



**YOU** ARE HERE



# MEDWAY RIVER LIT

**PROGRAMME**  
1-30 November 2024



**FREE**



# YOUR PAPER QUEST

Self-Published Monthly Book Subscription Box



Ever wonder what it would be like to read a classic before it became one?

We're a book of the month subscription box exclusively featuring stories from self-published and independent authors.

We work hard to find the hidden gems in the literary world and deliver them straight to your door.

Follow us

@yourpaperquest

# Welcome to **Medway River Lit 2024** A literary festival for Medway: Looking at our place in the world in a time of climate emergency

Over the next month we aim to provide something to entertain, inform, and excite all lovers of words in whatever way they choose to devour them.

There will be poetry, novelists, scientists, drama, workshops, panels, memoirs, and very possibly a small amount of rock'n'roll!

**Medway River Lit 2024**, like all other cultural events over the last few years, is taking place in a time of climate emergency. We feel it is our duty to address this in our art, so that is our underlying theme for this festival.

**We are here.** We are interconnected with the rest of the planet by oceans that are rising. Our stories must reflect this and talk about the alternatives.

## **Launch Party**

We are launching at Chatham Library on the afternoon of Friday 1 November, with poetry from Charlotte Ansell, Michi Masumi, and Sam Rapp who are all great local champions of writing. Charlotte, Sam, and Michi will be running mini-creative writing sessions later in the afternoon to get your creative juices flowing! There will be cakes and refreshments!

All main events for **Medway River Lit 2024** are ticketed on a Pay What You Can basis. We will not charge people who cannot afford to attend our festival. But if you want to support the festival by paying for a ticket, the amount you pay is up to you, or become a Festival Friend – see more on our website.

You can find full bios of all the authors and interviewers on our website at:

[www.medwayriverlit.co.uk](http://www.medwayriverlit.co.uk)

Follow us on Instagram: [medwayriverlit2024](https://www.instagram.com/medwayriverlit2024)

Facebook: [Medway River Lit](https://www.facebook.com/MedwayRiverLit)



## ***Friday 1 November***

### **Launch**

Chatham Library, 2-3.30pm

Come and find out what's scheduled for the festival at our launch! Have a go at some fun writing activities and pick up a programme.

### **Poetry Republic: The Four Poets**

Coffee Republic, Chatham, 6-9pm

The Four Poets are Maggie Harris, Bill Lewis, Sarah Hehir and Barry Fentiman Hall. They'll be reading from their eponymous joint collection and other works. Goody bags will be available!

## ***Saturday 2 November***

All events at Rochester Library

### **Writer Talk: Chloe Timms**

1-1.45pm

'The Seawomen' is a fiercely written and timely feminist novel, at once gothic, fantastical and truly unforgettable. Highly acclaimed debut novel from writer, campaigner, mentor and podcast host Chloe Timms.

### **Writer Talk: Megan Hunter**

2.30-3.30pm

Megan Hunter is the author of 'The End We Start From' recently adapted into a film starring Jodie Comer, and 'The Harpy', a dark exploration of the constraints of contemporary marriage and motherhood.

### **Writer Talk:**

### **Ben Okri In Conversation With Sarah Hehir**

7-8pm

Inspired by environmental activism, Booker Prize winning Ben Okri's latest book 'Tiger Work' blends fiction, essay and poetry to make a powerful and very personal appeal for change. He'll be in conversation with writer for stage and screen, Sarah Hehir.



Ben Okri



Megan Hunter



**Sunday 3 November**

### **Author Bookfair**

Rochester Library, 12.30-3.30pm  
Come and chat to local authors and buy their books!

### **Panel: How To Get Published!**

Rochester Library, 1-1.45pm  
Publishers, tutors and editors give tips on what makes a strong submission, including Neil Nixon who set up the UK's first professional writing course.

### **Panel: So You'd Like To Self-Publish?**

Rochester Library, 2-2.45pm  
Guidance from self-published writers Steven William Hannah, curator of Your Paper Quest, and Oli Jacobs, a writer who has been self-publishing for 12 years, plus self-published author Janys Thornton.

