

WEST  
DUNBARTONSHIRE  
14 to 19 MAY 2019

# FESTIVAL OF WORDS

14 to 19 MAY 2019  
**booked!**

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

a vibrant and diverse festival of talks  
and events by leading authors  
held at your local libraries.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

# FESTIVAL OF WORDS

West  
Dunbartonshire  
COUNCIL

2019  
14 – 19 MAY

CONTENTS

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Booked! Schools

PAGE  
16

Quick Guide:

Venues

18

Event Timetable

19

Ticketing

19

## Welcome to **Booked!** West Dunbartonshire's annual Festival of Words

It is my privilege and pleasure to introduce this year's **Booked!** literary festival brought to you by West Dunbartonshire Libraries. Sponsored by Creative Scotland, each year we strive to offer an ambitious programme of established authors and upcoming new talent. In addition, our **Booked!** Schools events complement the main programme and ensures that our secondary school community have the opportunity to experience top authors.

This year's Alastair Pearson Lecture will be delivered by Richard Holloway, the former Bishop of Edinburgh. Richard has delivered several talks for us through the years and it is an honour to welcome back a speaker of his calibre. He will be exploring what is possibly the most difficult topic of them all, our inevitable death and how we can most effectively come to terms with this.

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Historical topics are a perennial favourite of **Booked!** and this year we have Henry Bell exploring the life of the Red Clydeside legend, John Maclean. He will look at the events that shaped the man and his politics, as well as his enduring legacy.

Lovers of crime fiction should not miss our event with Alan Parks who has been compared to the late, great William McIlvanney. Polly Clark made a huge impact with her debut novel, **Larchfield**, and she will be discussing **Tiger**, her latest novel. Polly visited Siberia so that she would have a direct experience of the extraordinary environment that this apex predator reigns over.

We have a wonderful storyteller, Mara Menzies, who will be performing for our younger audience. Mara celebrates the very beautiful and rich heritage of African storytelling. Leading journalist and author Madeleine Bunting is making her first **Booked!** appearance; she will be talking about her debut novel **Island Song** which explores the experiences of Channel Islanders during the German Occupation. Wendy Erskine's debut short story collection **Sweet Home** has been very well received and she will be reading from her collection. It has garnered much critical praise and she is certainly a major writer in the making.

Lovers of the natural world will not want to miss Dan Richards who will be talking about his book **Outposts** which looks at our relationship with the wilderness.

Richard Maclean Smith has a huge following for his **Unexplained** podcasts which is about strange and mysterious real life events that continue to evade explanation. He will be discussing his book of the same name which looks at where the unknown and the paranormal meet the most radical ideas in science.

As well as having the opportunity to meet leading writers and performers **Booked!** is also very much about encouraging people to develop their own creativity. Leading artist, Mitch Miller, the inventor of the Dialectogram, will be running a workshop on how we can use illustration and drawing as a method of documenting the world around us. Mitch designed the fantastic Dialectogram of Clydebank Library which not only maps the building but expresses in text and images how both staff and the public interact with this particular environment. Mitch's work recently featured as part of a major exhibition at the Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art.

I take great pride in presenting such a varied and stimulating programme for **Booked!** 2019. The exciting schedule of events is a credit to the fabulous work undertaken by the Library team and we very much hope you will be enthused, entertained and inspired by what the programme has to offer.

David Main  
**Team Leader** Libraries

## Tuesday 14 May Richard Holloway Alastair Pearson Lecture

Millennium Hall, Gartocharn 7.00pm

We make no apology for once again inviting Richard Holloway to deliver the annual Alastair Pearson Lecture. The former Bishop of Edinburgh is widely recognised as one of Scotland's leading public thinkers and has a near unrivalled ability to grapple with difficult topics in an accessible, stimulating and deeply humane way. He is a wonderful speaker and in this talk he will be exploring his latest book, **Waiting for the Last Bus: Reflections on Life and Death**. This book is a profound meditation on how we approach death and evaluate the meaning of our own lives. Even if we do not want to, at some point we all have to contemplate the inevitability of our own mortality. Join a wise, compassionate and humorous guide to our universal destination.

