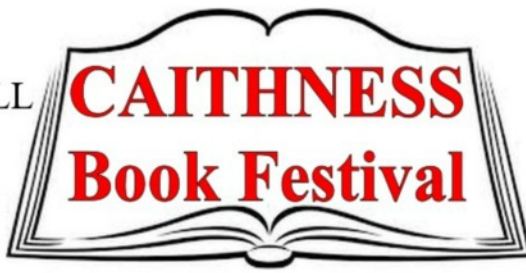


MURKLE HALL  
MURKLE



OCTOBER  
2024  
11th, 12th & 13th

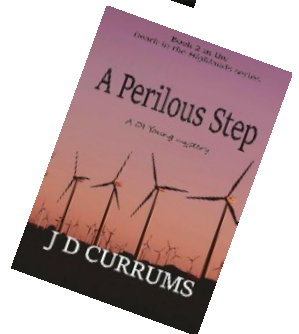
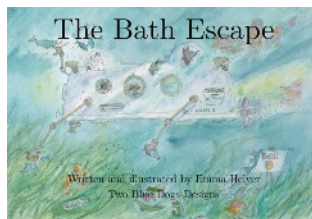
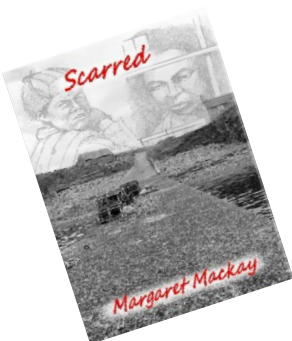
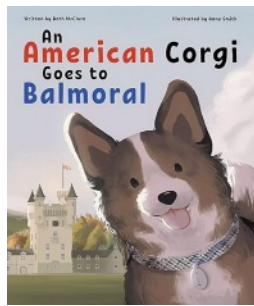
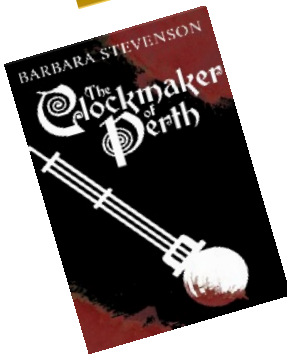
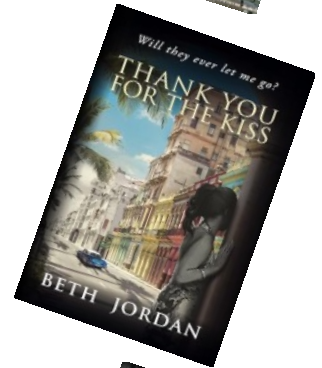
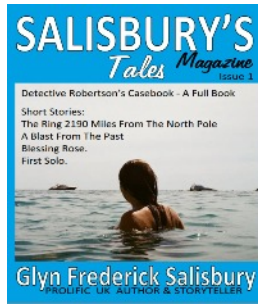
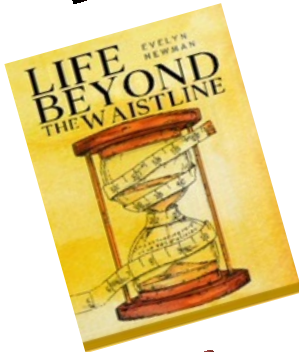
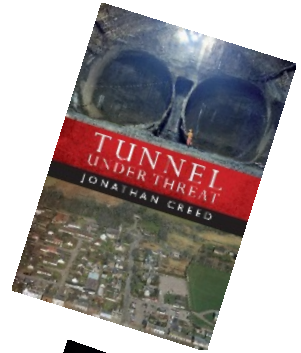
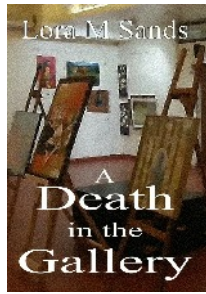
14 SPEAKERS & 15 SESSIONS

NO TICKETS - **FREE** to enter and enjoy



[caithnessbookfestival.co.uk](http://caithnessbookfestival.co.uk)

# BOOKS FROM OUR AUTHORS



# Emma Helyer

Friday 12:30 pm



I am based in Easter Ross, where I run Two Blue Dogs Designs from home studio. I am supervised by my two Border Collies and a cat who also inspire my artwork and stories.

