

Composer and writer Kerry Andrews' third novel *We Are Together Because* starts as a sensual drama and quickly becomes about

our own survival, asking us what is truly important in life.

Rozie Kelly's debut novel *Kingfisher* is a beautifully rendered exploration of the psychology of relationships delivered with a fresh voice, stylistic flair and keen observational insight.



Tickets
£6
Early bird
£5

Saturday 8 Nov, 2-3pm, Fielden Centre, Ewood Lane, OL14 7DD

The Spy in the Archive

Gordon Corera

Gordon Corera is the co-host of "The Rest is Classified" podcast— a top-rated weekly show looking at the world of security and intelligence and has spent two decades as a security correspondent for BBC News. He is the author of a number of books including *Russians Among Us*, the hunt for

Putin's spies; *MI6: Life and Death in the British Secret Service* and, most recently, "The Spy in the Archive - How one man tried to kill the KGB", the story of Vasili Mitrokhin.

Chair: Stephen May

Tickets
£6
Early bird
£5



Saturday 8 Nov, 4-5pm, St Mary's Church, Burnley Road, OL14 7BD

Northern Weird: Turbine 34 and Good Boy

Katherine Clements & Neil McRoberts

Two writers talk about their new novellas that transport readers into dangerous corners of the North. *Turbine 34* by Katherine Clement is an utterly contemporary folk-horror tale set on Walshaw Moor while *Good Boy* by Neil McRoberts is a profoundly moving piece, has been praised by Stephen King no less as 'an excellent story. Reminded me of people like MR James.'

Katherine Clements is an author and writers' coach. Her most recent book was *The Coffin Path* which was nominated for the HWA Gold Crown Award.

Neil McRoberts is a writer and the host of the landmark horror podcast *Talking Scared*.

Chair: Janine Bullman

Tickets
£6
Early bird
£5



Saturday 8 Nov, 5.30-6.30pm, Fielden Centre, Ewood Lane, OL14 7DD

Denise Mina

The Good Liar

Tickets £12
Early bird £10
Concessions
available

Denise Mina is the internationally best-selling author of over twenty novels including the Garnethill trilogy, the Paddy Meehan series and the Alex Morrow series as well as historical crime novels, graphic novels and plays. She has won the Theakston Old Peculiar Crime Novel of the Year twice, as well as the Scottish Crime Novel of the Year and the Gordon Burn Prize. She was inducted into the Crime Writers Hall of Fame in 2014. Her latest novel *The Good Liar* is a timely and gripping crime thriller that centres on a forensic expert responsible for a miscarriage of justice. Denise is a dynamic and thoughtful speaker and tickets for this event are bound to go fast.

Chair: writer and bookseller Mark Wright

“Mina is crime-writing royalty”

Val McDermid



Saturday 8 Nov, 7.30-8.30pm, Hippodrome Theatre, Halifax Road, OL14 5BB

Unfortunately, She Was A Nymphomaniac

Joan Smith



In her superb and illuminating history of Imperial Rome's most important women, the columnist, author, activist and feminist historian Joan Smith re-interprets the bloody story of twenty-three women closely associated with the most famous emperors of Rome. In doing so she rescues them from ancient and modern misogyny and history becomes a vivid avenue of approach to a burning modern-world concern.

Chair: Frankie Mullen

Tickets
£6
Early bird
£5

Sunday 9 Nov, 2-3pm, St Mary's Church, Burnley Road, OL14 7BD

Pennine Way: Celebrating 60 Years

Andrew Bibby, Andrew McCloy & Anita Sethi

Sunday 9 Nov, 4-5pm, St Mary's Church, Burnley Road, OL14 7BD



Andrew Bibby is a writer and journalist. His most recent book, *The Borders: The Lands We Share* looks at how human activity is shaping the land on both sides of the Scottish/English border. His books have won awards from the Outdoor Writers and Photographers Guild, with his exploration of Jurassic oolite landscapes, *Back Roads Through Middle England* winning the Guild's coveted Outdoor Book of the Year prize.