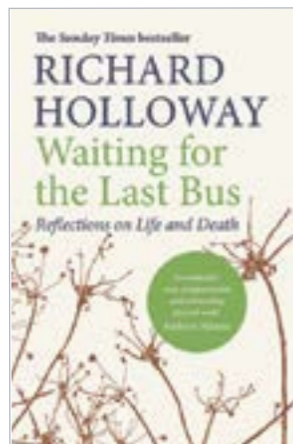
Richard Holloway has written many books including **Leaving Alexandria** which was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize. He has written for many newspapers including **The Times**, **The Guardian**, **The Herald** and **The Scotsman** and he has presented programmes for both radio and television.



Photograph © Colin Hattersley-Smith

"A wise, compassionate perspective on a persistently taboo subject. The pragmatism and gentle humour make it an unusually inclusive book. For everyone, however young" **Colin Firth**

"Thoughtful, playful, courageous and deeply altruistic . . . a fine companion for anyone who wishes to live a life of any depth" **A.L.Kennedy**



## Wednesday 15 May Henry Bell

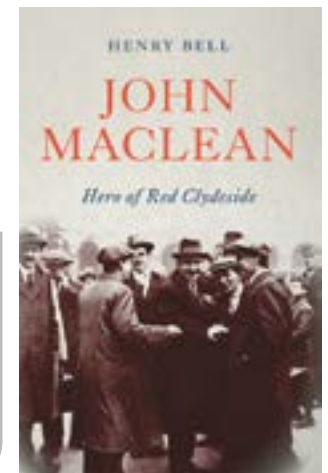
Dalmuir Library 7.00pm

The Head of British Intelligence referred to John Maclean as being 'the most dangerous man in Britain'. In **John Maclean: Hero of Red Clydeside** Henry Bell examines the life and legacy of one of the great heroes of the labour movement in Britain, a man who was admired by Lenin and Trotsky. Maclean was born in Glasgow in 1879 and the hardships he experienced and observed growing up forged a fierce hatred of social injustice and helped to inform his revolutionary politics. He was a schoolteacher and after losing his job became a full-time Marxist lecturer and founded the Scottish labour College. He was tried and imprisoned for sedition and his hunger strikes whilst in prison undoubtedly contributed to a deterioration in his health and early death at the age of 44.

Henry Bell is a writer as well as an editor and lives in Glasgow. He edits **Gutter** magazine and his poetry has appeared widely in magazines and anthologies. Henry has edited books including **A Bird is Not a Stone**, a collection of contemporary Palestinian poetry in translation.

'A beautifully structured and brilliantly written biography . . . Henry Bell's moving, evocative portrait of the complex man and his times is compelling and timely. It tells not just the story of the radical hero from the red Clyde, but a story of Scotland'

**Jackie Kay, novelist and Makar, Scottish Poet Laureate**





**Thursday 16 May**  
**Alan Parks**

Parkhall Library 7.00pm

Alan Parks is a new and exciting addition to Scottish noir with his work being compared to the late, great William McIlvanney. His debut novel **Bloody January**, featuring Detective Harry McCoy, was shortlisted for the prestigious international crime prize the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière. Alan described what he wanted to achieve with **Bloody January**: "When I started writing **Bloody January** I wanted to write about Glasgow and I wanted to write a book about the different kind of people who lived there in the early seventies. A crime story seemed to be the best way to explore the different levels of society, from homeless people living on the streets to the landed Gentry in their huge houses in the country . . .". Alan's latest novel is **February's Son** which sees the return of Harry McCoy who is trying to track a psychopathic killer who is leaving a trail of mutilated corpses around Glasgow, whilst rival gangs compete for control of the city's underworld. Alan's novels are dark and highly atmospheric and are a stark reminder of how 1970's Glasgow could be a place of extremes.