### **Workshop: medWILD Comics And Zines**

Intra Arts, 2-4pm.  
Free. Book via [www.ideastest.org.uk](http://www.ideastest.org.uk)

## Sunday 3 November (cont.)

### Writer Talk: Louisa Campbell

Rochester Library, 3-3.45pm

When a last-minute knock on the door threatens to spoil 82-year-old Minty's Jubilee party, she discovers her neighbours have secrets of their own. 'Secret Street' is a fiction-based-on-fact novel, offering a discourse on the relationships between stigma, friendship, class, and identity.

### Writer Talk: Melissa Todd

The Eagle, Rochester, 8-9pm Age: 18+

Described as 'Stormy Daniels meets Bill Bryson', Melissa's second book 'Americaned' tells of her journey from Massachusetts to Texas, whilst coming to terms with a bereavement.

## Wednesday 6 November

### Writer Talk: Bill McGuire

Rochester Library, 7-8.45pm

Bill McGuire is an academic, activist, broadcaster, and best-selling popular science and speculative fiction writer. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Geophysical and Climate Hazards at University College London. His non-fiction book 'Hothouse Earth' provides a 'steely-eyed view on how we can cope with a hothouse world'.

## Friday 8 November

### Poetry Republic: The Meanderslam!

Coffee Republic, 7-9pm (doors 6pm)

Come along to Medway River Lit's first ever poetry slam! Who will win our cash prize? Sign up on the night. Hosted by Lalah-Simone Springer.



# Saturday 9 November

All events at Chatham Library

## Writer Talk: Tom Mitchell

12.30-1.15pm Recommended ages 9-12  
Hilarious, fast-paced, and action-packed, 'How to Stop the End of the World' is an apocalyptically funny adventure for young readers.

## Masterclass: Historical Fiction Writing Workshop And Panel With Michael Hughes And Charlotte Byrne

Masterclass: 2-3pm

Booking required, max 12

Author Panel: 3.15-4.15pm

This two-hour session will consist of a one-hour creative writing workshop and a one-hour author panel, with Charlotte and Michael, the author of 'Country'.

## Writer Talk: Sam Hall

7-7.20pm

Sam Hall talks about the process of creating an autobio-fictional graphic novel inspired by '90s indie music. Sort of.

## Poetry: Sarah L Dixon

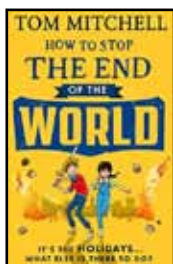
7.30-7.50pm

Poet Sarah will read from her '90s indie inspired collection 'A Bit Like Falling In Love'.

## Writer Talk: Jim Bob

8-9pm

Former lead singer of Carter USM, Jim Bob, will talk about and read from his new book 'Where Songs Come From'. There will also be a few songs!





*Jim Bob*



*Zahra Barri*



*Maggie Harris*



# Sunday 10 November

All events at Rochester Library

## Prizegiving: The Rosemary McLeish Award 2024

1.30-1.50pm

The winners of The Rosemary McLeish Poetry Prize, for a single poem on the climate, will be announced, plus the winners will read their poems.

## Writer Talk: Zahra Barri

2-2.40pm

'Daughters of the Nile' is a bold multi-generational debut novel exploring themes of queerness, revolution and Islamic sisterhood. Zahra Barri is a comedian, poet and writer.

## Writer Talk: Maggie Harris

3-3.40pm

Maggie Harris is a Guyana Prize for Literature and Commonwealth Prize-winning author and poet. 'Kiskadee Girl' is her memoir.

