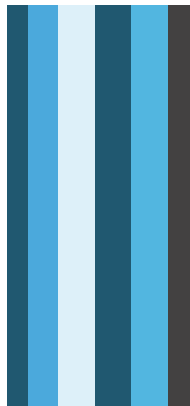
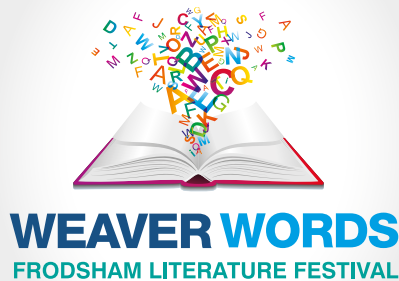


# WEAVER WORDS

## FRODSHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Saturday 3rd - Sunday 11th May, 2025



TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE

SCAN  
HERE



## A MESSAGE FROM WEAVER WORDS PATRON

### TIM FIRTH

I am delighted to welcome you to Frodsham's seventh Weaver Words Literature Festival. We have an exciting programme in store for you, including stand-up comedy legend Jenny Eclair, poet Lemn Sissay, BBC presenter Louise Minchin and the welcome return of Gerald Dickens (Charles Dickens' great great grandson) performing a stunning one man show of *'Nicholas Nickleby'*.

The theme this year is 'A Celebration of Cheshire', with a focus on great Cestrian literary connections, from Lewis Carroll to Elizabeth Gaskell, plus new Cheshire writers aiming to make their mark.

With a public pop-up poetry wall, two writing competitions and lots of engaging creative workshops and events, there's much to enjoy at the 2025 Weaver Words Festival. Many thanks to all our funders, partners and volunteers, who have helped to make this year's festival possible.

We look forward to welcoming you.



Weaver Words is a Frodsham  
Community Association event.  
Registered Charity number 520051.



## WRITE A POEM FOR OUR POP-UP POETRY WALL!

**Do you feel inspired to pen a poem in response to the festival theme  
A Celebration of Cheshire'? If so, we'd love to read it!**

During the months of April/May, Frodsham Community Centre will feature a pop-up poetry wall, specially created for the festival by Norley artist Ann Crawford.

We welcome all poems on a postcard – whether it's a haiku about the River Weaver or a few witty lines about the Cheshire Cat. The theme is as broad as your imagination! Poems will then be displayed on our Pop-up Poetry Wall.

(Pick up a festival postcard from Frodsham Community Centre or use your own. Leave your finished poem at the centre's reception for inclusion on the wall. Or email your small poem to:-  
[pm@weaverwords.org.uk](mailto:pm@weaverwords.org.uk).



## FESTIVAL FRINGE AT FRODSHAM LIBRARY

THURSDAY 1ST MAY



### Talk from bestselling crime author Simon McCleave

Join us for an evening with multimillion-selling crime novelist Simon McCleave. His first book *'Snowdonia Killings'* was released in January 2020 and became an Amazon bestseller, reaching No. 1 in the UK chart. This Snowdonia-based book is now set to be filmed as a major new television series.

His most recent book, *'Wirral Killings'*, is hot off the press (published 2024), and is soon to be followed by the publication of *'Abersoch Killings'* this year.

Book signing, wine and refreshments available.

Tickets available from Frodsham Library or via Ticket Source:

[www.ticketsource.co.uk/cwaclibraries](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cwaclibraries)




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**Place:** Frodsham Library

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**Time:** 7pm

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**Tickets:** £6

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## WRITING CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS – WHERE TO START

SATURDAY 3RD MAY



### Adult creative writing workshop with writer Ira Bova (Iryna Garkusha)

From idea to published book: This workshop will explore how to transform your idea into a captivating story, overcome writer's block to finish your manuscript, and navigate the publishing and promotion process.

We'll also discuss how to negotiate with your inner critic (who whispers doubts about your success) and talk about the role of your voice.




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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 10.30am – 12.30pm

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**Tickets:** £14, inc tea/coffee

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SATURDAY 3RD MAY

## DEBATE: THE FUTURE OF THE MEDIA?



Mick Ord



Dr Francois Nel



Michael Green



Tom Conway

Chaired by Mick Ord, with Dr Francois Nel, Michael Green and Tom Conway

The media world is in a challenging place with the arrival of AI, fake news and operating in an increasingly uncontrolled digital marketplace.

