

BBC NORTHERN IRELAND

libraries  **NI**

BOOK WEEK NI

19 - 25 October 2026



Seven Days. Great Books. Big Conversations.

Book Week NI is back, and there's a lot to talk about!

Meet brilliant writers, hear the stories behind the books, and discover something unexpected. From crime and cookery to poetry, history, fiction and family adventures, there's something happening every day.

From 19–25 October, libraries across Northern Ireland are bringing readers and writers together for seven days of books, ideas, stories and conversation.

Turn the page. Pick your favourites. We'll see you there.

Book Week NI is a joint initiative from Libraries NI and BBC Northern Ireland. Booking details for events where booking is essential or advised are on page 27.



(Probably) The Greatest Irish Books Ever Written

Belfast Central Library | The Writers' Room
at 12:30pm

What makes a great Irish book, and who gets to decide?

John Self hosts Wendy Erskine, Tara West and Irish Times Books Editor Martin Doyle for a lively panel discussion about the books that deserve a place among Ireland's greatest.

Expect strong opinions, good books and probably some debate.

This event includes lunch at 12:30pm.
Talk begins at 1:00pm.

Booking essential.

The Enigma Of Andrew Carnegie

Robber, Baron or Visionary Philanthropist?

Bangor Carnegie Library
at 3:00pm



The man behind thousands of libraries, but what do we really know about Andrew Carnegie?

Quintin Oliver, who purchased Belfast's former Carnegie Oldpark Library and is leading its regeneration as the Carnegie Centre for Weaving, explores the contradictions of Carnegie's life, extraordinary career and lasting legacy, including the 2,500 free public libraries he helped establish around the world.

Booking advisable.

Philip Johnston

Meet The Author and Illustrator

Portaferry Library
at 6:00pm



What happens when local history, imagination and illustration collide?

Join author and illustrator Philip Johnston for a journey behind the pages of his books, as he reveals the places, people and stories that spark his imagination.

Discover how an idea becomes a story, how a story becomes an illustration, and how inspiration can be hiding much closer to home than you think.

Booking advisable.

An Evening with Emma Heatherington

Ballyhackamore Library

at 6:30pm



Bestselling author Emma Heatherington comes to Ballyhackamore to talk books, writing and the stories behind the stories.

With 16 novels to her name, Emma will share the inspiration behind her much-loved fiction and introduce her brand-new novel, *Together for Christmas*.

Booking essential.

Bad Bridget

Crime, Mayhem and the Lives of Irish Emigrant Women

Belfast Central Library
at 6:30pm



Forget everything you thought you knew about the Irish emigrant story.

Elaine Farrell and Leanne McCormick uncover the extraordinary real lives of Irish women and girls who emigrated to North America. Stories of crime, hardship, survival and reinvention that challenge the traditional narrative.

Booking essential.

Book Nook Book Fair

Rathcoole Library
11:00am - 1:00pm

Love books? Come and meet the people who write them.

Rathcoole Library welcomes a fantastic gathering of local writers, including James Murphy, Bernie McQuillan, Linda Hagan, Kelly Creighton, Jane Buckley and John Mackel, for a Book Nook Book Fair. Drop in, meet the storytellers, discover their work and perhaps find your next great read.

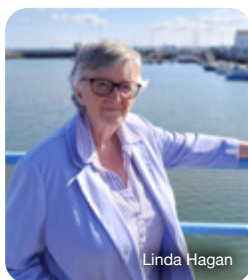
Everyone welcome.



James Murphy



Bernie McQuillan



Linda Hagan

Stories and Songs with Michael Bird

Antrim Library
at 2:30pm



Good stories deserve to be shared, and Michael Bird has plenty of them.

Join the storyteller and musician for an entertaining afternoon of tales, tunes and memorable characters, inspired by folklore, local history and stories passed down through generations.

Funny, fascinating and full of surprises, expect great storytelling, plenty of personality and a song or two along the way.

Booking essential.

Joe McCoubrey Meet The Author

Downpatrick Library
at 6:30pm



Crime, thrills and ten books' worth of stories.

Downpatrick-based bestselling author Joe McCoubrey takes readers behind his popular Quinn and Mike Devon crime series.