The Bath Escape is about my cat and dogs. Easter has lost a lot of her bouncing balls down rabbit holes and in the sea. Zero the cat and the other sheepdogs get together to cheer her up and get some of them back.

They use The Bath Escape, a small submarine made from an old bath and guided by CatNav they navigate the seas to find Easter's lost balls.

What an adventure they have, making new friends along the way...



[tbdd2blue@icloud.com](mailto:tbdd2blue@icloud.com)

# Juliette Currums



Friday 2 pm

J D Currums is a writer living in the North of Scotland. She served as a police officer in London for fourteen years with a particular interest in domestic abuse, sexual offences and missing persons. This was followed by a stint as the landlady of an Oxfordshire village pub.

Her primary genre is crime, incorporating some of the colourful characters she has encountered. She also has a strong interest in fantasy and supernatural thrillers along with young adult fiction.

Although a writer of many years, her publishing journey began in 2024 with the release of a debut historical fiction short story, '*Condemned*' which was paired with an artistic exhibition exploring the past persecution of women in relation to witchcraft.

This was swiftly followed by a series of crime short stories entitled '*Death in the Highlands*' which is due for completion early next year. She has many projects underway and due for release in 2025 including her first full length novel.

[juliettecurrums@gmail.com](mailto:juliettecurrums@gmail.com),

# Jonathan Creed



Friday 5 pm

After leaving Secondary school I began working in the book trade in Oxford in various independent bookshops, moving from one to another to gain promotion. During this time, I ran events in colleges and churches in and around Oxford.

In 1990 I left bookselling and went to University at Oxford Brookes to study for a BA Degree in Accounting & Finance and Retail Management, during this time I did write a manuscript but it was never published. Following graduation in 1994 I undertook a variety of temporary posts before returning to bookselling in Oxford. Where, with the support of my family, we started The Headington Bookshop. Sadly, the ceasing of the Net Book Agreement, which had fixed prices of books across the UK, resulted in my having to close the retail shop and continue only as a mail order business, which was eventually sold on as a going concern in 2000.

I choose to locate my first novel (A Sutherland Murder) in and around East Sutherland in an attempt to draw more people to this part of Scotland by raising the awareness of this beautiful county. While also allowing locals who may read them to recognise the areas described in the text. This title has been reprinted four times since then as has the second title (No Body at Ben Bhraggie) which was published six months later.

In 2022 I returned to the manuscript I had written in the 1990s, but had never been published, and spent a year rewriting it to 'fit' with the characters in the first two books into the third title. (Tunnel Under Threat). The fourth title, (The Rocks of Rogart) published this year, is the fourth in a series that has slowly continued to develop as I continue writing. My next book currently has the working title of (Hidden in Helmsdale).

[jonathan@creedservices.co.uk](mailto:jonathan@creedservices.co.uk)  
[www.paulpublishingltd.co.uk](http://www.paulpublishingltd.co.uk)

# Glyn F Salisbury



Friday 7 pm

Glyn F Salisbury has always harboured an interest in writing. His father encouraged him endlessly during his early years. A lot later on, he managed to get a few articles and short stories into print. Then, in his sixties, a friend said - why don't you try something bigger.

He released a book of short stories, *The Pool*, followed by a novella called *The Empty House*. It was warmly received and Glyn quickly realised his writing heart was into creating the longer story.

The Wrath Of Wick was next and proved so popular, it spawned the idea of a nine part Warlock Saga. This was completed last year, with fabulous acclaim.

Glyn has also created an adventure series about a group known as R.U.N.E. It was launched with a trilogy of over 250,000 words. Reviews have been incredible. The fourth book in the series, R.U.N.E. Beneath Loch Ness, is a standalone and has outsold the other titles. The latest title in this series is called Seabed Bank.. The next adventure will be called 199.

He gives talks, readings to the elderly in care homes and runs his own writing group.

Tonight, Glyn will be talking about his books and how he arrived at writing his 23<sup>rd</sup> book, a quarterly fiction magazine and a wild challenge that stretched him, at the age of 72.

**In his own words - *It's never too late to start writing.***

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email: [glyn.salisbury@btinternet.com](mailto:glyn.salisbury@btinternet.com)

plus Facebook

# Evelyn Newman

Saturday 11 am

Evelyn was born and brought up in Morayshire and currently lives in Elgin with her husband. She has twin daughters, now living independently in Edinburgh, who she enjoys spending time with.