**\*The Four Poets:**  
1 November

**\*Meanderslam!**  
8 November

**\*Big Trouble:**  
15 November

**\*Helen Ivory &  
Martin Figura:**  
22 November

**\*Caroline Bird:**  
29 November

**YOU ARE HERE**



**POETRY  
REPUBLIC**

*Every Friday through November. 7-9pm at Coffee Republic  
185-187 Military Rd. Chatham ME4 4AS*

**Booking for Poetry Republic is via Eventbrite.**

# Local Authority

Kent News Website of the Year

Independent news  
covering politics, culture  
and the weirder side of Medway





@localauthoritynews

Subscribe for free at  
[localauthority.news](http://localauthority.news)



## BIG TROUBLE

macropoetry in a micropub

@bigtroublepoetry  

### OPEN MIC, FEATURE SETS & OTHER LITERARY MESS

- \* NOVEMBER 15 - MEDWAY RIVER LIT  
WITH RICHARD SCOTT + OTHERS  
at Coffee Republic
- \* DECEMBER 13 - BIG TROUBLE'S  
CHRISTMAS BONANZA  
at 12Degrees Micropub

# Venues

## 1: The Eagle Tavern

124 High St, Rochester ME1 1JT  
Rail: Rochester station  
Bus stops: Rochester  
Community Hub Stop N  
(towards Strood) / Rochester  
Community Hub Stop C  
(towards Chatham)

## 2: Rochester Library

Community Hub  
Rochester, Eastgate,  
Rochester ME1 1EW  
Rail: Rochester station  
Bus stops: Rochester  
Community Hub Stop N  
(towards Strood) / Rochester  
Community Hub Stop C  
(towards Chatham)

## 3: Intra Arts

337-341 High St,  
Rochester ME1 1DA  
Bus stops: Hospital Lane  
(towards Chatham) /  
Hospital Lane (towards  
Rochester)

## 4: Chatham Library

Riverside Gdns, Dock Rd,  
Chatham ME4 4TX  
Rail: Chatham station  
Bus stop: Waterfront Bus  
Station

## 5: Coffee Republic

185-187 Military Rd,  
Chatham ME4 4AS  
Rail: Chatham station  
Bus stop: Waterfront Bus  
Station

## 6: Spotlites Theatre

338 High St, Chatham ME4  
4NR  
Rail: Chatham station  
Bus stops: High St Gala  
Bingo (towards Gillingham),  
High St Gala Bingo  
(towards Chatham),  
Institute Rd (towards  
Gillingham), Institute Rd  
(towards Chatham)

## 7: Strood Library

133 High St, Strood  
ME2 4TJ  
Rail: Strood station  
Bus stops: Strood High St  
Stop A (towards Rochester),  
Matalan Stop F (towards  
Gravesend)

## 8: Wigmore Library

208 Fairview Ave,  
Gillingham ME8 0PX  
Bus stops: Fairview Avenue  
Shops / Fairview Avenue  
End

## 9: Gillingham Library

3 High St, Gillingham ME7  
1BE  
No public toilets  
Rail: Gillingham station  
Bus stops: Medway Park  
War Memorial Stop E  
(towards Gillingham) /  
Medway Park War  
Memorial Stop F (towards  
Chatham)

Please contact the venues  
with any specific access  
questions.



