

# Evesham *Festival* of *Words*

**A YEAR-LONG FESTIVAL**

**f** Evesham Festival of Words **ig** #eveshamfow



**MAIN FESTIVAL WEEKEND**

**27th – 29th June 2025**

**BOOK NOW**

[www.eveshamfestivalofwords.org](http://www.eveshamfestivalofwords.org)

[info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org](mailto:info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org)

## WELCOME



Welcome to our 2025 Festival Brochure. The Festival celebrates words in all their forms. The main weekend, which is packed with events, runs from Friday 27th June – Sunday 29th June, but we also have events throughout the year.

Whatever your interest – writing, reading, author talks and interviews, meeting like-minded folk – the Festival really does offer something for everyone, with an exciting and varied programme at numerous locations in and around Evesham.

2024 was a fabulous year with a large number of sell-out events, and we are so excited about our 2025 programme. We very much look forward to welcoming you to our Festival and our lovely town.

Our new Festival website was launched on 1st January. Do visit it to find out more about the Festival and to book events.

For any accessibility concerns, please contact [info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org](mailto:info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org), or 0787 128 5606.

**Sue Ablett,**  
Festival Chair

Photo by Ian Tustin

## HOW TO BUY TICKETS:



### ONLINE

[eveshamfestivalofwords.org](http://eveshamfestivalofwords.org)

Tickets for most of our events can be purchased online via our website. Payments by credit/debit cards or by direct bank transfer.



### POST

20 Allardene, Evesham,  
Worcestershire, WR11 1EA

Cheques payable to 'Evesham Festival of Words'. Please include full contact and event details.



### ENQUIRIES

Sue Ablett

[info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org](mailto:info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org)

0787 128 5606

Tickets for events at Holland House, The Henrician, and Evesham Walking Festival can be accessed from our website but are purchased direct from those organisations.

**FRI 21ST MARCH, 1.00 PM**

### Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and the Atlantic Slave Trade

**Holland House, Cropthorne, £23**

**Tickets via Holland House:**

**[www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)**

**E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org), or  
T: 01386 860330**



Join us for an introduction to the nature of the slave trade from a British point of view and how it developed as the backbone of our economy. The talk focusses on the local effect, the estates in the shires based on plantation income, how the money reached down to the lowest members of society, and where the opposition to the slave trade came from. Much of the story is told through the voices of those who were there at the time.

Speaker Tony Conder moved to Gloucester to open the National Waterways Museum in the Docks, having previously worked for British Waterways as their Museum Curator. Now retired he is a regular speaker on subjects ranging from: canals and canal people, railways and the Severn Bore.

*Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated) but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the lovely house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.*

## THROUGH THE YEAR



**FRI 18TH APRIL, 2.30 PM**

### Kath Ryan – The Cake Lady

**Raphael's Restaurant, £15**  
**Includes afternoon tea.**  
**Pre-booking essential.**

Enjoy a classic Raphael's Afternoon Tea in the company of Kath Ryan, known as 'The Cake Lady'.

For more than ten years Kath has been bringing home comforts to injured soldiers. It began when she was visiting her sister in hospital in Birmingham and took some home-made cakes to cheer her up. Kath's sister shared them with injured soldiers in the hospital. The cakes went down well and the soldiers were soon looking forward to Kath's deliveries.

Not long after, Cakes 4 Casualties was born, with Kath baking every week for injured troops in Selly Oak Hospital and continuing when they left hospital for rehabilitation. Kath not only buys the ingredients and bakes the cakes, she also spends precious time with 'her boys'. As she says, "a cake and a cuddle go a long way."

Come and support Raphael's Easter Charity Weekend. Always a lovely afternoon.

**Tickets can also be booked direct with Raphael's 01386 45460**



**TUES 22ND APRIL, 1.00 PM**

### Lost Women of Shakespeare

**Holland House, Cropthorne, £23**  
**Tickets via Holland House:**  
**[www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)**  
**E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org), or  
T: 01386 860330**

A woman being lost and found (or brought back to life) is a major theme of Shakespeare's late plays, such as *The Winter's Tale*, but there are other women in both the comedies and tragedies who go through something similar. This talk explores this important theme, including the several "illusory" deaths, and what it means for characters' discovery and self-discovery, both men and women.

