

# WIGTOWN SPRING WEEKEND

3-5 MAY 2025

## Welcome to Wigtown Spring Book Weekend

*A Celebration of Literature and Community*

Dear Book Lovers,

Welcome to the Wigtown Spring Book Weekend, a celebration of literature, creativity, and the vibrant community that makes Wigtown Scotland's National Book Town. We are thrilled to have you join us for a weekend filled with engaging author talks and stimulating discussions.

However, it is not just about books; it is about the connections we make, the ideas we share, and the inspiration we find in every conversation and story. So, enjoy the festival, make new friends, and let the pages of countless books inspire and delight you.

Happy reading!

Jacqui Robertson

*Chair of The Association of Wigtown Booksellers*

P.s. A heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers, sponsors, and participants who make the Wigtown Spring Book Weekend possible. Your support and enthusiasm are the cornerstones of our success.

## ALL WEEKEND

### The Story Boat

#### ReadingLasses Garden

10am-4pm | Sat 3 - Mon 5 | Free

Climb aboard the Story Boat, created by traditional boat builder Gail McGarva from the upturned fishing boat 'Vera' of 1923. Enjoy her story, memory objects and miniature world of the sea.

### Makers Market

#### The Hut at ReadingLasses

10am-4pm | Sat 3 & Sun 4 | Free

In collaboration with Nest we are delighted to bring you our first makers market of the year. Browse through a curated mix of art and craft stalls from makers and artists from across the region.

## WITH THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

At the Sign of the Dragon

Byre Books

Anne Dunford

Faodail

The Old Bank Bookshop

ReadingLasses

The Smiddy Accommodation

Stranraer & District Local

History Trust

David Sumner

Wigtown Community Shop

Wigtown Emporium

## SATURDAY 3 MAY

### WALK

#### Paul Tarling & John Atkinson

#### Birds and a Bard

#### Meet outside County Buildings

9am | £5

Listen out for spring birdsong and enjoy poems inspired by our avian neighbours.

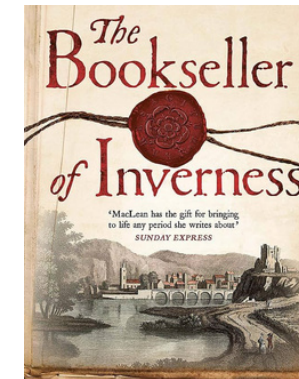
### DEMONSTRATION

#### Jollypotter

#### Nest, 13 South Main St

11am and 1pm | Unticketed

Join Jonathan (Jollypotter) of The Great Pottery Throw Down at Nest as he demonstrates throwing at the wheel.



### Shona MacLean

#### In conversation

#### County Buildings, Main Hall

12 noon | £12

Her books have earned her critical acclaim and loyal readers. Join the author of *The Bookseller of Inverness*, as she talks to Helen Graham about her journey into the world of historical fiction.

### Magi Gibson

#### Winner of Wigtown Poetry Prize

#### County Buildings, The Hub

12 noon | £8

Magi draws inspiration from the little things that affect the big issues in our lives to write poetry that is both timeless and modern.

### WALK

#### Steve Munroe

#### Wigtown Heroes

#### Meet at Wigtown Top Cemetery

12 noon | £5

Stroll through Wigtown's history, honouring lost fathers, brothers, sons, a deserter-turned-hero, a missing Commando, and ties to *A Bridge Too Far*.

### Elaine Barton & Julia MacDonald

#### The Great War at Sea

#### County Buildings, Main Hall

1.30pm | £8

Julia MacDonald and Elaine Barton discuss WW1 U-Boat activity near Wigtownshire, featuring the Bayano, Baralong incident, and U-Boat surrenders in Lochryan.

### Karen Campbell

#### This Bright Life

#### County Buildings, Main Hall

3pm | £12

Three strangers - one moment. *This Bright Life* is heartbreaking, yet brimming with hope and humour. A story about messy lives and the many hands it takes to build a boy.

