WELCOME TO THE THIRD FAVERSHAM LITERARY FESTIVAL taking place in various of the town’s historic venues: the Old Brewery Store, Guildhall, Alexander Centre, The Limes and Shepheard Neame Visitor Centre’s 15th-century function room, as well as the newer Arden Theatre. There’s a packed programme of events from 19 to 23 February, plus writing workshops and local author readings on the 15th & 16th.

Opening night on 19 February celebrates Kent cheese and ale in the company of taconeer cheesemonger Ned Palmer. Will Sell returns to Faversham and other headline events include Melvyn Bragg, Jenny Eclair, Lemn Sissay, Dame Joan Bakewell, Ken Livingstone and Sarah Perry.

The programme I hope has something for everyone. As usual, lots of great nature writers, including the inspirational Tim Dee on spring and bird migration, plus Kent nature writers Katherine May, Caroline Crampton, Lara Maiklem and Caroline Greville.

Politics features strongly on the programme with Jack Straw discussing the Middle East. Gavin Esler on Brexit; plus talks on the refugee crisis, Trump and the USA, and hard-hitting political fictions addressing dictatorship, genocide and writing in exile.

Fiction highlights include the much-acclaimed historical debut by Sara Collins; Naomi Wood and Elizabeth Macarrol reading on the Bauduas and Pre-Raphaelite art movements; Lee Routke on mother-son relationships and grief; Maggie Gee and William Shaw on crime in Kent; and much more. Taking fiction on the road, Peter Fennes and travel writer Sara Wheeler discuss the literary greats of Britain and Russia.

For music lovers, I’m very excited to feature Stephen Morris from Joy Division and New Order, and Tracey Thorn from Everything But the Girl. For football fans, a wonderful account of the game on the theme of class.

Exciting new additions to the programme - Abbey Physic Garden will be hosting a session on mental health with local author Stephen Gillatt; plus an all-day poetry hub in The Limes on Saturday 22nd, with special guest poet Luke Wright - a whole day of poetry plus our now regular Friday-night Poetry Slam. There’s events and activities for children and young adults, and an unmissable event for all the family with the much-loved author Michael Rosen telling funny stories, funny poems and, of course, pulling funny faces!

I hope you enjoy the festival.

AMANDA DACKOMBE
Festival Director
SUNDAY 23 FEBRUARY, ALEXANDER CENTRE

Sally Preston, Sara Collins and Sara Churchwell

What is it to pursue a goal, to strive for an ideal, to follow a dream? These are the questions explored in Pursuit, a collection compiled by award-winning novelist Alex Preston. The stories - from some of the brightest and most exciting voices writing today - tell of determination, perseverance and the search for truth in a world of uncertainty... You can win tickets to this event and more at favershamlibrary.org

£5

£3

Kate Grenville

The Girl in the Dark

A compelling historical debut in which a former slave accused of murder recounts her life. The Corridors of Frangipani Lodge is a bold exploration of passion and the transgression of boundaries. Collins is a new literary star intimately acquainted with these elusive creatures. An extraordinary tale of human-animal connectedness.

Host Carolin Mollar. 3.30-4.30pm £3

Sarah Perry

White Teeth

A coming-of-age masterpiece about the search for truth and wisdom – a tale of evil featuring a wandering philosopher, a penniless writer and a bee forced from its hive. Host Daniel Hahn. 6.30-7.30pm £5

Sarah Perry

Tales Out of My Head

A masterly work from the author of the wildly successful The Essex Serpent. Unnerving and unsettling, Melmoth is a harrowing tale about how to outlive the darkness and how we come to terms with our actions in a conflicted world. ‘Scary and smart, but also a philosophical inquiry into the nature of love and will.’ Host Alex Preston. 6.30-7.30pm £10

Sunday 22 February, Goldings Room, Shepherd Neame Visitor Centre, Court Street

Hamid Ismailov

The award-winning Uzbek author has crafted another masterpiece about the search for truth and wisdom – a tale of evil featuring a wandering philosopher, a penniless writer and a bee forced from its hive. Host Daniel Hahn. 6.30-7.30pm £5

Jane Wenham-Jones

Local flavour! The author and journalist tells Julie Wasmuth about her life of four women ‘coming of age’ in Broadstairs. Lots of laughs. 8-9pm £1

Saturday 22 February, Goldings Room, Shepherd Neame Visitor Centre, Court Street

John Gregory Smith

The food writer and chef shares stories and dishes from Saffron in the Souks, for which he travelled the length and breadth of Lebanon to bring back its most exquisite flavours and hidden beauty. Host Nikki Melican. 11am-12 noon £5

Gareeh E. Rees

A darkly satirical work of non-fiction Car Park Life explores how the UK’s retail chain-store car park has as much mystery, magic and terror as any mountain, meadow or wood. Rediscover a common space we know far less about than we think. Host Gary Budden. 12.30-1.30pm £1

William Shaw and Maggie Gee

William Shaw’s vast thriller Deadland, set in the brooding shadow of Devil’s Dyke, and Maggie Gee’s literary crime caper Black, a blood comedy set around Margate – the authors discuss Kent’s social divisions, with murderous result. 2-3pm £1

