

Press release
Monday 25 March 2019

Newcastle Writing Conference 2019 unlocks the door to the publishing industry

The biennial Newcastle Writing Conference returns this spring, bringing together new and emerging writers across the North with publishing industry experts, inspiring authors and creative writing tutors.

Newcastle Writing Conference is produced by New Writing North, the writing development agency for the North of England, and Northumbria University. The two organisations have been joining forces since 2008 to support writers in their creative ambitions and promote new writing from the North.

The conference is aimed at everyone who has a desire to be published or to further their writing careers, including those who feel they are not currently represented by the publishing industry. The event also celebrates the publication of *Common People*, a landmark anthology of working class writers, which is published by Unbound and supported by New Writing North and Northumbria University. The internationally acclaimed writer Tony Walsh will deliver a keynote speech.

Tickets go on sale on Monday 25 March.

The day-long conference, held at Live Theatre, Newcastle on Saturday 18 May, promises to open the door to the publishing industry, offering writers inspiration, networking opportunities, and very practical advice on developing their writing careers.

For those who are ready to take the next step, there will one-to-one sessions with literary agents and editors and the chance to pitch work to an industry panel.

For others at an earlier stage of writing, creative writing workshops with acclaimed writers including Paul Magrs will provide fuel for the imagination, while Carmen Marcus, founder of the Working Class Writers Collective, will offer her Writer's Plan for organising your career and ambitions.

The conference includes representatives from major publishers Penguin Random House and Hachette, and leading literary agents Emma Paterson (Aitken Alexander), Niki Chang (The Good Agency) and Davinia Andrews-Lynch (ANDLYN).

Claire Malcolm, chief executive of New Writing North, said: "We're delighted to be launching the fourth biannual Newcastle Writing Conference. This year we're keen to ignite people's writing careers and inspire a new generation of writers regardless of where they come from and what their background is. We

believe that talent is everywhere, so we're particularly pleased to be able to offer ten bursary places to those who need them most."

Katy Shaw, Professor of Contemporary Writing at Northumbria, said "The writers' conference is a fantastic opportunity for authors and industry to meet and discuss challenges and opportunities in the twenty-first century British literary industries. At Northumbria, we work with New Writing North in our English and Creative Writing teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and in our own research work to further understanding of access issues surrounding writing and publishing, and to professionalise our students with the skills they need to excel as global graduates in the contemporary publishing world."

Newcastle Writing Conference 2019 takes place on Saturday 18 May 2019 at Live Theatre, Newcastle. Tickets are cost £49 Early Bird, £59 Full Price, £25 concessions, with a limited number of free bursary places available www.newwritingnorth.com.

ENDS

For all media requests, including photographs and interview requests, please contact Laura Fraine, Senior Marketing and Communications Manager at New Writing North on 0191 204 8850/ 07411 164 837 or laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com

NOTES

Newcastle Writing Conference 2019 is produced by New Writing North and Northumbria University.

New Writing North is the development agency for creative writing and reading in the North of England. It works in partnership with regional and national partners to produce a range of literary and performance activities including flagship projects such as The Northern Writers' Awards, the Gordon Burn Prize and Durham Book Festival. New Writing North specialises in developing and investing in writers of all ages and acts as a dynamic broker between writers, producers, publishers and broadcasters across the creative industries. Current partners include BBC Radio 3, Channel 4 Drama, Faber and Faber, Northumbria University and Durham University. As a producer of new work New Writing North commissions a wide range of writing from topical essays and publications to award-winning dance theatre productions, short films, live literature and broadcast projects.

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. Northumbria collaborates with New Writing North to develop conferences, seminars and events for the wider writing community across the North. These include the Newcastle Writing Conference and the Crime Story crime writing festival. Northumbria's partnership with New

Writing North has also supported the development of innovative new learning offers. The University's Creative Writing team work with New Writing North to design and co-deliver industry focussed modules. These aim to bring industry speakers, knowledge and expertise into Northumbria classrooms for both undergraduate and post graduate students, exploring traditional and new modes of publication and distribution in the writing industry, and developing skills that equip students to work in the literary sector.

