

Welcome to the Frome Lit Fest!



This year's festival – our first – is bubbling over with big ideas, big dreams, big journeys, and simply brilliant books.

We will take you beyond the book, to explore the things that fascinate you: nature, art, theatre, life, and the issues of our time – with lashings of escapism, fantasy and fun thrown in for good measure.

So unfold me, and unfold a whole world of bookish delights!



Book Tickets
www.fromelitfest.com
Merlin Theatre Box Office:
01373 465949

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Friday 16th September

Memories of the Pink Palace with Jill Nalder

Running Away with the Circus with Ols Halas

Saturday 17th September

'Mega Robo Bros' Workshop with The Phoenix Comics' Neill Cameron

Circus of Wonders with Elizabeth Macneal

The Slowworm's Song with Andrew Miller

Sunday 18th September

The Museum of Marvellous Things with Kristina Stephenson

Discover Nature's Treasures with Ben Hoare

Horrible Histories and Deadly Drawing with Martin Brown

The Draw of the Sea with Wyl Menmuir

Monday 19th September

The Generous Gardener with Caroline Donald

Wednesday 21st September

Celebrating Somerset's Bounty with James Crowden and Ned Palmer

One of Our Ministers is Missing with Alan Johnson

The Whalebone Theatre with Joanna Quinn

Thursday 22nd September

Amy Jeffs' Storyland: In Conversation with Max Porter

Friday 23rd September

Double or Nothing: Writing Bond (and beyond) with Kim Sherwood

Swamp Songs: A Journey Through Marsh and Meadow with Tom Blass

Events may be subject to change. Check the website for updates.

Book Online: www.fromelitfest.com

Merlin Theatre Box Office: 01373 465949



@fromelitfest

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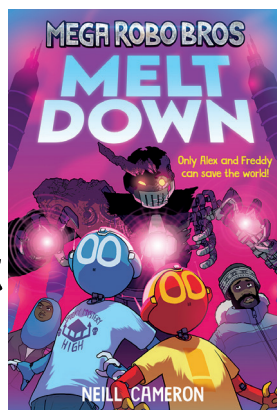
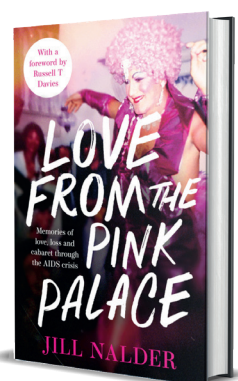
16th – 23rd September
www.fromelitfest.com



Memories of the Pink Palace with Jill Nalder

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date **Friday 16th September**
Time 5 – 6pm
Price £10

Jill Nalder was the inspiration behind Jill Baxter's character in Russell T. Davies' Channel 4 hit *It's a Sin*. Hear her talk about her moving memoir, *Love from the Pink Palace*, in which she tells the true story of her life during the AIDS crisis, and the friends and colleagues, doctors and nurses, activists and fundraisers she met along the way; many of whom were young, talented gay men whose lives were cut tragically short.



'Mega Robo Bros' Workshop with The Phoenix Comics' Neill Cameron

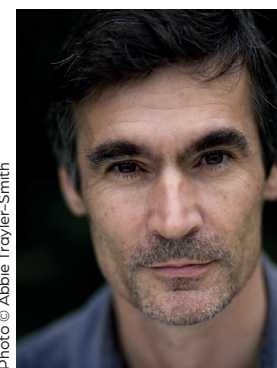
Venue Frome Town Hall
Date **Saturday 17th September**
Time 1 – 2.30pm
Price £5

Family Event

Join The Phoenix Comics' artist **Neill Cameron** for this interactive workshop where he shares the secrets of his award-winning graphic novel series *Mega Robo Bros*. Get all the tips you need to write and draw your very own mega awesome comics! You'll get to create your own characters with Neill's help and then draw a comic about them!



Photo © Abbie Traylor-Smith



The Slowworm's Song with Andrew Miller

Venue Frome Town Hall
Date **Saturday 17th September**
Time 7.30 – 8.30pm
Price £10

Costa Award-winning author **Andrew Miller** (*Pure*, *Now We Shall be Entirely Free*) talks about his latest novel, *The Slowworm's Song*. Described by the *Guardian* as 'bolder and more exquisitely menacing than anything he's done before', *The Slowworm's Song* follows Stephen Rose, former soldier and recovering alcoholic, as he escapes The Troubles (and his own), returning to the Somerset of his youth. But can he outrun the guilt and his past? Miller is one of this country's finest writers, truly at the top of his game.

