

NEW WRITING NORTH

27 April 2021

Read Regional returns! Digital author events from libraries across the North

Read Regional, the annual reading campaign for the North of England, returns this spring for a series of digital events hosted by libraries across the region.

Read Regional is a celebration of brilliant new books from the North of England, which was founded by New Writing North in 2008. The campaign is funded by Arts Council England and is produced in partnership with 23 library authorities across the region. In previous years it has profiled writers including AA Dhand, Andrew Michael Hurley and Jenn Ashworth.

The current programme began in 2020, but many events had to be put on hold due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Instead, the ten selected authors will be meeting audiences online from April until June. At the easy-to-access digital events, the authors will introduce their work and share stories about the writing process, as well as answering questions from audience members.

Read Regional's ten must-read titles by writers based in the North include *Remembered* by Yvonne Battle-Felton, which was longlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction 2019; *Supper Club*, the debut novel by Lara Williams, which won the *Guardian's* Not the Booker Prize 2019; and *Icebreaker*, Somerset Maugham-winning writer Horatio Clare's travelogue aboard an icebreaker in Finland's waters.

The full list of Read Regional 2020-21 titles is:

CHILDREN'S FICTION

A Witch Come True, James Nicol (Chicken House)

FICTION

The Moss House, Clara Barley (Bluemoose Books)

Remembered, Yvonne Battle-Felton (Dialogue Books)

The Blame Game, C. J. Cooke (HarperCollins)

A Shadow Intelligence, Oliver Harris (Little, Brown)

The Last Thing She Told Me, Linda Green (Quercus)

Supper Club, Lara Williams (Hamish Hamilton)

MEMOIR

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Icebreaker, Horatio Clare (Vintage)

POETRY

The Celox And The Clot, Hafsah Aneela Bashir (Burning Eye Books)

Baldwin's Catholic Geese, Keith Hutson (Bloodaxe Books)

For the selected authors, Read Regional is not only an opportunity to meet readers and talk about their work, but also to celebrate libraries as places of inspiration and connection, even in the digital space.

Will Mackie, Senior Programme Manager (Writing and Awards) at New Writing North said: 'After such an unbearably difficult year, it's good to be working with our library partners again and bringing these events to audiences across the region with the prospect of a more optimistic spring and summer ahead of us. We hope that introducing readers to these wonderful books will help to acknowledge how deeply we value our library communities.'

Find information about all of the events and download free reading guides for each of the titles at readregional.com

-- Ends --

For all media enquiries, including interviews, please contact Laura Fraine, Senior Marketing & Communications Manager at New Writing North laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com or call 07411 164 837.

Notes for editors

The following local authorities are taking part in Read Regional 2020-21: Barnsley, Bradford, Bury, Calderdale, Cumbria, Darlington, Durham, East Riding of Yorkshire, Hartlepool, Hull, Kirklees, Knowsley, Leeds, Manchester, Middlesbrough, North Tyneside, North Yorkshire, Northumberland, Redcar, South Tyneside, Stockport, Stockton-on-Tees, Wakefield.

About New Writing North

New Writing North is the development agency for creative writing and reading in the North of England, and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. The organisation 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, Read Regional, Young Writers and Durham Book Festival.

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New Writing North specialises in developing and investing in writers of all ages and act 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. An entrepreneurial approach to talent development has also seen New Writing North launch new writers via its Moth Publishing crime imprint in partnership with Business Educational Publishers and work with Northumbria University to stage the innovative Crime Story festival event.

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.

www.newwritingnorth.com

Author biographies

Clara Barley has written both fiction and non-fiction about Anne Lister of Shibden Hall. Clara was inspired to write the novel through her work at Shibden Hall, and was also involved both behind the scenes and on camera with the *Gentleman Jack* TV series. She lives in Yorkshire.