### Crystal Maw

#### Migrations

#### County Buildings, The Hub

3pm | £5

Learn why winter geese leave as African migrants like swallows arrive. Crystal explains the natural pressures that make these journeys necessary for survival.

### Shaun Bythell & Glenn Cooksley

#### The Diarists

#### County Buildings, Main Hall

4.30pm | £8

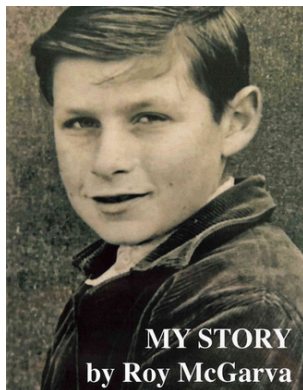
The bestselling writer and former BBC journalist join forces to read extracts from their diaries covering the worlds of bookselling and Scottish politics.



## SATURDAY 3 MAY SUNDAY 4 MAY

**Helen Graham**  
**The Real Mackay**  
County Buildings, The Hub  
4.30pm | £8

This critically acclaimed debut novel is based on the life of Charles Mackay - favourite stage comedian of Sir Walter Scott.



**MY STORY**  
by Roy McGarva

**Roy McGarva**  
**My Story**  
County Buildings, Main Hall  
7pm | £8

An inspiring journey from poverty to resilience, detailing time in the RAF, a return to Galloway, and the relentless fight against the tax authorities.

**WORKSHOP**  
**Sarah Stewart**  
**Creative Bookbinding**  
County Buildings, The Hub  
7pm-9pm | £25

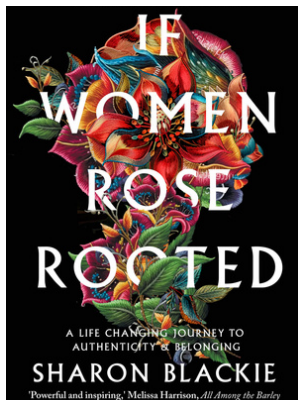
Learn how to create your own artists books and zines. Leave with a handful of books and the knowledge to make them again.

**Renita Boyle**  
**Words for the Birds**  
Nest, 13 South Main St  
7pm | Free but ticketed  
Fly Furthest Far Away with the Eagle and the Wren: a story, a song, a poem, a lullaby, a cosy cuppa and an optional hug await.

**Marion McGowan**  
**The Priest's Pool**  
County Buildings, The Hub  
10.30am | £5

Set in 1870s Scotland, change clashes with tradition. *The Priest's Pool* weaves a tale of resilience, family, and hope.

**Sharon Blackie**  
**Wise Women**  
County Buildings, Main Hall  
12 noon | £12  
Exploring themes of women's empowerment, the power of myth and folklore, and the connection between personal and environmental healing. Through bestselling books like *If Women Rose Rooted* and *Hagitude*, Dr Sharon Blackie reimagines traditional narratives to inspire contemporary solutions.



**Jack Sloan and David Sumner**  
**Alasdair Gray: Magnificent Citizen**  
County Buildings, The Hub  
12 noon | £8

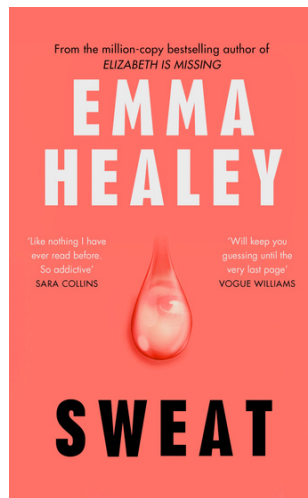
An illustrated talk on Alasdair Gray, "the father figure of the renaissance in Scottish literature and art", who began his landmark novel, *Lanark*, when studying at Glasgow School of Art.

## SUNDAY 4 MAY

**Kirsten MacQuarrie**  
**Remember the Rowan**  
County Buildings, Main Hall  
1.30pm | £8

Longlisted for the Highland Prize and the People's Book Prize, Kirsten MacQuarrie's debut novel is inspired by the true story of Kathleen Raine and Gavin Maxwell's 'some-requited' love.

