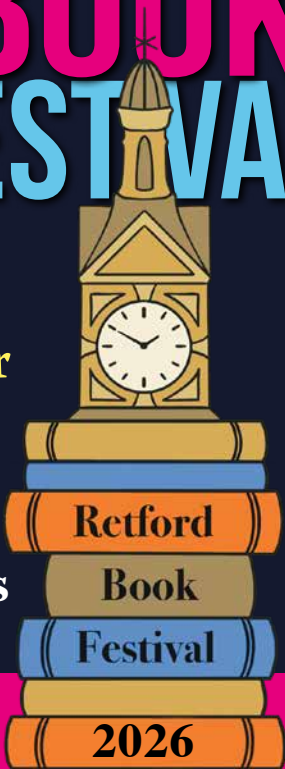


# RET FORD

6<sup>TH</sup> - 14<sup>TH</sup>  
JUNE  
2026

# BOOK FESTIVAL

- ◆ Retford  
♥ Books
- ◆ **Something for everyone**
- ◆ Authors, poets, workshops & the joy of books



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FESTIVAL

2026

# Jae Malone & Moira Hodgkinson

## HORROR WRITING WORKSHOP

**DATE:** SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

**TIME:** 10.00 A.M.

**VENUE:** IDLE VALLEY ①



### Horror and the Effects of Fear

What frightens you? Do you enjoy reading horror? Are vampires, ghosts or crazed serial killers your 'thing'? What would be your scary location? Who are your characters and why are they there? Who survives? What escalates fear? Can objects be haunted?

Authors Moira Hodgkinson and Jae Malone – AKA The Scare Sisters – will be running a two hour horror writing workshop. They will explain how to structure characters, locations and plots. They will also examine which senses are activated by reading horror and what happens if you read or watch too much.



**TICKETS: £12.50**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

Tickets are available online at [wegotickets.com](https://www.wegotickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Alastair Campbell

**PODCASTER & POLITICAL  
COMMENTATOR**

**DATE: SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026**

**TIME: 3.00 P.M.**

**VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2**

**Alastair is a journalist, author, strategist and activist known for his political roles during Tony Blair's Labour government. He currently hosts the very popular podcast "The Rest Is Politics" with Rory Stewart.**

He is also a devoted supporter of Burnley FC, an advocate for mental health, a musician (bagpipes) and a keen sportsman (running, cycling, swimming) and a children's author.



**TICKETS: £20.00**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

*\*Booking fee applies*

Tickets are available online at [wegottickets.com](https://www.wegotickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Mark Steel

## MARK STEEL'S IN RETFORD

DATE: SATURDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 7.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2

Mark Steel, broadcaster, author, columnist and stand-up comedian, is best known for his Radio 4 programme "Mark Steel's In Town".

He has a new book coming out and is visiting Retford for the first, but maybe not the last, time.



**TICKETS: £20.00**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

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## IN CONVERSATION WITH **Claire Hubbard-Hall** HISTORIAN

DATE: SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 2.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH **2**

**Dr Claire Hubbard-Hall is a leading historian and author specialising in the forgotten voices of women in secret intelligence.**

Her book *Her Secret Service* draws on private and previously classified documents to uncover the pivotal role women played in both World Wars, bringing their gripping stories to life.

She will be talking about her books and her writing life at this special “in conversation” event.



**TICKETS: £12.50**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

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or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford



# CRIME WRITERS' PANEL



Local crime writer, Graeme Cumming, will host a panel discussion about crime writing.

**Graeme Cumming** is the author of *Carrion*, *Ravens Gathering* and *Borderline*.

**Zoë Sharp** has been writing for a living since the 1980s. She is a neuro-diverse autodidact, fascinated by criminal instinct and the way characters react to stressful situations. She is known for writing strong female protagonists and giving occasional self-defence demonstrations.



**TICKETS: £12.50**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

Tickets are available online at [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford



DATE: SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 3.30 P.M.