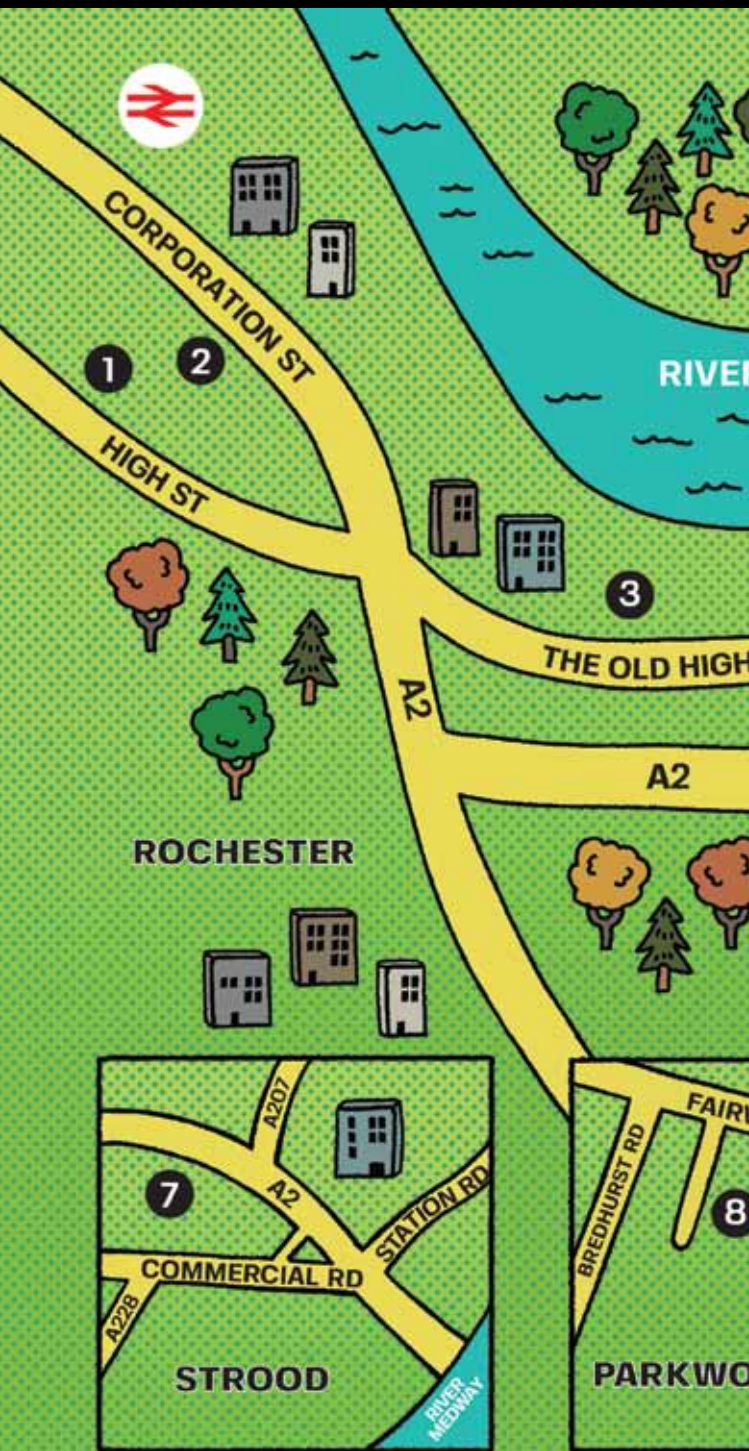
## Confluence magazine

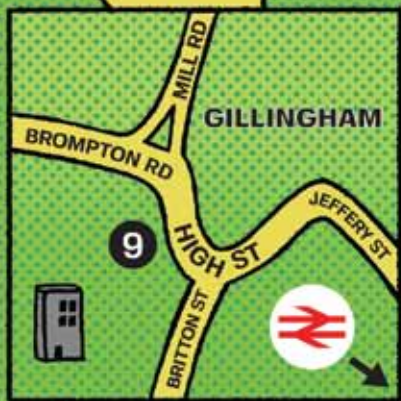
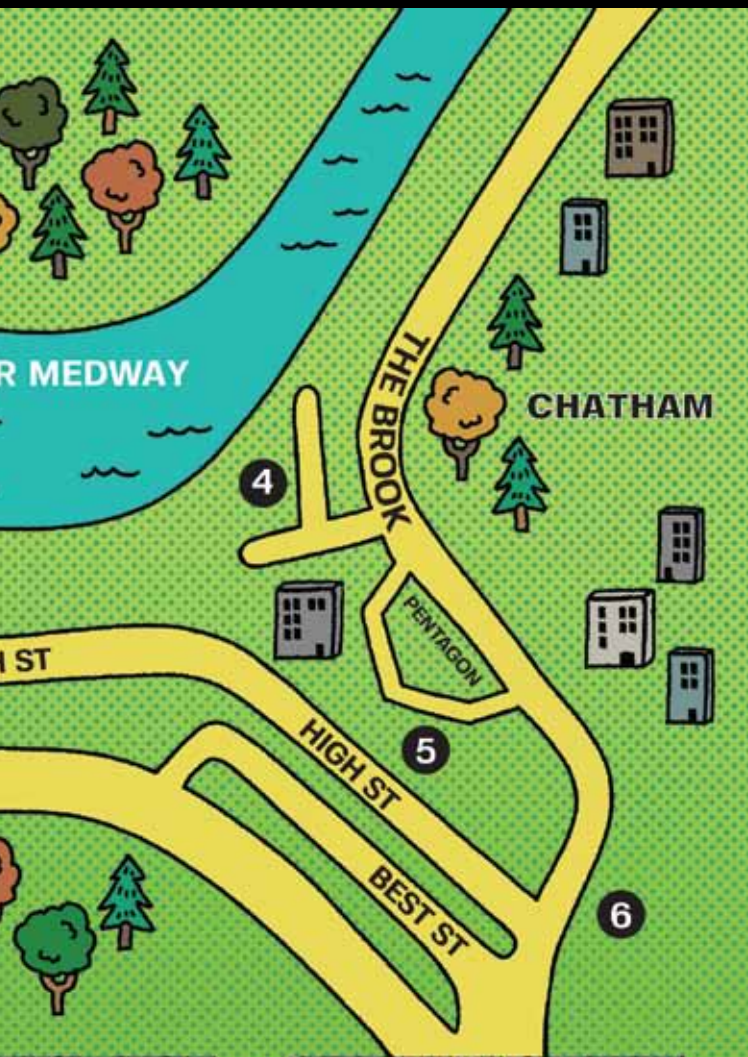
### Issue 16