Alan Parks lives and works in Glasgow. He graduated with a MA in Moral Philosophy from Glasgow University and he has worked in the music industry for over thirty years.



Photograph © Euan Robertson

"1970s Glasgow hewn from flesh and drawn in blood" **Peter May**

"The latest star of Tartan noir - perhaps even a successor to the late, great William McIlvanney . . . Gripping, utterly authentic and nerve-jangling, this novel announces a fine new voice in crime writing" **Daily Mail**

"Gripping and violent, dark and satisfying. I flew through it" **Bret Easton Ellis**

"Bloody and brilliant. This smasher from Alan Parks is a reminder of how dark Glasgow used to be" **Louise Welsh**

**Friday 17 May**  
**Polly Clark**

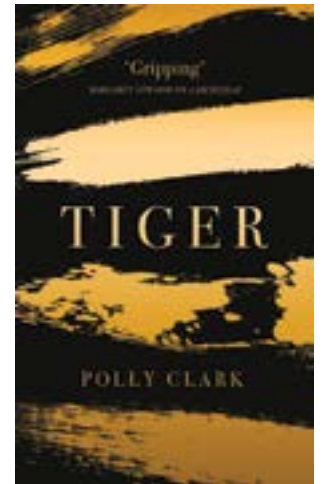
Alexandria Library 7.00pm

Polly Clark was born in Toronto and now lives in Helensburgh. Her debut novel **Larchfield** has been a huge success and it received praise from authors such as Margaret Atwood, Alexander McCall Smith and Louis de Bernieres. Polly's latest book is **Tiger** which crosses two continents and explores the interactions between people and the largest cat on earth, the Siberian Tiger. Polly is a former zookeeper and she travelled to Siberia in order to truly understand the extreme habitat that the Siberian tiger has evolved to dominate. She has stated what she wants the reader to experience when reading **Tiger**: "The tigers and the people of my novel, whilst my fictional creations, are as real as I can make them. When you have read **Tiger**, you will know something of how to track and how to survive in the wilderness. Most of all I hope you experience the tiger as it really is, and love it as I do."

Polly won the Mslexia Prize for **Larchfield**, the Eric Gregory Award and has been shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize. She has also published three poetry collections.



Photograph © Murdo McLeod





**Saturday 18 May**  
**Mara Menzies**

Alexandria Library 11.00am

Come and join Mara Menzies, a leading storyteller and storymaker, for a wonderful and beguiling time. Mara loves to bring African stories to life and share tales with people of all ages and backgrounds. This session is for our younger audience and is suitable for children aged from 6 – 10. Her stories range from traditional folklore such as 'The Seven Day Story', to those based on historical characters. She is very keen to provide an alternative vision of Africa, one which celebrates its extraordinarily rich cultures and traditions. Mara grew up in Kenya and spent her first thirteen years

there, and it has had a profound influence on her. She wanted her daughter to have a connection with her African heritage and wrote a book which was published, leading her into storytelling. Mara's focus is on children of nursery and primary school age. She has told stories in schools, libraries and clubs across Scotland, at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, and she has performed storytelling shows during the Edinburgh Fringe Festival which received rave reviews. This should be a wonderful session for children and we anticipate that it will be very popular.

## Have you joined West Dunbartonshire Libraries?

**There are 8 libraries in the authority:**

Alexandria, Balloch, Clydebank, Dalmuir, Dumbarton, Duntocher, Faifley and Parkhall.

For further details, addresses, telephone numbers and opening hours, please visit

[www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/libraries/library-branches/](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/libraries/library-branches/)

### Did you know?

- You can reserve and renew items online
- You can access eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines for free
- All our libraries have computers with free internet access and Microsoft Office software
- We offer a wide variety of Quest computer courses
- You can borrow items from any West Dunbartonshire library

## eBooks, eMagazines and eAudiobooks

### Like to read anytime, anywhere?

Delve into a world of eBooks and magazines from your computer or mobile device. eBooks, eAudiobooks and digital magazines are available free of charge to West Dunbartonshire library members.