Speaker, Jeremy Holmes, has worked in advertising and higher education. Now semi-retired he is a trustee of various charities. In his youth he won a scholarship and gained a Double First in English Literature at Oxford. This is his third visit to Evesham, having previously spoken about John Donne and Lord Byron.

*Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated) but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the lovely house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.*

**WED 14TH MAY, 7.00 PM**

### Mohandas K Gandhi – 'Seditious Middle Temple Lawyer' or 'The Most Enlightened of all Political Men'?

**Ecgwins Club, 117 High Street,  
Evesham, £11**

Views on Gandhi are varied, and far from universally positive. To Churchill, Gandhi was a seditious anti-colonialist, while to Einstein he was a truly great human being. His passionate adherence to 'satyagraha' – non-violent resistance – led to India's independence from British rule in 1947, and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom all over the world.

Gandhi learnt from his own life and mistakes. He called his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. How did his experiences training as a lawyer in London and as an early and leading civil rights activist in South Africa forge Gandhi into the powerful force that led India to independence? What price did his wife and family pay? How have his theories stood the test of time?

In this talk, Galen Bartholomew will attempt to examine these issues and to suggest how this painfully shy man became a prophetic voice for the twenty first century, whose views transcend race, religion and nation.

*A repeat of the sell-out talk given at Holland House in November 2024.*





WED 21ST MAY, 7.00 PM

**How We Made the Golden Age of Steam**  
Evesham Rowing Club, £11

TV Producer David Parker's two-part series 'The Golden Age of Steam' broke audience viewing records when it was first transmitted on BBC Four. Yet the series almost never got commissioned. Using superb home movie films of Britain's steam railways and the locomotives that ran on them, alongside testimony from some of the men and women who 'saved our steam', David will talk about what happened, why the series was 'touch and go' and how, having persuaded the BBC to support it, he was able to tell this remarkable story.

David is another great Festival favourite, having previously enthralled audiences with talks about Laurie Lee, Johnny Kingdom, and the Flying Scotsman, as well as leading two wonderful Laurie Lee themed walks from the village of Slad.



WED 11TH JUNE, 7.00 PM

**Long Lost Families, with Ariel Bruce**  
Evesham Rowing Club, £13

Since its launch in 2011, Ariel Bruce has been the lead Social Work and Research Consultant on ITV's *Long Lost Family* with Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell. Alongside this work she has also had the same role on ITV's innovative *Born Without Trace*, in which Ariel and her team trace the families of foundlings using DNA. In addition to working on TV, Ariel also works with many private clients, carrying out searches for missing family members.

Described as the 'Agatha Christie of the adoption world' by *The Daily Telegraph*, Ariel Bruce is a Post-Adoption Social Worker with over 30 years' experience tracing missing family members throughout the world. She and her team work with those whose lives have been affected by adoption or who have significant family members they wish to find.



SAT 14TH JUNE, 7.30 PM

**Around the World in 30-ish Musicals**  
Bengeworth Church, £10  
(Children under 12 free of charge)  
Including interval drink.

EODS (Evesham Operatic and Dramatic Society) returns to Festival of Words and Bengeworth Church with a new concert that will take you on a whistle stop tour around the world.

With songs from well-known musicals and those you might not think could exist, EODS will take you on the world trip that you didn't know you needed. With songs and words, it will be an evening to astound and amaze with the wonders of the (musical) world.

What are you waiting for? Purchase your ticket now for the trip of a lifetime!

Tickets also available from:  
**The Almonry Museum.**  
Call in person, or T: 01386 446944,  
E: tic@almonry.ndo.co.uk



MON 23RD JUNE, 1.00 PM

**A.E. Housman:  
A Worcestershire  
Lad and his  
Abiding Appeal**

Holland House, Crophorne, £23  
Tickets via Holland House:  
[www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)  
E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org),  
or T: 01386 860330

WED 18TH JUNE, 2.30 PM

**Chance Findings**

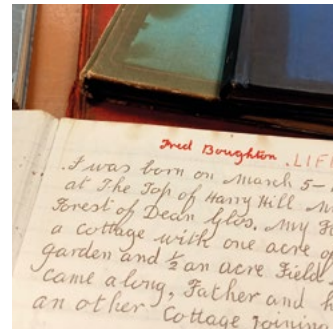
Cleeve Prior Field Barn, £10

While researching family history, many findings emerge from hours poring over documents, searching online or talking to people. However we discover our information, there is always a thrill. Perhaps the most thrilling though are those chance findings that you discover unexpectedly and in very random ways and which can sometimes change the course of your family story.