Hear from the experts as we discuss recent radical changes in the media landscape and join the debate about what the future might hold.

The Panel: Mick Ord (broadcaster), Dr Francois Nel (Associate Professor of Media Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Central Lancashire), Michael Green (Newspaper Editor, Chester Chronicle and others), Tom Conway (Social media executive, Meta, formerly Snapchat)

**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

**Time:** 3pm

**Tickets:** £10, inc tea/coffee

## 'JOKES, JOKES, JOKES' AN AUDIENCE WITH JENNY ECLAIR

SATURDAY 3RD MAY

Frodsham Community Centre | 7.30pm | £20 Licensed bar

**The comedian discusses her life and new autobiography.**

**Join stand-up comedy legend Jenny Eclair for a hilarious evening of reflections about her childhood, career and the changing face of women in comedy. She was the first female winner of the prestigious Perrier Award and 40 years on is still giggling to sell-out crowds.**



'FUNNY, POIGNANT, FASCINATING. JUST THE SORT OF HILARIOUS, DISRESPECTFUL, RIBALD BOOK I LOVE.'

**JO BRAND**



# THE ANIMATES

## ANIMATES ACTION STATIONS!

SUNDAY 4TH MAY

Frodsham Community Centre | 10.30am | £6 per child

Stories, fun and games for young children (aged 4-8)

Award-winning authors, Natalie Reeves Billing and Jude Lennon host a fabulous, fun session of interactive storytelling and games, based on their fantastic cartoons.

All children should be accompanied by an adult.



SUNDAY 4TH MAY

## FANTASTIC CRIME NOVEL DEBUT WITH KELLY MULLEN



### Hot off the press: 'This is Not a Game'

An event hosted by the Curious Cat Bookshop, Frodsham

If you love crime novels, this event is for you. Come and discover one of the hottest new talents in crime fiction, Kelly Mullen, who introduces us to a sparkling new crime-fighting partnership: an acerbic septuagenarian and her whip-smart granddaughter.

'Agatha Christie brought bang up to date in this innovative and funny spin on the classic country house murder.'

Published by Penguin Random House on 24 April, Kelly's novel is set to be one of the big crime fiction debuts of 2025.



**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

**Time:** 2.30pm

**Tickets:** £20, includes a free copy of signed hardback book. £10, without book. Including tea/coffee.

SUNDAY 4TH MAY

## GREAT WEAVER WORDS CHILDREN'S WRITING COMPETITION - AWARD PRESENTATION

### With Tim Firth



2023 children's writing competition finalists



All shortlisted children and their parents/teachers are invited to the prize-giving ceremony for the Great Weaver Words Writing Competition.

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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 6-7pm

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**Tickets:** FREE

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SUNDAY 4TH MAY

## FESTIVAL GALA CELEBRATION

### Flash Fiction competition winners announced



### ENTERTAINMENT WITH TIM FIRTH & LYNN PEGLER

Poet Lynn Pegler launches her new book: *'Around Cheshire in 100 Poems and Pictures'* and takes us on a fascinating illustrated tour, performing lively monologues and verse inspired by the county's intriguing people, places and history.



Winners of the 2023 Flash Fiction Prize

Followed by... **A Short Musical Interruption** with Tim Firth!

After the interval, we will host the nail-biting final of the **Frodsham Flash Fiction Prize** (sponsored by RSK, Helsby).

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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 8pm

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**Tickets:** £10. Licensed bar

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## MONDAY 5TH MAY

## BEHIND THE SCENES OF HIT BBC POLICE DRAMA


**Interview with screenwriter and author  
Tony Schumacher**

Liverpool writer and broadcaster Tony Schumacher is the author of the hit BBC TV drama series *The Responder*, inspired by his ten-year service in uniform with Merseyside Police. Tony will be talking about his eventful career, which has taken him from PC on the Mersey beat to a successful novelist and screenwriter.