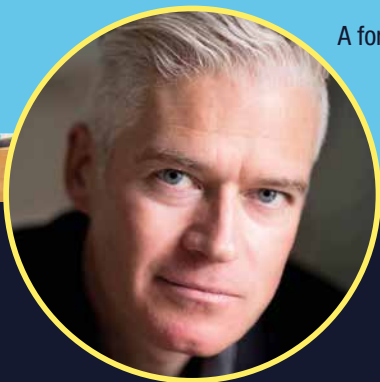
VENUE: GROVE STREET METHODIST CHURCH 2

**Wes Markin** is the bestselling author of *The Yorkshire Murders*, which stars the compassionate and relentless DCI Emma Gardner. He is also the author of *Whitby's Forgotten Victims*, the DCI Michael Yorke Thrillers set in Salisbury, and the Jake Pettman Thrillers set in New England. Wes lives in Harrogate close to the crime scenes in *The Yorkshire Murders* and *Whitby's Forgotten Victims*.



**TM Logan** thrillers have sold more than three million copies in the UK and are translated into 23 other languages. Six of his novels have been Sunday Times bestsellers and two of them – *The Holiday* and *The Catch* – have been adapted for television.

A former national newspaper journalist (and reporter on the Nottingham Evening Post), Tim now writes novels full-time, and lives in Nottinghamshire with his family.



His tenth book is **THE WEEKEND**, published in the UK in February 2026.



# Emily Brand

## THE WICKED LORD BYRON & HIS DYSFUNCTIONAL DYNASTY

DATE: SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

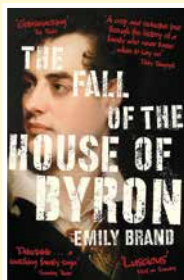
TIME: 7.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2

The poet Lord Byron has gone down in history as “mad, bad and dangerous to know” – but he came from a long line of scandalous ancestors.

Emily Brand uncovers the misdeeds of his Nottinghamshire relatives during the turbulent 18th century, including William the ‘Wicked’. This Lord Byron had an illustrious career winding up the gentry of Retford. This ultimately led to a fatal duel and a sensational murder trial in 1765.

Emily Brand is an author and historian specialising in the ‘long’ 18th century. Her book *The Fall of the House of Byron* was selected as BBC Radio 4 Book of the Week, and a Sunday Times, Mail on Sunday and BBC History Magazine Book of the Year.



**TICKETS: £10.00**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

Tickets are available online at [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Laura Elliott

## HORROR NOVELIST

DATE: MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 2.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH **2**

### What makes a monster?

**Laura is a disabled journalist and campaigner whose articles on health and disability have been published nationally and internationally.**

Her debut novel, *Awakened*, is a gothic horror dystopia in which sleep has been stolen from humanity and monsters reign.

In her talk, Laura will discuss the personal inspiration behind the book's story, why horror becomes more popular in times of unease, and how we make our monsters — both fictional and real.



**TICKETS: £10.00**

**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

*\*Booking fee applies*

Tickets are available online at [wegottickets.com](https://www.wegotickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Stephen Booth

## CRIME NOVELIST

DATE: MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 7.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2

## Best-selling Crime Novelist

Nottinghamshire crime novelist Stephen Booth is the author of eighteen novels in the best-selling *Cooper and Fry* series set in the Peak District.



Stephen's books have won awards on both sides of the Atlantic and have been translated into 16 languages, including Russian and Japanese. Four of his books were recently adapted for the hit Channel 5 TV series 'Cooper and Fry', starring Robert James-Collier (*Downton Abbey*) as Ben Cooper and Mandip Gill (*Dr Who*) as Diane Fry. Before his career as a crime novelist, Stephen worked as a local newspaper journalist.



TICKETS: £12.50  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

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# David Hepworth

## MUSIC JOURNALIST

**DATE:** TUESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

**TIME:** 7.00 P.M.

**VENUE:** GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH **2**

**David Hepworth has been writing, broadcasting and speaking about music and media since the seventies.**

He was involved in the launch and editing of magazines such as Smash Hits, Q, Mojo and The Word, among many others. He was one of the presenters of the BBC rock music programme The Old Grey Whistle Test and one of the anchors of the corporation's coverage of Live Aid in 1985. He has won the Editor of the Year and Writer of the Year awards from the Professional Publishers Association and the Mark Boxer award from the British Society of Magazine Editors.

