



Calendar September - December 2014

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 13	Writer Networking Morning: Telford	Free
Friday 26	European Day of Languages	Free

OCTOBER

Thursday 2 - Saturday 11	Birmingham Literature Festival	Various
From Thursday 23	Short Course: Writing for Older Children and Teenagers	£99 for all six sessions
Monday 27 - Friday 31	Page Talk: Young Writers' Week	£25

NOVEMBER

Saturday 1	Page Talk: Young Writers' Festival	Free
Tuesday 18	Next Generation Poets	£8 / £6
Wednesday 26	Seven Minute Stories	£5
Saturday 29	The Writers' Toolkit	£37 / £31

DECEMBER

Monday 1	The Librarian's Toolkit	Free
Saturday 13	Writer Networking Afternoon: Walsall	Free

COMING SOON

January 2015	Young Writers' Foundation Group	Price TBC
Thursday 5 February	Poetry by Heart - Birmingham Final	Free

Thanks to all Friends, Supporters & Benefactors of Writing West Midlands.

If you would like more information about our Friends scheme, please visit the Support Us page on either of our websites.

www.writingwestmidlands.org / www.birminghamliteraturefestival.org



Writing West Midlands, Unit 204, The Custard Factory,
Gibb St, Birmingham B9 4AA. Tel: 0121 246 2770
www.writingwestmidlands.org

Company Registration Number: 6264124. Registered Charity Number: 1147710.
The advertised programme is subject to change without notice where unavoidable.



WRITING WEST MIDLANDS

Programme of Activities September - December 2014

SUPPORTING CREATIVE WRITERS AND CREATIVE WRITING IN THE WEST MIDLANDS.

WWW.WRITINGWESTMIDLANDS.ORG



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

We are the region's literature development agency. We support the development of creative writing activities and participation across the West Midlands.

In this brochure you will find details of our public activities between September and December 2014. There are three main strands to our work. Look out for the symbols in this brochure.



WRITERS

We support writers as they develop their creative careers. We run training courses and workshops, networking events and industry conferences and a writer development programme. We also signpost people towards opportunities, projects and training.

www.writingwestmidlands.org



YOUNG WRITERS

We work with children and young people in and out of school to develop their interest in creative writing through our Write On! programme. This work is made up of: in-school writing workshop projects; out of school creative writing clubs (Write On! Young Writers' groups); and our online Write On! Magazine. Write On! works with children and young people aged 8 - 16+ and also involves teachers, parents and carers.

www.writingwestmidlands.org/young-writers-schools

STAY IN TOUCH

From time to time other events and activities may take place that we aren't able to include here. To stay in touch why not join our mailing list. For more details about what we do, please visit www.writingwestmidlands.org.

  Tweet us @writingwestmids or find us on Facebook.

If you are a writer in the region, we'd love to hear from you.

WELCOME

Welcome to Writing West Midlands' programme of events and activities for Autumn 2014.

Autumn is always a very busy time for Writing West Midlands and I'm sure for many writers. It certainly feels like the writing sector has never been busier and we hope to play our part in bringing writers together and to support and inspire them.

For inspiration look no further than the Birmingham Literature Festival which runs from 2 to 11 October and features a stunning array of wonderful writers. As many of you will know, the Birmingham Literature Festival is a small, friendly, independent festival.

This season also includes opportunities to develop the skills and contacts that help sustain a creative life. Our annual writer networking day, The Writers' Toolkit on Saturday 29 November, welcomes emerging writers from across the UK to meet and talk with speakers from across the writing industry. Also, look out for our smaller writer networking events dotted around the year.

Young writers are very important to Writing West Midlands. We run the UK's biggest programme of creative writing workshops for children and young people, offering over 200 workshops a year through our twenty Young Writers' Groups. And for young writers who can get to Stafford over the half-term, we will be running the third of our Page Talk Young Writers Festivals.

Finally, thank you to the many individuals and organisations who support our work and in doing so support creative writing in the region. Our Friends Scheme continues to grow – a snip at £30, with manifold benefits. If you can spare a small amount of cash – or a large amount – we'd love to talk to you about our work. And if you can support in other ways, as a volunteer for instance, or simply by helping us spread the word, we'd be very grateful.