Go to [www.libraryonline.org.uk](http://www.libraryonline.org.uk) or call in to your local library to get started.



## Saturday 18 May Madeleine Bunting

Dumbarton Library 2.00pm

**Island Song** is the debut novel of Madeleine Bunting. It explores the realities of living in Guernsey under German occupation during the Second World War. In 1940, Helene, young, naive and recently married, waves goodbye to her husband, who has enlisted in the British army. Her home, Guernsey, is soon invaded by the Germans, leaving her exposed to the hardships of occupation. Forty years, later, her daughter Roz begins a search for the truth about her father, and stumbles into the secret history of her mother's life. **Island Song** deftly investigates what it was like to live in a tight-knit community that has to live under enemy control. Loyalties are severely tested and people live in a permanent state of moral ambiguity, where survival is a constant struggle and compromise a necessary evil.

Madeleine is a highly respected journalist and non-fiction writer. Her books include **The Model Occupation: The Channel Islands under German Rule, 1940-45** and **Love of Country, A Hebridean Journey**. She was born in North Yorkshire and she studied history at Corpus Christi, Cambridge and Harvard, US. She joined **The Guardian** in 1989 and held numerous positions including being a columnist for twelve years. **Love of Country** was shortlisted for the Wainwright and the Saltire Prizes 2017, and she won the Portico Prize for **The Plot** in 2010 which was also shortlisted for the Royal Society of Literature's Ondaatje Prize. She has won several One World Media awards for her journalism on global justice.



Photograph © Howard Sooley

**On Love of Country**  
'I devoured **Love of Country** in a couple of sittings. It's a magnificent book, a heroic journey that takes us as far into the regions of the heart as into the islands of the north west.'  
**Richard Holloway**



## Saturday 18 May Wendy Erskine

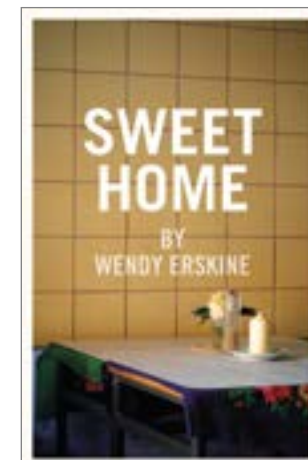
Dumbarton Library 4.00pm

**Sweet Home** is the debut short story collection of Wendy Erskine which has aroused great interest and critical acclaim. A reclusive cult-rock icon ends his days in the street where he was born; a lonely woman is fascinated by her niqab-wearing neighbours; a husband and wife become enmeshed in the lives of the young couple they pay to do their cleaning and gardening. The stories are set in contemporary East Belfast and Wendy Erskine explores her characters' struggles with a robust honesty, wry humour and compassion. The themes they explore are universal and will resonate strongly with readers' experiences.

Wendy graduated from Glasgow University and lives in Belfast. Her work has been published in **The Stinging Fly**, **Stinging Fly Stories** and **Female Lines: New Writing by Women from Northern Ireland** (New Island Books) and her story, **His Mother**, featured on BBC Radio 4. Leading publisher, Picador, has picked up the international rights for **Sweet Home**.