He lives in London, dividing his time between writing for a variety of newspaper and magazines, speaking at events, broadcasting work, and podcasting alongside Mark Ellen on the Word in Your Ear podcast.



**TICKETS: £12.50**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

Tickets are available online at [wegottickets.com](http://wegottickets.com)  
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# RNIB SPEAKERS

DATE: WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 2.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET METHODIST CHURCH 2

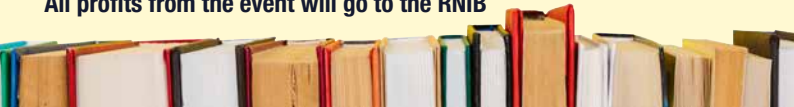


**Lara Marshall** is the Libraries Engagement Manager at the Royal National Institute of Blind People. Lara is visiting Retford and other towns throughout 2026 to talk about accessible literature as part of the National Year of Reading. Reading and access to information is a fundamental human right and whether this is through print, pictures, audio or touch, everyone has a right to read in their preferred format. She will be talking about accessible formats and tools that are available to help anyone out there interested.

**Dave Williams** is an internationally respected accessibility advocate helping organisations design inclusive experiences, communicate effectively, and empower blind and partially sighted people, he is also the chair of the Braille Foundation and spends time campaigning for accessible literacy. Dave is a specialist in accessible technology, media relations, and inclusive design. His professional background spans audio production, community media, agile design, and digital product testing, informed by his lived experience as a blind parent, international marathon runner, and award-winning volunteer.



**All profits from the event will go to the RNIB**



**TICKETS: £5.00**

**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

*\*Booking fee applies*

Tickets are available online at [wegottickets.com](https://www.wegotickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Esther Chilton

## SELF-PUBLISHING WORKSHOP

DATE: WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 6.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2

**Esther Chilton is a tutor for The Writers Bureau and has had articles and short stories published in a variety of magazines and newspapers.**

As well as winning several writing competitions herself, she was head judge of Writers' Forum magazine's monthly short story competition. She has her own editing business and works with lots of self-published authors as well as those who opt for the traditional route.

Having gone through the process of self-publishing her writing workbooks, short story collections and children's books, Esther knows first-hand what the process is all about. Her workshop will include: the different types of publishing available to authors, including the pros and cons; where to start if you want to self-publish; creating your book and formatting; the importance of a good cover; marketing and much more.

There will be plenty of examples, hints and tips. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions about your own writing.



**TICKETS: £10.00**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

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or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Graeme Cumming

## CRIME NOVELIST

**DATE:** THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

**TIME:** 2.00 P.M.

**VENUE:** GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH ②

**Graeme Cumming has a wide and varied taste in fiction, sparked by an excessive amount of time sitting in front of a black and white television as a child, before immersing himself in books and cinema. Influences have ranged from sci-fi to horror to action and thrillers.**

As a writer, he has dabbled in different genres, with a particular leaning towards the darker side – though he is very pleasant when you meet him. His latest novel, *Borderline*, has been dubbed a gritty thriller by reviewers, and described as funny, smart and with plenty of twists and turns. Released in 2025, it has already gained praise from fellow authors and readers alike. *Renegade*, the second in the series, is due to be released in the spring of 2026.



**TICKETS: £10.00**  
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\*Booking fee applies

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# Blake Morrison

## POET AND AUTHOR

DATE: THURSDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 7.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2

**Blake Morrison grew up in Yorkshire and studied at Nottingham University.**

He has published poetry, memoirs, novels, essays and plays, including *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* (made into a film with Jim Broadbent and Colin Firth) and *The Last Weekend* (which was dramatised for television).

For many years he worked as a literary editor before becoming Professor of Creative Writing at Goldsmiths, University of London. In 2025 he has published a poetry collection, *Afterburn*, and a book about life writing, *On Memoir*.



