South Norfolk’s festival of literature, poetry, drama and conversation

Visit our website: www.wymwords.co.uk
Welcome to Wymondham Words 2016

Incredibly, 2016 is the seventh year of Wymondham Words. This October promises to be a wonderful festival with a great mix of Norfolk-based writers, and others from further afield.

We begin with a visit from one of the UK’s finest non-fiction writers, Philip Hoare, winner of the prestigious Samuel Johnson Prize for his magnificent book on whales, *Leviathan*. With the news of multiple sperm whales stranded on the north Norfolk coast at the start of the year, and the rather happier recent sightings of a returning humpback whale – affectionately christened ‘Scroby Dick’ – which has spent recent winters feeding off the northeast coast of the county, Philip’s incredible first-hand knowledge of the planet’s largest creatures makes this an event not to miss.

The Festival holds its first ever event in the town’s fascinating Bridewell Heritage Museum, an eighteenth-century prison. The event is suitably fitting for the venue, as we are visited by Dr John A. Davies, Chief Curator for Norfolk Museums, and his colleague Dr Tim Pestell to talk about their book *A History of Norfolk in 100 Objects*. Dr Graham Platts also visits us to deliver a free lecture on the early development of the English language in the striking new extension of Wymondham Abbey. More-recent history follows, as we are joined by Keiron Pim and David Willett, who will discuss Keiron’s biography of David Litvinoff, an elusive character at the dark heart of 1960s London and its swinging music, film and art scenes.

Three highly regarded fiction writers, Megan Bradbury, James Ferron Anderson and Benjamin Johncock, join us for what will be a fascinating talk about their North American-set novels, all of which feature well-known, real historical figures – including Walt Whitman, Errol Flynn and Neil Armstrong – among their fictionalised characters and events.

Sitcom writer and author of three wonderfully entertaining books, John Osborne, will bring humour to the festival with his new comic show based on recent stories he’s had broadcast on Radio 4. A veteran of the Edinburgh Festival, John’s show is definitely one to catch.

Alongside all this – and not forgetting the intriguing *Flying Shop of Imagination* for children – are numerous other fascinating events, including a new creative performance from the Slow Theatre Company, which aims to provide a glimpse into the lives, worries and hopes of dementia carers. Proceeds from the performances will be shared with Wymondham Pabulum Café, a weekly meeting place for people with dementia and their carers.

We end with a poetry supper in the medieval surroundings of The Green Dragon, where the audience can join London-based poet Kate Bingham – noted for her “unusual ability to write convincingly and infectiously about happiness” – and locally based poets Heidi Williamson and Julia Webb, by taking part in an open mic slot.

We hope you can join us at Wymondham Words 2016, as we once again celebrate literature and words in South Norfolk.

Edward Parnell
Director

Thanks and Acknowledgements

Wymondham Words is entirely organised and run by a committee of volunteers who kindly give their time for free. In addition, we are particular grateful to Norwich Town Close Estate Charity, Norfolk County Council Arts Project Fund, The John Jarrold Trust, and Waitrose Community Matters. Thanks also for generous support-in-kind from Kett’s Books, The Book Hive, The Green Dragon, Wymondham Library, the Bridewell Museum, and Wymondham Nature Group. Refreshments, including wine supplied and donated by Wymondham’s specialist wine shop, Reno Wine, will be available at a number of events.

Wymondham Words is a Wymondham Arts Forum project and is supported by:

Wymondham Arts Forum Charity No. 1153188

Festival Patron: George Szirtes

Norwich Town Close Estate Charity

The John Jarrold Trust

Waitrose

Wymondham Arts Forum Charity No. 1153188
Tuesday 18 October 19.30 Bridewell Heritage Museum

A History of Norfolk in 100 Objects

Norfolk has evidence of a substantially longer human past than any other part of Britain. The discovery of the beautiful Happisburgh hand axe, described in A History of Norfolk in 100 Objects (2015), led to a find of further flint tools twice as old as anything found elsewhere in the country. Closer to Wymondham, objects inside the pages of this fascinating book include a magnificent Roman drinking cup from Crownthorpe, and the iconic – albeit somewhat larger – Kett’s Oak.