THE WRITING WEST MIDLANDS TEAM

Jonathan Davidson
Chief Executive

Abigail Campbell
Festival Programmer

Joanne Penn
Projects Manager

Sarah Bratby
Marketing Assistant

Sara Beadle
Programmes Director

Connor Evans
Team Administrator

Hayley Frances
Project Fieldworker

Emma Boniwell
Relationship Manager

Chris Swann
Events Manager

Cover Image: River Severn, Worcester, West Midlands.

NEWS FROM US

From the return of our creative writing groups for children and young people to our annual writer networking event and a commission. Here's a selection of our news...

WRITE ON! YOUNG WRITERS' GROUPS

Following their summer break, our Write On! Young Writers' Groups will be meeting again at various West Midlands locations from September. The groups, which are for young writers aged 8 - 16, meet monthly for up to two hours with a professional writer and an assistant writer. They look at all sorts of creative writing, receive feedback on their work and have individual writing time as well as working in small groups or pairs. Groups are divided into age ranges for those aged 8 - 11 and 12 - 16.

We currently have groups meeting in Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry, Telford, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Staffordshire. Our newest group for September will be meeting in Pershore and is for those aged 8 - 11.

Sessions cost £5 each which, in most cases, can be paid on the day. Young writers can join at any time but places are limited. To see the map of where each of the groups meet and book places, please visit our website.



For more details:

www.writingwestmidlands.org/young-writers-schools/write-on-young-writers-groups

MIDLAND METRO COMMISSION

Midland Metro are currently overhauling and extending their light rail system that operates in the West Midlands between Wolverhampton and Birmingham. They will soon begin looking for ten West Midlands writers to produce a short story or poem to celebrate this transition.

The work will be showcased at an event in 2015 (in partnership with

Writing West Midlands) and on the tram network in various ways.

Sign up to our newsletter to get details about this call out.



For more details:

www.writingwestmidlands.org

NEWS FROM OUR PARTNERS

Writing West Midlands is proud to work with partner organisations and individuals across the region and nationally. Here are a few of their upcoming projects...

READING LIVES APP

Developed in partnership with the University of Birmingham and developer Tim Hodson with the support of Arts Council England and the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Reading Lives app enables you to explore stories of people's reading lives and share your own.

For more information:

www.readinglives.org



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

timhodson.com

www.beyondthebookproject.org



The app will play a special part in the Readers' Afternoon at this year's Birmingham Literature Festival. Your participation will help us to make the app even better, and understand more about the role reading plays in people's lives.

24 HOUR CULTURAL SURVEY

What does art and culture mean to you? The 24 Hour Cultural Survey is aiming to take a snapshot of the cultural life of our region during one single day. The West Midlands has an amazing depth of arts and culture. By finding out what happens in one single day, we can learn to value the things that you hold dear.

Take part in the 24 Hour Cultural Survey from noon on Friday 24 to noon on Saturday 25 October 2014, and tell us why arts and culture matter to you. The answers will help arts and heritage organisations in the West Midlands to plan for the future.

For more details:

www.24hourculture.co.uk / Twitter: [#24hourculture](https://twitter.com/24hourculture)



TEACH WRITING

Teach Writing is a new professional development opportunity for teachers in the West Midlands from the creative writing organisation, Arvon. Designed to improve the teaching of writing by developing the confidence and writing skills of 16 teachers,

it will include a residential week at the Hurst John Osborne Arvon Centre in Shropshire. The programme will run from January 2015 and applications are now open. In partnership with Writing West Midlands, University of Exeter and the Open University.

For more information on how to take part: arvon.org.

www.arvon.org or contact **Becky Swain** becky.swain@arvon.org



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

WRITER NETWORKING AFTERNOON: TELFORD

Saturday 13 September, 2 - 4pm

Wellington Library, Wellington Civic and Leisure Centre, Larkin Way, Telford, TF1 1LX

Join Writing West Midlands for an afternoon of discussion and networking. This is a great opportunity for writers to meet one another, share ideas and initiatives and hear from industry professionals.

