

# National treasures heading to Borders Book Festival in June

**National Treasures will make their way to Harmony Garden in the Scottish Borders in June for one of the best parties in Britain.**

For four glorious days (12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June), all roads will lead to Melrose, where the Borders Book Festival will celebrate books and writers, interrogate politics and current affairs, and where festival-goers will have fun and be amazed.

The Book Festival's sparkling programme was announced yesterday (Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April) ahead of tickets going on sale.

The diamonds and rubies in the Book Festival's National Treasure chest will include *Gavin and Stacey* stars Alison Steadman and Larry Lamb who both have new books.

Michael Palin will cast his glow, talking about his latest volume of diaries.

Stacey Dooley won *Strictly!* and has also written a superb, moving book on motherhood. Hairy Biker, Si King, needed no second invitation to put on his helmet and roar up the A68 to Melrose.

Gifted natural history cameraman, Gordon Buchanan, has written a memoir. Scottish National Treasures Kirsty Wark and Sally Magnusson will recall the good – and bad – bits of 20 years on *Newsnight* and 27 years on *Reporting Scotland*.

Tanni (Grey Thomson) will meet Sammi (Kinghorn) and talk about gold (medals) and much else with Louise Minchin. And the doyen of crime fiction, Ian Rankin, returns in triumph to Melrose after another number one bestseller.

The world is changing at breakneck speed – every day it seems – and this summer, politics and political discourse will be major themes.

Now freed from the constraints of government, former cabinet ministers Jeremy Hunt and Michael Gove will tell us what they really think.

Journalist, television presenter and author Gavin Esler will talk about how Britain can be better.

First Minister, John Swinney, will talk to another former cabinet minister, festival chairman Michael Moore, not about politics but about the books that shaped his thinking. Andrew Marr, Sally Magnusson and Alistair Moffat will discuss the seismic changes in journalism and why they matter. And unique to the festival, available on no other format, Jim Naughtie will unravel what is truly happening in Washington – that day.

To mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War: Andrew Marr and James Holland will celebrate the Great Generation who sacrificed so much for victory; Tim Bouverie will discuss his superb book on the politics of the allies who defeated Hitler; and, in *To See Ourselves*, Alistair Moffat charts how the boomer generation radically changed post-war Britain.

Inspiring stories from more recent years come from champion British-Kenyan swimmer Rebecca Achieng Ajulu-Bushell, who will share her memoir, *These Heavy Black Bones*; and unlikely athlete-turned-record-breaker Jessica Hepburn, who describes how she exercised her way out of the heartbreak of eleven failed rounds of IVF and the realisation that she would not be

a mother.

Also joining the line-up: husband-and-wife duo Chris Brookmyre and Marisa Haetzman as crime sensation Ambrose Parry; and for fans of literary fiction, celebrated novelist Andrew O'Hagan, plus Dacre Stoker and Ellie Zeegen on the legacy of Bram Stoker's 1897 gothic horror novel *Dracula*; Mairi Kidd joins us with her acclaimed historical novel *The Specimens*; and Scottish poet, writer and musician Don Paterson and young rising Scottish music stararchie add to the eclectic arts line-up.

The announcement of the prestigious Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction will also be made on the opening evening of the Festival, with six shortlisted international literary talents in contention for the £25,000 prize, previously won by the likes of Dame Hilary Mantel, Sebastian Barry and Robert Harris.

Festival Director, Alistair Moffat, said: "As spring finally wakes us all from the long, dark winter, it gives us such joy to be able to bring to Melrose's idyllic Harmony Garden such a treat for the June diaries.

"This year we will look back at world events eighty years ago, with the end of World War Two, and will also hear direct from some of Britain's brightest minds their reflections on our current world: how it's changed; where it's headed; and what we can do about it.

"But it's not all heavy politics. As ever, our programme is as varied as it is packed, with top-notch storytelling, inspiring sport, well-known faces from the screen, and tales of travel and adventure to suit all tastes.

"This sparkling programme would not have been possible without the generosity of those who helped fund the Book Festival – both public and private – and we are beyond grateful for their support and enthusiasm, this year more than ever."

The Family Book Festival, sponsored by Blackport Investments, takes place throughout the day on the Saturday and Sunday (14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> June), teeming with fantastic author events for young book festival-goers, including: for teenagers, the inimitable Elle McNicoll, and former Waterstones Children's Laureate and Carnegie Medal winner Joseph Coelho; and for younger audiences, the wonderful Vivian French and Alan Windram returning to Harmony Garden, with Jill Calder, Mike Nicholson and *My Kind of Book* founder and sensory storyteller Ailie Finlay this year set to join the fun in sparking young imaginations; plus award-winning author-illustrator Catherine Rayner with a special event celebrating 20 years of her beloved picture book, *Augustus and His Smile*.

In addition, the four-day festivities will also play host to live music, the Orchard Food Village, a bookshop to browse thanks to new sponsor David Young, as well as free, fun activities for all the family throughout the weekend.

Naturally, the biggest party in the Borders will be blessed with glorious sunshine throughout! But if there are occasional episodes of 'refreshing' weather, those in the Orchard Food Village will be spared, for it will be covered by a vast transparent canopy, new to the Book Festival this year.

[The Borders Book Festival](#) is committed to reducing its carbon footprint and environmental impact by implementing a number of net zero goals including: zero waste to landfill;

e-ticketing and a donation to planting trees for every ticket purchased.

Tickets now available at [www.bordersbookfestival.org](http://www.bordersbookfestival.org) or by calling 0131 290 2112.