Hear where his stories come from, how he creates his characters and what keeps him returning to the darker side of fiction.

Everyone welcome.

Séamas Mac Annaidh Meet The Author

Fivemiletown Library
at 6:30pm



Where does a writer find the idea that becomes a story?

Join Irish author Séamas Mac Annaidh for an evening exploring writing, plots and inspiration.

Hear about his approach to storytelling, the ideas that spark his imagination and what happens between that first flash of inspiration and the finished page.

Everyone welcome.

Colin Bateman

Newtownbreda Library
at 6:30pm



Crime, comedy, screenwriting, and more than 30 years of stories.

Bangor-born Colin Bateman is the award-winning author of *Divorcing Jack* and many critically acclaimed novels, several of which he has adapted for the screen.

Hear Colin talk about writing, his career and the stories behind the books, with time for your questions too.

Booking essential.

An Evening with Felicity McCall

Shantallow Library
at 6:30pm



Got a story in you? Felicity McCall might just persuade you to start writing it.

Author and former BBC journalist Felicity McCall shares the highs, hurdles and lessons of a life spent writing, and the battle with turning ideas into words that connect with people.

Part conversation, part inspiration, this is an evening for readers, writers and anyone who has ever wondered if they could write too.

Booking essential.

In Conversation with Martina Devlin

Omagh Library
at 6:30pm



Martina Devlin

Literary legends, scandalous lives, tangled relationships, and an Irish artist at the heart of it all.

Acclaimed author Martina Devlin joins award-winning Northern Irish crime writer Brian McGilloway to delve into *Glorious Monsters*, her new novel inspired by Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley, Claire Clairmont and the extraordinary world of the Romantic circle.

Hear Martina reveal the inspiration, imagination and research behind this richly woven story.

Booking essential.



Brian McGilloway

The World's Craziest Pop-Up Book!

Comber Library
at 6:45pm



This is no ordinary pop-up book.

Local graphic artist Neal McCullough – aka Hand Drawn Creative – reveals the incredible story of creating an over-the-top illustrated pop-up book celebrating legendary songwriter Allee Willis, her pink Hollywood home and her famous friends.

From a call from Hollywood to working with a team of world-class creatives, expect pop culture, Los Angeles legends and stories behind some of the world's biggest hit songs.

You have to see this book to believe it.

Booking essential.

Making Reading Fun At Home

Online
at 8:00pm



How do you turn “Do I have to read?” into “Can I have one more chapter?”

Join Laura Fitzpatrick, National Literacy Trust and National Year of Reading lead for Northern Ireland, for a lively, practical session full of ideas parents can actually use.

Discover how to find what gets your child excited about reading, make books part of everyday family life and encourage a love of reading, without it feeling like homework.



Online registration required.
Scan the QR code to book your place via Zoom.

Love Your Library Day One Day. 96 libraries. Plenty to love.

Today we're celebrating the books, people, places and possibilities that make our libraries special.

Look out for what's happening in your local library and tell us what you love about yours.



Story Time with Johnathan Welsh

Carryduff Library
at 3:00pm



Step through the wardrobe and into a world of imagination.

Celebrate Love Your Library Day with narrator and voice-over artist Johnathan Welsh as he brings the much-loved world of C. S. Lewis to life.

Journey into Narnia, meet unforgettable characters and rediscover the magic of a story brilliantly told.

For all ages. Everyone welcome.

An Afternoon of Crime with Linda Hagan

Dungannon Library
at 3:00pm



What does it take to create a crime story that keeps readers guessing?

Meet crime author Linda Hagan and discover the inspiration behind her gripping books, her writing journey and the characters and crimes she creates along the way.

There'll be plenty of opportunity for questions, conversation and a chat with Linda herself.

Everyone welcome.

How Poetry Enhances Life with Moyra Donaldson

Donaghadee Library
at 6:30pm



Can a poem change the way we see, feel or understand something?

Acclaimed poet Moyra Donaldson reflects on her own writing career and the experiences that have shaped her work, while exploring the power of poetry to capture emotions, make sense of our lives and connect us with others.