**TICKETS: £12.50**

**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

*\*Booking fee applies*

Tickets are available online at [wegotickets.com](https://www.wegotickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford



# Rachel Bower & Helen Mort

## IN CONVERSATION

**DATE:** FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

**TIME:** 2.00 P.M.

**VENUE:** GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2



Sheffield based authors Rachel Bower and Helen Mort will be talking about their work and their writing lives in what promises to be an interesting and insightful conversation.

Rachel has published three poetry collections and her debut novel, *It Comes from The River*. Helen has also published three poetry collections, a novel *Black Car Burning* and a short story collection. They have both been identified as writers to watch.



**TICKETS: £10.00**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

Tickets are available online at [wegotickets.com](https://www.wegotickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford



# Ian Parks & Mick Jenkinson

## POETS

DATE: FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 4.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2



**Mick Jenkinson and Ian Parks are Doncaster based poets who have been working closely together for over a decade.**

Mick is an accomplished musician as well as a poet and his musical collaborations with Ian appear on the *Songs of Our Town* album. They have performed together on many occasions. Mick's new collection, the *Iron Harvest*, was recently published.

Generally regarded as 'the finest love poet of his generation' Ian is the author of nine collections of poems, the most recent of which is *The Sons of Darkness and the Sons of Light*. This special reading features the two poets reading and talking together in a lively and engaging performance.



**TICKETS: £10.00**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

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or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Steve Greaves

**WRITER, RUNNER &  
PHILANTHROPIST**

**DATE:** FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

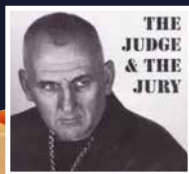
**TIME:** 7.00 P.M.

**VENUE:** THE GLASS LOUNGE **4**

**Steve Greaves is a fascinating character. Born and raised in the 1950s in the mining town of Dinnington, South Yorkshire, Steve has gained a reputation for his charity work and for some of his earlier career exploits.**

Steve has written two autobiographies. He will recount some of the many stories of his life. People say he has been a drug dealer, handled stolen goods, had bare knuckle fights and broken bones but he also mentored youngsters at his self-built boxing gym, keeping them off the streets and giving them a sense of purpose as well as 42 years running to raise money for children via his charity Kids@heart.

An enigma then. Today he is the holder of two world records for running, achieved through a single minded, self-brutalising, desire to achieve for the benefit of others.



**TICKETS: £12.50**  
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\*Booking fee applies

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# Graham Bartlett

## CRIME WRITER & CONSULTANT

DATE: SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 11.00 A.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET METHODIST CHURCH

Graham Bartlett spent 30 years in the Brighton and Hove police working as a senior homicide detective, a chief superintendent and a public order and firearms commander. He is now a best-selling crime fiction and non-fiction author. He

also works as an adviser on police procedure for crime writers and TV dramas.

His debut non-fiction, *Death Comes Knocking*, written with Peter James, was a Sunday Times Top Ten bestseller, and Peter and Graham followed this up with the critically acclaimed *Babes in the Wood*. Since then, Graham has had three solo crime novels published; *Bad for Good* (Sunday Times Top Ten Best Seller, Winner of Crime Fiction Lover Editors' Choice Award 2022 and Nominated for Specsavers Debut of the Year 2022), *Force of Hate*, and *City on Fire*.

As a police procedure and crime advisor, Graham works with over 200 authors and TV writers (including Peter James, Elly Griffiths, Anthony Horowitz, Ruth Ware, Mark Billingham and the BBC), helping them inject authenticity into their work. He is a crime writing mentor with Jericho Writers, runs live and online crime writing courses, is a regular speaker at crime writing festivals and appears in many true crime TV documentaries.

TICKETS: £12.50  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

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or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Iqbal Hussain

## WRITER & COMPOSER

**DATE:** SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

**TIME:** 12.00 NOON

**VENUE:** GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2

**Iqbal Hussain is the author of the semi-autobiographical novel *Northern Boy*, a coming-of-age story that takes in everything from ABBA to Margaret Thatcher.**

During his talk, Iqbal will explore the line between truth and story telling.