Anthology issue with highlights  
from past 15 issues, plus artwork by  
Michi Masumi.

Available at Medway River Lit  
Author Fair on Sunday 3 November  
at Rochester Library!

Map (not to scale)





## Wednesday 13 November

### Talk: Bird Wise Presents 'Migratory Birds in Medway'

Chatham Library, 2-3.30pm

Booking required, 12 max

A talk about migratory birds that use the Kent coastline with a chance to use telescopes from the river wall (dependent on weather).



### Film: DaVinci

Gillingham Library, 7-9pm

A documentary about the commander of the 'Wolves DaVinci' battalion of the armed forces of Ukraine: Dmytro Kotsyubailo (call sign DaVinci.)  
In aid of medical equipment for Ukraine.

## Friday 15 November

### Poetry Republic: Big Trouble

#### Guests: Richard Scott and Jah-Mir Early

Coffee Republic, 7-9pm (doors 6pm)

Local poetry producers Big Trouble host this poetic takeover, with guest poets, Richard Scott: "By turns explicit and playful, elegiac and defiant, Richard Scott's 'Soho' draws on the fiercer traditions of queer poetry without ultimately depending on those who have gone before", and Jah-Mir Early: "Impassioned, lyrical storytelling, meandering just to the left of chaos."



Richard Scott



Jah-Mir Early

## Writer Talks: Crystal Peake Presents YA Authors

Chatham Library, 12.30-1.15pm

Recommended for ages 12+

Colin R Parsons ('The Gamer', about a 12-year old boy sucked into a video game) and Samantha Fitzgibbons ('Happy State', a dystopian novel set in a future Britain for 16-18 year-old readers) will talk about their books.

## Masterclass: Historical Crime Fiction With Caitlin Davies

Strood Library, 1-1.45pm

Booking required, 12 max

Caitlin Davies, author of six novels and eight non-fiction books, many of which are inspired by forgotten women from history, will explore how to use research sources in writing crime historical crime fiction.



CRYSTAL PEAKE

HAPPY STATE BY SAMANTHA FITZGIBBONS

In the midst of martial law, a new government announces a Happy State; a state that promises to focus on the wellbeing of its populace.



FOLKED UP BY CHARLOTTE BYRNE

When musicians Matty and Sandy crack open a dusty old book of folk songs, they hope to escape into the whimsical stylings of the past. They don't expect to actually be taken there.



THE GAMER BY COLIN R PARSONS

Drake Banks is a 12-year-old boy who is used to moving from one army camp to another. After the death of his father, Drake and his mother have to get used to living a normal life in the town where she grew up. This proves challenging for Drake as he misses the army life...