Evelyn retired from a long and varied career as an NHS dietitian, at the end of December 2021. She spent her final 15 years working for NHS Highland, laterally in a specialist role covering the social care sector. The North coast 500 was very much her office for much of that time and she reflects how fortunate she was to have been paid to travel through so much beautiful countryside. Her job linked in across many national agencies and professional bodies, so she is well known to many in Scotland.

She has a completely unique story to tell, as the past 4 decades have seen so much change to the job that she started out with in 1986. The book chapters' take readers to many parts of Britain and to various areas of the world, including Indian burns units, New York state prisons, as well as Irish and Icelandic dietetic departments. Her award-winning work has been selected for presentation on 4 continents and she is well known to professional colleagues across the UK and Eire. The past two years have been spent writing her first book, which is widely available in eBook and paperback formats. She is currently working on another two publications in between enjoying so much of what retirement keeps giving.

She is a glass-half-full person, with a positive attitude and hopes that readers will see that shine through in hearing more about her. The book is a tale of determination, innovation, and adaptation to change. Evelyn encourages others to take whatever opportunity comes their way, as a small step can lead onto much greater, unexpected experiences. Life is never dull in Evelyn's view, as you'll learn more about when you meet her.

[brightskynarrative@gmail.com](mailto:brightskynarrative@gmail.com)

# Beth Jordan



Saturday 12.15 pm

I'm a local author, living in the Highlands of Scotland. It took me over 30 years to come to live here, but here I am now, having moved from East Sussex in 2021.

I was born in India of Anglo Indian/Eurasian parents, residing in old colonial railway colonies. We lived a charmed but borrowed European lifestyle, attending Catholic convents, far from home and being taught by Belgian and Irish nuns. Barely here I landed back in the arms of more nuns, until a further escape at sixteen to a teenage life at a college of further education. I followed in the footsteps of family into careers in nursing, teaching, and then breaking free in my early thirties by setting up my own business in design and textiles, manufacturing out of China and India. I set up my own brand of fashion, as well as manufacturing under White Label for many UK high street clients. I loved the textile business which enabled me to travel to many countries around the world, looking for the most unique and beautiful crafts to incorporate into my own world of fashion.

Over fifteen years ago, I came across a creative writing course run by Jonathan Lorie, called Travellers' Tales. Although I had kept copious diaries of my travels, they were very much diaries and bits of stories. With Jonathan I discovered I could use words differently, my imagination in the use of words opened, I became more expansive in my writing and found a new enthusiasm for the written word. I fell in love with words. Further along the way, I met Dorothy Max Prior who further introduced me to the world of memoir writing. I began to describe a memory of my time in Cuba and the 1000 words became 86000 words and my debut novel, *Thank you for the Kiss* was born.

[www.bethjordanwriterphotographer.life](http://www.bethjordanwriterphotographer.life)

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100095447910718>

twitter - @Annebethjordan1



# Beth McClure

Saturday 3:45 pm

Beth is currently a full time PhD student and primary initial teacher educator (ITE) lecturer at the University of Aberdeen. She has been in love throughout her career as an early childhood educator and has always desired to write her own. Beth is from Missouri in the United States where she attended the University of Missouri and began her teaching career in 1999. She came to Scotland for her PhD and fell in love with it and the UK.



After COVID lockdown Beth took a part-time job as a visitor enterprise assistant at Balmoral Castle & Estate. The scenery and the animals continued to inspire Beth to fulfil her dreams of writing a children's book. Beth believes that her picture book *An American Corgi Goes to Balmoral* will allow children to see and feel the magic that she feels every time she visits the castle.

Beth's writing journey came to fruition after a chance encounter with a new colleague who introduced her to independent local small press Oldbird Publishing and the world of editors and illustrators opened and her dream of becoming a published author was realised in May 2023. She particularly enjoys visiting primary schools as an educator and author, encouraging pupils to begin their own writing journeys.

In January 2024, her book became a coveted *Gold Mom's Choice Award* honouree, naming it among the best of products of family-friendly media, products and services opening the way for her book to be stocked in US bookstores.

The Scottish Highlands may have been the home of family ancestors before they migrated to the United States, but it is her home now.

