

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A STELLAR LINE-UP FOR THE FIRST-EVER DIGITAL RAWORTHS HARROGATE LITERATURE FESTIVAL WILL BRING WRITERS AND READERS TOGETHER FOR ONE LONG WEEKEND THIS OCTOBER.

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ALEXANDRA SHULMAN, ARIANA NEUMANN, BERNARD CORNWELL, CATHY RENTZENBRINK, DAVID LAMMY MP, ELIF SHAFAK, HUGO VICKERS, JEREMY VINE, JESS PHILLIPS MP, KADIATU KANNEH-MASON, KEN FOLLETT, LEE CHILD, LOYD GROSSMAN, LUAN GOLDIE, NATALIE HAYNES, RORY BREMNER, SIMON MAYO

Writers, politicians, historians, broadcasters, and more, will come together for the first ever digital Raworths Harrogate Literature Festival from Friday 23 – Sunday 25 October.

It has long been the hot ticket on the national Festival circuit after Harper’s Bazaar picked the event as one of the UK’s ‘*best literary festivals*’, and this year is no different as the Festival continues to bring to life a programme to delight and inspire. The renowned literature festival, now in its twelfth year has gone online in 2020 due to the current social distancing measures and restrictions in place on live Festival events.

Compressing what would have been a full Festival weekend, down to seventeen digital events is no easy task, but Harrogate International Festivals have ensured that each event is a programme highlight.

Events include conversations with great novelists: the worldwide acclaimed creator of Sharpe: **Bernard Cornwell**; The Reacher Guy: **Lee Child**; one of the world’s best-loved authors: **Ken Follett**; the passionate classicist exploring the heart of the ancient Greek myths **Natalie Haynes**; Women’s Prize nominated **Luan Goldie**, and the remarkable writer, academic and activist **Elif Shafak**.

A duo of interviews with British Labour Party Politicians brings time for reflection: at a time when many feel the world isn’t listening, **Jess Phillips MP** offers inspiration to those of us who want to speak out and make a difference, and **David Lammy MP** explores the fascinating effects of our need to belong.

Stars of non-fiction: **Hugo Vickers** brings to life the jaw-dropping tale of Gladys Deacon – Duchess of Marlborough, whilst Ex Vogue editor **Alexandra Shulman** and New York Times bestselling author **Ariana Neumann** share their memoirs.

The matriarch of Britain's most musical family: **Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason** shares a beautiful tale of determination as she opens up what it takes to raise a musical family in a Britain divided by class and race.

Broadcasters and screen icons turned authors: **Simon Mayo, Jeremy Vine, Loyd Grossman** and **Rory Bremner** round out the programme with entertaining and inspiring tales of their careers.

This year's Raworths Harrogate Literature Festival is free to attend and will be streamed through the Harrogate International Festivals website. With over 20,000 viewers for the digital Festival in summer, and with a programme this stellar, it's sure to be a bumper weekend of conversation, knowledge and laughter.

Zoe Robinson, Raworths Managing Partner, said: *"The content and delivery may have gone digital, but the inspiration that literature brings will continue to shine through."*

We are once again delighted to be partnering with Harrogate International Festivals and sponsoring the Raworths Harrogate Literature Festival - established as one of the leading literature festivals in the UK."

Sharon Canavar, Chief Executive of Harrogate International Festivals, said *"2020 has been a journey of discovery and adventure, a theme that trails through our programme. For Harrogate International Festivals, reinvention has come out of necessity to ensure survival of our arts charity and to continue in our mission to bring the very best of our events to audiences."*

Whilst there is no denying that this is a hugely challenging time for the Festival, and for artists, through our exciting digital weekend of events, bottling a taste of our usual Festival, we support authors, creators and suppliers and bring them together with audiences as community in a celebration of literature. For we have never needed stories that explore what it means to be human, more than we do now."

We can't wait to invite audiences to this incredibly stimulating, exciting and inspiring Festival."

Free to attend, the Raworths Harrogate Literature Festival will be streamed through the Harrogate International Festivals website: harrogateinternationalfestivals.com from Friday 23 to Sunday 25 October.

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For further information please contact Harrogate International Festivals:
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About Harrogate International Festivals

'Harrogate International Festivals' is a charitable organisation with a mission to present a diverse year-long programme of live events that bring immersive and moving cultural experiences to as many people as possible. Delivering artistic work of national importance, the Festival curates and produces over 300 unique and surprising performances each year, celebrating world-renowned artists and championing new and up-coming talent across music, literature, science, philosophy and psychology. The HIF+ ongoing education outreach programme engages schools, young people and the local community with workshops, talks, projects and inspiring activities, ensuring everyone can experience the Festival's world class programme and the transformative power of the arts.

As an arts charity reliant on ticket sales, 2020 has been a challenging year for Harrogate International Festivals. Since lockdown the Festival has worked tirelessly to focus on people. To look outwards to ensure accessibility, participation, supporting authors and artists, and ensuring a future for the arts with a series of free online events ensuring access to the festival for as many people as possible.

Established in 1966, Harrogate International Festivals are an artistic force to be reckoned with and a key cultural provider for the North of England.

Find out more at:

- Website: www.harrogateinternationalfestivals.com
- Facebook: @HarrogateInternationalFestivals
- Twitter: @HarrogateFest
- Instagram: @harrogatefestivals

About Raworths Harrogate Literature Festival

Launched in 2012, the *Raworths Harrogate Literature Festival* has become the hot ticket on the national Festival circuit thanks to its stellar line-up of literary names.

Held from 23-25th October and described as ‘*One of the UK’s best Literary Festivals*’ by Harpers Bazaar, this Festival, now in its ninth year, celebrates great writing by bringing an excellent range of best-selling authors, influential politicians, comedians and stars of the stage to share their stories, with a programme designed to entertain and inspire.

Previous speakers include: Prime Minister David Cameron, BBC Countryfile broadcaster John Craven; veteran news anchor Mark Austin; author Conn Iggulden, politician Alan Johnson; blogger Gill Simms; explorer Chris Bonnington; politician-turned-strictly-star Anne Widdecombe; presenter-turned-GB triathlete Louise Minchin; and business titan Sir Tim Waterstone.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic this year’s Festival will be going online for the first time, ensuring access for as wide an audience as possible.