



D Day to Douglas Adams. Sturminster Newton Literary Festival Celebrates Dorset and Wessex Writers.

Sturminster Newton Literary Festival is in its fifth year and has organised a diverse and ambitious programme for 2024. The festival runs from 8th -16th June and includes a special event dedicated to D Day.

This year the festival includes a talk on one time Stalbridge resident, Douglas Adams' early work from his colleague Kevin J Davies. Bridport Prize winner, Fiona Williams will be speaking about her novel, *The House of Broken Bricks*, set in the Somerset Levels. Colonel Guy Deacon will talk about his inspirational journey driving alone from London to Cape Town while living with stage three Parkinson's Disease.

Local people have contributed testimonies from family members who experienced D Day. These will feature in a special exhibition in The Exchange during festival week. On Sunday 9th June, two speakers, Taylor Downing and James Porter will speak about the deception around D Day and the role of the Dorsetshire Regiment, and some testimonies will be read to mark the official opening of the exhibition.

In the 150th year since *Far From the Madding Crowd* was published, there will be a special screening of the 2009 Gryphon School film and an opportunity to meet some of the actors. Walks at Bere Marsh, Marnhull, and Bagber combine writing and local literature with the outdoors.

On 15th June, Sturminster Newton will be turned into a (legal) crime scene with a special Crime Writing Day. A writing workshop and competition along with talks by authors Mark Bridgeman, Jane Labous, and Paula Harmon are likely to be popular with thriller fans.

Local writers are speaking on a wide range of subjects this year, including Celia Brayfield speaking about Anna Sewell and her contribution to animal welfare, the Royal Navy through the eyes of author Jim Carter's father, the legend of Inanna and Gilgamesh from Cerne Abbas based writer Emily Wilson, and nature themed poetry from Robin Walter. Derbyshire based Joanne Burn will join the festival via Zoom to discuss her latest novel, *The Bone Hunters*, set in Lyme Regis.

Festival chairman Pauline Batstone said: "Each year the Sturminster Newton Literary Festival gets better and better and we look forward to greeting even more visitors to this our fifth Festival".

Sturminster Newton Literary Festival focuses on the historic writers associated with the town (Thomas Hardy, William Barnes, and Robert Young), contemporary writers with a Dorset or Wessex connection, and aspiring writers.

[Www.sturlitfest.com](http://www.sturlitfest.com)

Ends

For details of authors, publicists, photos, contact Rachael Rowe at info@sturlitfest.com