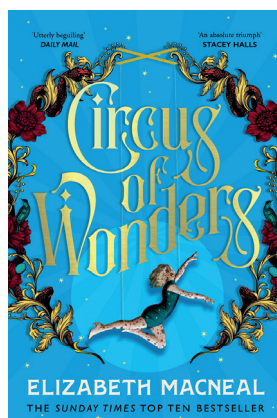
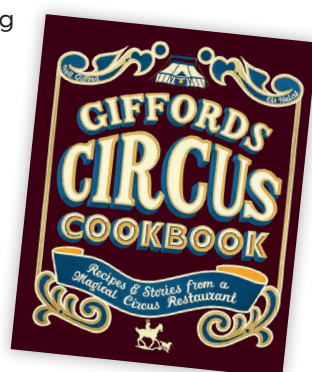


Running Away with the Circus with Ols Halas

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date **Friday 16th September**
Time 7.30 – 8.30pm
Price £10

Have you ever dreamt of running away with the circus? **Ols Halas**

did just that. Ols talks about how he came to create the pop-up Circus Sauce kitchen and became part of the award-winning and much-loved Giffords Circus. From stories about troupe life, to recipes and tips on foraging, Ols will be in conversation with **Gill McLay** who worked alongside Giffords' late founder Nell on her own writing.



Circus of Wonders with Elizabeth Macneal

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date **Saturday 17th September**
Time 5 – 6pm
Price £10

Bestselling author **Elizabeth Macneal** talks about her books, *The Doll Factory* and *Circus of Wonders*. With lush Victorian settings and characters that you instantly fall in love with, her novels are glittering, spectacular, deliciously vivid and thrilling. As one fan puts it, 'The author engages all our senses to explore illusion versus reality, keeps us on a tightrope of emotions and presents us with a truly dazzling show...'



Photo © Mar Smith



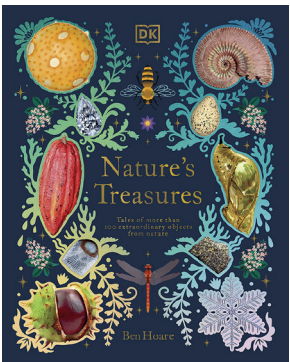
The Museum of Marvellous Things with Kristina Stephenson

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date **Sunday 18th September**
Time 11am – 12 Noon
Price £5

Family Event

Welcome to *The Museum of Marvellous Things*, where the impossible can happen! Make stars in jars, catch moons like balloons, dance with Doo-Dahs in cages, sing with Noo-Nahs on stages, and marvel at the many wonders on display inside this amazing place! With puppets, songs, movement, music, craft (and a special measuring machine that needs to be filled with MAGIC) this is an interactive and fun-filled family show based on the new picture book by bestselling author and illustrator **Kristina Stephenson**.





Discover Nature's Treasures with Ben Hoare

Venue Frome Town Hall
Date Sunday 18th September
Time 2 – 3pm
Price £5

Family Event

Come and get curious about nature with wildlife writer and self-professed nature nerd **Ben Hoare**. The world is filled with curious objects made by plants, animals, and even by the Earth itself. The wonder of wildlife is so much bigger than young (and even old) minds can fathom and there is always more to learn. Ben's amazing new book, *Nature's Treasures*, celebrates nature in all its weird-and-wonderful glory. And this fact-filled event – bursting with top tips about what to look for on family walks – will make sure a stroll through the woods is never the same again!



Horrible Histories and Deadly Drawing with Martin Brown

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date Sunday 18th September
Time 4 – 5pm
Price £5

Family Event

Do you like your history with the nasty bits left in? Come and meet mega-selling illustrator and author **Martin Brown** as he celebrates the *Horrible Histories* in a fun-filled, action-packed event loaded with foul facts, live illustration and a touch of audience involvement. A fact-tastic show for the whole family where Martin's passion for drawing is simply infectious.



The Whalebone Theatre with Joanna Quinn

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date Wednesday 21st September
Time 7.30 – 8.30pm
Price £10

Sunday Times bestseller and rising star, **Joanna Quinn** talks about her stunning debut novel *The Whalebone Theatre*.

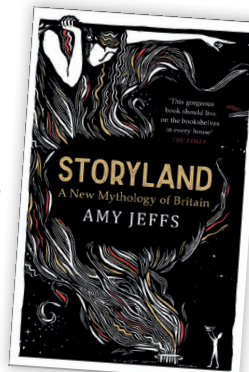


Amy Jeffs' Storyland: In Conversation with Max Porter

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date Thursday 22nd September
Time 8.30 – 9.30pm
Price £10

The simply remarkable author, artist, musician and professor of medieval history **Amy Jeffs**

Jeffs talks to fellow author **Max Porter** (*Lanny*; *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*) about her *Sunday Times* bestselling book *Storyland: A New Mythology of Britain*. Soaked in mist and old magic, Amy's retellings of the myths and legends that Britain is built upon are suffused with wild wonder. Landscape, lore, and legend weave their way through both writers' work, so this is a conversation not to be missed!

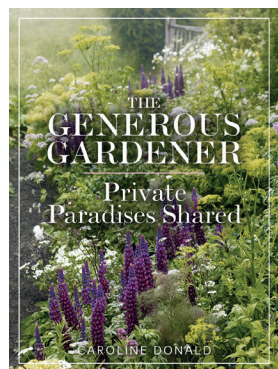
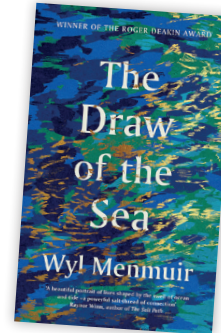


The Draw of the Sea with Wyl Menmuir

Venue Frome Town Hall
Date Sunday 18th September
Time 5 – 6pm
Price £10

The ocean fires our imagination, provides endless joy and solace, but also wields immense destructive power on people, communities, and the environment. Join us to hear **Wyl Menmuir**, author of *The Draw of the Sea*, in conversation with conservationist and natural history broadcaster **Philippa Forrester** to explore the incredible power that water has in our lives and why it has such magical power in casting its spell.