Dr John A. Davies is Chief Curator for Norfolk Museums Service based at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery, and has been Keeper of Archaeology for Norfolk Museums since 1997. He has worked as an archaeologist in Norfolk for over thirty years, specialising in the Roman and late prehistoric periods, and he is currently undertaking research into Norman castles and the Iron Age period. He has published widely on the coinage from British archaeological sites.

Dr Tim Pestell is Senior Curator of Archaeology at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery where he has worked since 2002. Born and schooled in Norwich, he specialises in the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods, with particular interests in monasticism, literacy and the Kingdom of East Anglia.

This is a partnership event held in conjunction with the Bridewell Museum and Kett’s Books.

Tickets: Adults £7.50
Under 21s £4.00
Available from Kett’s Books and The Book Hive.

Numbers are limited so advance booking is highly recommended. Also, please note that the venue is upstairs, so regrettably there is no wheelchair access.

Thursday 13 October 19.30 Baptist Church

The Sea Inside Us All

Philip Hoare is one of the UK’s finest non-fiction writers. He is the author of six books, including biographies of Noel Coward and Oscar Wilde. Leviathan or, The Whale (2008), won the 2009 Samuel Johnson Prize for non-fiction and was followed by his most recent work, The Sea Inside (2013). An experienced broadcaster and curator, Philip wrote and presented the BBC Arena programme The Hunt for Moby-Dick, and directed three films for the BBC’s Whale Night.

Philip is obsessed with the sea and what it contains – particularly its largest creatures, the cetaceans (whales and dolphins). In a wide-ranging illustrated talk, he asks what the sea and its whales mean to us now, and what they have meant in the past. The whale is freighted with the terrible disconnection between human and natural history. Yet perhaps some reconciliation is possible, through the medium of culture: the culture of humans, and the culture of whales.

“A classic. So compelling, it cast a spell on me that endured for days...”

Praise for Leviathan, The Observer

“A beautifully written mixture of travelogue and essay... Hoare has invented a new genre: an elegy for something not yet lost.”

Praise for The Sea Inside, Independent on Sunday

This is a partnership event held in conjunction with Wymondham Nature Group.

Tickets: Adults £7.50
Under 21s £4.00
Available from Kett’s Books and The Book Hive.

Photo: Andrew Sutton
**Friday 21 October  19.30  Wymondham High Studio Theatre**

**Three Shows from Radio 4**

Come and join **John Osborne** for an evening of comedy stories. John has written and performed six half-hour storytelling shows for BBC Radio 4. They are funny, heart-warming and a masterclass in how to keep an audience captivated. This autumn he is travelling around with a stage show where he tells a selection of these stories as well as performing new radio material he is developing. John is a regular at festivals including Glastonbury and Latitude and is the creator of sell-out Edinburgh show *John Peel’s Shed* and *Sky 1’s sitcom* *After Hours*.

John has written three books. The first, *Radio Head*, was broadcast as Radio 4’s Book of the Week in 2009. Every chapter is a different radio station, with John investigating the future of British radio. His second book *The Newsagent’s Window* won an East Anglian Book of the Year award in 2010 and is about the cards you see in the windows at newsagents: John decided to answer as many cards as he could to meet the people who still use these adverts. John’s most recent book is *Don’t Need the Sunshine* (2013), in which he spent time with a retired lighthouse keeper, went to a Punch and Judy convention, and met the owner of a saucy postcard museum on the Isle of Wight.

“Stands somewhere between Daniel Kitson and Tom Wrigglesworth, I could have listened for hours.” – The Independent

“John Osborne’s story left me and my children spellbound.”
Stewart Lee, The Observer

“Genius.” – The Guardian

**Tickets: Adults £7.50  Under 21s £4.00**

Available from Kett’s Books and The Book Hive.