Speakers include Simon Thirsk, joint-founder and Chairman of Bloodaxe Books and novelist, Pauline Fisk. Simon will offer a unique insight into the contemporary poetry publishing scene, drawing on his many years of working with poets and the publishing world. Pauline will talk about working as a writer and how she finds inspiration from her surrounding landscape, expeditions further afield and mythology. The afternoon will be hosted by Jonathan Davidson, Chief Executive of Writing West Midlands.

www.alcs.co.uk

FREE

Book: joanne@writingwestmidlands.org



EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES

Friday 26 September, 1 - 3pm

Book Box, Library of Birmingham. Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2ND

To mark the European Day of Languages in the West Midlands, students from KS3 and KS4 are invited to a special celebration event at the Library of Birmingham. At this free event hosted by Routes into Languages in partnership with Writing West Midlands, we'll be getting creative with languages and poetry, as well as hearing some of the winning entries from this year's **Mother Tongue Other Tongue** competition.

The programme will include presentations from the winners of the **Mother Tongue Other Tongue** competition and small workshops led by poet Elisabeth Charis to create poems in French, German, Spanish or community languages. Light refreshments will be provided.

Presented in association with Aston University.

www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk

FREE

Book: www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk



OCTOBER EVENTS

BIRMINGHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Thursday 2 - Saturday 11 October

Various venues

The Birmingham Literature Festival 2014 features events, activities, workshops and performances of literature from a stellar line-up of writers, speakers and producers. Join us for events including **Meera Syal**, **Roger McGough**, an **Urban Sermon** from **Owen Jones**, **Sophie Hannah**, **Stephen May**, **Jackie Kay**, **Malorie Blackman**, **Peaky Blinders** writer **Steven Knight**, **Helen Dunmore**, **Sathnam Sanghera**, **Louise Doughty**, **BBC Radio 4** and writers longlisted for the **Man Booker Prize for Fiction**, which will be announced shortly afterwards.

The programme also includes the makers of BBC Radio's new **Home Front** series, **Guy Masterson** performing of **Dylan Thomas**' selected works, **Patience Agbabi** and **Lavinia Greenlaw** reading from their respective **Chaucer re-workings**, and ten writers specially commissioned to rewrite an element of the **Odyssey set in the Midlands**. Additionally there is a strong international strand to this year's Festival: Director, writer and actress **Janet Suzman**, and an event celebrating **Danish Noir**, with writers including **Dagmar Winther**, one half of the Danish writing duo **Sander Jakobsen** (*The Preacher*).

Elsewhere in the Festival you will find a unique residency, **One Page Wonders**, and commissioned activities including **floating readings**, a **comic book making project** and the telling of **ghostly tales** around the library with Birmingham-based theatre company, **Little Earthquake**.

Writing Workshops at the Birmingham Literature Festival

Writing Comedy with Stephen May, Saturday 4 October, 10am - 12pm

Last Act: Dance and Poetry Workshop, Tuesday 7 October, 5.30 - 6.30pm

Writing from Life with Tiffany Murray, Saturday 11 October, 10am - 12pm

Voices from the First World War Creative Writing Workshop with Fiona Joseph, Saturday 11 October, 10.30am - 12.30pm

Voices from the First World War Poetry Workshop with Garrie Fletcher & Antony Owen, Saturday 11 October, 1.30 - 3.30pm

Other events you can get involved in throughout the Festival

Emergency Poet, Sunday 5 October, 11am - 5pm (drop in)

BBC Radio 4's Poetry Please, Sunday 5 October, 2 - 3.30pm

Raven: Comic Book Q&A with the Artists, Wednesday 8 October, 6 - 6.30pm

The Boat that Rocked: Poetry and Music, Friday 10 October, 6 - 8pm

Short Fiction Open Mic, Saturday 11 October, 2 - 3pm

Lost Districts: Finding Joel Lane, throughout the Festival

www.birminghamliteraturefestival.org



OCTOBER

SHORT COURSE: WRITING FOR OLDER CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