He will also discuss his turbulent path to publication: from failed submissions to winning Unbound's emerging writers' competition, then navigating the fallout when the publisher went into administration, and how he rebuilt. His debut children's novel went to a four-way auction before being selected as Waterstones' Children's Book of the Month. He lives in North London and secretly dreams of writing a Gothic musical.



**TICKETS: £10.00**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

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or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford



# Sam Marshall

## ILLUSTRATOR

DATE: SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 2.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2



**Sam is best known as an artist, working in printmaking and drawing. In this talk, she reflects on the path that led to making and publishing her books.**

Beginning at art school, her working life has included roles in media, nutrition, sign writing and retail. Travel and observation have played an important part in shaping her work.

Sam will speak about how these varied experiences have informed both her visual practice and her books, and how a creative career can evolve over time.



**TICKETS: £10.00**  
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\*Booking fee applies

Tickets are available online at [wegottickets.com](https://www.wegotickets.com)  
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# Ashleigh Rainbird

## ENTERTAINMENT JOURNALIST

DATE: SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 4.00 P.M.

VENUE: GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH 2

**Ashleigh Rainbird is an entertainment journalist. She spent 15 years at the Daily Mirror, working as an editor within the showbusiness team for a decade, during which time she oversaw the 3 am and Diary columns.**

Now freelance she has recently written a biography of Cliff Richard, *Cliff at 85*. She is also currently ghost writing a celebrity memoir. She still works as a journalist for various national titles, as well as producing press packs for TV broadcasters.

Ashleigh will discuss interviewing techniques, writing long form, getting into journalism / book writing..... with some fun celebrity anecdotes.



**TICKETS: £10.00**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

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or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford



# Henry Normal & Paul Cookson

## PIE AND PEAS

**DATE:** SATURDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

**TIME:** 6.30 P.M. PIE & PEAS / 7.30 P.M. SHOW

**VENUE:** ST SAVIOURS ③



Paul is Retford's Town Crier and very own poet in residence. He has worked as a poet for over thirty years, has over sixty titles to his name and has sold over a million copies.

He's performed his poetry in thousands of schools, international schools, festivals, libraries and assorted front rooms. Since Covid, he has written and shared on-line, a new poem every single day. The first 1000 can be found in *The Man Who Launched A Thousand Poems*, Vol 1&2, published by Flapjack Press.

Henry is a writer, poet, TV & Film producer, founder of the Manchester Poetry Festival (now the Literature festival) and co-founder of the Nottingham Poetry Festival. In June 2017 he was honoured with a special BAFTA for services to Television.

Paul and Henry have been friends for forty years and their first performance together was in Retford. So, here we are again. Expect laughter, audience participation, occasional ukulele and poetry of the highest order.



**TICKETS: £20.00 or £25.00 with Pie & Peas**  
**GET YOUR TICKETS HERE**

\*Booking fee applies

Tickets are available online at [wegotickets.com](https://www.wegotickets.com)  
or at Wonderland Bookshop, Retford





# Andrew Fusek Peters

## WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER

DATE: SUNDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2026

TIME: 2.00 P.M.

VENUE: IDLE VALLEY 1

**An entertaining talk about Andrew's wildlife adventures in the UK's gardens, parks, cemeteries and allotments.**

Andrew Fusek Peters the most widely used wildlife photographer in the national papers including cover shots for The Guardian, The Times, BBC Wildlife, Country Life and Amateur Photographer.

'One of the country's best photographers. A man with a profound understanding of the natural world.' Iolo Williams.

His latest book is Garden Safari: 'Breath-taking images,' Daily Express

'Andrew is one of the most distinguished and creative wildlife photographers we've ever featured in Amateur Photographer's 140 year history and his new book is a great reminder that you don't need to travel far for amazing results' Amateur Photographer.



