

# HAY FESTIVAL

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## NEWS RELEASE

### Hay Festival 2015 line-up announced



**Tuesday 7 April, 2015:** **Hay Festival 2015** (Thursday 21 to Sunday 31 May) brings writers and readers together once again to share stories and ideas that inspire, examine and entertain. Now in its 28<sup>th</sup> year, the 2015 programme spans 11 days with over 700 events, blending expert thinkers, world class writers, and award winning entertainers from the stage and screen.

Director of Hay Festival, Peter Florence, said:

“The festival comes a fortnight after the election. We don't have a manifesto; we have a thousand stories. We want to talk about a new beginning and dream about what the future might be, and be inspired to make those changes ourselves.”

Diverse, pertinent and illuminating, the 2015 Hay Festival programme includes:

#### **Magna Carta 800 – What do we want?**

800 years on from the creation of the Magna Carta and in the wake of a hotly contested British election, a special series of events invites experts and audiences to reimagine the world in the strand *Magna Carta 800 – What Do We Want?* Spotlighting the biggest issues affecting us today – from equality and the law, to politics and fairer farming – the nine events look at how we would redesign our society if offered a blank slate, with speakers including: Hay Festival President **Stephen Fry**; founder of the Everyday Sexism project **Laura Bates**; writer and broadcaster **Sandi Toksvig**; and internationally acclaimed jurists **Igor Judge**, **Helena Kennedy**, **Thomas Buergenthal**, **Brian Leveson**, **Philippe Sands** and **Richard Goldstone**. Speakers will address what we want from a free press, equality and democracy, while inviting HayMakers to pitch in ideas for a new charter.

#### **Literature**

Leading the fiction programme is a host of renowned authors representing a cross section of world fiction. **Kazuo Ishiguro**, **David Mitchell**, **Graham Swift**, **Irvine Welsh**, **Rose Tremain**, **Elif Shafak**, **Alexander McCall Smith**, **Anne Enright**, **Colm Tóibín** and **Marian Keyes** will discuss their latest works, while **Neil Gaiman** pays tribute to the late Sir Terry Pratchett.

Rising stars sit alongside established talents, as **Jessie Burton** offers insight into her multi-award-winning debut, *The Miniaturist*; **Polly Samson** discusses her second novel *The Kindness*; and **Sarah Winman** introduces *A Year of Marvellous Ways*. **Nadifa Mohammed** and **Zukiswa Wanner** represent *Africa39*, a Hay Festival and Rainbow Book Club Project celebrating 39 of the best African south of the Sahara writers under 40. Meanwhile, **Brenda Lozano**, **Daniel Saldaña París**, and **Laia Jufresa** represent *México20*, a Hay project promoting new voices in Mexican literature as part of the Year of Mexico in the UK and the Year of the UK in Mexico, 2015 celebration.

[www.hayfestival.org](http://www.hayfestival.org)

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## Religion

Issues tied to the world's largest religions are confronted as Archbishop of Westminster **Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor** reflects on the Church's response to the sexual abuse scandal; **Abdel Bari Atwan**, the Palestinian editor of *Rai al-Youm*, offers a comprehensive view of IS and the group's masterful command of cyber space in *Islamic State: the Digital Caliphate*; and **Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks** talks religious violence in *Not in God's Name*. Former Roman Catholic nun **Karen Armstrong** interrogates the link between religion and bloodshed, while novelist and historian **Tom Holland** gives the first Christopher Hitchens Lecture on religion and democracy.

## Global affairs

Russia comes under the microscope as **Galina Timchenko**, executive editor of the independent news platform, Meduza, is joined by editor-in-chief of Russia's only independent news channel TV Rain, **Mikhail Zygar**, and author **Oliver Bullough** in *We Need to Talk About Putin*. Founder and chief executive of Kids Company **Camila Batmanghelidjh**, **Helena Kennedy QC** and the UK's Deputy Commissioner for Children's Services, **Sue Berelowitz**, talk to **Jon Snow** on the world's alarming sexual abuse crisis, while ahead of the 2016 US election, ambassador to the UK **Matthew Burzan** debates global innovation with Secretary Clinton's senior advisor, **Alec Ross**.