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**Wednesday 19 October  19.30  Wymondham Library**

**Adventures in the Rock ‘n’ Roll Underworld**

**David Litvinoff** (1928–75) was one of the mythic characters of London in the 1960s – outrageous, dangerous to know, always lurking in the shadows as the spotlight shone on his famous friends. Flitting between the worlds of music, art and crime, he exerted a hidden influence that helped create the Kray’s legend and Lucian Freud’s reputation as a man never to be crossed; connected the Rolling Stones with London’s dark side; and shaped the plot of the film *Performance* by revealing his knowledge of the city’s underworld, a decision that would put his life in danger.

Litvinoff’s determination to live without trace means that his life has always eluded biographers, until the publication of **Keiron Pim’s Jumpin’ Jack Flash: David Litvinoff and the Rock ‘n’ Roll Underworld** (2016). This extraordinary feat of research entailed 100 interviews over five years, including Eric Clapton, Marianne Faithfull and ‘Mad’ Frankie Fraser. It is also an account of former EDP journalist Keiron Pim’s determined pursuit of Litvinoff’s ghost, which took him from London to Australia.

Keiron will be joined by **Paul Willetts**, author of a number of books on London and its more colourful characters, including the biography of Paul Raymond, *Members Only* (2010), which was made into the film *The Look of Love* starring Steve Coogan. Paul’s most recent book is *Rendezvous at the Russian Tea Rooms* (2015), which provides the first comprehensive account of what was once hailed by a leading American newspaper as the greatest spy story of World War II.

**Tickets: Adults £7.50. Under 21s £4.00.**

Available from Kett’s Books and The Book Hive.
Slow Theatre Company Presents

I’m here
Saturday 22nd October 3pm & 8pm

A creative performance highlighting the world of carers of people living with dementia

Director: Danny O’Hara

Venue:
Wymondham Baptist Church,
Queen Street,
Wymondham,
Norfolk NR18 0AY
(Fully accessible; limited parking)

Tickets:
Donations. Proceeds shared with Wymondham Pabulum Café, a meeting place for people with dementia and their carers

Tea & coffee served before 3pm performance

Saturday 29 October
14.30  Central Hall
Slow Theatre event with Pabulum Café

07896 179833 community@slowtheatrecompany.co.uk

twitter: @slowtheatrecomp facebook/slow-theatre-company

Slow is a not-for-profit Theatre Company (no. 09849483) working in the community

Ticket Information

We look forward to welcoming you to a variety of venues and events this year. There is limited space at a number of our venues, so we would recommend buying tickets in advance to avoid any potential disappointment at the door.

In particular, numbers are limited for our final event, the Poetry Supper at The Dragon, so advance bookings are required for that event (which also includes a free jacket potato supper). Numbers are also rather limited for 100 Objects.

Our events this year for children are all free – though you do need to book (see the penultimate page of this programme for booking details). We also have a free talk in the Abbey on 23 October on the development of Early English. No bookings are necessary for that event – please just turn up on the afternoon.

This year we are offering a special under-21 ticket rate of £4.00 for each ticketed event (except the Poetry Supper). Adult tickets cost what we consider is a very reasonable £7.50.

Tickets are available from two fine local independent book shops: Kett’s Books in Wymondham and The Book Hive in Norwich. Please visit them and take advantage of some of the thousands of wonderful books that they have on their shelves!

TO RESERVE TICKETS BY PHONE CALL 01953 603663

Box Office Details

Kett’s Books, Whartons Court,
Wymondham, NR18 0UQ
01953 603663  www.kettsbooks.co.uk

Kett’s Books is Wymondham’s community bookshop offering a wide range of new titles, a Friends scheme, and various events throughout the year. Free parking is available in the adjacent Market Street car park.

The Book Hive, 53 London Street, Norwich, NR2 1HL
01603 219268  www.thebookhive.co.uk

Situated in the heart of Norwich in the Lanes area of the city, The Book Hive is a beautiful three-storey building housing a unique collection of books in a quirky and stylish setting. The shop was named the best small bookshop in Britain in 2011 by The Telegraph.
Wednesday 26 October  19.30 Wymondham Library
This Land is Not Our Land
Three Norwich-based writers whose North American-set novels interweave history and fiction.