Newcastle Writing Conference 2018

Programme

Saturday 18 May 2019, 10am-5pm

10am Registration for a 10.30am start

10.30am Introduction

With Claire Malcolm, Chief Executive of New Writing North, and Michael Green, Professor in English and Creative Writing at Northumbria University

10.45am Keynote speech: Tony Walsh

Poet, writer and all-round inspiration Tony Walsh (aka Longfella) overcame childhood poverty and illness to work everyday jobs in the communities of his beloved home city of Manchester. Tony is a contributor to the new Unbound anthology *Common People*.

In recent years he has become one of the UK's most widely recognised and most in-demand professional poets. His work was brought to an international audience after the poem 'This Is The Place' was broadcast globally from the vigil for victims of the Manchester Arena bombing.

Tony will talk about his own journey to becoming a writer, as well as offering advice to writers of all genres who are at the start of their careers.

11.15am Break-out Sessions 1 (choose one)

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Breakout 1a | Perfect Your Elevator Pitch <i>with Ian Fenton</i> If you get tongue-tied when trying to describe your work, then you're not alone. Writer and director Ian Fenton works closely with our Northern Writers' Awards winners each year to prepare their pitches ahead of meeting agents and editors. In this interactive session, Ian will guide you through the dos and don'ts of pitching your work, before (gently) putting you through your paces. |
|--------------------|--|

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| | <i>Participants in this session will have the opportunity to pitch to our publishing industry panel in Breakout 3a.</i> |
| Breakout 1b | <p>The Mighty Power of the Small Press with <i>Debbie Taylor, editor of Mslexia, and Sophie O'Neill, managing director of Inpress</i></p> <p>Literary magazines and independent book publishers can help you to take the first steps in your writing career. In this session, Debbie Taylor and Sophie O'Neill will discuss the opportunities available, what editors are looking for, and how best to pitch to this thriving independent market.</p> |
| Breakout 1c | <p>Writing Reflectively with <i>Professor Michael Green and Dr Tony Williams, Northumbria University</i></p> <p>Are you ready to improve the literary quality of your writing and gain a better understanding of the writing process?</p> <p>Professor Michael Green and Dr Tony Williams, both of Northumbria University, are looking for a group of writers to take through a programme of critical self-reflection.</p> <p>This will be the first session, with another session taking place (free of charge to participants) in central Newcastle on Saturday 8 June.</p> |
| Breakout 1d | <p>So, You've Been Rejected?</p> <p>with <i>writer Degna Stone, children's books editor Ruth Alltimes (Hachette) and literary agents Emma Patterson (Aitken Alexander) and Niki Chang (The Good Agency)</i></p> <p>Rejection is a tough part of the writing game, but it's something every writer has to face at some point.</p> <p>In this session, Degna Stone will explore how to become more resilient as a writer, while industry insiders Ruth Alltimes and Niki Chang will talk through exactly what they are looking for, what you need to do to make your work stand out, and how to build success from rejection.</p> |

12.15pm Tea and coffee break

12.30pm Breakout Sessions 2 (choose one)

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Breakout 2a | <p>The Novel Inside You with <i>author Paul Magrs</i></p> |
|-------------|--|

