

SCARBOROUGH BOOK FESTIVAL

FRI 5 - SUN 7 JUNE

BOOKS
BY THE
BEACH
2026

BOOKSBYTHEBEACH.CO.UK

MEET THE
AUTHORS
AT LIVE
EVENTS



TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM YMCA THEATRE
BOX OFFICE, SCARBOROUGH

A BIG WELCOME TO BOOKS BY THE BEACH

In this National Year of Reading we're thrilled to reveal our exciting programme of live author events in Scarborough. With an inspiring mix of bestselling fiction and real life stories, we are in for a literary treat. We open with a Brontë bonanza and close with the world's leading classicist. Come listen to musical musings, history, politics and poetry. Let's share tales of happy holidays and daring sea rescue. Celebrate the wonders of nature and become followers of fashion. We welcome a top thriller writer who became a *Traitors* star, a famous face from ITV's News at Ten plus the legendary 'Queen of Shops'... Something for every reading taste at this year's Books by the Beach.

Browse the programme, grab your tickets and meet the authors. Get signed books, join the conversations and enjoy the festival.

HUGE THANKS to our visiting authors, interviewers, sponsors, volunteers and brilliant patron – former head of BBC Radio, **Helen Boaden**. Special thanks to our working partners – bookseller **Sarah Tyson** of **Books Up North**, graphic designer **Charlotte Middleton**, web designer **Sarah French** and **Don French Signs**. We are so grateful to our amazing teams at **Queen Street Church** and **YMCA Theatre**.

Final thanks to you the audience, for your continued support.

Heather French,
Festival Director



Friday 5th June

DEBORAH LUTZ

The Life of Emily Brontë

10am – 11am | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Helen Boaden

At the opening event we immerse ourselves in the world of Emily Brontë. Scholar, author and Brontë specialist **Deborah Lutz** is here from the USA to share her expertise and introduce her new book *This Dark Night*. The first full biography of Emily in over two decades, it reveals the events, delights and tragedies of the Brontë world which inspired her writing and offers a fresh take on her short but momentous life. A must-see event for all lovers of Brontë storytelling.



Photo Credit © Victoria Rich

Friday 5th June

ESSIE FOX

Wuthering Heights
Reimagined

12.30pm – 1.30pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with **Gerry Foley**

You thought you knew *Wuthering Heights*... what if you were wrong? Staying in the Emily Brontë theme we welcome queen of the gothic and bestselling author of seven historical novels, **Essie Fox**. Essie has reimagined the Brontë classic from a new angle; in the narrative voice of Catherine Earnshaw. Essie's novel *Catherine* is a haunting and atmospheric retelling. Nelly Dean told only half the story...this version sees Catherine rise from the grave to tell her own.



Friday 5th June

SALLY COULTHARD

The Secret World of Twilight

3pm – 4pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Helen Boaden

Sally Coulthard is a bestselling author of books about nature and rural life. She lives on a Yorkshire smallholding with her family and an assortment of unruly animals. Welcome to *The Secret World of Twilight*, when Sally shares the science, natural history and folk-lore surrounding the most otherworldly time of day. Skies flare with colour, seductive flowers open and hidden creatures stir. Twilight affects human life too but in our age of electricity we've almost forgotten how to see it. Today Sally opens our eyes to Twilight's beauty.



Photo Credit: © Andrew Montgomery



Friday 5th June

TOM BRADBY

Red Scorpion

8pm – 9pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with Gerry Foley

Tom Bradby is a novelist, screenwriter and journalist. He is the author of ten previous novels, including top-ten bestselling thrillers *Secret Service*, and two sequels, *Double Agent* and *Triple Cross*.

As a broadcaster, Tom is best known as the empathetic Anchor of ITV's News at Ten, a position he has held for over ten years. In his first year he was named Network Presenter of the Year by the Royal Television Society.

Tonight Tom introduces his new novel *Red Scorpion*. Set within the dangerous world of Columbian drug cartels, it depicts the dark underbelly of the crime world. With his signature sinuous plotting which his readers love, Tom's latest novel is a guaranteed success. Come join him for a fascinating evening.

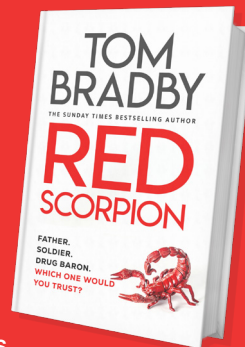


Photo Credit: Tony Ward

Friday 5th June

TIM SULLIVAN

The Bookseller

5.30pm – 6.30pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Gerry Foley

Tim Sullivan is a crime writer, screenwriter and director. Tim's film credits include *A Handful of Dust* and *Cold Feet*. Today Tim discusses his latest novel, *The Bookseller*. A bookseller is found dead in his shop, surrounded by rare books, first editions and a profusion of blood. The prime suspects are rival dealers, as being familiar with crime novels they know how to get away with murder... Someone's about to turn their last page!