AIR FAY BY ROSA CARE

*Last... in a world she doesn't recognise. Trapped... without a clue who she is.*

Aria woke up in a forest that defies imagination, unsure of who she was or how she got there. Guided by a runaway stranger, she delves into the mystical plane where fairies are real and magic exists.



## Writer Talk: AA Chaudhuri

Strood Library, 2-2.45pm

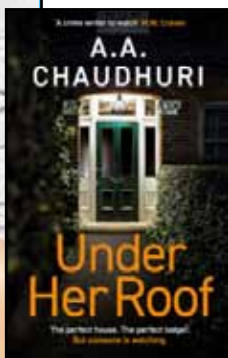
Author of acclaimed psychological thrillers, AA Chaudhuri will talk about her latest twisty-turny novel 'Under Her Roof'.

## Writer Talk: Caitlin Davies

Strood Library, 3-3.45pm

Female private eyes have been a staple of popular culture for over 150 years – from plucky Victorian ladies to 'busy body spinsters' and fearless modern investigators. But what about the real women detectives? Caitlin Davies discusses her latest non-fiction book, 'Private Inquiries: The Secret History of Female Sleuths'.

AA Chaudhuri



Thomas McMullan  
(Photo: Jonathan Ring)



## ***Sunday 17 November***

All events at Rochester Library

### **Panel: How To Write Better Short Stories**

1-1.45pm

Writers Charlie Fish, founder and editor of Fiction on the Web, the internet's longest-running literary magazine; Neil M Thorne and Maria C McCarthy talk about writing short stories.

### **Writer Talk: April Doyle**

2-3pm

In a near future, pollinators are going extinct. April Doyle's debut novel 'Hive' is a 'chillingly plausible vision of the future'.

### **Writer Talk: Thomas McMullan**

3.30-4.30pm

Set in a near future, 'The Last Good Man' is a troubling, uncanny book about fear and atonement, responsibility and justice.

## ***Monday 18 November***

### **Writer Talk: Jennifer Godfrey**

Gillingham Library, 7-9pm

Discover the stories, motives, plans, tactics and antics as Jennifer Godfrey explores the connections, friendships and collaborations that would help change the course of history for women in Britain, uncovered in her book 'Secret Missions Of The Suffragettes: Glassbreakers and Safe Houses'.

## ***Wednesday 20 November***

### **Wigmore Lecture: Barbara Havelocke**

Wigmore Library, 7-9pm

Book via [medwayticketslive.co.uk](http://medwayticketslive.co.uk) £4.50

Barbara Havelocke will talk about her novel 'Estella's Revenge' which expands the Great Expectations universe.

## **Friday 22 November**

### **Poetry Republic: Martin Figura and Helen Ivory + support**

Coffee Republic, 7-9pm (doors 6pm)

Martin Figura's poetry ranges from biting satire to the dark material of 'Whistle'. Also some daft stuff (he says)! Helen Ivory is a poet and visual artist who edits the webzine 'Ink, Sweat and Tears'. Her collections have been published by Bloodaxe. They'll be supported by local writers, Pauline Holmes and Zack Davies.

## **Saturday 23 November**

All in-person events at Chatham Library

### **Writer Talk: Carol Donaldson**

2-2.45pm

Writer and conservationist Carol Donaldson's latest book, 'The Volunteers', is a heart-warming true story of the woods and wildlife, conservation and community.

### **Talk: Almost Lost Islands Of The Medway**

3-3.45pm

Adam Taylor shines a light on the little-known histories of these islands, the people who lived on them and what they look like today, before they disappear from sea levels rising and the ravages of erosion.

### **Writer Talk: Phil Smith**

4-5pm

In 'Albion's Eco-eerie: TV and Movies of the Haunted Generations', Phil Smith takes us through a selection of weird films and TV shows and uncovers a wholly unexpected ecological and political message.

### **Poetry Showcase: Common Ground**

7-9pm

Common Ground is a workshop series run by Sarah Hehir and Charlotte Ansell. This will be a showcase of work from the sessions.