Thursday 23 October - Thursday 4 December (excl. 13 Nov), 6 - 8pm
Moseley Exchange, 149-153 Alcester Road, Moseley, Birmingham. B13 8JP

Join Leila Rasheed for this six week evening course which will use writing games and exercises to explore the exciting and diverse field of writing for older children and teenagers. Topics covered will include: creating unforgettable characters, inventing original plots, shaping scenes and stories for maximum tension, using genre and busting genres, creating powerful story through point of view, finding your theme, understanding age ranges and writing 'within hearing' of children and teenagers. The course will also briefly cover market trends and issues in UK children's publishing.

Leila Rasheed is the author of three books for ages 9 -12, and several publisher-led novels for children and teenagers. She teaches Writing at the University of Warwick, where she gained a distinction in an MA in Writing. She also has an MA in Children's Literature.

www.leilarasheed.com

£99 for six sessions BOOK: 0121 245 4455 / www.writingwestmidlands.org



**Aged 8 - 16 with a passion for creative writing
and interested in developing your skills?**



Write On!
Young Writers' Groups

Write On! Young Writers' Groups are monthly creative writing groups for children and young people aged 8 - 16 which are led by professional writers. They meet from September - June at various West Midlands locations.

Sessions are £5 and young writers can join at any time but places are limited. To find out more and to join, please visit the Young Writers tab on www.writingwestmidlands.org.

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER

PAGE TALK; YOUNG WRITERS' WEEK

Monday 27 October - Saturday 1 November, 11am - 4pm
Shire Hall Gallery, Market Square, Stafford ST16 2LD

Page Talk is a series of Creative Writing workshops and festivals for young writers aged 12-16. Page Talk Young Writers' Week explores the world of creative writing through inspiring workshops with professional writers and culminates in a one day festival of events.

A group of young people will work with professionals to produce a variety of new writing. Past events have seen poetry, live radio plays and real life story telling. This time around participants can also sample flash fiction and journalism. At the end of the week, the young writers will have the chance to take part in the Page Talk Young Writers' Festival. This gives young writers the chance to show their friends, family and members of the public what they have been working on during the week, as well as meet and get advice from professionals.

Previous Page Talk projects have taken over venues such as the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon and the Arena Theatre in Wolverhampton where the performed writing created two exciting days of original festival events.

For our third and final Page Talk of 2014, we are looking for a group of young people aged 12-16 who are free and ready to get creative in Stafford in the Autumn half term from 27th October – 1st November. Their venue for the week will be the Shire Hall Gallery in the centre of Stafford. The Shire Hall Gallery is housed in the Grade 2* listed building which is situated in the heart of Stafford's town centre. Workshops and performances will take place in the building's two historic Courtrooms.

This is the perfect opportunity for young writers to gain experience working with professional writers. We are looking for people of all abilities to take part in this project and welcome 12 - 16 year olds with a passion for creative writing.

It may be possible for the young writers involved in the Page Talk: Young Writers' Week to take part in Arts Award during the course of the week. More information will be provided to all parents of those who book before the week.

www.writingwestmidlands.org/page-talk

£25, per person for the week

BOOK: 0121 245 4455 / www.writingwestmidlands.org



NOVEMBER EVENTS

NEXT GENERATION POETS

Tuesday 18 November, 6 - 8pm

BCU Parkside (Lecture Hall P350), 5 Cardigan Street, Birmingham, B4 7BD

The Poetry Book Society, in partnership with Writing West Midlands and the Institute of Creative and Critical Writing at Birmingham City University, present two poets from Next Generation Poets 2014, a major promotion of the 20 most exciting new poets who have published their first collection in the last decade, reading with a young newcomer. New Generation Poets including Carol Ann Duffy, Simon Armitage and 18 others, established a movement in 1994 and Next Generation Poets in 2004 helped bring to prominence the next group of rising poets, including Paul Farley, Robin Robertson, Alice Oswald and 17 others. Find out via the website below in September which poets will take the limelight in the next ten years

www.poetrybooks.co.uk/projects/51/

£8 / £6

BOOK: 0121 245 4455 / www.writingwestmidlands.org

(Free entry for BCU students & Staff - please book)