Keen family historians, Sue Ablett, Galen Bartholomew and Noelle Chambers, share some fascinating examples of their chance findings.

We'll also hear how Cleeve Prior's Edgar Wheeler Hovel came to be discovered (by chance) and what its findings revealed about the man and life on the land. A visit to the nearby hovel is included.

*Tea and cake will be served after the event.*



The idea behind this talk arose from an increasing awareness of how many writers, in their own work, quoted lines or phrases from one of Housman's poems. The most obvious is Colin Dexter's *The Remorseful Day*, in the Morse series of books. But there are so many more including – WH Auden, John Betjeman, Dorothy Sayers, Tom Stoppard. The talk starts, however, with Housman himself, noting that he was born and brought up in Worcestershire, not Shropshire, and was a Latin scholar not a poet. The timeless and universal themes in *A Shropshire Lad* are covered, as well as the circumstances that led to his writing the 63 poems.

Presented by Linda Hart, with readings by Max Hunt. Both have a keen interest in A.E. Housman.

Max will also be reading Housman poems on the Bredon Hill Walk on 26th June. Max and Linda will also be presenting *A Shropshire Lad's Journey* from Gloucester to Cambridge on 28th June.

**Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated) but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the lovely house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.**



THURS 26TH JUNE,  
2.00 - 5.30 PM

**In Summertime on  
Bredon: Guided Walk**

Meet: Car park, St Benet's Church,  
Wing Lane, Kemerton.  
GL20 7JE, £3

The village of Kemerton lies on the southern edge of Bredon Hill, which we will climb, along narrow lanes and through fields and wooded paths on a gentle but steady incline. From Bredon we will survey the surrounding Vale of Evesham and have views of both the Malverns and the Cotswolds.

Max Hunt, Secretary of the Housman Society, will give readings from A.E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* including, of course, 'Bredon Hill'.

This easy 5-mile walk is in conjunction with Evesham Walking Festival.

Park in the car park just by the churchyard, or alongside the churchyard in the lane. There is a pub and café in the village but you may like to bring a drink or snack for a short refreshment break on Bredon Hill. The walk is not suitable for children and no dogs are allowed.

Map ref: SO 949 374. [what3words: tweeted.branched.heat](https://www.what3words.com/what3words/tweeted.branched.heat)  
Maximum walkers: 25

Tickets only available from:  
[www.eveshamwalkfest.org.uk](http://www.eveshamwalkfest.org.uk)

FRI 27TH JUNE, 10.45 AM – 12 NOON

**WWII at Blenheim Palace –Evacuees and Espionage**

Ecgwins Club, Evesham £10. Includes tea/coffee and cake.

The Marlborough family, Estate staff and Blenheim Palace itself played a full and energetic part in the war effort. This talk tells the story of how the Palace prepared for the worst, survived the onslaught of 400 boys evacuated to Blenheim and how they kept the secret of MI5.

Antonia Keaney, Blenheim Palace’s social historian, returns for the third year running to share her passion and unique knowledge of this historic estate. She has appeared on Radio 4’s Saturday Live, BBC’s Country File, Channel 4’s Phil Spencer’s Stately Homes, and Channel 5’s The Cotswolds with Pam Ayres.

**Why not stay on for lunch at Ecgwins’s Club? Menu will be circulated to attendees ahead of the event for pre-ordering menu choices on the morning.**



FRI 27TH JUNE, 2.00 – 3.00 PM

**Living the Dream**

Ecgwins Club, Evesham £10. Includes tea/coffee and cake.

Author Ruth Hogan was brought up in a house full of books – her mother worked in a bookshop - and grew up with an unsurprising passion for reading and writing. Becoming a writer was one of a long list of possible future careers. She studied English and Drama at Goldsmith’s College and then found herself working in local government for ten years.

Life then threw a couple of curved balls at Ruth but they proved the push for her to start writing seriously. Her first novel, *The Keeper of Lost Things*, proved to be a bestselling debut novel, which was a Richard and Judy Book Club pick. Three further novels have followed. As a full-time author, Ruth feels lucky to be living the dream.