## **Saturday 23 November (cont.)**

### **Theatre and Online Theatre: 'The Modern Image Of Dorian Gray'**

Start time: 7.30-9.30pm £12 / £5

Tickets available from [www.spotlites.co.uk](http://www.spotlites.co.uk)

In association with Spotlites Theatre, we are excited to present a modern day retelling of the infamous Dorian Gray story by Aimee Riddell.

If you are unable to attend in real life, we are also making a video on demand version of the show, which you can watch online. You will be emailed a link to the screening which will be available to view till the end of the month.

## **Sunday 24 November**

All events at Rochester Library

### **Panel: Graphic Novel And Comics Adaptation**

1.30-2.30pm

Matt Adcock will discuss adapting his 2019 novel, one of Den of Geek UK's Top Books 'Complete Darkness', into a comic series, with writer Sam Hall, who adapted her play 'My Mind Is Free' into a graphic novel in 2023.

### **Writer Talk: Sacha Coward**

3-3.45pm

Sacha Coward's debut non-fiction book, 'Queer as Folklore', reveals the unsung heroes and villains of storytelling, magic and fantasy. Each chapter investigates the queer history of different mythic and folkloric characters, both old and new.

### **Masterclass: Writing Queer And Trans Characters**

4-4.45pm

Booking required, 12 max

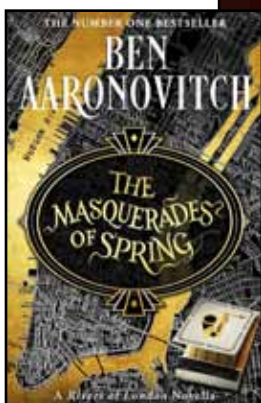
In this dynamic masterclass, writer and PhD student Charlotte Byrne will offer a number of exercises and advice for writing queer and trans characters. Attendees will have the opportunity to share writing with their peers for constructive feedback in a safe and supportive environment.



*Caroline Bird*



*Ben Aaronovitch*



For more author news and interviews –  
check out *The River Is Lit* podcast on  
YouTube and Spotify.

## **Friday 29 November**

### **Poetry Republic: Caroline Bird + Support**

Coffee Republic, 7-9pm (doors 6pm)

Festival patron, Caroline Bird, poet and playwright, winner of the Forward Prize for best poetry collection in 2020, will read from her poetry collections. Bird's work has been commended for her dexterous use of image, pun, and voice; poet Simon Armitage described Bird's poetry as "spring-loaded, funny, sad and deadly".

Caroline will be supported by Kent writers, Charlotte Ansell and Sarah Tait.

## **Saturday 30 November**

All events at Rochester Library

### **Panel: Writing Horror, Sci-fi And Fantasy**

11-11.45am

Join Your Paper Quest featured indie writers: Eli Wilde, Rex Burke and Jennings Zabransky, who will be reading from their novels and answering questions from the audience.

### **Writer Talk: Tom Huddleston**

12.30-1.30pm

Tom Huddleston's book 'The Worlds of Dune' explores the range of ideas and concepts that inspired Frank Herbert in the writing of his 1965 science fiction masterpiece, 'Dune'.

### **Writer Talk: Ben Aaronovitch**

2-2.45pm

Ben Aaronovitch will be in conversation about his latest Rivers of London novella, 'The Masquerades of Spring', and anything else you might like to ask him!

### **Festival close**

3pm

The festival directors will close the festival and preview what's next.

# Coming soon! Medway River Lit 2024 Rippling Out

*The Rippling Out Engagement Project* is an essential part of Medway River Lit 2024, continuing the work of the festival and leading into next year's programme.

After the 2024 festival, we will run community craft and literature workshops; aligning with our sustainability theme, craft activities and materials have been selected for their longevity, reusability, or ease of recycling. We'll have a bus bursary scheme to enable workshop attendees to travel by public transport, and refreshments will be provided in reusable mugs.

We're also bringing climate change inspired theatre, poetry, and music to the festival in our Sunday Sunset Sessions: a mid-afternoon, relaxed and welcoming environment for poetry, music and chat.