'With skill and style, Erskine unpicks the underlying complexity of ordinary lives, the unexpected intricacy of ordinary situations. These are stories about ramification as opposed to redemption; dark, bittersweet and perfectly formed.'  
**Sara Baume**

'These wonderful stories of people and place are deceptively smooth, stealthily complicated. Each one's a sweet but stiff cocktail. They go down easy, but soon your head starts to pitch and you realise you've been hit with a wallop.'  
**Gavin Corbett**



**Sunday 19 May**  
**Dan Richards**

Balloch Library 2.00pm

Through a series of personal journeys Dan Richards explores the appeal of wild places. **Outposts** looks at locations which are largely inhospitable to humanity and which can dwarf us by their sheer scale. Dan takes us from the Cairngorms of Scotland to the fire-watch lookouts of Washington State; from Iceland's 'Houses of Joy' to the Utah desert; frozen ghost towns in Svalbard to shrines in Japan; Roald Dahl's Metro-land writing hut to a lighthouse in the North Atlantic. He considers landscapes which have had a profound impact upon writers, artists and musicians and contemplates their appeal. What can we do to protect such places and what future do they have?

Dan Richards is the co-author of **Holloway** (with Robert Macfarlane and Stanley Donwood) and the author of **The Beechwood Airship Interviews** and **Climbing Days**. He has written for the **Guardian**, **Harper's Bazaar**, **Caught by the River**, **Monocle** and the **Quietus**.



Photograph © Richards + Dan\_c\_Gullick



"Dan Richards is that rare thing, a writer whose way of looking at the world is utterly unique. His new book, **Outpost**, is shot through with a sense of wonder, an infectious enthusiasm and a surreal wit. Pure joy" Rupert Thomson

**Sunday 19 May**  
**Richard Maclean Smith**

Balloch Library 4.00pm

Richard Maclean Smith researches, writes and produces the podcast **Unexplained**. This podcast is about strange and mysterious real life events that continue to evade explanation. Richard has created a book, also called **Unexplained**, based on his podcasts which looks at ten very strange events including a case of reincarnation in Middlesbrough and the infamous UFO sightings at Rendlesham Forest. He takes ideas once thought of as supernatural or paranormal and questions whether radical ideas in science might provide a new but equally extraordinary explanation for these profoundly strange events.

Richard traces his fascination with the strange and mysterious to the night his mum let him stay up to watch the pilot episode of **Twin Peaks**. He is developing a number of TV drama projects that may or may not live to see the light of day. He lives in Walthamstow with his beautiful partner and a cat called Boo.



Photograph © Donna Mackay



"Is Unexplained the world's spookiest podcast?"  
**The Guardian**

"A grisly treat . . ." **The Financial Times**





## Drawing Workshops with Mitch Miller

Dalmuir Library

Tuesday 14 May 2.00 - 4.00 pm

Wednesday 15 May 7.00 - 9.00 pm

Join artist Mitch Miller for a drawing workshop with a difference. This interactive and informal workshop will look at illustration and drawing as a method of documenting the world around us; the ways it can be used to stimulate thinking and discussion, to report and record information, or as a piece of creative non-fiction in its own right.

In the first part we will explore drawing as a means of observing and being mindful of our environment. We will run through some exercises to break the ice and get you comfortable with drawing. To get you inspired, Mitch will introduce work by himself and other artist/illustrators who work in this area.

In the second part, we will try our hand at various techniques in Visual Journalism, Ethnographic Drawing/Mapping, mind mapping and visual minuting. Mitch will be on hand to guide you through the various methods and approaches.

No previous experience required. Materials will be provided, but if you have a favourite pencil, pen and/or sketchbook, please bring it along!



Mitch Miller is a Glasgow-based artist, researcher and inventor of the illustrative style of the dialectogram. Take a dash of map making, a pinch of architecture and a fair bit of observation and you have the dialectogram, graphic art that depicts place from the ground up.

Owing to the high level of interest in our workshop sessions and to ensure that everyone has the chance to attend Mitch will be running a daytime and an evening session of this workshop. Both sessions are the same. Please bear in mind that you can only book one of these sessions.

**Limited to 10 places per workshop**



# booked!

## SCHOOLS

Did you know that Libraries and Cultural Services also deliver library services in the five High Schools in West Dunbartonshire? As well as supporting the curriculum, we promote reading for pleasure and provide opportunities for young people to encourage and develop their creativity.

