

HAY FESTIVAL

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NEWS RELEASE: Thursday 23 November 2017

Largest-ever Hay Festival Winter Weekend begins as festival names its “Book of the Year”

Hay Festival Winter Weekend begins today (Thursday 23 November, 2017), kicking off a four-day community celebration featuring prize-winning novelists and poets, global policy makers, industry leaders and guardians of the natural world, alongside stars of theatre, TV and film, sports leaders, children’s heroes, acclaimed musicians and much-loved comedians.

Explore the programme and book tickets at hayfestival.org or call 01497 822 629.

To coincide with the festival’s opening, and following hundreds of public nominations, the **Hay Festival Book of the Year 2017** has been named: *The Lost Words* by Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris. *The Lost Words* is a unique illustrated collection of spell-poems to re-wild the language of children. The rich landscape of wild imagination and wild play is brought into focus in acrostic spell-poems by the peerless wordsmith and the artist. Both will discuss the book at the festival on Friday 24 November at 5pm.

Hay Festival Winter Weekend is now in its 18th year, blending literary conversation, immersive performances and interactive workshops, with the best of the town’s seasonal shopping and a chance to explore the famed natural surroundings in all their autumnal splendour. A new venue doubles the festival’s seated capacity this year, while events begin a day earlier.

Peter Florence, Director of Hay Festival, said: “Come and join us in Hay for fireside storytelling and feasting. The town is decked in Christmas lights and glistening with winter cheer for a celebration of scrumptious food, glorious vintage clothing and high times. Bring a story, bring a new idea, bring a friend. Everyone is welcome.”

The project has been part-funded by the Welsh Government’s Tourism Product Innovation Fund, which aims to encourage partnership-working and innovative ideas that will have a greater impact and attract more visitors. **Tourism Minister, Dafydd Elis-Thomas, said:** “This is yet another fantastic line-up which draws together international thought provoking subjects and speakers as well as being a showcase of Wales’ rich and vibrant culture, literature and creative sector. As the Year of Legends in Wales draws to a close, a festival of legendary storytelling, performances and appearances is a fitting closing chapter to the year.”

Programme highlights

Natural wonders are celebrated as **Robert Macfarlane** and **Jackie Morris** present their collaboration, *The Lost Words*; **Horatio Clare** talks *Icebreaker: A Journey Far North*; **Patrick Barkham** discusses *Islander: A Journey Around Our Archipelago*; **Leif Bersweden** presents *The Orchid Hunter: A young botanist’s search for happiness*; writer and broadcaster **Robert Penn** spotlights the wonders of our woodlands with his new book *Woods: A Celebration*; while the country’s favourite gardener **Monty Don** talks *Down to Earth: Gardening Wisdom*.

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Global issues are tackled as investigative journalist **Oliver Bullough**, Nigerian novelist **Chibundu Onuzo** and anti-corruption barrister **Eva Anderson** discuss global corruption; reporter **Luke Harding** talks about his investigation into Trump's links with Russia, *Collusion*; activist and writer **Laurie Penny** talks #MeToo; **Ben Arogundade** presents *Barack Obama: 101 Covers*, looking at the world leader through the evolution of his magazine covers; while this year's Hay Festival 30 Reformations series draws to a close with a trio of talks posing reforms to contemporary orthodoxies: **Helena Kennedy** talks equality; **Owen Sheers** reforms men; and **Marie-Elsa Bragg** takes on Christmas.

Stars of stage, screen and the airwaves offer a glimpse behind the scenes: actors **Jacob Ifan** and **Catrin Stewart** join screenwriter **Roger Williams** to talk to **Guto Harri** about their acclaimed Port Talbot-based crime drama for the BBC, *Bang*; while broadcaster **Jeremy Vine** talks *What I learnt*, part autobiography and part recollection of listeners' wisdom.

Prize-winning novelists present their latest works: **Jeanette Winterson** talks *Ghost Night*; **Matt Haig** discusses his best-seller *How to Stop Time*; and **Owen King**, son of Stephen King, talks about the new novel co-written with his father, *Sleeping Beauties*.

Poetry takes centre-stage as former National Poet of Wales and Hay Festival Medal for Poetry winner, **Gillian Clarke**, presents her new collection *Zoology*, while her 80th birthday is marked by a group of emerging Welsh poets, including **Zillah Bowes**, **Rosey Brown**, **Imtiaz Dharker**, **Menna Elfyn**, **Joao Morais**, **Pascale Petit** and **Clare Potter**. Forward Arts Foundation founder **William Sieghart** opens up *The Poetry Pharmacy*; Welsh poet-playwright **Menna Elfyn** reads from her new collection *Bondo*; and **Pascale Petit** presents *Mama Amazonizã*.

History is reimagined as medical historian **Lindsey Fitzharris** presents her study of Joseph Lister and a turning-point in medicine, *The Butchery Art*; historian **Peter Lord** discusses the first account of Welsh art for 50 years, *The Tradition: A New History of Welsh Art*; **John Connolly** presents his retelling of the life of Stan Laurel, *He*; and **Simon Jenkins** nominates *Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations*; while Professor of English **John Mullan** discusses the work of Jane Austen.

Industry leaders from around the world converge to share their learnings: CEO of tech firm Unruly, **Sarah Wood**, presents her guide to leadership *Stepping Up*; co-founder of the Eden Project, **Tim Smit**, presents his autobiography *Beyond Eden*; and former RFU director **Rob Andrew** talks *Rugby: The Game of my Life*. Chef **Anna Jones** talks about her new cookbook *The Modern Cook's Year*, while best-selling writer **Isabel Losada** explores sexuality with *Sensation*.