This event is being held in association with Frome Town Council as part of Great Big Green Week 2022.

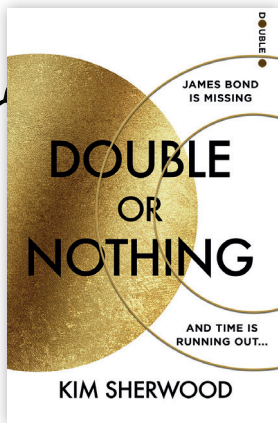


The Generous Gardener with Caroline Donald

Venue Merlin Theatre
Date Monday 19th September
Time 5 – 6pm
Price £10

Former Gardening Editor of *The Sunday Times* and curator at Hauser and Wirth gallery, **Caroline Donald** has long been fascinated by what she calls Britain's 'folk

art'; an activity in which everyone, from all walks of life, can indulge and talk about on equal terms – gardening. In her long years as one of Britain's foremost writers on gardening, Caroline has travelled all over the country meeting people famous in another sphere but united in their love of their gardens. So, join us for a peek over the garden wall and hear about some of the incredible private outdoor spaces she has been lucky enough to explore.



Double or Nothing: Writing Bond (and beyond) with Kim Sherwood

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date Friday 23rd September
Time 5 – 6pm
Price £10

Kim Sherwood is expanding the Bond universe with the first of a trilogy of novels following three of MI6's

brightest and most skilled agents – each with a licence to kill. They'll do anything to protect their country. Hear more about how the author approached taking on Bond – the challenges and triumphs – and about the resulting explosive novel that has been described by Jeffery Deaver as a 'Brilliant thriller.'

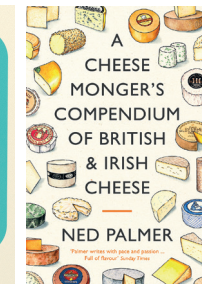
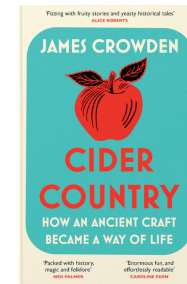


Swamp Songs: A Journey Through Marsh and Meadow with Tom Blass

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date Friday 23rd September
Time 7.30 – 8.30pm
Price £10

Oozing with bad airs, boggarts and other spirits, the world's marshes and swamps are

often seen as sinister and only partly of this earth. Author of *Swamp Songs*, **Tom Blass** invites you on a swampish journey from Romney Marsh to North Carolina, Lapland to the Danube Delta. Introducing you to their myths and hidden histories, this event promises to be a feast for the imagination and you will never think of wetland in the same way again. Tom will be in conversation with Frome's own **Andrew Ziminski**, author of *The Stonemason: A History of Building Britain*.

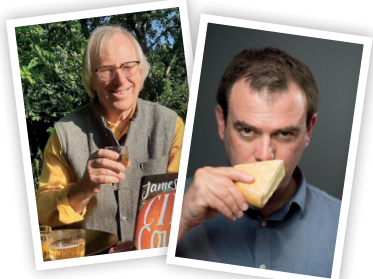


Celebrating Somerset's Bounty with James Crowden and Ned Palmer

Venue Silk Mill
Date Wednesday 21st September
Time 1 – 2:30pm (ish)
Price £18

James Crowden embarks on a journey to distil the ancient origins of cider, uncovering a rich culture and philosophy that has united farmer, maker and drinker for millennia. Cheesemonger **Ned Palmer** takes us on his own delicious journey across Britain and Ireland and through time to uncover the histories of beloved old favourites and new cheese innovations. This event will include cider from The Newt in Somerset (thanks to Cellar Master Greg Carnell) and scrumptious cheese nibbles.

Staged with the kind support of The Newt in Somerset



One of Our Ministers is Missing with Alan Johnson

Venue The Merlin Theatre
Date Wednesday 21st September
Time 5 – 6pm
Price £10

Hear author and former politician **Alan Johnson** talk about his new fast-paced and warm-hearted page-turner, *One of Our Ministers is Missing*, in which (you guessed it) a government minister in the Foreign Office has vanished into thin air... Johnson was a Labour MP for 20 years, serving in Blair's and Brown's cabinets as education secretary, health secretary and home secretary. His fiction is both authentic and thrilling, and he is much-loved for his wonderful memoirs.



A FEW THANK YOUS...

We would like to thank the following fabulous folk for helping to bring you this year's Frome Lit Fest:



Would you like to get involved in the Frome Lit Fest?

Email us at fromelitfest@gmail.com for more info about becoming a volunteer, a Friend of the Frome Lit Fest, or even a Frome Lit Fest trustee!