More details about the full programme will be announced on our website:

[www.medwayriverlit.co.uk](http://www.medwayriverlit.co.uk)

Follow us on Instagram: [medwayriverlit2024](https://www.instagram.com/medwayriverlit2024)

Facebook: [Medway River Lit](https://www.facebook.com/MedwayRiverLit)



# With thanks to:

All our writers, performers and their reps. Medway Council, The Culture Team, Medway Libraries, Active Medway and Kent, Bird Wise, Climate Response Team, The Black Art Hub, Nucleus Arts, Your Paper Quest, Dragon Coworking, Common Ground, The Little Green Bookshop, Store 104, Coffee Republic, The Eagle Tavern, Big Trouble, Local Authority, The Chatterday Show, Renaissance One, Medway Change Makers, Roger and Neil M Thorne, Spollites, Creative Medway, Electric Medway.

The festival team: Sam and Barry Fentiman Hall, Anne-Marie Jordan, Kerrie Owens, Karen Scudder (YOU ARE HERE artwork), Jio Butler (map). Kateryna Baranenko. Our volunteers. And of course, our audiences.

Our Festival Friends: Stuart Turner, Jo Eden, Louisa Campbell, Matthew Adcock, Chris Brown, Steve Keevil, Barnaby Harsent, Marie Crozier and Lizzy Perkins.

If you would like to support the festival by becoming a Festival Friend, then check out:

[www.medwayriverlit.co.uk/festivalfriend](http://www.medwayriverlit.co.uk/festivalfriend)



## The Black Art Hub CIC

Black British Visual Arts & Poetry

Research . Development . Networking . Exhibitions

[www.TheBlackArtHub.co.uk](http://www.TheBlackArtHub.co.uk)

## Coworking Space in Rochester, Medway.

A collaborative **coworking space** that provides **professionals** the opportunity to work **independently** and **comfortably** in a **fully functional** space with **close travel links**.

7-8 New Road Avenue, Rochester, Chatham,  
Kent ME4 6BB.

[www.dragoncoworking.co.uk](http://www.dragoncoworking.co.uk) | 01634 557 006



**DRAGON**  
COWORKING

We've signed the pledge!  
Medway and Kent Creative Sector  
Environmental Sustainability Pledge



## ***INCLUDING...***

BEN AARONOVITCH, MATT ADCOCK,  
CHARLOTTE ANSELL,  
ZAHRA BARRI, BIG TROUBLE, CAROLINE BIRD,  
REX BURKE, CHARLOTTE BYRNE,  
LOUISA CAMPBELL, ROSA CARR,  
AA CHAUDHURI, SACHA COWARD,  
CAITLIN DAVIES, ZACK DAVIES,  
SARAH L DIXON, CAROL DONALDSON,  
APRIL DOYLE, JAH-MIR EARLY,  
BARRY FENTIMAN HALL, MARTIN FIGURA,  
CHARLIE FISH, SAMANTHA FITZGIBBONS,  
JENNIFER GODFREY, SAM HALL,  
STEVEN WILLIAM HANNAH, MAGGIE HARRIS,  
BARBARA HAVELOCKE, SARAH HEHIR,  
PAULINE HOLMES, TOM HUDDLESTON,  
MICHAEL HUGHES, MEGAN HUNTER,  
HELEN IVORY, OLIVIA JACOBS, JIM BOB,  
PHILIP KANE, BILL LEWIS, MARIA C McCARTHY,  
BILL McGUIRE, THOMAS McMULLAN,  
TOM MITCHELL, NEIL NIXON, BEN OKRI,  
COLIN R PARSONS, SAM RAPP, RICHARD SCOTT,  
PHIL SMITH, LALAH-SIMONE SPRINGER,  
SARAH TAIT, ADAM TAYLOR, NEIL M THORNE,  
CHLOE TIMMS, MELISSA TODD, ELI WILDE,  
JENNINGS ZABRINSKY and more!

WITH MASTERCLASSES, PANELS, AUTHOR FAIR,  
THE ROSEMARY McLEISH POETRY AWARD,  
THEATRE and FILM

**[www.medwayriverlit.co.uk](http://www.medwayriverlit.co.uk)**

