

Borders Book Festival 2019 – tickets now on sale

Baillie Gifford Borders Book Festival programme was announced today with the help of pupils from Melrose Primary School Ellie Darlow (11) and members of the Caledonian Dandie Dinmont Terrier club

The world premiere of the Dandie Dinmont operetta written by Alexander McCall Smith, featuring children from the school will be performed at the book festival in June.



Ellie Darlow (11) of Melrose Primary School with members of the Caledonian Dandie Dinmont Terrier Club PHOTO Ian Georgeson Sporting legends David Coulthard, Stephen Hendry, Bob Champion, Gregor Townsend and inspiring women Kate Humble, Ruth Davidson and Susan Calman are just some of the highlights at this summer's Baillie Gifford Borders Book Festival.

The full-line up of over 100 events is announced today as tickets go on sale for the four-day book festival, running

from 13th to 16th June at Harmony Garden in Melrose in the Scottish Borders.



Alistair Moffat, Festival Director with Ellie Darlow 11, Ben Cook 11 and Maryan Khan 11 with Dandie Dinmont Terriers PHOTO Ian Georgeson

Alistair Moffat, Festival Director said: "After a long winter and much discontent, the clouds are parting and a brilliant sun will shine on Harmony Garden in June. The marquees will rise, the seats will be set out, the sound systems installed, the show will begin and the spells of enchantment will weave their magic.

"For four glorious, glowing days, the world will come to Melrose to celebrate at what Michael Palin, Prue Leith and Neil Oliver have hailed as the best book festival in Britain. In 2019 new faces will be everywhere, from lovely Alan Titchmarsh, Kate Humble, Michaela Strachan, David Coulthard and Fintan O'Toole.

"And in sessions with fascinating, unexpected storytellers, you will hear a pin drop. The epic tale of Lara Prior-Palmer's victory in a thousand -mile Mongolian horse race will thrill and David Wilson's amazing life as a former prison governor and criminologist will leave audiences wide-eyed.

“The wonderful Walter Scott Prize has laureated the best of historical fiction for ten years and we plan a mighty celebration. In fact, the whole festival, with the strongest programme ever, is just that – a party that rejoices in the best of Britain and is one of the best parties in Britain.”

Entertaining on stage in June will be one of Britain’s comedy greats Alexei Sayle, gardening expert and much-loved writer Alan Titchmarsh, wildlife TV-presenter Michaela Strachan, the voice of rugby Ian Robertson, historian Neil Oliver, comedian and impressionist Jan Ravens and BBC Newsnight presenter turned novelist Kirsty Wark.

Attempting to make sense of the current political turmoil will be Dominic Grieve MP on the Brexit process and what lies ahead; political commentator Matt Chorley with a light-hearted view of inside Parliament, Fintan O’Toole setting Brexit into historical perspective, James Naughtie’s authoritative take on what is happening to our political system and, to top it off, firm favourite, political satirist and impressionist Rory Bremner.

The 10th anniversary of the prestigious Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction will be marked by the world premiere of the Dandie Dinmont operetta written by Alexander McCall Smith, with music composed by Tom Cunningham and directed by David Lyle (music) and Alan Borthwick (artistic).

The £25,000 prize will be awarded to the winner at the Book Festival on Saturday 16th June from a shortlist including Peter Carey, Cressida Connolly, Samantha Harvey, Andrew Miller, Michael Ondaatje and Robin Robertson.

The McInroy and Wood lecture will this year be delivered by War Doctor David Nott, who for over 25 years has taken unpaid leave from the NHS to volunteer in some of the world’s most dangerous war zones.

Health and well-being are a prominent feature with events by

Sue Armstrong on the science of how and why we age; Eve Simmons and Laura Dennison revealing the myths behind healthy eating; Kim Jones with practical advice on achieving a good night's sleep and Michelle Thomas's honest account of living with mental ill health.

How to Train Your Dragon author Cressida Cowell, Vivian French, artist Catherine Rayner, bestselling Beetle Boy author MG Leonard, Doctor Who writer David Solomons and cooks Mary Contini and Pru Irvine will entertain and energise the younger crowd in the popular Family Book Festival, which takes place throughout the weekend of Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th June, and includes kids craft activities, storytelling and creative workshops.



From Melrose Primary School Ellie Darlow (11) and members of the Caledonian Dandie Dinmont Terrier club enjoy some stories. PHOTO Ian Georgeson

Adults get to go free to any Family Book Festival event so long as they are accompanied by at least one child!

In addition, throughout the four days there will be live music, the Orchard tented food village and plenty of free, fun activities making the book festival a great day out for all the family to enjoy.

The festival welcomes the continued support of Title Sponsor Baillie Gifford and Key Sponsor McInroy & Wood, as well as Douglas Home & Co, The National Trust for Scotland and the on-going funding of Scottish Borders Council, Creative Scotland and many other loyal supporters.

Michelle McLeod, Sponsorship Manager at Baillie Gifford said: "We are delighted to support the festival and see how our continued sponsorship has contributed to festival's growth and develop. We look forward to seeing many of the exciting and varied authors who will take part over the weekend in June, and to being amongst the thousands of festivals goers who will embark on Melrose to enjoy everything the festival has to offer".

Tim Wood, Chief Executive of McInroy & Wood said: "McInroy & Wood is delighted once again to be the Key Sponsor of the Borders Book Festival, continuing our longstanding support of the arts in Scotland and across the UK. In the rush of modern life, the opportunity to sit back, absorb and reflect upon a wide range of topics in such beautiful surroundings is a tonic for the soul. We are proud to be able to provide our backing to this valuable event in our local community and look forward to sharing our enjoyment with you."

Tickets for this year's Baillie Gifford Borders Book Festival are available from Hub Tickets, at www.bordersbookfestival.org or at 0131 473 2000.



Pupils from Melrose Primary School (Ellie Darlow 11 (centre), Ben Cook 11 and Maryan Khan 11) and members of the Caledonian Dandie Dinmont Terrier Club Photo Ian Georgeson