Chair: Pam Warhurst



Andrew McCloy is a writer, journalist and consultant, specialising in walking and outdoor recreation, and is currently Walks Programme Manager for the YHA. He's just produced a series of short walks books to the Peak District and his next is an in-depth and personal profile of the Peak District National Park, which he chaired for five years until 2023.



Dr Anita Sethi is an award-winning writer and author of the acclaimed book *I Belong Here: a Journey Along the Backbone of Britain* which won a Books Are My Bag award, and was nominated for the Wainwright Prize for UK Nature Writing, the Great Outdoors Award and Royal Society of Literature's Ondaatje. She has written extensively for national newspapers and publications.

Tickets
£6
Early bird
£5



Tickets £12
Early bird £10
Concessions
available

Sunday 9 Nov, 7.30-8.30pm, Hippodrome Theatre, Halifax Road, OL14 5BB

Bobby Joseph

My Dad Fights Demons!

Getting graphic with the UK Comics Laureate

Bobby Joseph is an acclaimed South London comic creator, the current UK Comics Laureate and the first comic book creator of Indian origin to become Comics Laureate.

He has been a vocal advocate for diversity and representation in comic books throughout his career. His graphic novel, *Scotland Yardie*, published by Knockabout Comics in 2017, was the first diverse graphic novel to be studied as a module on an English Literature MA course at King's College, London. He has written for *The Guardian* newspaper, *Dazed and Confused*, and *Vice.com*.

As a secondary school teacher, he believes that comics are a gateway to literacy and learning and has used comics in the classroom to build subject knowledge. His newly-published graphic novel *My Dad Fights Demons!* was released in September 2025 by Self-Made Hero.

Open Mic

Wednesday Writers and Gobshite group



Monday 10 Nov 7-8.30pm, Todmorden Library, 8 Rochdale Road, OL14 5AA



The Ishtar Gate and Lives of the Female Poets

Sarah Corbett & Clare Pollard

Join two major voices of contemporary poetry as they read from and discuss their latest collections.

In her powerful sixth collection, *The Ishtar Gate*, Sarah Corbett considers the fragments of the self we might hold onto as we strive against dissolution, whether personal, national, or global.

In her playful and beguiling *The Lives of the Female Poets*, Clare Pollard talks back to poets of the past while offering glimpses into her own everyday life – from nit-combing and laundry to pollen counts and cocktails.

Tickets
£6
Early bird
£5



Wednesday 12 Nov, 7.30-9pm, Todmorden Library, 8 Rochdale Road, OL14 5AA

The Rise, Fall & Resurrection of Oasis

John Robb

Think Oasis was just Britpop and brawls? Think again.

In this, the definitive book on Britain's biggest band, John Robb, peels back the layers of Manchester's best-known musical export, revealing a tale of ambition, talent and attitude. *Live Forever* is a rollercoaster ride through the Gallagher brothers' turbulent lives and the music that defined a generation. It is also a portrait of Britain around the turn of the millennium and the places that shaped, and were shaped by, two cocksure upstarts from Burnage.

John Robb runs the *Louder Than War* website and magazine. He is the author of several books on music.

Tickets
£6
Early bird
£5



**“Read on...
it's all true.”**

Noel Gallagher

Thursday 13th Nov, 7.30-9pm, Fielden Centre, Ewood Lane, OL14 7DD

Sister in Law

Fighting for Justice in a System Designed by Men

Harriet Wistrich

A unique insight by the renowned feminist lawyer Harriet Wistrich into ten of her hard-won cases, demonstrating that terrifyingly often, the law is not fit for purpose for half the population.

Harriet Wistrich is the founder and director of the Centre for Women's Justice and a solicitor of over 25 years' experience. She has worked for many years with civil liberties firm Birnberg Peirce, acting in many high-profile cases around violence against women, including on behalf of women who challenged the police and parole board in the John Worboys case. She is also a founder member of the campaign group Justice for Women.