The Institute of
Creative and Critical Writing



SEVEN MINUTE STORIES

Wednesday 26 November, 6 - 8pm

Library of Birmingham, Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2ND

Back in Spring 2014, as part of the West Midlands Readers' Network's commissioning strand, we set six regional writers the challenge of writing a short story in a matter of a few short months. The writers have since been working with narrative prompts and ideas offered by reading groups around the region. Tonight is an opportunity to hear short extracts of the stories and to take away a limited edition anthology with all six stories featured in full.

The writers: Yasmin Ali, Liam Brown, William Gallagher, Charlie Hill, Catherine O'Flynn and Kate Long will be in conversation with West Midlands Readers' Network co-ordinator Roz Goddard to talk about the highs and lows of writing to commission.



West Midlands Readers' Network



www.wmreadersnetwork.co.uk

£5

BOOK: 0121 245 4455 / www.writingwestmidlands.org

NOVEMBER

THE WRITERS' TOOLKIT - A NATIONAL WRITER NETWORKING DAY

Saturday 29 November, 9.30am - 4pm

Bramall Music Building, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT

The Writers' Toolkit is an annual writer networking day for emerging and established writers. Run by Writing West Midlands, the region's literature development agency, the day offers writers the pick of sixteen sessions with industry professionals, along with keynote presentations and of course plenty of networking time.

Sessions cover topics ranging from working with publishers and agents, working in schools and community settings, writing for television and film, teaching creative writing, developing and getting funding for writing projects and residencies to making the internet work for you. Each session is presented by two expert speakers, with opportunity for questions and discussion.

Speakers are drawn from a wide range of national and regional organisations and partners including the University of Birmingham, BBC, Birmingham Rep, National Association of Writers in Education, Arvon, The British Council and various publishers, universities and arts organisations. This year we will also have displays and stands from national and regional literature organisations, a writers' information stand and a bookstall.

The day is a wonderful opportunity for writers to meet, share ideas and make new contacts. Places are limited and we anticipate high levels of demand. The ticket price also includes lunch and refreshments.

This year we are delighted to be supported by the University of Birmingham and the Royal Literary Fund.

The full programme of sessions will be available closer to the event on our website at www.writingwestmidlands.org. You can also see details of previous Toolkits and useful information to come from each day on our website.



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Royal Literary Fund

www.writingwestmidlands.org/event/the-writers-toolkit-2014

£37 / £31 (INCLUDES LUNCH)

BOOK: 0121 245 4455 / www.writingwestmidlands.org

DECEMBER EVENTS

SUPPORT US



THE LIBRARIANS' TOOLKIT

Monday 1 December, 9.30am - 4pm

Library of Birmingham, Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2ND

A skills-building and networking conference for frontline library staff in the West Midlands.



West Midlands Readers' Network working in partnership with Writing West Midlands presents a practical day of workshops and networking opportunities for library staff. The conference will be opened by Sue Wilkinson, Chief Executive of The Reading Agency. Workshop topics will include: Planning, running and marketing reading events, developing reading champions in the library and beyond and using social media to promote library events and services. There will be readings from poet and novelist Sophie Hannah and from Jo Bell, the Canal Laureate. Full details will be available at the beginning of October.

West Midlands Readers' Network



Please email joanne@writingwestmidlands.org for a booking form. There are five free places available per library authority.

FREE

BOOK: joanne@writingwestmidlands.org

WRITER NETWORKING MORNING: WALSALL

Saturday 13 December, 10.30am - 12.30pm

Walsall Central Library, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TR

Join Writing West Midlands for a free morning of discussion and networking for emerging and established writers. A great opportunity for writers to meet one another, share ideas and initiatives and hear from industry professionals.



Speakers include Robert Harper, with an additional guest to be confirmed shortly. The morning will be hosted by Sara Beadle, Programmes Director of Writing West Midlands, who will talk about how Writing West Midlands can help writers develop and sustain their creative careers.