**Tim Cowen**  
**Badger Tales**  
County Buildings, The Hub  
1.30pm | £5  
Writer and performer Tim Cowen volunteers for the charity Scottish Badgers. His novel *Banquet of the Beasts* is a truly original story mixing politics, fantasy and the natural world.



**Emma Healey**  
**Sweat**  
County Buildings, Main Hall  
3pm | £12  
The bestselling author of *Elizabeth is Missing* explores themes of exercise addiction and coercion, asking how far one would go for revenge on an abusive ex.

**Sandy McKnight**  
**The Celtic Rites of Spring**  
County Buildings, The Hub  
3pm | £5

Scotland's most tattooed man explores the rituals, traditions and folklore surrounding spring in pre-Christian cultures both in Scotland and across the world.

**Bob Frith**  
**Horse and Bamboo**  
County Buildings, Main Hall  
4.30pm | £8  
Founder and director of Britain's only horse-drawn touring theatre company tells of 40 years bringing his unique theatre to rural areas from the Hebrides to Hungary and Slovakia.

**Breagle Martin**  
**Kirkyard Chronicles**  
New Chapter Books  
4.30pm | Free but ticketed  
Uncover the fascinating, surprising, and heart-wrenching life stories of the people buried in the local old kirkyards.

## MONDAY 5 MAY

**Roy Walter**  
**A Harbour Goes to war**  
New Chapter Books  
3pm | Free but ticketed  
Originally published in 2000, *A Harbour Goes to War* has been reissued. Roy Walter talks about the history of the Mulberry Harbour in Garieston - the story of a local village and the impact it had on the war effort in WW2.

**Celebrate May Day in Book Town**  
**McCuffie Memorial Gardens**  
12noon-4pm | Free, unticketed  
Live music, storytelling, barbeque or bring a picnic. Explore the wrapped bookshelf for literary surprises, and soak up the festive atmosphere.

## HOW TO BOOK

### Online

Secure ticketing via [wigtownbookfestival.com](http://wigtownbookfestival.com)  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

### By phone

During office hours (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm) on **01988 403222**



## DAVY BROWN'S 75TH BIRTHDAY EXHIBITION

The Conference Room  
26 South Main Street  
10am-4pm  
Sat 3 - Mon 26 May

### Mayflower

Community events over Spring Weekend at Wigtown Hall.  
For more information visit [wigtownhall.uk/mayflower](http://wigtownhall.uk/mayflower)

## FOOD & DRINK

**Books & Bakes**, 6 Bank Street  
10am-4pm Sat and Mon; 9.30am-1.30pm Sun  
**Cafe Melba**, Bladnoch Distillery  
10am-4pm Sat  
**Cafe Rendezvous**, 2 Agnew Crescent  
10am-6pm Sat; 10.30am-3.30pm Sun  
**Cobwebs**, 31 South Main Street  
Sat & Sun 12noon-5pm; Mon 12noon-4pm  
**The Frying Scotsman**, 24 North Main Street  
4pm-8pm Sat  
**The Galloway Bar**, 24 South Main Street  
12.30pm-1am Sat; 12.30pm-11.30pm Sun; 1pm-11.30pm Mon  
**North Street Deli**, 2 North Main Street  
8am-5pm Sat; 9am-5pm Sun; 7am-2.30pm Mon.  
**The Wigtown Ploughman**, 30 South Main Street  
See website for opening times ([thewigtownploughman.co.uk](http://thewigtownploughman.co.uk))  
**Pop Up Bar**, 4 South Main Street  
4pm-11pm Fri; 1pm-11pm Sat-Mon. Food served until 9.30pm.  
**ReadingLasses**, 17 South Main Street  
10am-5pm Sat-Mon.



ASSOCIATION OF  
**WIGTOWN**  
**BOOKSELLERS**