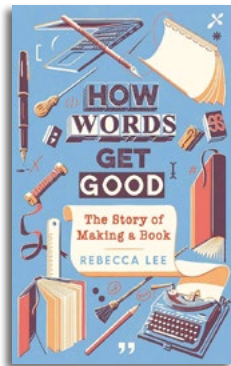
FRI 27TH JUNE, 3.30 - 4.30 PM

**How Words Get Good**

Ecgwins Club, Evesham £10. Includes tea/coffee and cake.

Rebecca Lee is the author of *How Words Get Good: The Story of Making a Book*, and an editorial manager at Penguin Random House. She has spent twenty years managing hundreds of high-profile books from delivery of manuscript to finished copies, signing off millions of words as fit to go to print with only the occasional regret.

Join us to hear how an idea gets from an author’s head onto your bookshelves. Rebecca will also share some of the challenges of working in publishing, while at the same time embarking on a new life as an author. She is the third member of the Penguin Random House team to talk at the Festival.



FRI 27TH JUNE, 7.30 PM

**Festival Quiz Night**

Raphael’s Restaurant  
£10 per person (Teams of 4)  
Light supper included.  
Pre-booking of teams essential.

Our annual Quiz Night is a firm Festival favourite. Little did quiz masters, Helen Yendall and Chris Cherry, realise when they offered to run a Quiz for our first ever Festival back in 2016 that they would be back every year since. With questions on everything from poetry and song lyrics to book titles and the meaning of words, the Quiz Night definitely has a WORDY slant! A fun and friendly event.

(Maximum of 11 teams of 4).

SAT 28TH JUNE, 10.45 AM – 12 NOON

**Dining with Great Writers: Samuel Pepys on Food**

Ecgwins Club, £10  
Includes tea/coffee and cake.

Samuel Pepys might be best known for his diaries but how many of us know what he actually wrote about? Along with his other appetites, Pepys relished his meals, and recorded the choosing, buying, cooking and eating of food and drink in hundreds of diary entries. Join us to enter his culinary world, featuring period dishes such as salmagundi, apple and orange tarts, and sack posset.

Speaker Judith Headley loved history and literature equally at school and hated having to choose between them. Opting for an English degree led her to further studies at the Shakespeare Institute. Since then a career in secondary teaching has developed beyond retirement into teaching adults. Judith has a particular interest in social history and the history of food. She regularly talks on a wide range of topics.

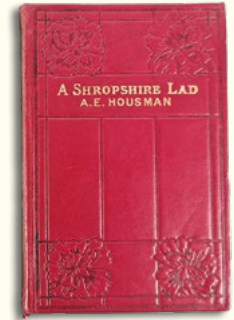


SAT 28TH JUNE, 1.00 – 2.00 PM

**A Shropshire Lad Travels from Gloucester to Cambridge**

Ecgwins Club, £10  
Includes tea/coffee and cake.

By Linda Hart with readings by Max Hunt. Linda’s presentation is best characterised as the biography of a book. In 2019 she was at Trinity College, Cambridge, where the librarian showed her a very special copy of A.E. Housman’s celebrated collection of poems, *A Shropshire Lad*. The book had been inscribed in 1909 by an unknown young man in Gloucester named Ivor Gurney to the internationally famous Rudyard Kipling. Linda decided to find out where the book had been for 110 years; how did it get from Gloucester to Cambridge; what readers had it met on its cross-country journey? She explains the links that she discovered between A.E. Housman, Rudyard Kipling, and Ivor Gurney who would become Gloucestershire’s much-admired poet and composer.



SAT 28TH JUNE, 3.00 – 4.00 PM

**An Afternoon with Sue Moorcroft**

Ecgwins Club, £10  
Includes tea/coffee and cake.

Sue Moorcroft is a *Sunday Times* and international bestselling author of Women’s Fiction. She has published 26 novels since 2005, translated into thirteen languages. Her novels of life and love have been #1 on Kindle UK and Top 100 on Kindle US, Canada, Germany and Italy. She has also won a number of prestigious prizes. She is currently President of the Romantic Novelists’ Association. Her novels, short stories, serials and columns have appeared around the world.