Supported by Walsall Libraries.

FREE

BOOK: joanne@writingwestmidlands.org

SUPPORT CREATIVE WRITING AND WRITERS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS BY BECOMING A FRIEND

Writing West Midlands works with creative writers of all ages to support their development and encourage participation in creative writing activities across the region. For as little as £30 a year you can make a real contribution to creative writing and literature activities in the West Midlands.

BENEFITS OF BECOMING A FRIEND INCLUDE:

10% off tickets for all Birmingham Literature Festival events (excluding workshops)

20% off books sold at the Birmingham Literature Festival

10% discount off total bill at Cafe Opus at Ikon

25% off a la carte menu at Loch Fyne (selected branches only)

25% off Nine Arches Press books

Exclusive quarterley newsletter

2 for 1 offer on tickets to the RSC viewing tower

To support the work of Writing West Midlands sign up as a Friend, Supporter or Benefactor.

To join, fill in this form or you can join online at
www.writingwestmidlands.org/support-us.

Please enter your details below in block capitals

Title

First
name

Last
Name

Mobile

Phone

Email

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@

Address

Postcode

SUPPORT US

Level of support

I would like to become a:

☐ Friend (£30) ☐ Joint Friend (£50)
available for two people sharing the same address

Want to give more?

If you are able to give a larger donation, you will help us to bring writing to even more parts of our region. Become a:

☐ Supporter (£80) ☐ Benefactor (£150+)

In order to claim your discounted tickets, we have to pass your details to our box office, The Box. Please tick if **you do not** wish us to do this. ☐

The Box may use your details to give you information about events at the Library of Birmingham. Please tick if you **do not** wish to hear about these events. ☐

The Box may pass your details on to carefully selected third parties. Please tick here if you **do not** want to hear from them. ☐

To become a Friend, Supporter or Benefactor please complete this form and send it along with a cheque made payable to Writing West Midlands to:

**Emma Boniwell, Relationship Manager, Writing West Midlands,
Unit 204, The Custard Factory, Gibb Street, Birmingham, B9 4AA.**

If you would prefer to pay online, please visit our website to fill in an online form and pay via PayPal or Direct Debit.

www.writingwestmidlands.org/support-us.

Thank you for your support!

Internal use only

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COMING SOON

YOUNG WRITERS' FOUNDATION GROUP

Meeting Saturdays four times a year from January 2015, time TBC

Birmingham City University, Parkside Campus, 5 Cardigan Street, Birmingham, B4 7BD



In response to the continued success of our Young Writers' Groups for ages 8 to 16, Writing West Midlands will be launching a new group for young writers aged 16 to 19+. Initially based in Birmingham, the Young Writers' Foundation Group will meet four times a year, out of term time, and on each occasion offer a full day of creative writing activity supported by professional writers.

Details of the Young Writers' Foundation Group will be released shortly, with the first day to take place in early January 2015. If you would like to express interest please complete our sign-up form on www.writingwestmidlands.org/young-writers.

www.writingwestmidlands.org/young-writers

The Institute of
Creative and Critical Writing



PRICE TBC

BOOK: www.writingwestmidlands.org

POETRY BY HEART - BIRMINGHAM FINAL

Thursday 5 February 2015, 7pm

Library of Birmingham, Centenary Square, Broad Street, Birmingham, B1 2ND



Writing West Midlands is delighted to be supporting the 2015 Poetry by Heart competition. Poetry By Heart is a pioneering national competition designed to encourage young people aged 14-18 and at school and college in England to learn and to recite poems by heart.

Each participant is challenged to memorise and recite two poems – one published before 1914 and one in or after 1914.

Writing West Midlands will be hosting the Birmingham final on Thursday 5 February at the Library of Birmingham. For more information on how to take part please go to www.poetrybyheart.org.uk.

www.poetrybyheart.org.uk

FREE

BOOK: 0121 245 4455 / www.writingwestmidlands.org

POETRY BY
HEART