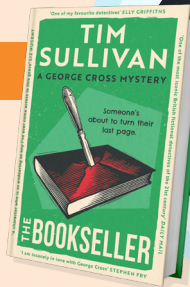
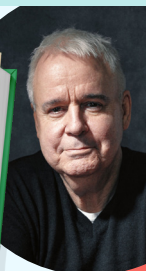


Photo Credit: © Ivan Weiss



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Saturday 6th June

FELICITY CLOAKE

The Underdog

10am – 11am | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Helen Boaden

Saturday morning opens with award-winning food writer, **Felicity Cloake**. Felicity has written five cookbooks, two food travelogues and is the author of The Guardian's *How to Cook the Perfect...* recipe series. Her sixth book, *One More Croissant for the Road*, was a Radio Four book of the week. And now Felicity has turned her hand to novel writing. *The Underdog* is a restaurant-set romcom about a recently rejected 36-year-old woman who abandons her career to pursue her dream of becoming a chef. If you're a lover of food, romance or dogs come join us... you're in for a tasty treat!



Photo Credit: © Jill Mead

Saturday 6th June

HARRIET TYCE

Witch Trial

3pm – 4pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Gerry Foley

Harriet Tyce, author and *Traitors* star practiced as a criminal barrister in London for nearly a decade before turning to writing. Her first thriller, *Blood Orange*, was published to critical acclaim and subsequent novels were all Sunday Times bestsellers. Today Harriet shares her new book, *Witch Trial* – a chilling legal thriller revolving around the death of a teenager, and trial of her two best friends charged with murder. Who's telling the truth? Who can be trusted? With a defence no-one saw coming, let the Witch Trial begin..



Photo Credit: © Charlotte Kneep Photography

Saturday 6th June

SINCLAIR MCKAY

Dad's Army

12.30pm – 1.30pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Gerry Foley

Historian **Sinclair McKay** is a bestselling author and literary critic. Today he discusses his new work, *Dad's Army*. With the threat of invasion from Hitler's forces looming in 1940, men and women of all ages and backgrounds assembled under the banner of the Home Guard. Far from the stereotype of charming incompetence they were highly professional in their approach. These courageous volunteers trained with a spirit of defiance and good humour. Come hear their glorious true story.

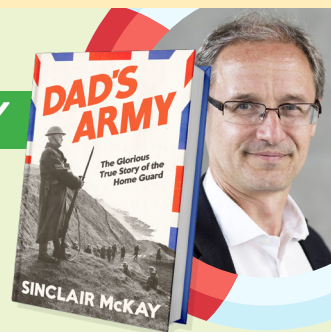


Photo Credit: © Liam Bergin

Saturday 6th June

DOMINIC GREGORY

Lifeboat at the End of the World

5.30pm – 6.30pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Helen Boaden

Lifeboat at the End of the World is the compelling story of being part of a RNLI crew who give up their time, livelihoods and safety to rescue anyone in distress at sea. Author **Dominic Gregory** shares the emotions of the 'shout out', the heart-in-mouth experiences of stormy night launches plus the ethos of the service. Through him we meet the lifeboat team based in Dungeness on the English Channel, many from families who have crewed for generations. **An inspiring memoir which resonates here in Scarborough where we have our own brave RNLI crew.**



Photo Credit: © Johnny Ring

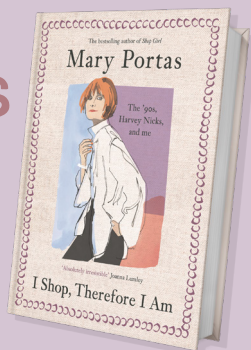
Saturday 6th June

MARY PORTAS

I Shop, Therefore I Am

8pm – 9pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Helen Boaden



Mary Portas OBE is a businesswoman, broadcaster, author and activist. At age 32 she became a board member at Harvey Nichols before founding her own retail consultancy. Mary has since worked with some of the biggest names in global retail. Her BBC series *Mary Queen of Shops* premiered in 2007 and she's presented on television and radio ever since. This evening Mary will be sharing her new memoir *I Shop, Therefore I Am*.

The setting is the 1990s and British fashion is ripe for reinvention. Leading the charge is a twenty-something Mary who has been brought in to revitalise the fusty department store Harvey Nichols into Harvey Nicks! Mary takes us behind her headline-grabbing window displays to show how she created an era-defining global brand destination. An entertaining evening of wit, humour and frank conversation.

Photo Credit: © Linda Nyland

THE
PERFECT
SATURDAY
NIGHT
OUT!



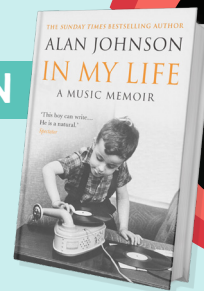
Sunday 7th June

ALAN JOHNSON

In My Life

10am – 11am | Tickets £9
At YMCA Theatre

In conversation with
Gerry Foley



Did you know that award-winning author **Alan Johnson** wanted to be a rock star? Today he charts his remarkable story from growing up in a condemned area of West London to the corridors of power – but with a musical soundtrack. He recalls a vanished world of dance halls, jukeboxes and flower power. His delightful take on post-war Britain is played back to the soundtrack of Dylan, Springsteen and his beloved Beatles. Alan may not have made the charts, but his nostalgic and funny tales will keep you hooked...

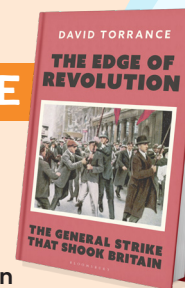
Sunday 7th June

DAVID TORRANCE

The General Strike

1pm – 2pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with Alan Johnson



On Tuesday 4th of May 1926, two million workers downed tools in the only nationwide strike ever held in Britain. Industry was deprived of gas and electricity, public transport stopped, workers abandoned mines and newspapers ceased publication. It lasted only nine days but left a legacy of bitterness that has impacted on modern-day politics. Historian **David Torrance** will discuss his new book, *The Edge of Revolution* – published to mark the centenary of The General Strike.



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Sunday 7th June

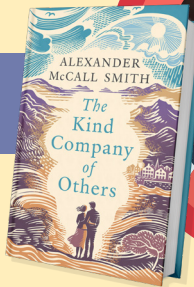
ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH

Poetry and Storytelling

3pm – 4pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with Helen Boaden

Join worldwide best-selling author, **Sir Alexander McCall Smith** for an afternoon of sheer delight. The master storyteller will entertain us with tales from his many series of books, including the 44 Scotland Street novels and the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series. He will also be celebrating the publication of the latest Isabel Dalhousie Novel, *The Subtle Pleasures of Indiscretion*, and reading poems from his new poetry collection, *The Kind Company of Others*. Unmissable!



Sunday 7th June

ANNABELLE THORPE

400 Years Of Holidays

5.30pm – 6.30pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with Helen Boaden

Award-winning **Annabelle Thorpe** has written two UK travel books and four novels. In *The Great Escape* Annabelle takes us on a 400 year journey through the history of British holidays – from the early spa break to the age of the global nomad. With mention of Scarborough's spa water discovery in 1626, this fits perfectly with the 2026 'Scarborough 400' celebration. Weaving together history, social change and personal anecdotes this event is its own Grand Tour.



Sunday 7th June

MARY BEARD

Talking Classics

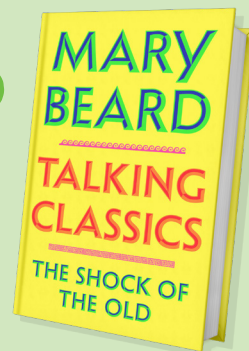
8pm – 9pm | Tickets £9
At Queen Street Church

In conversation with
Alan Johnson

Mary Beard is the most acclaimed classicist working today. She is the Professor Emerita of Classics at Cambridge and Classics editor of the TLS. She is also the co-host, with Charlotte Higgins, of the podcast Instant Classics. Her previous books include the Wolfson Prize-winning *Pompeii* and *Emperor of Rome*.

Today Mary shares her new book, *Talking Classics: The Shock of the Old*. What's exciting about a piece of bread 4,000 years old? Or some pots of paint abandoned in the eruption of Pompeii? Why should we be bothered with the distant past anyway? What's the point?

Mary will discuss such questions and more, making surprising connections between antiquity and the present. Sharing lively stories, curious facts and good gossip – a memorable finale is promised. Mary is a wonderful speaker. Join her and fellow author Alan Johnson to discover why the Classics still matter.



TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets are available online at
ymcatheatre.uk/books
booksbythebeach.co.uk

And in person at our box office

YMCA Theatre, St Thomas Street,
Scarborough YO11 1DY

Box Office Opening Times

Mon – Fri 10am – 9pm **Sat** 10am – 4pm

Telephone 01723 506750

Email info@ymcayorks.uk

Our great value day tickets are just £40 per day.
These cover all 5 events in that day. Take the
opportunity to see something new!

Tickets should be purchased in advance
of festival events.

There will be book signings at each event.

Please check event times as late
admittance is not permitted.



Scan to purchase
your tickets online



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