Megan Bradbury was born in the United States and grew up in Britain. She has an MA in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia, where she was awarded the Charles Pick Fellowship. Her debut novel *Everyone is Watching* (2016) is about the people who have defined New York. Through the lives and perspectives of these great creators, artists and thinkers (notably the poet Walt Whitman, photographer Robert Mapplethorpe and city designer Robert Moses), and through other iconic works of art that capture its essence, *Everyone is Watching* is a love letter to New York and its people – past, present and future.

Growing up in the 1970s terrorism of Northern Ireland, feeling neither British nor Irish, James Ferron Anderson acquired his outsider perspective early. His first novel *The River and the Sea*, which won the 2012 Rethink New Novels Award, is set in the bleak landscape of end-of-empire British Columbia. His new novel, *Terminal City* (2016), moves to a noirish 1959 Vancouver, the city where reprobate Hollywood star Errol Flynn died in October of that year. Taking the return of this famous, fading man as its inspiration, *Terminal City* reignites relationships and a crime that is long gone for some, though not for others. Constructing a novel around a real place, a real past and real characters is James’s ultimate outsider observation.

Benjamin Johncock is the author of *The Last Pilot*, described by The Washington Post as “supercharged Hemingway at 70,000 feet”. The novel, which opens in the Mojave Desert in 1947, is set during the heady days of the space race. It won the Authors’ Club Best First Novel Award 2016 and was shortlisted for the East Anglian Book Award 2015. Benjamin’s short stories have been published by The Fiction Desk, The Junket and Comma Press. He is the recipient of two Arts Council England grants and an American Literary Merit Award.

Tickets: Adults £7.50. Under 21s £4.00.
Available from Kett’s Books and The Book Hive.

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Sunday 23 October 15.00 Wymondham Abbey

**The Early Development of the English Language**

Where did the English language come from? How did it first establish itself as our national language? What better place to learn more about this subject than the magnificent setting of Wymondham’s twelfth century Benedictine Abbey.

Dr Graham Platts’ illustrated talk will describe the foundations of English in Britain and its evolution up to the 12th century, before the modern forces of language standardisation came into effect.

Dr Platts graduated from the University of York with a degree in English and Related Literature, before pursuing a Master’s course in English Society and Culture in the Later Middle Ages at Birmingham University and a PhD there that focused on South Lincolnshire in the early 14th century.

**Tickets:** Free event. No need to book, just turn up on the afternoon.

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Wednesday 2 November  19.30  The Green Dragon
Poetry Supper at The Dragon

Join three marvellous poets for supper and a feast of poetry at Wymondham’s popular medieval pub. There will also be a few open mic spots available.

Kate Bingham has written three collections of poetry: Cohabitation, Quicksand Beach (which was shortlisted for the 2006 Forward Prize for Best Collection), and Infragreen. A five poem leaflet appeared from Clutag Press in June this year. Her poem ‘On Highgate Hill’ was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem in 2010. Her highly praised work has appeared many times in publications such as The Times Literary Supplement, The Spectator and The Poetry Review. Kate lives in London.

Heidi Williamson’s first collection, Electric Shadow (Bloodaxe, 2011), was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation and shortlisted for the Seamus Heaney Centre Prize for Poetry. Her second, The Print Museum, was published this year. Heidi works as a freelance poet and tutors for Writers’ Centre Norwich and The Poetry Society.

Julia Webb is a graduate of the University of East Anglia’s poetry MA. In 2011 she won The Poetry Society’s Stanza competition. Her first collection, Bird Sisters, was published earlier this year.

All tickets: £7.50. Available only in advance from Kett’s Books, The Book Hive and The Green Dragon. Includes a free jacket potato chilli supper (veg or meat).