Part personal journey, part celebration of poetry, discover the words, ideas and experiences that have inspired Moyra along the way.

Booking essential.

Bernie McQuillan Meet The Author

Lisburn Road Library
at 6:45pm



Every novel starts somewhere. For local author Bernie McQuillan, it became *The Lobster Pot*.

Join Bernie as she takes you behind the pages of her debut novel, sharing the inspiration, characters and ideas that brought the story to life.

Hear how *The Lobster Pot* grew from an idea into a finished novel, discover the twists and turns of her writing journey and find out what it feels like to finally hold your first published book in your hands.

Booking essential.



Linda Hagan



Eirin Thompson

Queens of Crime Fiction Linda Hagan and Eirin Thompson Belfast Central Library at 2:00pm

Two crime writers. Two very different ways to commit murder – on the page, at least!

Linda Hagan and Eirin Thompson delve into the darker side of fiction, from police procedurals and psychological crime to the characters, motives and twists that keep readers guessing.

Where does a killer idea come from? How do you create suspense? And just how difficult is it to plot the perfect murder?

Expect secrets, suspects and plenty of surprises as two of Northern Ireland's crime writers reveal what really goes on behind the pages.

Booking advisable.



John Banville



Martin Doyle

In Conversation with John Banville

Armagh City Library
at 3:00pm

A rare opportunity to spend an afternoon in the company of one of Ireland's most celebrated writers.

Booker Prize-winning author John Banville joins Martin Doyle, Books Editor of The Irish Times, for a special conversation about his latest novel, *Venetian Vespers*, and a writing career spanning more than five decades.

Drawing on Martin's own experience of interviewing some of Ireland's most acclaimed writers – brought together in his new book, *A Hosting: Interviews with Irish Writers 1991-2026* – expect a fascinating conversation about writing, inspiration, craft and the ideas behind Banville's work.

An unmissable event for lovers of great writing.

Booking essential.

The Lobster Pot with Bernie McQuillan

Cushendall Library at 2:00pm
Ballycastle Library at 6:00pm



Intrigue, lies, family secrets and suspense... welcome to *The Lobster Pot*.

Join local author Bernie McQuillan for a live reading from her debut novel, a gripping family saga packed with drama and tension.

Bernie will reveal the inspiration behind the story, share her own creative journey and answer your questions about the book and her writing.

Booking advisable.

Susan Bennett Meet The Author

Holywood Library
at 6:00pm



One year, one camper van, and a journey towards rediscovering joy and hope.

Susan Bennett talks about her new memoir, *One Year*, following her travels with husband Chris through western Europe and Scandinavia in their camper van, Hans – and the unexpected challenges they meet along the way.

Booking advisable.



Iain MacLachlan
Meet The Author
 Chichester Library
 at 6:30pm

What happens when Irish folklore meets the world of modern fantasy?

Join local author Iain MacLachlan as he lifts the lid on the legends, landscapes and research that inspire his writing.

Discover how folklore becomes fiction, how imaginary worlds take shape and where the line between myth and imagination begins to blur. Iain will also share insights from his own journey to publication, with practical tips for aspiring writers hoping to see their own work in print.

For fantasy fans, curious readers and budding authors alike.

Booking essential.



In Conversation with Donal Ryan
 Derry Central Library
 at 6:30pm

Spend an evening with one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary Irish fiction.

Acclaimed author Donal Ryan comes to Derry to discuss his new book, *Where Are the Kings*, and the ideas, characters and inspiration behind his writing.

Winner of the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction and Irish Book of the Year, Donal will offer a fascinating insight into his creative process, his storytelling and the work that has earned him readers and acclaim around the world.

Booking essential.

Irish Ghost Stories and Tales Of Terror

Newry City Library
at 6:30pm



International storyteller and bestselling author Steve Lally brings the darker side of Irish folklore to life with a unique selection of haunting folktales and thrilling ghost stories.

Drawing on Ireland's rich storytelling tradition, expect eerie encounters, strange happenings and tales inspired by the myths and legends that have fascinated generations.

Booking essential.

Stephen Daly

Lisburn City Library
at 6:45pm



A missing father, mysterious visions, Belfast's troubled past, and a teenager searching for answers.