He'll discuss his breakthrough into the writing world through his three novels, including *The Darkest Hour*, an alternative history of 1940s Britain, after a hypothetical Nazi victory in World War Two.




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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre
 

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**Time:** 7.30pm
 

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**Tickets:** Adults £10. Licensed bar
 

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## TUESDAY 6TH MAY

POETRY ABOARD THE DANNY STEAMSHIP  
AT ANDERTON BOAT LIFT
**Poetry writing workshop inspired by  
two amazing Cheshire historic waterway  
treasures led by poet Jean Atkin**

Come up the gangplank to write poems inspired by the 1930s art deco splendour of the Danny, a historic steam-driven tug boat. After a guided tour of the elegant saloons, bridge, boiler room and promenade deck, poet Jean Atkin will lead a writing workshop.



Why not make a day of it and stop for a delicious lunch in the Anderton Boat Lift visitor centre café and maybe book a 2pm trip aboard the Edwin Clark trip boat along the River Weaver Navigation and up the world's first major commercial boat lift, which this year celebrates its 150th anniversary. Boat trips can be booked separately at [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk)




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**Place:** Anderton Boat Lift, Lift Lane, Northwich, CW9 6FW
 

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**Time:** 10.15am – 12.30pm.
 

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**Tickets:** £16
 

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TUESDAY 6TH MAY

## THE PUNCTUATION POLICE



**DS (Dot Superintendent) Sharon Wright discusses the importance of good grammar**

Enjoy a light-hearted look at grammar through the eyes of the remarkable writer and journalist Sharon Wright. You may remember, she delighted audiences at the 2023 festival with a talk based on her book *Mother of the Brontës: The Life of Maria Branwell*.



As a champion of the famous Brontë family, she was recently aghast to discover the two dot diaereses above their surnames in Westminster Abbey Poets' Corner were missing. Not one to take a grammatical error lying down, she persuaded the abbey authorities to correct this 85-year-old mistake – a major achievement which resulted in widespread national media coverage!

Join Sharon for a delightful afternoon of derisory tuts and laughs.




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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 3pm

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**Tickets:** Adult £10, including tea/coffee

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TUESDAY 6TH MAY

## FESTIVAL FRINGE AT MAIN STREET KITCHEN



Join festival Patron Tim Firth, award-winning writer of *Calendar Girls* and other hit plays and musicals, and broadcaster Mick Ord, for an evening of fine food, wine and literary reflections.

Enjoy a delicious three course dinner, with a glass of fizz, at the fabulous Main Street Kitchen restaurant, followed by fascinating insight into creating successful drama for TV, film and theatre.




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**Place:** Main Street Kitchen, 86 Main Street, Frodsham, WA6 7AR

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**Time:** 7pm

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**Tickets:** £55 (including three course meal and glass of fizz)

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Book in advance direct with  
Main Street Kitchen.  
[www.mainstreetkitchen.co.uk](http://www.mainstreetkitchen.co.uk).  
Tel: 01928 444086

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## WEDNESDAY 7TH MAY

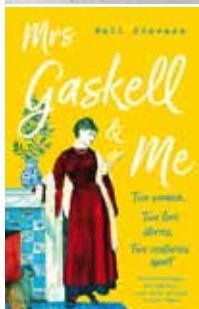
EXPLORING ELIZABETH GASKELL'S WORLD,  
TALK AND AFTERNOON TEA

## Interview with author Nell Stevens

Celebrated Victorian author Elizabeth Gaskell spent much of her childhood in Knutsford, where she was brought up by her aunt, after her mother died when she was only 13 months old. The town was later immortalised in her novel *Cranford* and this, together with *Mary Barton* and *North and South* have been re-imagined many times for the TV and silver screen.



More recently, author Nell Stevens, Associate Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Warwick, has sought to explore the woman behind the bestsellers, with a fanciful tale of two parallel doomed love affairs, in her 2018 novel *Mrs Gaskell and Me*, which won the 2019 Somerset Maugham Award.