| | |
|-------------|---|
| | <p>Paul Magrs has been a writing teacher since the early 1990s and a writer for much longer, writing in most genres and for every age group. He has also been a serious diarist all his life.</p> <p>Paul says: “Journals are the books that we never have to show another person, unless we decide to do so. Our journals are where we have complete freedom – and that is the place true writing begins.”</p> <p>In this workshop Paul will reveal the real writing practice of journals, the storytelling involved in teaching, and how putting stories together can seem like the most fantastic activity ever invented.</p> <p><i>This session is repeated in Breakout 3c</i></p> |
| Breakout 2b | <p>Develop Your Professional Profile with <i>Indira Birnie and Emma Wallace, Penguin Random House</i></p> <p>It has never been more important to have an online profile as a writer, but where do you draw the line? From blogging to social media, we can all be more creative, savvy and strategic about building our professional profile, while protecting our own private lives.</p> <p>Indira Birnie is a senior manager for Penguin Audiences, while Emma Wallace looks after audience development for #Merky Books, curated by Stormzy as a home for a new generation of voices. Together they will offer expert advice from the front-line of marketing, publicity and promotion.</p> |
| Breakout 2c | <p>Find Your Peer Support Network with <i>facilitator and writer Sophie Hall-Luke</i></p> <p>Writing is often a solitary business, but a group of peers with similar goals can provide both support and motivation. With facilitator Sophie Hall-Luke of writing group The Table, we’ll look at how to find and form your own group, as well as providing peer networking within the session.</p> |
| Breakout 2d | <p>Where are all the working class writers? with <i>Lisa Blower and Anita Sethi, chaired by Dr Katy Shaw, Northumbria University</i></p> <p>Inspired by a shared concern that working class voices are increasingly absent from the pages of books and newspapers, author Kit de Waal came together with publishers Unbound and the regional writing development organisations, including New Writing North, to launch <i>Common People</i>.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p><i>Common People</i> is a collection of essays, poems and pieces of personal memoir, bringing together sixteen well-known writers from working class backgrounds including Lisa Blower, Anita Sethi and Tony Walsh, with an equal number of brand new as-yet-unpublished writers from all over the UK.</p> <p>In this session, Lisa and Anita will discuss their own careers and what it means to be a working class writer today.</p> |
|--|---|

1.30-2.30pm Lunch break

Please bring your own packed lunch or visit one of the several cafes in the nearby area.

2.30-3.30pm Break out sessions 3 (choose one)

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Breakout 3a | <p>Pitching in Practice <i>with industry representatives including Ian Fenton; Sonny Marr crime editor at Penguin Random House; and Katie Brown, Orion editor</i></p> <p>A chance to pitch your work to the publishing industry. Each participant will deliver a 2-minute pitch on their proposed book or writing project, and receive feedback from a small panel.</p> <p><i>This session is ideally suited to those who took part in Breakout 1a.</i></p> |
| Breakout 3b | <p>The Writer's Plan <i>with Carmen Marcus</i></p> <p>The Writer's Plan is a route map through the woods of the industry for underrepresented writers: from personal barriers like being afraid to ask for help, to practical barriers like finding our champions.</p> <p>The plan is a hybrid of Carmen Marcus's experience as a writer and in business development but it isn't simply a goal-setting exercise, it's about enabling you to ask yourself what you really want to make your writing happen, and how to get it.</p> |
| Breakout 3c | <p>The Novel Inside You <i>with author Paul Magrs</i></p> <p>Paul Magrs has been a writing teacher since the early 1990s and a writer for much longer, writing in most genres and for every age group. He has also been a serious diarist all his life.</p> |

| | |
|-------------|---|
| | <p>Paul says: “Journals are the books that we never have to show another person, unless we decide to do so. Our journals are where we have complete freedom – and that is the place true writing begins.”</p> <p>In this workshop Paul will reveal the real writing practice of journals, the storytelling involved in teaching, and how putting stories together can seem like the most fantastic activity ever invented.</p> <p><i>Please note, this is a repeat of Breakout 2a</i></p> |
| Breakout 3d | <p>How to Edit Your Work: Live with Joe Sedgwick of <i>The Literary Consultancy</i> and literary agent Davinia Andrews-Lynch</p> <p>Learn the art of editing your own work, as we take you through a live edit of a real draft manuscript. You’ll find out how literary agents and organisations like <i>The Literary Consultancy</i> assess, edit and polish a draft manuscript before submitting work to publishers, and what you can do to make your own work ready for submission.</p> |

3.30pm Tea and coffee break

3.45pm Closing panel: The publication story

In our final panel, the authors of two of 2019’s hottest debuts discuss their journeys to publication. *The Familiars* by Stacey Halls and *The Confessions of Frannie Langton* by Sara Collins are both set to be huge fiction releases this year; join them as they talk about how their books came into being. Chaired by Orion editor Katie Brown, this inspiring panel is not to be missed!

4.45pm Closing remarks

from Claire Malcolm, chief executive of New Writing North