Author Stephen Daly joins Lisburn City Library's Teenage Reading Group to talk about his Young Adult debut, *The Last Death Poet* – a gripping mix of coming-of-age story, Irish history and the supernatural.

Hear Stephen reveal the ideas and inspiration behind the novel, how he brought Michael's story to life and what it takes to write fiction that keeps young readers turning the pages.

Hosted by Lisburn City Library's Teenage Reading Group but everyone is welcome to come along.

Booking advisable.



Draw Along with Jamie Smart Exclusive for Primary Schools and Home Educators

Online schools and home educators event
at 10:30am

Get your pencils ready – Jamie Smart is taking over the classroom!

The creator of the hugely popular *Bunny vs Monkey* series joins us live for a special Book Week NI event packed with books, characters, drawing and plenty of fun.

Pupils will hear from Jamie about his work, get a glimpse into the world behind his much-loved books – and, best of all, draw along with Jamie as he brings some familiar characters to life on screen.

A brilliant opportunity for pupils to meet the creator behind the books, without leaving the classroom.



Primary schools and parents who home educate must register in advance.

Scan the QR code to book your place via Zoom.



An Afternoon with Janice Hallett

Ballyclare Library
at 2:30pm

Meet the writer behind *The Appeal* and *The Twyford Code*.

Bestselling crime author Janice Hallett talks about her books, her career and the distinctive storytelling that has made her one of the most talked-about voices in contemporary crime fiction.

And if one Janice Hallett event isn't enough, you'll find her in Carrickfergus tomorrow for *The Agatha Christie Effect*.

Booking essential.

Pockets of Joy

Poetry Workshop with Stephanie Conn

Bangor Carnegie Library

at 10:30am



Take some time out. Pick up a pen. Find a little joy.

Multi-award-winning poet Stephanie Conn leads a warm and inspiring workshop exploring poetry's ability to hold loss and hope, grief and joy, side by side.

Discover the work of established poets before trying your own writing through a series of gentle, engaging prompts.

No previous writing experience needed. Booking essential.

The Belfast Fairytale Family Bus Tour

Leaving from Holywood Arches Library

at 10:30am



Climb aboard and watch a favourite Belfast story come to life!

Join author Mel Carroll for a very special family adventure inspired by his book, *The Belfast Fairytale*. Travel through the city, spot places and landmarks from the story and follow the journey with your own specially created map.

With Mel along for the ride, young readers can experience the story beyond the page and discover Belfast as they've never seen it before.

Booking essential. Bookings will be taken via Holywood Arches Library.

Children's Book-Themed Art Workshop with Sarah Majury

Saintfield Library
at 11:00am

Look closely, get creative, and add your own page to the story.

Join artist Sarah Majury to discover the fascinating world of moths, design your own Observer's book cover and create a drawing for a collaborative concertina book linked to Sarah's exhibition at the library.

For ages 5–11. Booking essential. Children under eight must be accompanied by an adult.

Northern Noir with Simon Maltman

Portaferry Library
at 11:30am



Dark stories. Local inspiration.
Welcome to Northern Noir.

Meet local author Simon Maltman and discover the ideas, experiences and imagination behind his writing.

Hear what inspires his distinctive take on crime fiction and put your own questions to Simon as he reveals what life as an author is really like.

Everyone welcome.

Siobhán Murphy

Meet The Author

Bangor Carnegie Library
at 1:30pm

Fantasy worlds don't build themselves. So where does a writer begin?

Join award-winning local writer Siobhán Murphy, author of *The Hedgefall Chronicles*, as she explores the fantasy, apocalyptic and speculative fiction that has shaped her work.

Hear about her road to publication, discover how she approaches the writing process and find out how resilience helped her overcome the setbacks along the way.

Bring your questions – this is your chance to find out what being an author is really like.

Booking essential.