<https://oldbirdpublishing.com/>

<https://oldbirdpublishing.com/books/an-american-corgi-goes-to-balmoral/>

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/173938301X>

# Gideon Hodge

Saturday 3:45 pm



Gideon Hodge (aka – Nikolas Baxter) when not rescuing manuscripts from burning buildings, has worked as an actor and entertainer throughout the eastern United States. He has taught workshops on a variety of topics in the areas of performance and writing techniques throughout the United States.

His debut novel, *Lilith's Redemption*, came out in 2014 and was met with great reviews and given a short film available for viewing online.

His second novel, the first in a series, *Aether Sphere* released in 2021 to similar acclaim. (Also known as the manuscript rescued from the fire.)

Book 2 is scheduled to release in 2024.

His third book, *Kazimer the Cat*, is an adorable story about cats being the supernatural protector for children during the night.

His love of literature and storytelling lead him to delve deep into the studies of not just literature, but history, mythology, and folk lore. (Also a focus of his podcast/vlog) He has delved deep into the nature of storytelling from novel, stage, and screen, to bring his own unique vision to the world of film, theatre, and literature.

He began his journey in writing wandering the snowy, rainy forests of Ohio, or climbing the rock ledges and causeways of the treacherous and aptly named Lake Erie. Here, while drinking deep of works of fantasy and fiction, he began writing his own stories and even some rudimentary comic books.

As an adult, he moved to New Orleans, here he worked for many years in theater and film, while finishing his degrees in history from Loyola University, and his masters degree from Saint Leo University.

[www.gideonhodge.com](http://www.gideonhodge.com)

<https://anchor.fm/s/d701cc0/podcast/rss>

# Mark Bridgeman



Saturday 6:30 pm

Wiltshire born writer Mark followed in his father's footsteps and became a published author in 2019. Four of Mark's titles have since been reprinted due to exceptional sales. Mark has appeared on ITV, Channel 5, the History Channel, and BBC Radio. His stories have been dramatised on Canadian radio; and featured in newspaper serial form. A story from Mark's collection of Yorkshire mysteries, *The Dark Side of the Dales*, recently featured on Channel 5's documentary series *Manhunt*. His 2023 title *Erased* is perhaps the first hybrid paperback with its trademarked logo.

He has written peer reviewed articles for the Daily Telegraph, the Thomas Hardy Society Journal, and the West Highland Museum. A member of the Society of Authors, the Federation of Scottish Writers, and the ALCS, Mark also maintains a strong social media presence.

Nominated for the John Bryne Award and the James Tait Black Award in 2022, for his adventure biography *The Nearly Man*, the book is currently in development in the US for TV/Film, in collaboration with leading Hollywood scriptwriter and producer Alan Roth.

**UPDATE:** A leading Hollywood studio has just requested a pilot episode script for *The Nearly Man*.

Mark's titles *Perthshire's Pound of Flesh* and *Blood Across The Water* have been Waterstones Scotland best sellers for 2022 and 2023.

*Perthshire's Pound of Flesh* was also Perth Waterstones bestselling title of 2022, selling more than twice as many copies as any other book.

[www.markbridgemanauthor.co.uk](http://www.markbridgemanauthor.co.uk)  
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[www.facebook.com/markbridgemanauthor/](https://www.facebook.com/markbridgemanauthor/)

# Authors Interview

Sunday 12:30 pm

A collective interview with local Authors.

Random questions from the audience.

A short sample of reading from each of the authors.

Lora M Sands

Anne-Marie Jones

Margaret Mackay

More details of each author are on the following 4 pages.

# Margaret Mackay

Sunday 12:30 pm



Local writer, Margaret Mackay won the inaugural prize for a short story competition organised and administered by Perth College with her factual story ‘*The Kilns*’ in which she related the history of her home, previously a herring kiln. This competition is now an annual event.

Being a member of Caithness Writers she has had stories published in several of their anthologies: *Anthology of Caithness Crime*, *Beyond the Mist*, *Stacks*, *Flights of Imagination* and *Connections*. She attended Creative Writing classes at North Highland College where she wrote a play for radio, a stage play and a screenplay.

After the success of her first novel, *No More Secrets, No More Lies*, inspired by her visit to Malaysia, she has written other novels. Encouraged by George Gunn, who set his class an assignment to write a novella set in Caithness, Margaret began *Scarred*. However, in true Margaret Mackay style, she took her characters on a journey to other countries, sometimes exotic, sometimes with tragic consequences, and *Scarred* blossomed into a full length novel. December 2018 saw the release of her third novel *More Secrets*, the sequel to *No More Secrets, No More Lies*, and continued the mostly misfortunes of the characters introduced in her debut novel. Her fourth book, *Revelations*, will reveal the true consequences of the frailties and failings of her flawed characters and will surprise those avid followers of her heroes and heroines.