Born into an army family, Sue lived abroad before settling in the UK at the age of 10. Finding it hard to make friends she spent a lot of time in the library and her love of books just grew and grew. A teacher predicted that “one day there will be novels on the shelves with ‘Sue Moorcroft’ on the spine.” How right that teacher was!



SAT 28TH JUNE, 7.00 – 8.30 PM

**Every Picture Tells a Story**

Evesham Rowing Club, £13

Doug Allan has been filming wildlife for over 40 years. He's contributed memorable sequences to classic BBC series like *The Blue Planet*, *Planet Earth*, *Frozen Planet* and many others.

Every wildlife series starts with words and ideas on a page. And every sequence in every episode links to the next like chapters in a book until finally the narrator's words complete the production process. With a budget of twelve million dollars for a series, and David Attenborough's impeccable delivery, what could possibly go wrong?

*Every Picture Tells a Story* follows the path from concept to delivery, illustrated with personal stories and behind the scenes pictures. He'll also talk about the creation of *Freeze Frame*, his 2012 self-published collection of photographs and stories that sold over 13,500 copies.

Doug's photographic awards include eight Emmy's and five BAFTAs. He is an Honorary Fellow of the *Royal Photographic Society* and in 2019 he was awarded the *Royal Scottish Geographical Society's Mungo Park Medal* for his outstanding contribution to geographical knowledge through exploration. He received an OBE in 2024 for his work promoting Environmental Awareness.



SUN 29TH JUNE, 10.00 AM – 12 NOON

**Evesham – Heritage and People: A Guided Walk**

Meet 9.45 am, The Almonry, £5

Whether you are local or a visitor to Evesham, this two-hour guided walk around the heart of Evesham will showcase some of the buildings, their history and features, and the people (both local and with connections to Evesham) who have left their mark on the town over the centuries.

The walk will be led by Gill Pawson, Chair of the Vale of Evesham Civic Society, and Sue Ablett, Festival Chair, both of whom share a love of, and fascination for, the town. An information sheet will be provided.

**Maximum of 20, so do book early!**



SUN 29TH JUNE, 2.00 – 4.00 PM

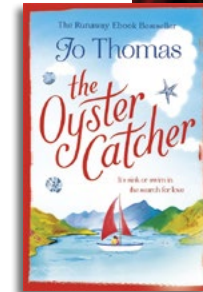
**An Afternoon with Jo Thomas**

Ecgwins Club, £11

Includes tea, scone and cake.

Jo Thomas writes romantic fiction about food and love, all set in fabulous locations. And she loves a happy ending! Jo worked for many years as a reporter and producer, first for BBC Radio 5, then moving on to Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* and Radio 2's *The Steve Wright Show*, before taking up writing full-time.

Her first novel, *The Oyster Catcher*, was inspired by a visit to Galway, eating a plate of oysters, and learning more about the oyster beds and oyster festivals of the area. She just had to write about it and it proved a real winner. Jo's research for her novels involves visiting beautiful places, discovering the food of the area, and letting the story follow from there. Reading her books, whether set in a lavender farm in Provence, or a lemon grove in Sicily, you immediately feel as if you are there. Add to the fabulous settings some lovely characters and you have all the hallmarks of a great read. With 17 novels published so far, she really has the perfect recipe.



SUN 29TH JUNE, 7.00 – 9.00 PM

**The Great Train Robbery – Revisited**

The Henrician, £13 (plus £1 booking fee per ticket)

2023 marked the 60th Anniversary of The Great Train Robbery, an event that saw the theft of £2.6 million from a Royal Mail train heading from Glasgow to London on the West Coast Main Line in the early hours of 8th August 1963. After tampering with the lineside signals to bring the train to a halt, a gang of 15 attacked the train.

Ian Boskett has studied the events of 8th August and the subsequent investigations and enquiries. How did the robbers know there was more money than usual on the train that night? Ian has uncovered some fascinating local connections with the heist: one of the escape flights out of the country took off from an airfield in Worcestershire. Some items connected with the heist, all supposedly destroyed, have quite recently resurfaced! So just how did the gang tamper with the signals? Ian will tell the story and give a live demonstration! (Ian gave a talk about The Great Train Robbery in 2023 to mark the 60th Anniversary. He's back in 2025 with updated information and lots more stories!)