Meet Emer McLysaght and Sarah Breen

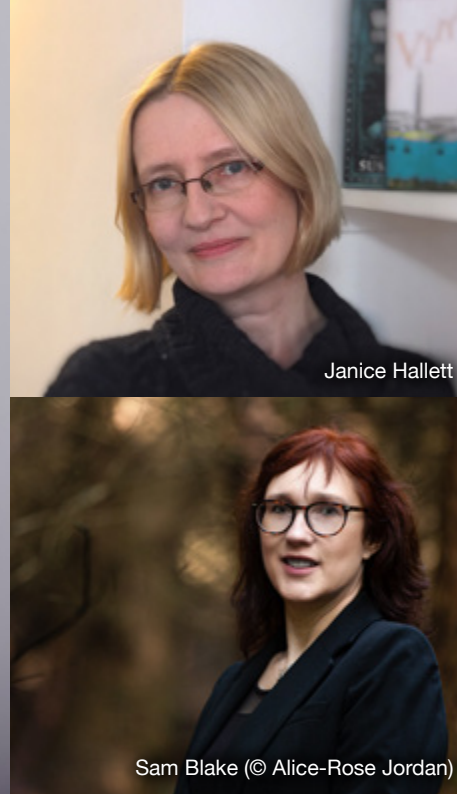
Belfast Central Library
at 2:00pm

More than 400,000 books sold, one unforgettable character, and now, a brand-new novel.

Emer McLysaght and Sarah Breen, the bestselling duo behind the much-loved Aisling series, come to Belfast Central Library to talk about *Our Deadly Summer* and the writing partnership that has created one of Irish publishing's biggest success stories.

Expect plenty of chat about characters, collaboration, inspiration and what happens when two writers sit down to create together.

Booking advisable.



Janice Hallett

Sam Blake (© Alice-Rose Jordan)



Kerry McLean

The Agatha Christie Effect

Carrickfergus Library
at 2:30pm

A century later, we're still hooked. Why?

Bestselling crime writers Janice Hallett and Sam Blake join BBC presenter Kerry McLean for a lively conversation about the enduring power of the Queen of Crime, from ingenious plots and unforgettable characters to the influence she continues to have on the writers keeping us guessing today.

Murder, mystery and more than a little misdirection, this is one for crime fiction fans.

Booking essential.

Colin Bateman

Lisburn City Library
at 2:00pm



Your second chance to catch our special Book Week NI guest.

Award-winning author Colin Bateman talks books, writing and a career spanning more than 30 years.

Booking essential.

An Afternoon with Hilary McCollum

Whitehead Library
at 3:00pm



Meet one of Northern Ireland's compelling contemporary voices.

Author Hilary McCollum joins us to discuss her latest novel, *As a Lover*, as well as the writing life and stories behind her work.

Known for her debut novel *Gold Digger* and her memoir *Funny Peculiar*, published as Constance McCullagh, Hilary will share insights into her writing before opening the conversation to your questions.

Booking essential.

Ready to Book?

For events where booking is essential or advised, contact the relevant library to reserve your place.

