

DURHAM BOOK FESTIVAL

Durham Book Festival 2020 to take place online

Founded in 1990, Durham Book Festival is one of the country's oldest literary festivals, traditionally taking place every October in some of Durham's most impressive historic venues.

In light of COVID-19, the 2020 festival will still go ahead – but this year the entire festival will take place online, with more than 50 events presented for free between 9-18 October.

Durham Book Festival is a Durham County Council festival produced by New Writing North with support from Durham University, Arts Council England and BBC Newcastle.

As always, the producers are planning a diverse and wide-ranging programme, with details to be released at the official launch on 10 September. This year it will include high-profile and international author events, poetry readings, live drawing, writing workshops, literary quizzes, podcasts and social media takeovers.

The events can be accessed from anywhere in the world, inviting local people and those from further afield to enjoy the North East's largest literary event. The 2020 festival will take this opportunity to shine a spotlight on Durham, showcasing the stories of the North East, including at least 20 newly commissioned works.

The festival producers will also distribute 4000 free copies of its Big Read and 1500 copies of its Little Read titles to Durham residents, focussing particularly on groups in the county who have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

Further updates about the free programme will be available from September 2020 at durhambookfestival.com.

Claire Malcolm, Chief Executive of New Writing North said: "We believe that now, more than ever, books can play an important role in providing solace and a sense of connection and in helping us make sense of the world. Although we very much wish we could be with our regular audiences in person this October, we hope that together we will be able to recreate the wonderful festival atmosphere online. This is also an opportunity for those who have not attended before to find out what Durham Book Festival is all about and to join in with our packed programme."

Cllr Joy Allen, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for transformation, culture and tourism, said: "Books can provide entertainment, are a form of escapism, can lift our spirits and help us to look at things differently. I am sure they have been a source of great comfort to people during the coronavirus pandemic. By moving Durham Book Festival online, we can continue to spread the joy of reading and offer even more literary activities that people of all ages can enjoy and engage with

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safely at home. New Writing North is pulling together a really exciting programme of virtual activities and we are looking forward to sharing more details with you soon.”

Professor Stuart Corbridge, Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, said: “We are very pleased that the Durham Book Festival will take place online this October and we will once again be giving our enthusiastic support. We hope that the Festival moving online will give many more people the opportunity to enjoy it, wherever you are in the world. We look forward to unveiling the full Festival programme in September.”

For all media enquiries please contact Laura Fraine at New Writing North
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