**Tickets only from: [www.henrician.org](http://www.henrician.org)**





SAT 5TH JULY, 7.00 PM

**Greyfriar's Bobby**

The Henrician, £13  
(plus £1 booking fee per ticket)

Join us for a heartwarming one-man adaptation of the classic tale based on the true story of a Highland Terrier and his unwavering loyalty to his master, Jock. A sentimental caper for animal lovers young and old, but equally appealing to lovers of live theatre.

This is a production by Don't Go Into the Cellar with actor Jonathan Goodwin, who has previously performed A Christmas Carol and Wilde About Oscar for the Festival. Don't Go Into the Cellar perform at venues across the UK from theatres to manor houses and festivals. Their shows offer an original take on traditional Victorian and Edwardian literature – perfect for people seeking good old-fashioned theatrical entertainment.

Tickets only from [www.henrician.org](http://www.henrician.org)



SAT 19TH JULY, 2.00 PM

**Bikes and Books**

Meet Evesham Velo Park  
Free event

After a successful ride last year this event is returning in 2025 to celebrate a love of books and cycling. Join us for a leisurely 20-mile social ride, starting at Evesham Velo Park and finishing at Raphael's Restaurant. Led by local cyclist, Helen Russell, this year's ride will meander through Cotswolds' villages, and riders will learn about the area's connections to writers such as JM Barrie, JRR Tolkien and William Morris, as well as modern TV series, *Agatha Raisin* and *Father Brown*.

Run in conjunction with Cycle Evesham Vale. The ride is suitable for all abilities and for regular or electric bikes. Please ensure your bike is in good working order. There will be a back-marker to ensure that no one gets left behind.

This is a free event but please register before the day with [info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org](mailto:info@eveshamfestivalofwords.org).



SAT 2ND - SUN 3RD AUGUST

**Battle of Evesham Festival weekend**

2025 marks the 760th Anniversary of the Battle of Evesham. The occasion will be marked by a Grand Parade; re-enactments; jousting; archery demonstrations; living history camp displays; and a range of stalls catering for medieval and modern tastes. This is the biggest event of the year in Evesham with visitors from far and wide flocking to join in the celebrations.

In addition there will be programme of talks by historians and others throughout the weekend. Sir Tony Robinson will be speaking on both days – 2.30 pm on the Saturday, and 1.30 pm on the Sunday, an event entitled 'A Cunning History – a talk from one of England's favourite Knights'. Evesham Festival of Words is proud to be sponsoring the Presentation Marquee where the authors will be found.

Tickets for all the author events can be purchased at: [shop.battleofevesham.co.uk](http://shop.battleofevesham.co.uk).



SUN 10TH AUGUST, 2.00 PM

**Hush Hush! A Bletchley Story, with Mikron Theatre Company Raphael's Restaurant**

In a nondescript mansion house, in a nondescript town, a group of extraordinary men and women worked to provide intelligence that would help to win the war. But shhhhhh, you'd better keep it under your hat, because as far as the rest of the world is concerned, Bletchley Park doesn't exist.

Peggy Valentine arrives at Bletchley in 1940, 18 years old, headstrong and gifted. Finding herself in a world of boffins, soldiers and debutantes, Peggy has to shoulder the burden of high pressure war work whilst navigating a new world of feuds, friendships and growing up in a frame of absolute secrecy.

But what of the world beyond Bletchley? As the war rages on in Europe, the stakes are raised for Peggy and her friends as they work to protect their loved ones fighting abroad. Mikron invites you to enter a world of secrets, songs and cyphers as we get to know the heroes of Hut 3.

This event will take place outside whatever the weather. Bring your own chairs. No need to pre-book. There will be the usual Mikron 'pay what you feel' bucket collection at the end of the performance. If you would like to eat at Raphael's, please book with them direct – 01386 45460. Note, own food cannot be eaten on Raphael's premises.



SAT 6TH SEPTEMBER, 7.00 PM

**Coward at Sea**

Bretforton Theatrebarn, £15



A rare opportunity to see this dramatic adaptation of one of Noël Coward's finest pieces of light verse, P&O 1930, brought to the stage for the first time by Michael Lunts, whose one-man show The Enigma of Edward Elgar featured at last year's Festival of Words. Come aboard the SS Madeira and relive, in Coward's own words and songs, the historic journey home to Britain from the Far East in the 1930's, when a voyage took weeks rather than hours, and enabled the passengers to get up to all sorts of antics en route!