Antrim Library

t: 028 9446 1942
e: antrim.library@librariesni.org.uk

Armagh City Library

t: 028 3752 4072
e: armagh.library@librariesni.org.uk

Ballycastle Library

t: 028 2076 2566
e: ballycastle.library@librariesni.org.uk

Ballyclare Library

t: 028 9335 2269
e: ballyclare.library@librariesni.org.uk

Ballyhackamore Library

t: 028 9050 9204
e: ballyhackamore.library@librariesni.org.uk

Bangor Carnegie Library

t: 028 9127 0591
e: bangorcarnegie.library@librariesni.org.uk

Belfast Central Library

t: 028 9050 9150
e: belfast_central_library@librariesni.org.uk

Carrickfergus Library

t: 028 9336 2261
e: carrickfergus.library@librariesni.org.uk

Carryduff Library

t: 028 9081 3568
e: carryduff.library@librariesni.org.uk

Chichester Library

t: 028 9050 9210
e: chichester.library@librariesni.org.uk

Comber Library

t: 028 9187 2610
e: comber.library@librariesni.org.uk

Cushendall Library

t: 028 2177 1297
e: cushendall.library@librariesni.org.uk

Derry Central Library

t: 028 7122 9990
e: derrycentral.library@librariesni.org.uk

Donaghadee Library

t: 028 9188 2507
e: donaghadee.library@librariesni.org.uk

Hollywood Arches Library

t: 028 9050 9216
e: holywoodarches.library@librariesni.org.uk

Hollywood Library

t: 028 9042 4232
e: holywood.library@librariesni.org.uk

Lisburn City Library

t: 028 9266 9345
e: lisburncity.library@librariesni.org.uk

Lisburn Road Library

t: 028 9050 9223
e: lisburnroad.library@librariesni.org.uk

Newtownbreda Library

t: 028 9070 1620
e: newtownbreda.library@librariesni.org.uk

Omagh Library

t: 028 8244 0733
e: omagh.library@librariesni.org.uk

Portaferry Library

t: 028 4272 8194
e: portaferry.library@librariesni.org.uk

Saintfield Library

t: 028 9751 0550
e: saintfield.library@librariesni.org.uk

Shantallow Library

t: 028 7135 4185
e: shantallow.library@librariesni.org.uk

Whitehead Library

t: 028 9335 3249
e: whitehead.library@librariesni.org.uk



BOOKCITED!

A New Podcast Every Day

Seven days. Seven special conversations.
A new podcast every day of Book Week NI.

Join the Bookcited! team throughout the week for an exciting line-up of bestselling authors, writers and familiar faces, with conversations spanning books, reading, writing and the stories behind some remarkable careers.

From internationally acclaimed authors to home-grown talent, there's a new conversation to discover every day.

MONDAY



David Baldacci

A global publishing phenomenon comes to Bookcited!

With more than 130 million books sold worldwide, David Baldacci is one of the biggest names in international thriller writing. The bestselling American author and former trial lawyer joins Jillian and Pete for a very special Book Week NI conversation about his extraordinary career, the craft of creating page-turning thrillers and the stories behind some of the books that have captivated millions of readers around the world.



Paula McIntyre

From the kitchen to the bookshelf.

Celebrity chef, writer and broadcaster Paula McIntyre joins Jillian and Sian to talk about her love of cooking and reading, and shares the books and stories that have entertained, inspired and influenced her along the way.



Louise Kennedy

From the acclaimed *Trespasses* to the eagerly awaited *Stations*.

Award-winning author Louise Kennedy joins Bookcited! to talk about her remarkable journey to literary success, the acclaimed *Trespasses* and her new novel, *Stations*, sharing the inspiration, ideas and experiences that have shaped her work.

WEDNESDAY

TUESDAY



Rachel Duffy

What happens after you win *The Traitors*?

Joint winner Rachel Duffy joins Jillian and Pete to talk about her experience on the hit series and how life has changed since her unforgettable win, before sharing some of the books and stories that have meant the most to her throughout her life.



Nuala McKeever

Books, laughter and a life in words and entertainment.

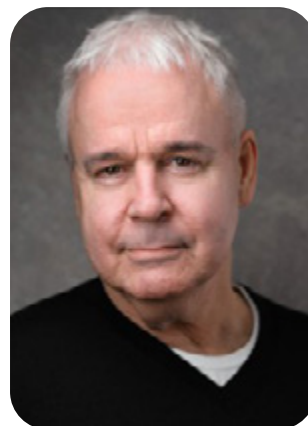
Much-loved Northern Irish writer, actor, comedian and broadcaster Nuala McKeever joins Jillian and Sian for a warm and entertaining conversation about her life and career, her love of reading and the books that have entertained, inspired and influenced her over the years.



Sara Paretsky

Meet a trailblazer of modern crime fiction.

Award-winning American author Sara Paretsky changed the landscape of crime writing with the creation of pioneering private investigator V.I. Warshawski. She joins Jillian and Pete for a very special Bookcited! conversation about breaking new ground in the genre, creating one of crime fiction's most enduring characters and her remarkable writing career.



Tim Sullivan

From writing for the screen to creating bestselling crime fiction.

Screenwriter and director turned novelist Tim Sullivan joins Bookcited! to talk about making the move from screen to page and creating his bestselling DS Cross crime series, and why storytelling remains at the heart of everything he does.

There's More To Book Week NI

And that's not all! There are lots of other exciting events and activities happening in libraries throughout Book Week NI.

Discover what's happening at your local library and explore the full programme at:
librariesni.org.uk