Please note the venue is upstairs, so regrettably there is no wheelchair access.
Programme produced and designed by Edward Parnell: www.edwardparnell.co.uk
Cover photo © E. Parnell

Events for Children (22–30 October)
The Flying Shop of Imagination

The Flying Shop of Imagination is the new and exciting part of Wymondham Words Festival just for children and families!

Led by writer Bel Greenwood and artist Kate Munroe, children can explore their own imaginations, come up with extraordinary stories and create amazing artefacts that become part of the ‘Flying Shop’. Join in the adventure at schools and Wymondham Library before the shop is built and exhibited at Wymondham Abbey over half-term (22 Oct to 30 Oct). Here the adventure continues with additional workshops, before moving to the Millennium Library in Norwich.

Sign up for the adventure by phoning 07533 421023 or email createprojects@hotmail.com, giving the age of child/children and the date of the workshop you would like to attend:

Tuesday 25 Oct  14.30–16.00  Wymondham Library
Wednesday 26 Oct  10.30–12.00  Wymondham Abbey

Both suitable for ages 4 upwards (under 8s must be accompanied).

Thursday 27 Oct  14.00–15.30  Wymondham Abbey
Making ‘Story Pictures’ with Clare Jarrett

A special session in which children and their families will make big ‘story pictures’ with illustrator and children’s book author Clare Jarrett, who wrote the wonderful Arabella Miller’s Tiny Caterpillar – where the lovely dog drawing above comes from.

Suitable for families with children aged 3-6.

Norwich Town Close charity funding means all activities are FREE!

Venue Details

All venues are in central Wymondham and have level access (except upstairs at The Green Dragon). Parking is available at some venues, but ample nearby pay-and-display parking is available in various Wymondham town centre car parks, which are free after 18.00.

Bridewell Heritage Museum – NR18 0NS, Norwich Road
Park in town centre car parks or adjacent Fairland Church.
Please note the venue is upstairs, so regrettably there is no wheelchair access.

The Green Dragon Tavern – NR18 0PL, Church Street
Limited parking available on nearby Becketswell Rd. Otherwise use town car parks.
Please note the venue is upstairs, so regrettably there is no wheelchair access.

Kett’s Books – NR18 0UQ, Whartons Court, off Market Street
Main Festival ticket office. Park in Market Street car park; shop is located in adjacent courtyard.

Wymondham Abbey – NR18 0PH, Church Street
The Abbey now has inspiring new spaces for events and meetings. Limited parking nearby, or use town centre car parks.

Wymondham Baptist Church – NR18 0AY, Queen Street
Limited parking adjacent. Alternatively, easy access on foot from the rear of the nearby Market Street car park. The venue is fully accessible.

Wymondham High Studio Theatre – NR18 0NT, Norwich Road
Access to theatre off Norwich Rd, adjacent to Leisure Centre. Ample on-site parking.

Wymondham Library – NR18 0QB, Back Lane
Ample parking available in adjacent car park, or in other nearby town centre car parks.
Thursday 13 October
19.30  Baptist Church, Philip Hoare – *The Sea Inside Us All*

Tuesday 18 October
19.30  Bridewell Heritage Museum, *A History of Norfolk in 100 Objects*

Wednesday 19 October
19.30  Library, *Adventures in the Rock ‘n’ Roll Underworld*

Friday 21 October
19.30  Wymondham High, John Osborne – *Three Shows from Radio 4*

Saturday 22 October
15.00 & 20.00  Baptist Church, Slow Theatre Company – *I’m Here*

Saturday 22 to Sunday 30 October  *(Various children’s events)*
Wymondham Abbey, *The Flying Shop of Imagination*

Sunday 23 October
15.00  Wymondham Abbey, *Early Development of the English Language*

Wednesday 26 October
19.30  Library, Three novelists on America – *This Land is Not Our Land*

Thursday 27 October  *(Children’s event)*
14.00  Wymondham Abbey, *Making ‘Story Pictures’ with Clare Jarrett*

Wednesday 2 November
19.30  The Green Dragon, *Poetry Supper at The Dragon*

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