Hay-on-Wye comes to life with music throughout the weekend: **Mid Wales Opera** presents the hilarious one-act comedy classic *The Bear*; there are performances from **Siobhan Wilson Trio**, **Smerins Anti-Social Club** and **Hay Community Choir**; **Daniel Martyn Lewis** plays Bach; **Joanna MacGregor** interprets Chopin's Mazurkas; while *GQ* editor **Dylan Jones** presents his new biography *David Bowie: A Life* and broadcaster **Clemency Burton Hill** talks *A Year of Wonder*, her daily guide to classical music.

Comedians offer more late-night entertainment: comic classicist **Natalie Haynes** talks about her much-loved BBC Radio 4 series *Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics*; **Shazia Mirza** brings her award-winning stand-up show *With Love from St Tropez*; and actor, writer and comedian **Matt Lucas** presents his autobiography *Little Me: My Life from A-Z*.

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HAYDAYS events offer fun for all the family as leading writers for children present their latest books: **Ed Vere** talks *Banana!* and *Bedtime for Monsters*; **Adam Frost** showcases *The Awesome Book of Animals*; and **Catherine Barr** presents *Discover 10 Reasons to Love a Turtle*; while **James Campbell** delivers his stand-up show for children.

Hay Festival Schools Visits see leading writers for young people drop in for events at local primary and secondary schools, including **James Campbell**, **Nicola Davies**, **Joe Coelho** and **Barney Norris**.

Hay Festival International Fellow **Jenny Valentine** presents the latest part of her global exploration of adolescence in an event alongside **Harriet Stewart**, **Jonathan Godfrey** and **The Beacons Project** students.

Free drop-in workshops for young people take inspiration from the festival's **#HAYTREES** project, with tree-to-type printmaking and outdoor cookery for children with **Forest Schools**. The Parish Hall is transformed into a workshop of wonders with interactive sessions from festive crafts to hula hooping with **Elle Edwards** from **No Fit State Circus**; **Charles McCarthy** presents *Drawing Without Lines*; and **Barney Norris** and **Pervasive Media** merge creativity with the latest tech in their creative writing and ambient literature workshop.

Meanwhile, the town's atmospheric market square will be a focus of festivities:

On Friday 24 November, **Matt Lucas** switches on the **Hay Christmas lights**, transforming the town into a winter wonderland brimming with festive cheer, accompanied by carol-singing, readings and evening entertainment.

On Saturday 25 November, the **Hay Food Festival** celebrates all that's good about winter cooking, with over 50 stalls showcasing the very best of local produce, from savoury to sweet.

On Sunday 26 November, **Hay Does Vintage** transforms the square into a festive outdoor fleamarket with over 50 vintage and retro traders offering a diverse collection of items from clothes, textiles and jewellery, to furniture, collectables and kitchenalia.

And in the final Hay Festival event of 2017, audiences are invited to take part in the first **#HAYTREES** planting of the Hay Festival Wood on Saturday 2 December at the base of Pen y Fan. To celebrate the festival's 30th Anniversary, 30 acres of new native woodland are being created on National Trust Wales land and in partnership with The Woodland Trust. For more information visit www.hayfestival.org/p-13251-hay-festival-30th-anniversary-wood-tree-planting.aspx

Following on from the 30th Hay Festival in Wales (25 May – 5 June), Querétaro, Mexico (7 – 10 September), Segovia, Spain (16 – 24 September), Aarhus, Denmark (26 – 29 October), and Arequipa Peru (9 - 12 November), Hay Festival Winter Weekend is the final edition of 2017.

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#HayWinterWeekend

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Notes to editors

For IMAGES, INTERVIEWS or FURTHER INFORMATION, contact Hay Festival publicity director Christopher Bone at christopher@hayfestival.org or 07506 522540.

About Hay Festival

www.hayfestival.org

Hay Festival brings readers and writers together to share stories and ideas in sustainable events around the world. The festivals inspire, examine and entertain, inviting participants to imagine the world as it is and as it might be.

Nobel Prize-winners and novelists, scientists and politicians, historians and musicians talk with audiences in a dynamic exchange of ideas. The Festival's global conversation shares the latest thinking in the arts and sciences with curious audiences live, in print and online. Hay Festival also runs wide programmes of education work supporting coming generations of writers and culturally hungry audiences of all ages.

In 1987, the festival was dreamt up around a kitchen table in Hay. Thirty years later, the unique marriage of exacting conversations and entertainment for all ages has travelled to editions in 30 locations, from the historic town of Cartagena in Colombia to the heart of cities in Peru, Mexico, Spain and Denmark. The organisation now reaches a global audience of hundreds of thousands every year and continues to grow and innovate, building partnerships and initiatives alongside some of the leading bodies in arts and the media, including the BBC, Welsh Government Department of Education, Visit Wales, ACW, the British Council, Oxfam, TATA, Friends of Hay Festival, Baillie Gifford, Good Energy, the Woodland Trust and the National Trust.

Acclaimed author, actor and writer **Stephen Fry** is President of the organisation; **Peter Florence** is Director; and **Caroline Michel**, CEO of leading literary and talent agency Peters Fraser + Dunlop, is Chair of the Festival board.

Hay Festival 2018 dates...

- Hay Festival Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (25–28 Jan 2018)
- Hay Festival Wales, UK (24 May – 3 Jun 2018)
- Hay Festival Querétaro, Mexico (Sep 2018)
- Hay Festival Segovia, Spain (Sep 2018)
- Hay Festival Arequipa, Peru (Nov 2018)
- Hay Festival Wales Winter Weekend, UK (Nov 2018)