We first saw this event back in 2016, the first year of the Festival. If you saw it then, it's well worth a second look. And if you haven't seen it, then you really should! To quote the Daily Mail: "A rare gem evoking the genuine spirit of Coward... Mr Lunts can switch characters with the twitch of an eyebrow while playing the piano perfectly."

**Bretforton Theatrebarn is the perfect venue for this event. Note: steep steps to the theatre. No disabled access.**

WED 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2.30 PM

**Producing the BBC's Antiques Road Show**

Richmond Villages Wood Norton, £10  
Includes tea/coffee and cake

Who doesn't love the *Antiques Roadshow*? Robert Arley's talk, 'Producing the BBC's Antiques Roadshow' – How 100 experts turn an unpredictable day of location filming into a smooth Sunday evening show, will shed light on this popular and long-running TV programme. Maybe it will prompt us all to go away and scour our attics and cupboards in the hunt for hidden treasure?

Robert is a retired television producer and director and has worked for a number of TV channels. He directed *The Antiques Roadshow*, *Flog It* and *Bargain Hunt* over many years, and enjoys revealing behind-the-scenes stories from his "hairy" years as a broadcast location director.

This event is kindly sponsored by Richmond Villages Wood Norton.



FRI 3RD OCTOBER, 1.00 PM

**Eyam: The Plague Village**

Holland House, Cropthorne, £23  
 Tickets via Holland House: [www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)  
 E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org), or T: 01386 860330

The Derbyshire village of Eyam would be just another attractive spot in the English countryside, were it not for events there in 1665. In that year, as plague spread through England, the village's residents - led by their priest - isolated themselves from neighbouring communities to stop the disease spreading. This talk is all about that so-called "year of wonders" - the courage of its people, the sacrifices they made and the lasting impact on their community and the wider world. Interesting parallels are drawn with recent experiences of Covid lockdowns.

Speaker, Ian Braisby, has been a professional tour guide for over 20 years and holds the Blue Badge, the UK's highest tour guiding qualification. He leads tours throughout the UK and in mainland Europe and is also a regular speaker in person and online on historical and cultural subjects.

**Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated) but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the lovely house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.**

WED 15TH OCTOBER, 7.00 PM

**Off to the Workhouse**

Ecgwins Club, 117 High Street, Evesham. £11

In this illustrated talk historian Richard Churchley paints a picture of the way in which the poor were treated by the authorities from Elizabethan times through to the twentieth century. To explain the poor laws he uses many local examples and quotations from Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy. Anyone who has studied their own family history is likely to have come across relatives who ended up in the workhouse but this will be equally fascinating to all.

Richard Churchley is an experienced local historian, specialising in areas of Worcestershire, Warwickshire and North Gloucestershire. His first degree was in German but he subsequently gained an MA in English Local History and a PhD for his study of changing occupational structure in the rural area around Redditch and Alcester, the area where he has lived for more than 40 years.



MON 3RD NOVEMBER, 1.00 PM

**Reasons for treason: some truths behind the Gunpowder Plot of November 1605**

Holland House, Cropthorne, £23  
 Tickets via Holland House: [www.hollandhouse.org](http://www.hollandhouse.org)  
 E: [enquiries@hollandhouse.org](mailto:enquiries@hollandhouse.org), or T: 01386 860330

In the early hours of 5th November 1605 Guy Fawkes was discovered in the cellars under the Houses of Parliament, with a fuse, a small lamp and 36 barrels of gunpowder. The intent was obvious, but an ill-planned plot to destroy, not just the king, James I and his family, but the entire system of government had just been foiled. Years later, the events of 5th November are still celebrated with firework displays, and effigies of Guy Fawkes on top of numerous bonfires. Fawkes undoubtedly played a vital role in the plot but, remarkably, he was not the main man. So, who was the leader of the plot, who were his fellow plotters, what were the sources of their discontent, and what were they ultimately hoping to achieve?