Lee Rouke and Will Wilde

Intellectually playful chronicles of modern Britain, Will Wiles’s Plum is a fast-moving Kafkaesque story about an alcoholic hack set in contemporary London, in which Lee Rouke unflinchingly explores the guilt and the irregularities of everyday life. 3.30-4.30pm £3

Writing Women’s Lives

In Plastic Emotions Shiori Pinto charts the life of forgotten feminist icon and Sri Lankan architect Minette de Silva, and her affair with Le Corbusier; plus short stories from Linda Mannheim’s This Way to Departures and Annabel Banks’s Exercises In Control. 5-6.30pm £3

Peter Williams

A local Faversham author tells the story in Black and White Kent’s coalmines and ironworks from the 1920s to the 1960s. 6.30-7.30pm. Host Christine Rayner. £5

Saturday 22 February, The Lime - Poetry Hub All Day Poetry Pass £10

All-day poetry hub, 11am to 1pm. A great line-up of poets and poetry writers running throughout the day, plus Open Mic sessions and Poets for the Planet. Special guest is Luke Wright, support poet for John Cooper Clarke. The Remains - a new verse play in the age of Brexit. Crackling with energy, wit and passion. See website for timings and poet listings.

Sunday 23 February, Alexander Centre

Tim Dee

In Greenery BBC radio producer Tim Dee explores the idea of spring. Following the migration paths of birds, he finds inspiration to create his own paths through the wilds of England, from Cornwall to Shetland. Is it possible to keep in step with a season? 11am-12 noon £5

Lara Maiklem

Mudlarking traces Kent-based Lara Maiklem’s search for urban solitude and history on the River Thames, what she calls ‘the longest archaeological landscape in the world’. Known as the London Mudlarker, Lara has been larking along the Thames for over 15 years, unearthings from Neolithic, Roman, medieval and Victorian eras that tell her about London’s ‘lost ways of life’. 1.30-2.30pm £5

*CHANGE OF VENUE TO PRINTED PROGRAMME

Peter Fiennes and Sara Wheeler

Sopsons around Britain and Russia in the company of great writers. In footnotes Peter Fiennes brings modern Britain into the picture by looking through the lens of the past, following in the footsteps of some of our greatest writers, from Emil Blyton to Jill Priestley. In Mud and Stars travel writer Sara Wheeler takes us on a literary tour of Russia, the company of Pushkin, Tolstoy, Gogol and other greats. Host Alex Preston. 2-3pm £5

Sara Collins

A compelling historical debut in which a former slave accused of murder recounts her life, The Corridors of Frangipani Lodge is a bold exploration of passion and the transgression of boundaries. Collins is a new literary star reminiscent of the best of Sarah Wates. 3.30-4.30pm £5

Gavin Esler

The former Newswinter presenter’s Brexit Without the Bulldozer is a frank guide to the most momentous change in British politics for decades. Will Brexit affect our daily lives. Will Brexit boost jobs? Or wreck the NHS? Or cause food shortages? It may not be the Brexit you thought you were getting. Host Julia Wheeler. 5-6pm £5

Sarah Perry

A masterly work from the author of the wildly successful The Essex Serpent. Unnerving and unsettling, Melmoth is a harrowing tale about how to outlive the darkness and how we come to terms with our actions in a conflicted world. ‘Scary and smart, but also a philosophical inquiry into the nature of love and will.’ Host Alex Preston. 6.30-7.30pm £10

Sunday 23 February, Arden Theatre

Alex Preston, Sara Collins and Sara Churchwell

What is it to pursue a goal, to strive for an ideal, to follow a dream? These are the questions explored in Pursuit, a collection compiled by award-winning novelist Alex Preston. The stories - from some of the brightest and most exciting voices writing today - tell of determination, perseverance and the search for truth in a world of uncertainty... You can win tickets to this event and more at favershamlibrary.org

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Caroline Crampston

The Way to the Sea: The Forgotten Histories of the Thames Estuary traces the course of England’s longest river to reveal how the waterway helped shape our nation, finding epic tales of Vice and Vice-hunting, history of the ships, shipwrecks, old trade routes and wild riverbanks along the way. Host Peter Fiennes. 5-6pm £5

Sunday 23 February, Goldings Room, Shepherd Neame Visitor Centre, Court Street

Mary-Elsa Bragg

The suicide of Melyn Bragg’s first wife forged an unbreakable bond between father and daughter. Author and producer Marie-Ela Bragg’s memoir Sleeping Letters is a way of reconnecting to past family, an attempt to reconcile with loss, as well as a radical exploration of her faith. Host Marnie Summerfield-Smith. 12.30-1.30pm £8

*THIS EVENT REPLACES LARA MAIKLEM, WHICH HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE ALEXANDER CENTRE

Katherine May

Part memoir, part exploration of a human condition, Whisper by Water offers healing nature of the great outdoors. The Whitstable-based author recounts her own year-long journey through winter, and how she found strength and inspiration when life felt f f ( venture Host Anna Stanford. £3

Caroline Greville

Personal and poetic, Badger Clan tells of how a Kent family was introduced to the ancient World and intimately acquainted with these elusive creatures. An extraordinary tale of human-animal connectedness.

Host Carolin Mollar. 3.30-4.30pm £3

Julie Wassmer

Whistable crime writer Julie Wassmer talks about her two most recent tales set in Kent and the importance of location to her writing, to include some stunning photography of Oare and Whitstable. 5-6pm £5