



# ILF 2023 Newsletter 4

Charity Number 1169618

## ILF's Post Festival Press Release says it all !

### **“ CONGRATULATIONS ON A SUPERB LIT FEST!”**

With well over 1000 tickets sold, Ilminster's seventh Literary Festival, held June 1 to 8, has been widely acclaimed as the best ever, with something to suit all tastes. A huge number of enthusiastic comments about speakers, venues and organisation have been received, the title of this article being just one of them.

The festival featured 2 competitions for young people - Creative Writing and Poetry Performance - held in liaison with schools and 18 further events for adults. If you think topics like politics and diplomacy are dull, think again - Vince Cable wowed a sold out audience with a talk on “How to be a Politician” as did Simon McDonald, speaking about the leadership lessons learned during his career as a top diplomat working with 6 Foreign Secretaries and 5 Prime Ministers.

In contrast, we heard from Tessa Boase about the glittering world of London's lost department stores and from Andrew Prince - who made the jewellery featured in TV's Downton Abbey - talking about the opulent jewellery and fashion produced and worn between the 1890's and 1930's. Gemma Aldridge, editor of The Sunday Mirror and The People, provided insight into the newspaper world, Dave Usher spoke about the restoration of the world famous Hestercombe gardens and the Fresh Fiction event featured short stories from across the region, read by their authors.

The festival's final event was a hugely successful wrap up concert of tango music performed by Trio Paradis from Music South West and featuring readings about the tango by Mick and Irene Glynn from Ilminster's Warehouse Theatre.

Ilminster Literary Festival is a real community event. The organising committee would like to thank this year's audiences, business sponsors, volunteer helpers and venues (Ilminster Arts Centre, Warehouse Theatre, Monks Yard Conference Centre, the Minster Rooms, Nyanza Lodge, Whitelackington Village Hall) for their outstanding support, with special mention to WATERSTONES, a new partner who made ordering, lugging and selling books to enthusiastic buyers - always with a smile - an absolute doddle!

## **More of the many positive comments received.....**

**“I just wanted to say thank you for a superb literary festival. I was very impressed by the speakers, venues and above all the organisation of the festival.**

**I must also thank all the volunteers who did such a wonderful job and made it such a very enjoyable week”**

**“Congratulations to all who made a successful festival. For a town as small as Ilminster it is quite an achievement to run such a large and varied programme, showing what a small community pulling together can achieve”**

**“A fabulous festival for the young and old”**

**“ We were planning on going along at the start of the event to get some photos (for the Free Press) and then move on, but once the talk started we found it so interesting we stayed for the whole event!”**

**“I would have paid twice, no three times as much for a talk as good as that one”**

## **Invaluable support**

Although a charity, Ilminster Literary Festival receives no external grants and is totally self funding. The organising committee consciously held down most ticket prices in 2023 to last year’s levels. Thanks to the festival’s success there is a modest profit to go forward towards future events, made possible largely by the generosity of our sponsors and advertisers. Grateful thanks to....

### **Greenslade Taylor Hunt – 2023 Corporate Sponsor**

**Event sponsors: \*Bonners the Butchers \* Elite Auto Body Repairs**

**\* Harper Dolman and West \* Spar Ilminster \* Symonds and Sampson**

**\* A. J. Wakely and Son \* Ilminster Home Hardware \* Mark Hebron Hairdressing**

**\*Jordans Courtyard Wellness and Yoga**

**The 26 advertisers in the festival Programme Brochure**

**Thanks also to the Friends of ILF for their generosity and loyal support and to audiences for buying lots of tickets, producing enthusiasm, probing questions, laughter and loud applause and buying books in quantities that made WATERSTONES very happy!**

## Why not get involved and be part of ILF 2024?

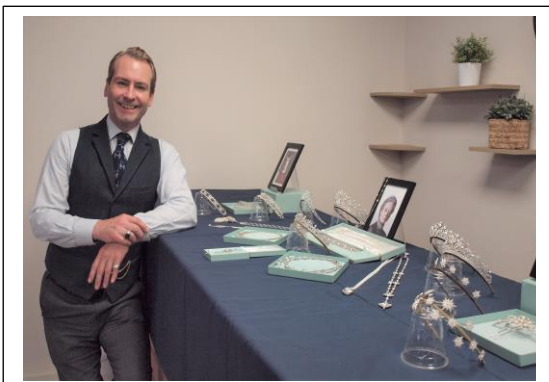
### Ways you could help:

- Planning the ILF programme of speakers and events
- Programme Brochure distribution
- Helping with box office sales during the run-up to the festival
- Acting as steward/usher during the festival
- Providing technical support (audio/visual) to speakers and venues during the festival
- Taking photographs during festival week for publicity and the ILF archive.

Please drop an email to the festival office if you're interested – [ilminsterlitfest@gmail.com](mailto:ilminsterlitfest@gmail.com)

### Photographs from ILF 2023

A wider range of festival photographs is available on the ILF website – [www.ilminsterliteraryfestival.org](http://www.ilminsterliteraryfestival.org)



Andrew Prince – From Downton to Gatsby



Tina Orr-Munro – Breakneck Point



Simon Parkin – Island of Extraordinary Captives.



Siobhan Daniels – Retirement Rebel



The audience awaits.....



Sophie Pavelle – Finding the forgotten species of climate change Britain



Kate Vigurs – The Women of SOE

Fresh Fiction – Short stories performed by local authors



Calista Lucy – Shakespeare's 1<sup>st</sup> Folio





Sir Vince Cable, waiting for his SOLD OUT audience to arrive! – How to be a Politician.



Simon McDonald, another SOLD OUT session – Leadership: A Life in Diplomacy



### THE DOWNTON ABBEY JEWELLERY

Made of crystal, not diamonds.....

The ITV production company was initially on a very tight budget and producers declined to pay Andrew Prince for designing and making the jewellery worn in the series.

It therefore remains his and has helped Andrew to re-coup time and money invested many times over.



Tessa Boase – London's lost Department Stores



Tim Moorey – Secrets of a Crossword Setter



Trio Paradis – Wrap – Up Tango Concert



Richard Kay – An Auctioneer's 10 Commandments

Photographs by Yola Munro, assisted by David Elliott

*Ilminster Literary Festival*  
*For Book and Arts Lovers Everywhere !*