Hafsah Aneela Bashir is a writer, playwright and performance poet based in Manchester. Her work has been published in several anthologies. She is founder and co-director of Outside The Frame Arts (OTFA), a collective platforming marginalised voices. She is currently The Royal Exchange Manchester's Supported Artist 2018–19, Longsight's Writer In Residence with Manchester Literature Festival and a 'Leader of Tomorrow' on the Artistic Director's Leadership Programme. She was recently awarded the prestigious Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellowship 2019, has performed for numerous festivals, is creating theatre work of her own exploring womanhood and heritage and is still a sane mother of five.

Yvonne Battle-Felton was born in Pennsylvania and raised in New Jersey. She holds an MA in Writing from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD in Creative Writing from Lancaster University where she is an associate Lecturer. A writer of fiction and creative non-fiction, her writing has been published in *riverSedge*, *Assisi*, *Not Somewhere Else But Here: A Contemporary Anthology of Women and Place*, *Welter*, *Slices*, and *The Chesapeake Reader Literary Journal*. Yvonne was a recipient of a Northern Writers' Award in 2017 for *Remembered*.

Horatio Clare is the bestselling author of the memoirs *Running for the Hills* and *Truant* and the travel books *A Single Swallow* (which follows the birds' migration from South Africa to the UK), *Down to the Sea in Ships* (the story of two voyages on container vessels) and *Orison for a Curlew*, a journey in search of one of the world's rarest birds. His books for children include *Aubrey and the Terrible Yoot*

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and *Aubrey and the Terrible Ladybirds*. Horatio's essays and reviews appear on BBC radio and in the Financial Times, the Observer and the Spectator, among other publications. He lives with his family in West Yorkshire.

CJ Cooke is an acclaimed, award-winning poet, novelist and academic with numerous other publications under the name of Carolyn Jess-Cooke. Born in Belfast, she has a PhD in Literature from Queen's University, Belfast, and is currently Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Glasgow, where she researches creative writing interventions for mental health. *I Know My Name* was CJ Cooke's first psychological drama and was inspired by her creative work in mental health. There is a TV adaptation in development. CJ Cooke lives by the sea with her family.

Linda Green is the bestselling author of nine novels, including *And Then It Happened* and *After I've Gone*. She is an award-winning journalist and has written for *The Guardian*, *the Independent on Sunday* and the *Big Issue*. During a ten-year career in regional journalism, she worked as a reporter on the *Birmingham Daily News*, news editor on the *Birmingham Metro News* and Chief Feature Writer on the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, winning Highly Commended in the Feature Writer of the Year category of the 1997 Press Gazette Regional Press Awards. Linda lives in West Yorkshire

Oliver Harris was born in London in 1978. He has an MA in Shakespeare studies from UCL, and a PhD in psychoanalysis from Birkbeck. He is the author of the Nick Belsey series of crime novels, as well as one work of non-fiction: *Lacan's Return to Antiquity*. He teaches creative writing at Manchester Metropolitan University.

Keith Hutson has written for *Coronation Street* and for many well-known comedians. His award-winning poetry has been widely published both in the UK and internationally. He plays to packed houses and was a 2018 Laureate's Choice poet. He is a member of the Poetry Salzburg editorial board and delivers poetry and performance workshops in schools for the Prince's Trust. A Mancunian by birth, Keith now lives in Halifax, West Yorkshire, where he is Poet-In-Residence at the Square Chapel Theatre. He has an MA (Poetry) from Manchester Metropolitan University. His two pamphlets, *Routines* and *Troupers* were followed by his first book-length collection, *Baldwin's Catholic Geese*.

James Nicol is the author of the bestselling Apprentice Witch series, and has loved books and stories his whole life. As a child he spent hours absorbed in novels, watching epic 1980s cartoons or adventuring in the wood at the bottom of the garden. He lives in Yorkshire with his partner and a black cockapoo called Bonnie.

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Lara Williams is the author of one short story collection, *Treats*, which was shortlisted for the Republic of Consciousness Prize, the Edinburgh First Book Award and the Saboteur Awards and longlisted for the Edge Hill Short Story Prize. She has contributed to the *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Vice*, *Dazed* and others. Lara Williams lives in Manchester and *Supper Club* is her first novel.

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