Chair: Frankie Mullen



Tickets
£6
Early bird
£5

Friday 14 Nov, 7.30-8.30pm, St Mary's Church, Burnley Road, OL14 7BD

Tickets £12
Early bird £10

Concessions
available



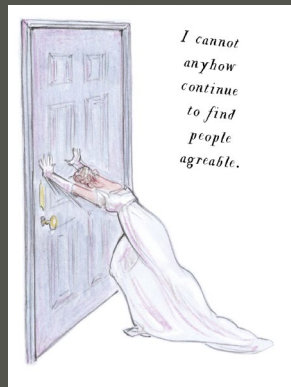
Northern Premier

Patchwork

Kate Evans

Kate Evans is a cartoonist, graphic novelist, artist, author, and quilter. The subject of her pen is wide-ranging – from feminist fairy stories, through birth and breastfeeding to refugee relief and revolutionary socialism. Her graphic biography of Rosa Luxemburg, *Red Rosa*, has 18 foreign editions and *Threads* from the Refugee Crisis was the first graphic novel to be nominated for the Orwell Prize for journalism. An avid Austen fan, *Patchwork* is based around the quilt that Jane Austen made. Evans situates Austen's life story in the wider fabric of society of Regency England through a series of thread paintings, which she has then sewn into a quilt which will be available to view at the end of the talk.

Chair: Esther Ferry-Kennington



Saturday 15 Nov, 7.30-8.30pm, St Mary's Church, Burnley Road, OL14 7BD

Masterclasses

Full details at
todmordenbookfestival.co.uk

Flash Fiction

David Gaffney

Saturday 8 Nov, 10am-12pm, Todmorden Community College, 44 Burnley Rd, OL14 7BX

Can you tell a story in fewer than 500 words? In this workshop you will learn how to condense while keeping your story effective. How to reduce a thousand words to 150 without losing a thing.

Writing for Children & Young Adults

Mark Illis

Saturday 8 Nov, 10am-12pm, Todmorden Community College, 44 Burnley Rd, OL14 7BX

How do you write a story for young people? How is it different from writing for adults? This practical workshop will explore ideas, character and structure. You'll go home with an enthusiasm to get writing.

Fiction

Naomi Booth

Saturday 8 Nov, 10am-12pm, Todmorden Community College, 44 Burnley Rd, OL14 7BX

A workshop for those who want to produce unsettling works of fiction. Join award-winning writer Naomi Booth to experiment with different approaches to the macabre.

Novel Writing

Stephen May

Sunday 9 Nov, 10am-12pm, Todmorden Community College, 44 Burnley Rd, OL14 7BX

What makes a writer's voice unique? Join novelist Stephen May for this stimulating workshop we will explore how to depict fictional worlds, characters, relationships, and situations so that they seem 'real'.

Everything You Wanted to Know About Publishing but Were Afraid to Ask

**Andrew Furlow
(Harper North)**

Saturday 8 Nov, 12.15-1.15pm, Todmorden Community College, 44 Burnley Rd, OL14 7BX

With twenty years of experience as an editor there is nothing about publishing that Andrew Furlow doesn't know. Hear him reveal the secrets of getting a book out into the world.

Experimental Fiction

Rob Chapman

Saturday 15 Nov, 10am-12pm, Todmorden Library, 8 Rochdale Road, OL14 5AA

This workshop will show you how to adopt experimental techniques to help your creativity. The practical exercises will illustrate how unconventional methods can be utilised in even the most conventional forms of writing.

Writing Poems

Amanda Dalton

Saturday 15 Nov, 2-4pm, Todmorden Library, 8 Rochdale Road, OL14 5AA

Whether you're a terrified beginner or a seasoned writer who fancies an injection of new ideas, this practical, friendly workshop is for you. We'll be reading some brilliant contemporary poems to inspire your own writing through a series of kick-start, lively exercises. For everyone aged 16+

Storytelling Beyond Words

A Free Community Event for All Ages

Saturday 15 Nov, all day

Todmorden Community College, 44 Burnley Road, OL14 7BX

10.30-11.30am Stories for children with Ursula Holden-Gill

12-1pm Enjoy a free lunch and children's book giveaway

1.30-2pm Celebrating the work of our schools
Come and see what our local children have been working on.

2-2.45pm TAODS youth team bring their original story to life with a magical puppet show

3-3.45pm Annapurna dance present A Tree in Time
The real and inspirational story of an Indian Tree Planter who planted hundreds of Banyan trees. Enjoy the display of traditional dances with beautiful authentic costumes from the magical Annapurna dancers.