Speaker, Alan Tolley, will be hoping to reveal, among other things, the real reasons behind the plot, the individual stories of the plotters themselves, and how an unsigned letter handed to a footman in the street the night before, warning its recipient to stay away from Parliament is, according to our National Archives, the most (in)famous letter in British history.

**Two-course lunch is served at 1.00 pm (special diets can be accommodated) but arrive early to get a drink and enjoy the lovely house and gardens. The talk will commence about 2.00 pm.**



WED 5TH NOVEMBER, 7.00 PM

**Lest We Forget – Timeless Lessons of Auschwitz thanks to Primo Levi**

Ecgwins Club, 117 High Street, Evesham. £11

2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, and the death marches in which concentration camp victims were forced to march west into Germany as the Red Army advanced from the east.

Primo Levi was an inmate of Auschwitz for 11 months (where life expectancy, if you were 'spared' for work, was three months). His highly acclaimed books about his experiences, rather than focusing on the appalling brutality of Auschwitz, shed light on the way human beings behave in these most extreme conditions, and how some are better equipped to survive than others.

In this talk Galen Bartholomew will outline some aspects of the Third Reich between 1933 and 1945 in the belief that continued awareness of the Holocaust, the most hideous crime in modern history, will help to protect future generations.





FRI 28TH NOVEMBER, 7.00 PM

**The Second Best Bed**

The Henrician, £13 (plus £1 booking fee per ticket)

When Shakespeare died, he left his wife Anne only one thing – the second best bed. This superb one-woman play, full of both humour and pathos, has received great critical acclaim since its premier in 2012. Liz Grand stars as Anne Hathaway on the night of Shakespeare’s funeral. The wake has finished, leaving Anne to remember her life with the most talented playwright the world has ever seen. Or was he? Did he write the plays? His widow would know if anybody did. Wouldn’t she?

With actress Liz Grand (previous shows: ‘Where is Mrs Christie?’, ‘Mrs Churchill – My Life with Winston’ and ‘The Secret Life of Enid Blyton’) we are guaranteed a compelling performance and a thought-provoking script around one of the greatest literary mysteries! An On A Role production.

Tickets only from [www.henrician.org](http://www.henrician.org)

**Festival Book Club**

The Festival Book Club started in January 2020 and has proved really popular. Monthly meetings take place in central Evesham – lots of lively discussion, a wide range of books discussed with members having the chance to put forward their suggestions, and a very social group. If you’re interested in joining, contact Helen Yendall.

E: [helenyendall@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:helenyendall@yahoo.co.uk)

**Festival Committee**

**Members:**

Sue Ablett; Galen Bartholomew; Noelle Chambers; Joyce Davey; Lynn Lucchese; Diana Raphael; Social Media: Chloe Gittings

**Festival Map**

1. **Almonry**  
Abbey Gate, WR11 4BQ
2. **Abbey Remains & Bell Tower**
3. **All Saints Church / Church House**  
Market Place, WR11 4RW
4. **Abbey Park & Riverside Walk**
5. **Friends Meeting House**  
Cowl St, WR11 4PN
6. **Evesham Library**  
Oat St, WR11 4PJ
7. **Ecgwins Club\***  
117 High Street, Evesham, WR11 4EQ
8. **The Henrician\***  
Victoria Avenue, WR11 4QH
9. **Evesham Rowing Club\***  
Abbey Rd, WR11 4ST
10. **Hampton Ferry & Raphael’s Cafe\***  
Boat Lane, WR11 4BP
11. **Hampton Community Hall\***  
Pershore Rd, WR11 2PQ
12. **Bengeworth Church**  
Port St, WR11 3LF
13. **Regal Cinema**  
Port St, WR11 3LD
14. **Evesham Velo Park\***  
WR11 2BH

- Bretforton Theatrebarn\***  
(off map), WR11 7JH
- Cleeve Prior Field Barn\***  
(off map) WR11 8JX
- Holland House\***  
(off map) WR10 3NB
- Richmond Villages Wood Norton\***  
(off map) WR11 4TY\*

\* Parking available at venue







## A huge thank you to:

### **Our wonderful contributors, audiences, volunteers, and Festival Patrons:**

Local MP, Nigel Huddleston; TV presenter and comedian,  
Alistair McGowan; Editor Cotswold & Vale Magazine, Lynne Powell;  
Local authors, Amanda Reynolds and Helen Yendall

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