This is now the third year of our **Booked!** Schools programme and we are delighted to have two authors who were shortlisted for the Scottish Teenage Book Prize. John Young was recently announced as the winner of this year's prize. Please note that all **Booked!** Schools events are run directly in conjunction with schools and are not open to the public.



### John Young

Award winning author John is originally from Belfast and now lives in Edinburgh. He trained as a lawyer and he helped to found The Teapot Trust, a children's art therapy charity, with his wife Laura.

He has written *The Success of Failure*, *Sandy the Starfish* and *Farwell Tour of a Terminal Optimist* which has won this year's Scottish Teenage Book Prize. Farewell Tour tells the story of two boys who go on an adventure, form an unlikely friendship and share an indomitable spirit.

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### S M Wilson

**Booked!** Schools is delighted to welcome exciting new fantasy author, Susan Wilson to our schools to discuss her debut YA novel *The Extinction Trials*, and its two sequels. Runner up in the Scottish teenage Book Trust Award 2019, Susan has written adult fiction since 2011 and has recently moved into the YA field.

*The Extinction Trials* has been described as "The Hunger Games meets Jurassic Park" and explores the consequences when two vastly contrasting worlds collide.



Please note that all **Booked!** Schools events are run directly in conjunction with schools and are not open to the public.

# SCHOOLS

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## Venues

### Your Library Venues

#### Alexandria Library

Gilmour Street  
Alexandria, G83 0DA  
T: 01389 608974  
F: 01389 710550  
E: alexandria.library@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

#### Balloch Library

Carrochan Road  
Balloch, G83 8BW  
T: 01389 608989  
F: 01389 608995  
E: balloch.library@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

#### Dalmuir Library

Lennox Place,  
Dalmuir, Clydebank, G81 4HR  
T: 0141 562 2425  
F: 0141 952 6497  
E: dalmuir.library@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

#### Dumbarton Library

Strathleven Place  
Dumbarton, G82 1BD  
T: 01389 608992  
F: 01389 608100  
Local Studies: 01389 608965  
E: dumbarton.library@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

#### Parkhall Library

Hawthorn Street  
Parkhall, Clydebank, G81 3EF  
Tel & Fax: 0141 562 2467  
E: parkhall.library@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

### Other Venue

#### Kilmaronock Millennium Hall

Church Rd, Gartocharn  
Alexandria G83 8NF  
T: 01389 830500

Date	Time	Name of event	Venue	Cost
Tuesday 14 May	7.00pm	Richard Holloway	Millennium Hall, Gartocharn	free
Tuesday 14 May	2.00pm	Mitch Miller	Dalmuir Library	free
Wednesday 15 May	7.00pm	Henry Bell	Dalmuir Library	free
Wednesday 15 May	7.00pm	Mitch Miller	Dalmuir Library	free
Thursday 16 May	7.00pm	Alan Parks	Parkhall Library	free
Friday 17 May	7.00pm	Polly Clark	Alexandria Library	free
Saturday 18 May	11.00am	Mara Menzies	Alexandria Library	free
Saturday 18 May	2.00pm	Madeleine Bunting	Dumbarton Library	free
Saturday 18 May	4.00pm	Wendy Erskine	Dumbarton Library	free
Sunday 19 May	2.00pm	Dan Richards	Balloch Library	free
Sunday 19 May	4.00pm	Richard Maclean Smith	Balloch Library	free

Tickets for all events can be booked exclusively using Eventbrite.

Eventbrite

[booked2019.eventbrite.co.uk](http://booked2019.eventbrite.co.uk)

Need help booking tickets?  
Visit your local library and ask a member of staff.

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## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE FESTIVAL OF WORDS

For Booked! tickets visit

 [booked2019.eventbrite.co.uk](https://booked2019.eventbrite.co.uk)

Do you know that we have a number of events  
throughout the year?

**Keep in touch with us**



West Dunbartonshire Libraries and Cultural Services



@wdclibraries

[www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/booked2019](http://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/booked2019)

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