15 years on from the setting of the Millennium Development Goals, the former head of statistics at UNESCO **Denise Lievesley**, adviser to the United Nations **Claire Melamed**, and the CEO of Oxfam **Mark Goldring**, talk to chief executive of the Royal Statistical Society **Hetan Shah**, on our progress and discuss what's next for global ambitions. Implications of the ongoing digital revolution are also faced head on with discussions on cyber security, the dark web, and mass surveillance.

## UK today

A range of talks spotlighting key post-election issues address the state of Britain today. New chair of the National Trust, **Tim Parker**, looks at our sense of nationhood in the context of our institutions; Britain as a nation of 6.5 million unpaid carers is spotlighted by **Professor Luke Clements** and filmmaker **Anne Cottringer**; Queen of shops **Mary Portas** reviews the decline of the British high street; while **Joe Grice** and **Jay Lindop** from the Office of National Statistics give us the unspun truth behind the nation's numbers. In politics, ex-advisor to David Cameron, **Steve Hilton**, offers his manifesto for a more human society; while **Alex Salmond** reflects on Scottish independence.

## Science and health

Some of our generation's greatest minds are on hand to answer burning questions about the world around us, including: teen innovator **Jack Andraka**; evolutionary biologist **Beth Shapiro**; Professor of infectious diseases, **Derek Smith**; Mohammed Ali Humanitarian of the Year, **Mick Ebeling**; and Nobel Prize winner **Sir Andre Geim**. Taking on the whole of human history, **Yuval Noah Harari** discusses his bestselling book *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*; while **Andrew Solomon**, lecturer, activist and author of *Far From the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity*, gives the Wellcome Trust Lecture.

## Environment and nature

Drawing inspiration from the serene setting of the Wye valley, the programme is once again packed with events to spotlight the natural world. The Hay on Earth forum returns in 2015 to ask: *What policies should the new government be pursuing to build a sustainable Britain?* Ecologist **Tony Juniper** looks at the value of Britain's countryside, while Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales **Christianne Glossop** and scientist **Glyn Hewinson** talk Bovine TB. The continued renaissance of nature writing is reflected in events with writers **Robert McFarlane**; **Helen McDonald**, author of the Costa Prize winning *H is for Hawk*; Wainwright Prize shortlistee **John Lewis-Stempel**; and writer, broadcaster and horticulturalist **Monty Don**.

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## Art, fashion and photography

V&A curator, **Claire Wilcox**, leads the festival's fashion pack as she discusses her spring blockbuster exhibition, *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty*. **Professor Noah Charney** presents his *Case Studies in Deception* exploring the stories, dramas and human intrigues surrounding the world's most famous art forgeries; while the great Magnum photographer, **Steve McCurry**, discusses his 30 years of shooting conflicts and the changes in media during that time.

## Comedy and music

Festival president **Stephen Fry** will thrill audiences with anecdotes and discussion from the latest volume of his autobiography, *More Fool Me*; while a host of the world's comedians bring their best jokes, including: Edinburgh Fringe favourites **Jason Byrne** and **Mark Watson**; British Comedy Award-winner **Nina Conti** and Irish sensation **Tommy Tiernan**.

Complementing the expansive programme of talks is an equally varied musical line-up blending international stars with new talent. Pop-rock superstars **Texas**; folk-rock trio **The Staves**; Herefordshire singer and songwriter **Sasha McVeigh**; indie-pop four-piece, **SANS**; Mercury Prize-nominated folk stars **The Unthanks**; world-renowned classical harpist **Catrin Finch**; and folk singer-songwriter **Frank Turner** all take to the stage. A special concert from **Tinariwen** celebrates Hay's twin town of Timbuktu, while **Daniel Martyn Lewis** offers an extraordinary journey over four concerts with *JS Bach: The Well-tempered Clavier 2*.

