



## Love Books? Love the Arts? Love Ilminster?

....then a treat awaits....

.....**Ilminster Literary Festival is back in 2025 from May 29<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup> inclusive!!**

In 2025 Ilminster Literary Festival will build on its past successes and offer yet another great line up of authors, talks and arts activities across eight days in early summer. Since its start in 2016 the festival has gained a wide reputation and recognition for the variety and atmosphere which it brings to this small, vibrant town in southwest Somerset. And in this, which should have been its tenth anniversary year (Covid spoiled the numerical anniversary...but next time!) we are working towards another huge success.

### **So, what will 2025 bring?**

There's an exciting and diverse selection of authors and other speakers ready to offer festival goers insights into their latest, and other, works. With 5 months still to go, here are 3 'tasters'.....

- ***Evacuation in war time - with a difference***

Operation Ark is a mesmerising memoir of the evacuation from Afghanistan with a difference! It tells the story of how Pen Farthing, a former Royal Marine Commando, had to steer the staff and animals of his animal charity to safety when the Taliban invaded and took over in 2021, and British troops withdrew. A political storm at home made the task especially difficult and Pen became front page news across the world.

- ***A 'First' for ILF***

Poetry (the word descended from the Greek *poiesis* meaning making) is a form of literary art that uses aesthetic and often rhythmic qualities of language to evoke meanings in addition to, or in place of, literal meanings.

ILF is delighted to offer the exceptional opportunity to hear a joint reading of their poetry by two of Britain's leading contemporary Faber poets, Christopher Reid and Jamie McKendrick. Faber publishes poetry, fiction and drama that is respected and studied across the UK and around the world. Not to be missed for existing poetry fans or for those new to the medium!

- ***Whodunnit, how and where?***

Damien Boyd is an established author of detective fiction whose books have sold more than 3 million copies worldwide. He will be talking about his latest novel, to be published in the new year, and the first in a new series. There's special interest for ILF audiences - the plot centres on a serial killer who cruises the A303 between Ilminster and Wincanton..... who knew???

**Find out more about who's appearing in 2025 in ILF's spring newsletter. The full programme and speaker details will also be available of course in the FREE Festival Programme Brochure, also published in the spring. Look out for it in shops, libraries, pubs and other public places or find it online at [www.ilminsterliteraryfestival.org](http://www.ilminsterliteraryfestival.org)**

### ***A day – or more – in the life of a book lover***

Festival goers and Friends will of course realise that Ilminster is now one of many literary festival venues. We are proud of the fact that we were one of the first literary festivals in the southwest thanks to the intrepid group of individuals who created it. Life behind the scenes is ongoing but can be varied and fascinating. Ian Munro one of our Trustees and a planning committee member says: -

“No sooner have we delivered a successful festival than we are drawing up a potential list of authors for the following year. Frequently we have some writers who couldn't attend one year and would like to be invited the following year, or we find a popular author who has a new book which will be published in the year in question. We are delighted too that sometimes locally based authors contact us about participating.

But a large proportion of authors appeal to us because of appearances at other literary festivals. 2025 will be no exception. Our scouts have already attended many literary events and approached writers of different genres, either in person or by subsequently contacting their agent.

Other authors are considered and then contacted. They include those recommended by people who have read their books, seen or heard them in the a/v media, or authors whose books have interested the national press. In the years we have been 'in business', word about the ILF has spread around the writing community, and we can now find ourselves receiving approaches from authors or their agents, which is very pleasing. They particularly tell us about the enthusiastic audiences and general friendliness which make ILF a favoured festival.”

### **Can YOU help ILF in 2025....?**

Last year we asked for helpers to join our planning committee and for volunteers to assist with logistics. We're delighted that we now have new committee members Gerald Hawke; John James; Margaret Morgan and Jim Riche. Between them they have a great skills set. But vitally we need volunteers to help in festival week itself, so once again the call for help goes out..

- Speakers often arrive by train at either Taunton or Crewkerne and ILF arranges collection from and return to the station. If you're a driver and don't mind using your car, please do consider joining the 'Meet, Greet and Drive' rota. Mileage is claimable.
- Speakers who need us to arrange B&B very occasionally say they'd prefer to stay in a private home rather than a hotel or pub. If you have a spare bedroom and would like to host a speaker for a night we'd love to hear from you. A small fee is payable to cover hosting expenses.

- There is a team of festival photographers, made up largely of enthusiastic, talented amateurs. Contact from anyone who would like to join the photography rota will be warmly welcomed. We're keen to encourage young talent so the invitation includes interested students studying photography in one of the area's 6th Forms or FE Colleges, who would like to gain interesting practical experience. Please get in touch as soon as possible for further details about any of the above.

**For further information, to volunteer for general festival help, or to go on the ILF Mailing List call 01460 54999 or email: [ilminsterlitfest@gmail.com](mailto:ilminsterlitfest@gmail.com)**

### **But why not become a FRIEND of Ilminster Literary Festival?**

If you're already a FRIEND of ILF or about to renew for the coming season, sincere thanks for your support. Every penny raised through subscriptions goes to the festival charity to help ensure the quality and future of what has become Ilminster's annual cultural highlight. Please keep spreading the word to people who don't know we exist and don't realise what they're missing! If you're NOT already a FRIEND of ILF and would like to become one, please contact Margaret Morgan: [mmlitfest@gmail.com](mailto:mmlitfest@gmail.com) for details and an application form. Membership entitles you to ticket offers and special events, including and notably the festival Launch event.



**Pen Farthing**



**Damien Boyd**



**Jamie McKendrick**

**+ lots more at ILF 2025.....**

**Finally - last but not least, J K Rowling got it right...**

***"One can never have enough socks. Another Christmas has come and gone and I didn't get a single pair. People will insist on giving me books." – Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone***