BOOKS ON TYNE

THE NEWCASTLE BOOK FESTIVAL



THE LIT & PHIL AND NEWCASTLE LIBRARIES

19 ~ 28 NOVEMBER 2026

Welcome to Books on Tyne 2026

Kay Easson
Programme:
Lit & Phil

Derek Tree
Programme:
Newcastle Libraries

For the 14th year, Newcastle Libraries and the Lit & Phil have come together to present Books on Tyne 2026. Offering a wide range of events and authors, focusing on subjects as diverse as smells, anger and
The Smiths, our festival continues to celebrate the written word. There will be plenty to choose from with fiction, non-fiction and poetry all represented. For those of you who like drama we also offer a performance of the seasonal favourite *A Christmas Carol*. And this year for the first time we have handed over a full day to the Science Fiction genre. We hope you will find something for you to enjoy in our programme.

The Books on Tyne Team

Acknowledgments:

Shima Banks
Graphic Design

John Stafford
Website

We also wish to thank all Lit & Phil and Newcastle Libraries staff

Opt Indie Books

BOOKS ON TYNE
THE NEWCASTLE BOOK FESTIVAL

How to Book

Please book to avoid disappointment.*

www.booksontyne.co.uk

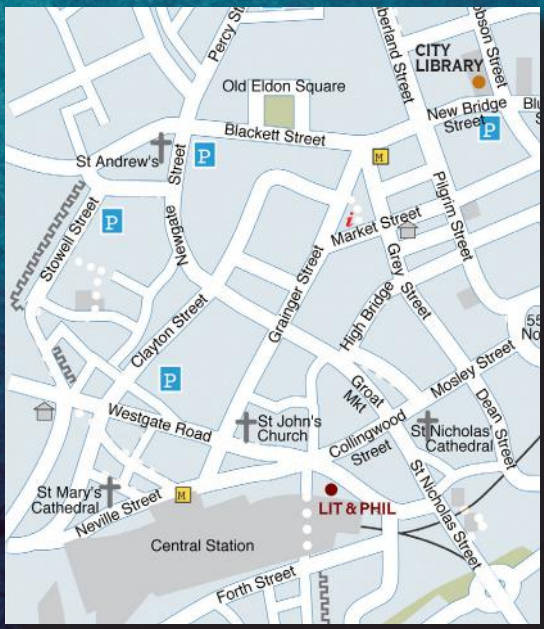
Call in at any of Newcastle's libraries or the Lit & Phil to buy tickets for both venues

Tickets available on Newcastle Libraries Eventbrite

City Library:
0191 277 4100
information@newcastle.gov.uk

For Lit & Phil events:
0191 232 0192
www.litandphil.org.uk
library@litandphil.org.uk

**If the event you have booked for is cancelled, rescheduled or has changed location, you are entitled to a refund. You're not entitled to a refund if you can no longer attend an event.*



THE Lit & Phil

The Lit & Phil, on Westgate Road, is the largest independent library outside London. Opened in 1825, the building houses contemporary and historic collections of more than 200,000 books, and an important collection of recorded music and scores.

www.litandphil.org.uk

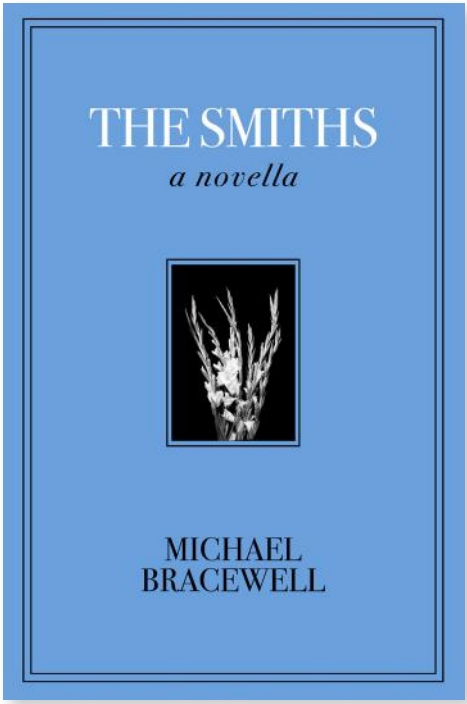
Newcastle Libraries

City Library on New Bridge Street, is a welcoming modern building open to everyone. We provide contemporary and easily accessible services as well as historic collections.

www.newcastle.gov.uk/libraries
X @toonlibraries
Facebook: NewcastleLibraries

Thursday 19 November

CITY LIBRARY



6.30pm | £5

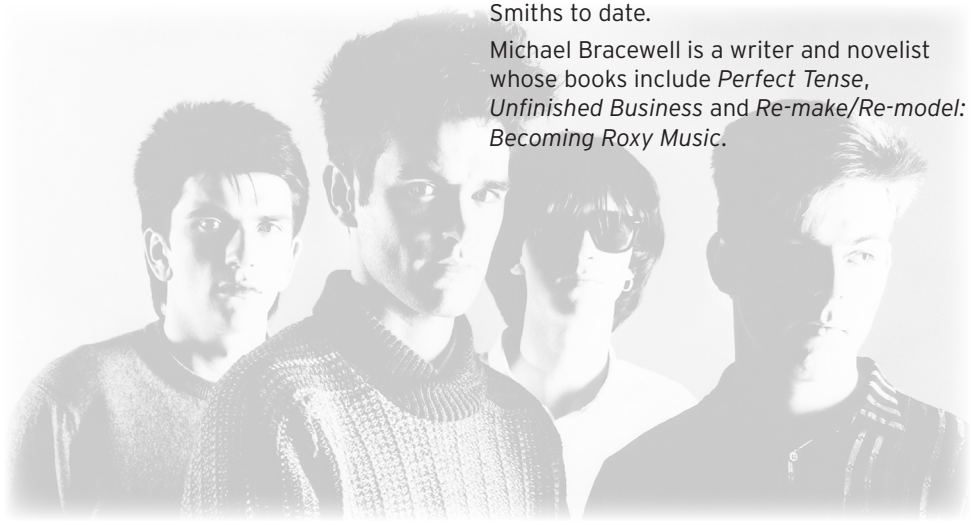
Michael Bracewell on The Smiths

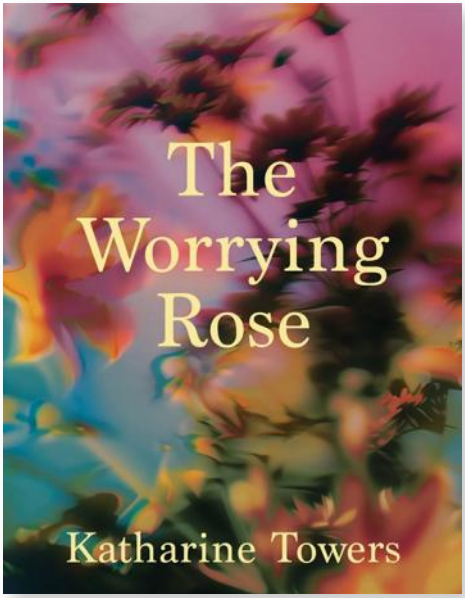
In conversation with author and journalist Daniel James

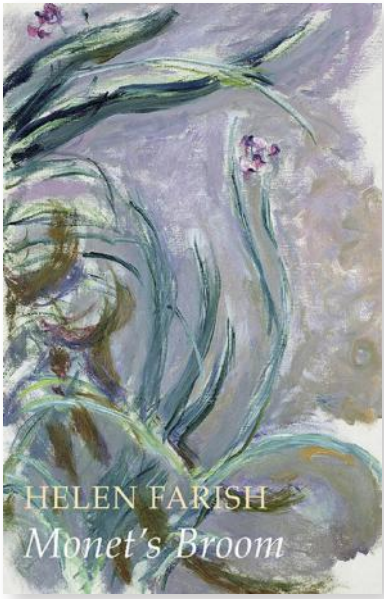
Wildly inventive and magnificently surreal, *The Smiths: A Novella* recounts the impact of an unconventional pop group from Manchester on one man's life. Taking the form of a flâneuring journey through the landscape of memory, our anonymous protagonist is accompanied by the iconic French actress Carole Bouquet, who becomes his guide and interlocutor, asking about his life during the years The Smiths were together and the profound effect of their music upon him.

Michael Bracewell's novella-cum-fairy tale is at once deeply romantic and laced with comedy – not unlike the band themselves – and perhaps (in fictional form) the most astute and celebratory portrait of The Smiths to date.

Michael Bracewell is a writer and novelist whose books include *Perfect Tense*, *Unfinished Business* and *Re-make/Re-model: Becoming Roxy Music*.







7.30pm | FREE

Helen Farish & Katharine Towers
Poetry Reading

Two poets with a shared interest in the nature of creativity come together to read from their new collections at the Lit & Phil, with Helen Farish reading from *Monet's Broom* (Bloodaxe Books) and Katharine Towers from *The Worrying Rose* (Picador).

Helen Farish's poems in *Monet's Broom* emerge from a deep absorption in the work of Claude Monet who revered that most fragile and fleeting of things: the present moment. This is her fifth collection, published in Monet's centenary year. Two of her previous books were shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize, *Intimates* (Cape, 2005) and *The Penny Dropping* (Bloodaxe Books, 2024).

Katharine Towers has long been widely acclaimed for the intricate musicality of her poems and for their almost spiritual attentiveness to the natural world. In *The Worrying Rose*, her fourth collection, Towers invokes the radical act of being still in a world that seems to be dizzyingly out of control. Unfolding from Samuel Barber's *Hermit Songs* cycle influenced in turn by the anonymous writings of early Irish scribes and anchorites, *The Worrying Rose* distils Towers' thinking about women, creativity and solitude.

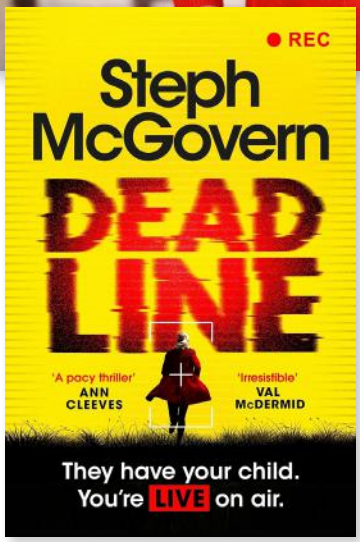
This event is sponsored by Bloodaxe Books

Friday 20 November

CITY LIBRARY



Photo: Carolyn Mendelsohn



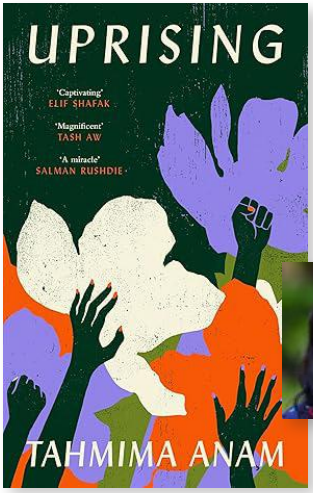
1pm | £5

Steph McGovern on *Deadline*

In conversation with Bay Tales Festival Director Vic Watson

Award-winning journalist and broadcaster Steph McGovern co-hosts the *The Rest Is Money* podcast with Robert Peston, exploring the economic issues that affect our everyday lives. Steph is also a regular face on the BBC fronting shows such as *Have I Got News for You*, and *Crimewatch*. She is an avid crime reader and has interviewed countless authors including Val McDermid, Harlan Coben, Ann Cleeves, Hilary Clinton, Lee Child and Don Winslow, as well as judging the Theakston Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year award at the Harrogate Crime Festival since 2019. *Deadline* is her first novel.

Saturday 21 November



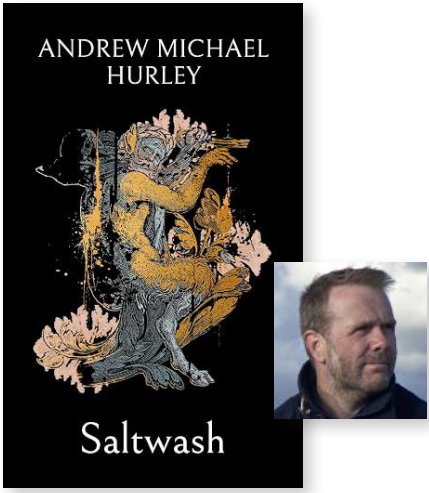
11am | £7

Tahmima Anam on *Uprising*

In conversation with James Routledge from Opt Indie Books

On a desolate, sinking island, a group of children witness their mothers living lives of cruelty and servitude. Bought and sold by Amma, the sadistic madam who was once herself sold into slavery, the women have learned to accept their fate. Yet their children weave fantastic tales of escape, imagining that someday they will leave the island and enjoy a life of freedom.

An earth-shattering drama of resistance and female power, Uprising gives voice to the silenced through the story of a revolution no one saw coming. The book was nominated for the Orwell Prize 2026. Tahmima is also the author of *The Good Muslim* and *The Startup Wife*.



1.30pm | £5

Andrew Michael Hurley on *Saltwash*

In conversation with author and journalist Daniel James

The dilapidated seaside town of Saltwash isn't a place that Tom Shift would have chosen to come to at all, let alone on such a bleak November afternoon. But his new friend, Oliver Keele, has insisted on meeting for dinner at the Castle Hotel, where the owners, the Paleys, try their best to cling on to the glory days.

Both terminally ill, Tom and Oliver have been bound by the saddest of circumstances, though they have found some solace in writing to one another via a pen-pal scheme set up by their respective cancer clinics. Andrew Michael Hurley is the author of the Costa Book award winning *The Loney* and *Starve Acre*, which was made into a film in 2023.

Monday 23 November

LIT & PHIL





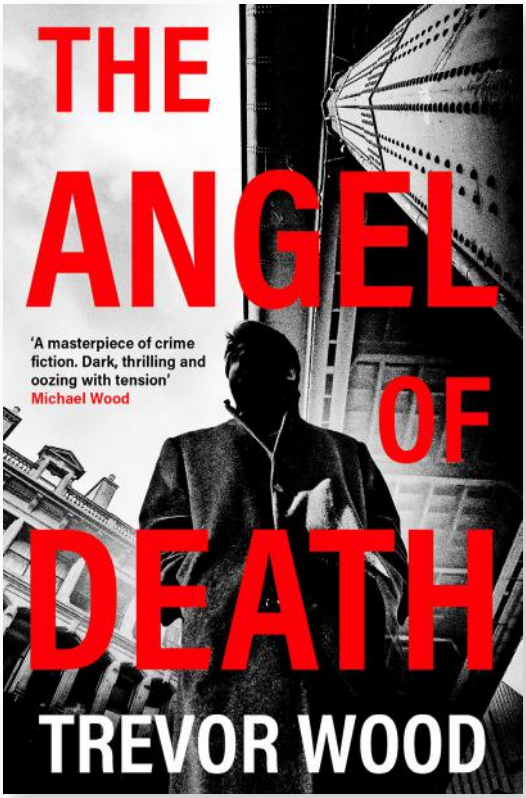
Red Squirrel Press invites you to join us for the launch of Sean O'Brien's poetry pamphlet, *Back of Beyond: English Mysteries*.

Back of Beyond follows Sean O'Brien's acclaimed twelfth poetry collection *The Bonfire Party* (Picador, 2026).

The new poems explore taken-for-granted rituals in the back of an English beyond, including sheds, cricket, rural auctions, Guy Fawkes Night, and slow trains heading even further beyond.

O'Brien is Emeritus Professor or Creative Writing at Newcastle University and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Tuesday 24 November



6pm | £7

An Evening with Trevor Wood
In conversation with
David Whetstone

Killer or Saint? Death is stalking the streets of Newcastle in the form of a mercy-killer who is running an assisted-dying service for those who want a dignified end to their suffering. DCI Jack Parker is on the case but does he really want to catch the killer? The truth is that the Angel of Death may be exactly the kind of man Jack's been looking for.

Want to know more? Newcastle based crime-writer Trevor Wood will be talking to David Whetstone about his work and, in particular, his latest crime novel, *The Angel of Death*, the third in his new series featuring DCI Jack Parker, who's confronting the one killer he can't stop: early onset dementia.



Trevor is an award-winning writer of gritty crime novels set in the North East. His highly-acclaimed debut novel, *The Man on the Street*, set in Newcastle's homeless community, picked up the Crime Writers' Association's John Creasey New Blood Dagger and the Crimefest Specsavers Debut Novel of the Year. It was also shortlisted for the Theakston's Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year.

Wednesday 25 November

CITY LIBRARY

1pm - 4pm | FREE

Writers Unite: Free business support for writers in their local libraries



They say everyone has a book in them but writing that book is only half the battle. How can you promote, sell, and protect your written work? The Business & IP Centre, your local in-library business support service, is on hand to help!

At this event, BIPC officers (and writers) Elaine Cusack and Hannah Hoare will talk about their own writing journeys, the lessons they learnt along the way, and how free library support can help at every stage. We will also hear from the BIPC's intellectual property specialist John Cunningham on some of the key issues facing creatives today, including artificial intelligence and copyright.

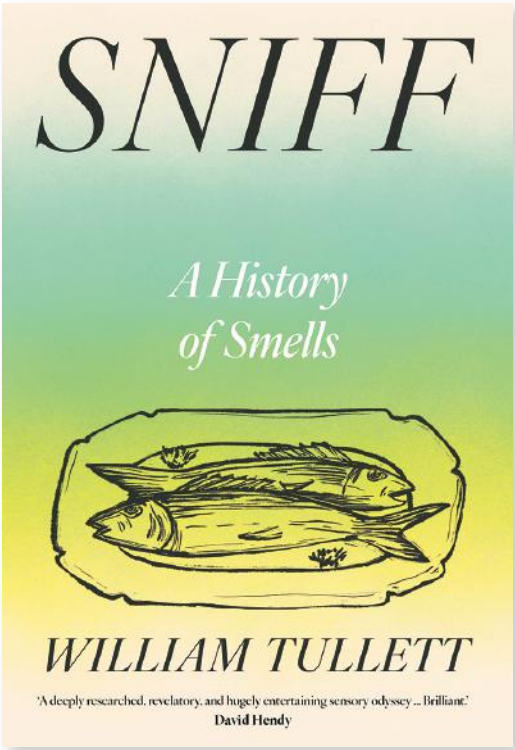
Plus, for anyone who would like to test their writing on an audience - we will close with an open mic opportunity!

The event will have guest speakers:

Ann English
Ann English is a Visual Communications expert and solution focused business coach. She is the founder of Create Intrigue and The Visual Marketing Academy, creator of the VisionMapping™ process, renowned for her VisualDoodle™ style and TEDx Speaker. Ann equips business owners, creatives, consultants and coaches with a range of visual communication tools and techniques to transform their ideas into reality.

Danielle Barbereau
The UK's first divorce coach Danielle spent 17 years supporting 1,750+ clients through separation/divorce - all referred by their lawyers. She's the author of: *After the Split* (non-fiction) – a practical and compassionate guide which helps readers navigate the emotional challenges of relationship breakdown.

Grey Matters (fiction) – Through an emotionally rich and authentic story Danielle challenges stereotypes, celebrates resilience and honours women whose voices are often forgotten or overlooked.



6pm | £5

Sniff: A History of Smells
William Tullett

In this groundbreaking history, Will Tullett takes your nose on a journey through the past and across the globe. Along the way we sniff the foul, the fragrant, and everything in between. Ranging from ancient aromas to modern malodours, this book shows how much richer our understanding of the past can be if we follow our noses rather than accepting that only seeing is believing. The scent of burning incense filled medieval churches, theatres in nineteenth-century Paris were thick with smoke: smells have been central to our sense of place and belonging, and, perhaps less positively, to mark those deemed unwelcome. Our sense of smell brings us the pleasure of good food, wine and perfume, but it also warns us of dangers like fire, gas and rot. From the enchanting scent of books and libraries to the disgusting stench of whale fat in candles and soap, what emerges is not just a history of smells, but a sense of the lived experiences of all those who sniffed them. We often think that the past smelled bad, but really – as Tullett shows us – it just smelled different.



Will Tullett is a senior lecturer in early modern history at the University of York. He is the author of *Smell in Eighteenth-Century England: A Social Sense* and *Smell and the Past: Noses, Archives, Narratives*.

Thursday 26 November

CITY LIBRARY

SF & FANTASY DAY AT BOO

SAVE MONEY WITH DAY TICKET PASS FOR SF

2pm | £5

Small, Strange and Perfectly Formed

Small press and North East publishing roundtable. The Braag publishes poetry and speculative fiction, as well as the quarterly micro-journal *Carmen et Error*; Carnyx Press is a new independent publisher sounding the horn for strange and lyrical fantasy, horror, and science fiction. Come and hear representatives from each discuss publishing in the North East.



3.30pm | £5

Grace Curtis on *Heaven's Graveyard*

Sunday Times bestselling author Grace Curtis is the author of four novels, including future-climate-*Western Frontier*, workplace-mystery-in-space *The Floating Hotel*, and her new academia-science-fantasy, *Heaven's Graveyard*. Imaginative, smart, and moving, filled with adventure and queer romances, her stories look to both past and future. This discussion will explore Curtis' approach to character, worldbuilding and genre, including how her North East background influences her writing, with an opportunity to get books signed at the end of the event.



5pm | £6

Frances Hardinge on *Traitors' Nest*

Join Frances Hardinge, winner of the Costa Book Award for *The Lie Tree*, for a discussion of her dazzling new novel for readers of all ages, *Traitors' Nest*, set in a fantasy realm where grandstanding Players deploy castles as though they were chess pieces, and ordinary folk are caught in the gears of their Great Game. The discussion and Q&A will explore Hardinge's historical and mythological inspirations, with the opportunity to get books signed at the end of the event.





6.30pm | £8

Adrian Tchaikovsky in conversation with Emma Newman

Emma Newman (*Planetfall*) and Adrian Tchaikovsky (*The City of Last Chances*) are award-winning authors and podcast co-hosts. Newman is a Hugo Award winner for her podcast *Tea and Jeopardy*, while Tchaikovsky's *Children of Time* won the Arthur C. Clarke Award. In their podcast, *Starship Alexandria*, they take it in turns to recommend each other works for potential inclusion in a library of the future. They will discuss their recent books - *The Vengeance* and *Green City Wars* - and there will be a chance to get books signed at the end of the event.



LIT & PHIL

6pm | £5

The Jack Common Archive at Newcastle University

Join rare book dealer and actor **Neil Pearson**, and freelance historical researcher **Peter Mitchell** for a conversation exploring a remarkable new addition to Newcastle University Special Collections & Archives: a newly acquired accrual to the Jack Common Archive. The collection comprises reader reports written by the Newcastle-born author for the Associated British Picture Corporation based at Elstree Studios between 1955 and 1968.

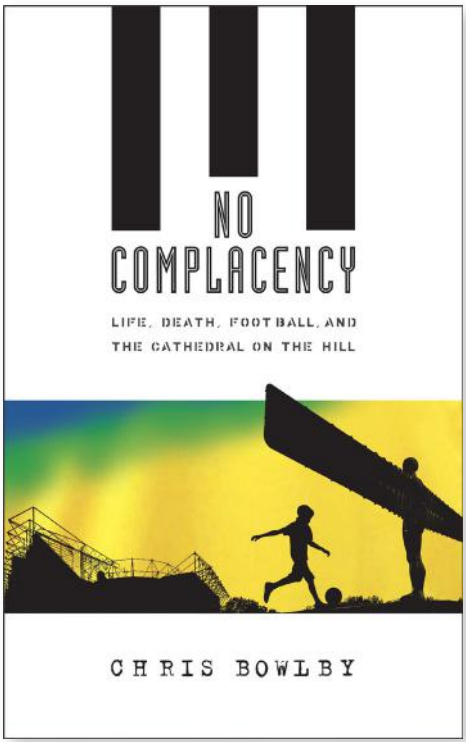
As one of the Reading Department's most prolific contributors, Common assessed novels, works of non-fiction and screenplays, producing reports that helped determine their potential for adaptation to the screen. The Reading Department played a key role in identifying projects for development, offering a unique insight into the creative and commercial processes of the British film industry. Neil Pearson and Peter Mitchell will discuss the significance of these newly acquired papers, what they reveal about Common's career beyond his published work, and how this archive enriches our understanding of post-war British cinema and literary culture.



JC-4-6, Common (Jack) Archive, Newcastle University Special Collections, GB 186

Friday 27 November

CITY LIBRARY





Northumberland-based Chris is a Freelance writer and broadcaster, who worked for the BBC for many years.

3pm | £3

Chris Bowlby on *No Complacency*

In conversation with James Routledge from Opt Indie Books

An original football memoir on grief and belonging, glorious joy, of sharing memory, hope, anxiety and humour in the most unexpected ways.

When Chris Bowlby's son Ewan was diagnosed with a brain tumour aged 17, you might have thought football would be the last thing on their minds. But in the following decade in which Ewan faced growing threats to his health, the love of football they shared seemed to grow in importance. It was a kind of thread, defiantly holding some kind of normal life together, and a passion that prompted fascinating discussion about why a sport could matter so much.

After Ewan's death from cancer in 2022 Chris faced a choice. He wondered whether his lifelong love of football might fade. But gradually he found a way of including grief in a return to life, all of life. He understood as never before how much football had meant to him, how it had shaped the world he had lived through, and how it could now help him cope. Yet there was tension too. Was he now more aware of how the modern game might be leaving its humanity behind?

This book explores that experience, ranging from top-level football to community clubs, the intensely local to the global, the women's game as well as the men's. It has football at its heart but is about much more than sport.

LIT & PHIL

7pm | £15/12

A Christmas Carol performed by Gerald Dickens

No stranger to the Lit & Phil, or *Books on Tyne*, Gerald Dickens returns with his acclaimed one man show. The great great grandson of Charles Dickens brings to life the enduring Christmas tale, playing more than 30 characters. Don't miss this early Yuletide treat which has received standing ovations all over the world.



Saturday 28 November

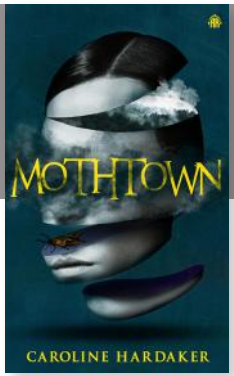
CITY LIBRARY

11am | £5

Routes to the Page: Outsiders and Underdogs

Building on the success of our previous Routes to the Page event, this panel brings together writers living and working in the North to explore how place, class, and identity shape the stories we tell – and the paths we take into publishing. The discussion will consider the idea of the "outsider" in contemporary literature, from characters and world building to the realities of being a writer outside traditional literary centres. Alongside conversations about craft, the panel will reflect on the opportunities and challenges of publishing today.
The Panel will feature Novelists **Caroline Hardaker** and **Louise Powell**.

Caroline Hardaker is an award-shortlisted novelist, poet, librettist, and occasional puppeteer. Her most recent novel, ***Mothtown***, was published in 2023 and was illustrated by Chris Riddell.
Louise Powell is an award-winning working-class writer from Middlesbrough. She won the Sid Chaplin Northern Writers' Award in 2023 and her debut novel is called ***Underdogs***.



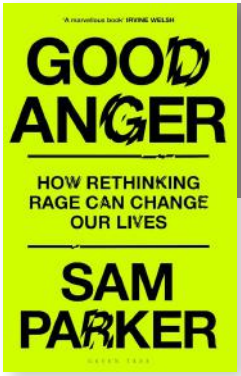


1.30pm | £5

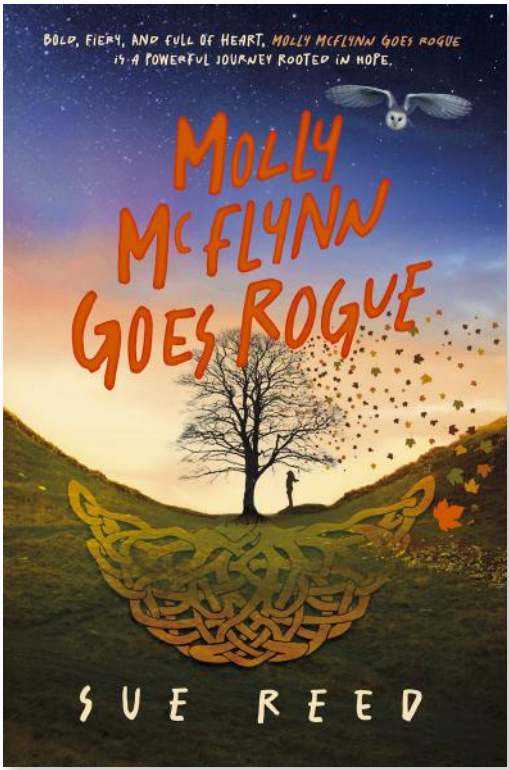
Sam Parker on *Good Anger*
In conversation with author and journalist Daniel James

We are used to complaining there is too much anger in the world. But what about the cost of having too little? And what if, instead of fearing anger, we learned to use it wisely? In *Good Anger,* journalist Sam Parker investigates how one of our most complex emotions became a taboo and the cost that suppressing it has on our mental and physical health, relationships and society. He argues that, rather than trip us up or fill us with shame, anger can be turned into a life-enhancing source of bravery, purpose and self-respect.

Sam Parker is GQ's Site Director. He has worked in culture and lifestyle journalism for over 15 years, including as Digital Editor at *Esquire* magazine, Features Editor at *BuzzFeed* and Culture Editor of *The Huffington Post*.









11am | £5
under 18s Free

Sue Reed
Molly McFlynn Goes Rogue

There were two trees in Molly's life - one she could no longer bear to be around and another that was calling her back. Haunted by grief and unable to live the life she once knew, Molly is drawn to Sycamore Gap. It's the only place that makes sense to her – where the legendary tree stood alone beside Hadrian's Wall for generations, a symbol of strength, memory, and belonging.
On the night before the beloved tree is brutally felled in an act that shocks and devastates the nation, Molly finds herself standing beneath its branches. And something shifts.
Pulled into a world far older and wilder than her own, Molly is swept back to ancient Britain, into a world of Iron Age tribes, druids, and old magic, at the time when Hadrian's Wall is being constructed.
As the line between past and present blurs, Molly rediscovers her spark and creativity and uncovers a fierce power buried deep within herself - one fuelled by grief, rebellion, and hope.

Sue Reed lives in rural Northumberland, where a love of nature and the wild inspires her writing.
She went to Newcastle University to do an MA in Creative Writing as a mature student in 2019, and it was during the Writing for Children and Young Adults module that the Molly McFlynn series was first fledged.
Sue writes non-fiction essays on her Substack RIPE and freelances for various publications.

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In conversation with Daniel James

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In conversation with Vic Watson

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In conversation with
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1.30pm | £5
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MONDAY 23 NOVEMBER

LIT & PHIL
7pm | Free
Red Squirrel Press Book Launch
Sean O'Brien: *Back of Beyond*

TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER

LIT & PHIL
6pm | £7
An Evening with Trevor Wood in
conversation with Dave Whetstone

FREE GUIDED TOURS OF THE LIT & PHIL

(45 mins) Places limited
Booking essential
0191 232 0192
library@litandphil.org.uk

Saturday 28 November
10.30am | 11.30am

A GLANCE

WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER

CITY LIBRARY
1pm | Free
Writers Unite: Free business support for writers in their local libraries

LIT & PHIL
6pm | £5
William Tullett
Sniff: A History of Smells

THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER

CITY LIBRARY
SF & FANTASY DAY AT BOOKS ON TYNE
Day Ticket Pass: £20
2pm | £5
Small, Strange and Perfectly Formed
Small Press and North East publishing roundtable

3.30pm | £5
Grace Curtis on *Heaven's Graveyard*

5pm | £6
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3pm | £3
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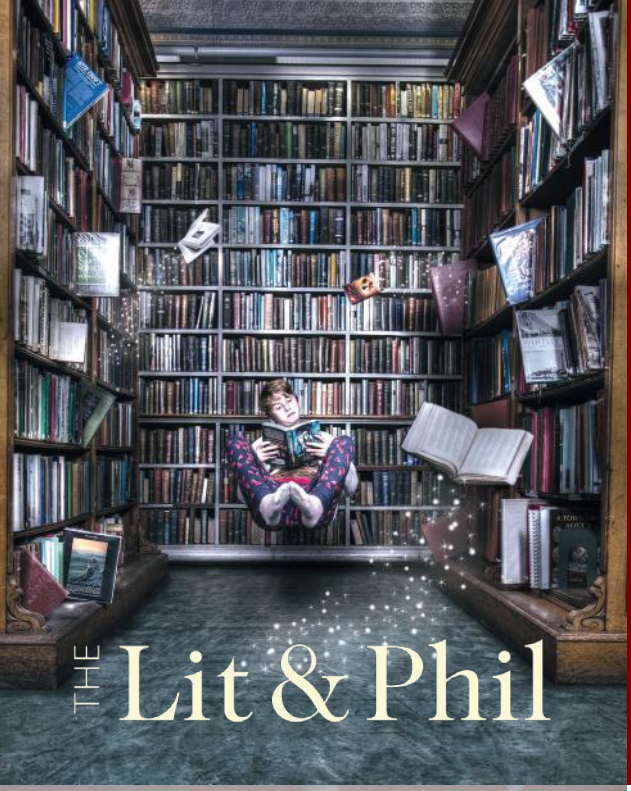
LIT & PHIL
7pm | £15/12
A Christmas Carol
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SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER

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11am | £5
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Panel includes: Caroline Hardaker and Louise Powell

LIT & PHIL
11am | £5 | under 18s Free
Sue Reed
Molly McFlynn Goes Rogue

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Sam Parker on *Good Anger*
In conversation with Daniel James



Founded in 1793, the Lit & Phil is Newcastle's independent library, housing a collection of over 200,000 books, maps, CDs and periodicals.

Our cultural programme offers a wide range of talks, concerts, readings and classes.
Visit us and experience the unique ambience of the building.

www.litandphil.org.uk

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky



Newcastle Libraries

City Library, on New Bridge Street, is a welcoming and modern building open to everyone. We provide contemporary and easily accessible services as well as historic collections.
www.newcastle.gov.uk/libraries
Facebook: NewcastleLibraries
Instagram: @toonlibraries