**TICKETS: £12.50**  
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\*Booking fee applies

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[WWW.RETFORDBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.RETFORDBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK)

# Children's Events



Following a very successful outreach programme for schools last year, the Retford Book Festival 2026 will double the funding and cover the cost of five days of outreach school events for a minimum of fifteen primary schools in Retford and surrounding villages.

Schools will have the opportunity to host an event with a children's author, poet and/or illustrator.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US ON  
RETFORDBOOKFESTIVAL@GMAIL.COM**

# 2026 IS THE NATIONAL YEAR OF READING

We are delighted that children's poet, Paul Cookson and children's book illustrator, Liz Million, will be covering this part of our programme.

Paul and Liz regularly perform their fast-paced, fun and highly interactive Poems and Pencils shows in UK schools, libraries and at festivals.

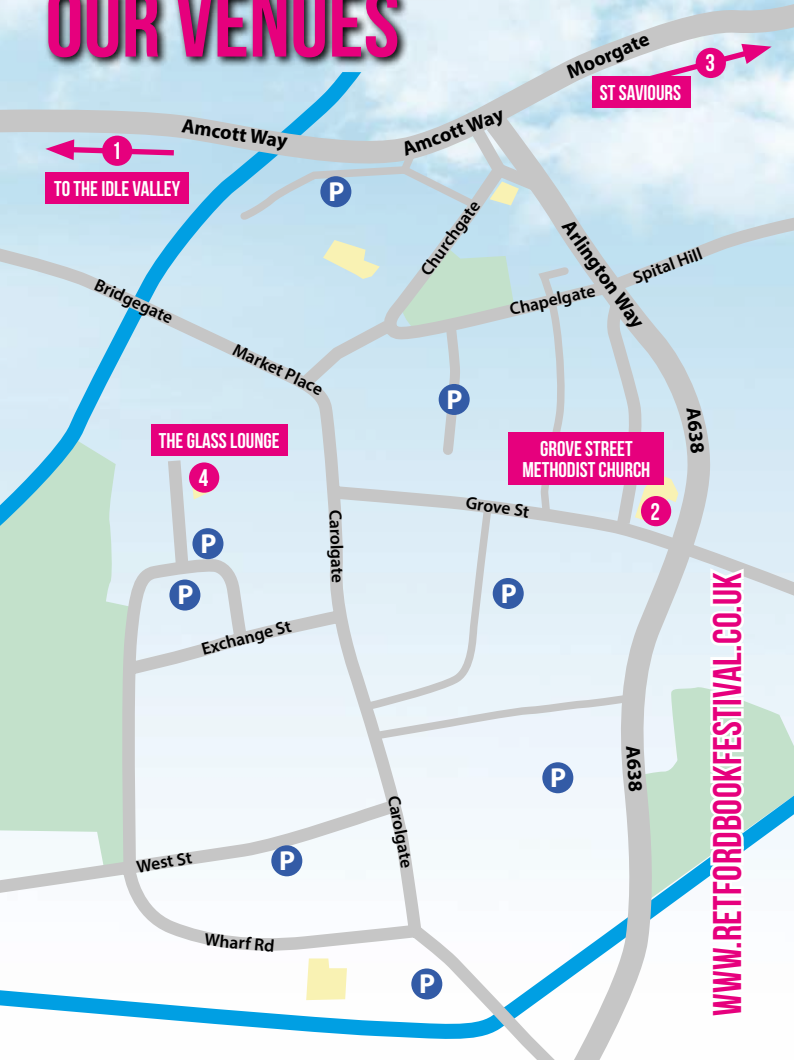
They have the audience roaring with laughter with their witty banter whilst encouraging the children and teaching staff to take part in both the poetry and drawing.

Through our sponsorship, Retford Book Festival aims to inspire thousands of local children to embrace the magic that combined creativity, writing and reading brings.



[WWW.RETFORDBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK](http://WWW.RETFORDBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK)

# OUR VENUES



1  
TO THE IDLE VALLEY

3  
ST SAVIOURS

4  
THE GLASS LOUNGE

2  
GROVE STREET  
METHODIST CHURCH

WWW.RETFORBOOKFESTIVAL.CO.UK