## Hay Fever

Hay Fever, the festival's programme for children and families, is back with a feel-good line-up to make children of all ages smile. The programme's variety reaches new heights with cartooning, comedy, illustrating, model making, sleepovers, comic-making workshops, spectacular young adult fiction discussions and more. With hundreds of events and activities, children and adults alike can enjoy the summer half-term with treasured favourites like **Jacqueline Wilson** and **Liz Pichon** or discover fabulous YA stars like *New York Times* bestseller **Sarah J Maas**, over from the US to launch her new series.

There will be events to celebrate the 800 year anniversary of the Magna Carta and 150 years since the publication of *Alice in Wonderland*. Highlights for family audiences' will include activity workshops like 'Drawing Favourite Characters' or 'Easy Chinese Workshops'; while the fabulous **Chris Riddell** will be live drawing and **Cressida Cowell** talks *How To Train Your Dragon*. **Michael Morpurgo** is joined by actress **Alison Reid**, violinist **Daniel Piore** and **The Storyteller's Ensemble** (a quartet of strings) to interweave words and music in 'The Mozart Question Concert' – a great event for all the family. Children can learn how to make awesome comics with **Neill Cameron**, the very artist who illustrated some of *The Phoenix's* best-loved comics. Not to mention appearances by a spectacular line-up of well-loved authors including; **Neil Gaiman**, **Frank Cottrell Boyce** and **John Boyne**.

Picture book loving families can look forward to meeting their favourite illustrators; *Waterstones Children's Book Prize* Winner **Rob Biddulph**, twice winner of the *CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal* **Emily Gravett**, **Chris Haughton**, **Ed Vere** and a host of much loved characters (**Peter Rabbit**, **Topsy and Tim** and **Spot** to mention a few).

For older readers the **#HayYA** programme truly has something for everyone. Children's Laureate **Malorie Blackman's** YA panel includes 'Queen of Teen' winner **James Dawson**. Bestselling creator of *Geek Girl*, **Holly Smale** is back, as is spoken word artist **Steven Camden**. Whether you like to immerse yourself in romantic fantasy adventure, dystopian trilogies, emotional rollercoasters or prefer a quieter, thought-provoking literary experience – you'll find it all at **#HayYA**.

The full festival programme is available to view at [hayfestival.org](http://hayfestival.org).

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## ENDS

### Notes to editors

For 28 years Hay Festival has brought together writers from around the world to debate and share stories at its festival in the staggering beauty of the Welsh Borders. Hay celebrates great writing from poets and scientists, lyricists and comedians, novelists and environmentalists, and the power of great ideas to transform our way of thinking. We believe the exchange of views and meeting of minds that our festivals create inspire revelations personal, political and educational. Hay is, in Bill Clinton's phrase, 'The Woodstock of the mind'.

Founded around a kitchen table in 1987, the Festival continues to attract the most exciting writers, filmmakers, comedians, politicians and musicians to inspire, delight and entertain.

### About Africa39

A Hay Festival project selecting and celebrating – through a festival and an anthology of stories/extracts published by Bloomsbury – the most promising 39 authors under the age of 40 from Sub-Saharan Africa and the diaspora. The project was launched in UNESCO's World Book Capital, Port Harcourt, Nigeria and thanks to the Arts Council England Africa39 writers are being promoted in the main literary events in the UK throughout the year. More information [Africa39.com](http://Africa39.com)

### About México20

Hay Festival, the British Council and Conaculta present México20, a project that promotes new voices in Mexican literature and brings their work to an international readership and the global publishing world as part of the Year of Mexico in the UK and the Year of the UK in Mexico, 2015 celebration. A jury of three experts on Mexican literature – Juan Villoro, Guadalupe Nettel and Cristina Rivera Garza – have chosen twenty young Mexican writers under the age of 40 published to form an anthology by Pushkin Press and Conaculta. Hay Festival will invite them to their international festivals across the world. More information [mexico20.com](http://mexico20.com)

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