3.55-4.15pm Music for the Many singalong



Schools Events

Ursula Holden-Gill

Monday 10 Nov,
St Joseph's and Todmorden CoE Primary Schools

Described as a 'warm-hearted tornado' Ursula Holden Gill is a unique force in storytelling, using music, movement and real-life observation alongside her traditional folk heritage to connect people of all ages with their creativity.



Bobby Joseph

Monday 10 Nov, Todmorden High School

Bobby Joseph will be working with students at Todmorden High School in the culmination of a six-week programme centred around creating their own stories told through comics. The programme is supported by Esther Ferry-Kennington, creative development director of Horse + Bamboo and graphic novels superfan.



2025
UK Comics
Laureate

Ian Douglas

Monday 10 Nov, Castle Hill and Shade Primary Schools
and Tuesday 12 Nov, Ferney Lee and Cornholme
Primary Schools

Ian Douglas is a storyteller and theatre maker who works extensively across the British Isles. He has developed a practise approach which mixes sensitivity, comedic energy and wit.



Peter Sansom

Tuesday 12 Nov, Walsden Primary School

Peter Sansom is a poet, teacher and founder and co-director of The Poetry Business. He has published five collections of poetry.



Stories in Song

Pete and John bring back musical memories.
A residents only event.

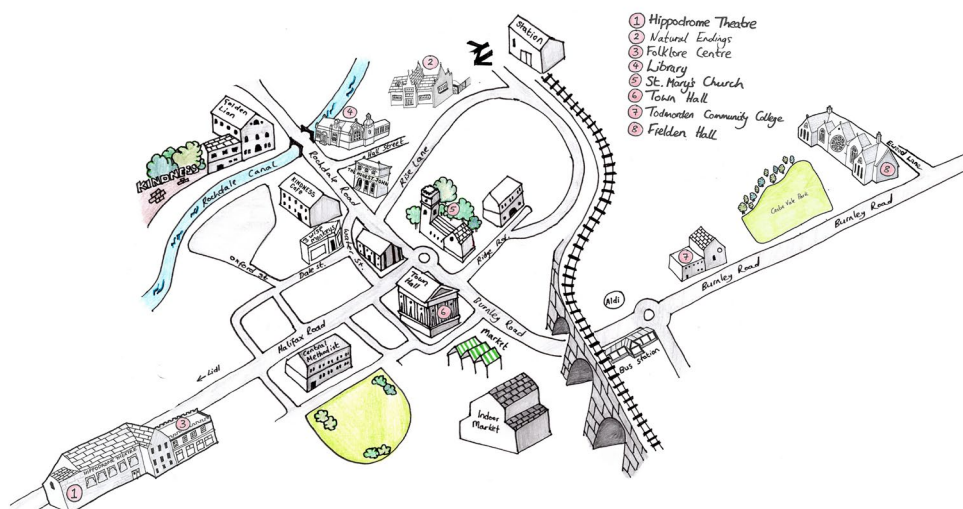
Tuesday 11th Nov, 2pm, Waterside Lodge, 60 Rochdale Road, OL14 7LP

Where we are and how to book

Book online at todmordenbookfestival.co.uk (a booking fee of 7% plus VAT applies)
or at Todmorden Information Centre, 15 Burnley Road, OL14 7BU, 01706 818181.

Under 16s are free. Concessions are available for under 18s, students, pensioners, benefit recipients and people with disabilities.

Book before 7 Oct for early bird tickets



How to find us by car: Todmorden can be reached from the M62, M1, M6 and M65. From the M62 eastbound, leave at junction 21 and junction 24 westbound. From the M65, leave at junctions 9, 10 or 11.

By train: There are regular train services from Manchester and Leeds. For train information, please visit northernrailway.co.uk

By bus: There are regular bus services from Halifax, Burnley and Rochdale. For bus information, please visit wymetro.com



Todmorden
Town Council

**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
FOR CALDERDALE**



Hebden Bridge

**Calderdale
Council**



Bookcase
Hebden Bridge



**Todmorden
Book Festival**

7-15 November 2025