[margaret.mackay.kilns@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.mackay.kilns@gmail.com)

# Lora M Sands



Sunday 10.30 am

Lora M Sands cut her writing teeth on short stories and flash fiction. After winning a competition realised she really could tell a story. With this in mind she released a book of short stories called *Ruler Of The Kingdom*. It was well received and then had an idea for her first book.

Her book, *A Death In The Gallery*, was released later. Readers loved it and her characters. Lora is now in the middle of a new case for the characters to solve.

Again, starting creative writing late in life, proved daunting and rewarding.

With encouragement from a writing group and plenty of reading, her mind is constantly coming up with idea's for stories.

At the moment her ideas can evolve in all types of genre. One particular short story in *The Ruler Of The Kingdom*, addresses the idea of independence, but in a most unusual way.

Lora now enjoys creative writing and loves creating in a different style. Saying -

*Write in the genre you like reading, but also experiment with a different genre. You might discover another you like.*

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

[loramsands@gmail.com](mailto:loramsands@gmail.com)

# Anne-Marie Jones



Sunday 10.30 am

I started writing poetry when I was in primary school. I wrote small poems for friends to put inside cards to their friends and families for special occasions.

In high school, my English teacher always praised me on my vivid imagination, unfortunately my grammar was terrible. My parents bought me my first oxford dictionary when I turned 12 years old. Not really the present you would tell your friends about though.

I loved studying literature, but detested English Classes as I could not grasp the technical part of the English language. I was useless at foreign languages too. Later in life I discovered how much I enjoyed writing short stories and being able to express my feelings through my writing.

Now I'm in my 50's, and with much guidance and enthusiasm from our mentor in our group of writers, I never feel embarrassed to ask questions about the skills needed to write well. At school I always felt intimidated and stupid for asking 'silly' questions. I now realise writing is a continuous learning experience and 'The write place 2b' has enabled me not to fear making mistakes.

Glyn sets prompts to stretch our imagination and we all make an attempt to create something to our best ability. I feel my writing has improved so much since I joined the group four years ago.

[amread68@gmail.com](mailto:amread68@gmail.com)

# Charlotte Platt



Sunday 2.15 pm

Charlotte Platt is a legal professional based in the far north of Scotland writing speculative fiction and horror.

Her recent novel *One Smile More* was released in June 2024 and her upcoming novella, *Treasured Guest*, is coming out in March 2025.

She received a Masters in Creative Writing through the Open University in 2021, achieving a merit class, and is an affiliate member of the Horror Writers Association.

<https://charlotteplattwriter.co.uk/>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B0D5DPQWHY>



# Babs Stevenson



Sunday 4 pm

I live in Orkney and mainly write fiction - short stories and novels, however I also write some drama and non-fiction articles. I am currently part of the National Union of Journalists' mentoring scheme to improve my non-fiction writing and hopefully write a book about the works of Oscar Wilde.

My first book, *The Organist*, is a historical romance set in 1911/12. I have also had an anthology of fantasy stories published (*Where the Ocean Meets the Sky*) and two humorous fantasy novels - *The Dalliances of Monsieur D'Haricot* and *Travels with an Organ to Perilous Lands*.

I also write Neolithic whodunits set in Orkney (the *Marna Mysteries*) under the name of B K Bryce and I am currently working on the fourth book in the series. Just back from promoting the series at *Shetland Noir*.

As a change from humorous fantasy, I am also in the process of editing a dark fantasy/supernatural horror set in a fictional North Sea island where time plays tricks.

Babs has a new book coming out and the front cover might be revealed at the book festival

Barbara is on Kindle.

Email : [stevensonbj1@aol.com](mailto:stevensonbj1@aol.com)

# END OF SHOW

Sunday 6 pm

**COMPETITIONS TOP ENTRIES READ OUT**

**Three Childrens categories**

**Adult category**

**Winners will be selected by one or two  
of the authors present.**

**Awards and Certificates will also be presented**

**Raffle draw**

**Time permitting**

**Author Panel Q & A**

Thank you for supporting our Caithness Book Festival.  
We hope you enjoyed it.