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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 3pm

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**Tickets:** £17, including afternoon tea

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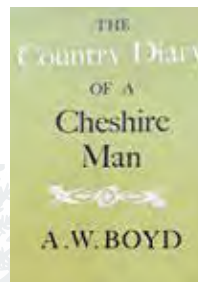
## THURSDAY 8TH MAY

CHESHIRE'S COUNTRY DIARIST: A.W. BOYD  
WITH LECTURER ANDY JURGIS

The naturalist and author Arnold Whitworth (A.W) Boyd - Cheshire's very own Gilbert White - lived from 1885-1959. Boyd was an important contributor to *The Guardian Country Diary* and author of the books *The Country Diary of a Cheshire Man* (1946) and a volume in the celebrated New Naturalists series - *A Country Parish* (1951). Join this seminar to find out about Boyd's writing in the context of his place, times and some of the changes in the natural world of Mid-Cheshire since his day.

Andy teaches a wide range of adult education literature courses - with a special interest in works on nature and the environment.

A one-hour lecture followed by questions and discussion. Refreshments will be available afterwards.




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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 10.30am

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**Tickets:** £10, including tea/coffee.

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THURSDAY 8TH MAY

## SPOTLIGHT ON CHESHIRE'S KEY ROLE IN THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR



**Historian Steve Capstick and novelist Tony Bryan in conversation**

Cheshire's role in the English Civil War offers rich pickings for would-be writers of historical fiction. Apparently, the man who sentenced King Charles I to death was a Cestrian; the last battle of the war was fought on Cheshire soil and Royalist stronghold Chester city suffered a 16-month siege between 1644 and 1646!



Transforming fact into fiction is the tricky bit. Steve and Tony will explore how to harness historical information, including a focus on Tony's latest book, *The Tailor Spy*, inspired by a heroic real-life tailor at the Battle of Worcester in 1651.

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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 2.30pm

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**Tickets:** £10. Including tea/coffee

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THURSDAY 8TH MAY

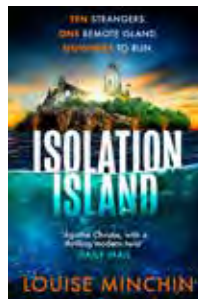
## AN EVENING WITH LOUISE MINCHIN



**The BBC journalist and novelist in conversation**

Louise Minchin is most famous for her 20-year stint on *BBC Breakfast's* red sofa, but you may also have seen her as the main news anchor on BBC's *One O'Clock News*, as well as presenting *The One Show*, *Live Drive*, *Real Rescues* and *Missing Lives*.

More recently she has written non-fiction titles *Dare to Tri* and *Fearless*, and has just published her first novel *Isolation Island* about a celebrity survival reality TV show on a remote Scottish Island in the depths of winter. Possible echoes of her appearance on ITV's *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here*? Discover the facts behind the fiction in this engaging and wide-ranging interview with one of Chester's most famous residents.




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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 7.30pm

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**Tickets:** £16. Licensed bar

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FRIDAY 9TH MAY

## LITERARY TOUR: IN SEARCH OF LEWIS CARROLL'S CHESHIRE WONDERLAND



Introductory talk, followed by a guided coach tour to Lewis Carroll's birthplace and Daresbury Church Visitor Centre.

Go down the rabbit hole with award-winning Lewis Carroll playwright Lynn Pegler to discover the Cheshire connections of one of Britain's best-loved children's authors.



Born Charles Lutwidge Dodgson in Daresbury in 1832, he was the first son and third child of the Rev Charles Dodgson, who was a curate at All Saints Church, Daresbury.

Carroll lived in Cheshire for the first 11 years of his life and a stained glass window at the church commemorates his famous novel *Alice in Wonderland*.




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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 10am – c.1pm

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**Tickets:** £18, including tea/coffee and coach travel.

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FRIDAY 9TH MAY

## 'LET THE LIGHT POUR IN' WITH POET, LEMN SISSAY

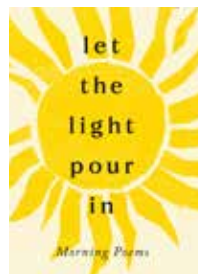


Readings from his latest uplifting poetry collection

Sponsored by Main Street Kitchen

Lemn Sissay is one of Britain's best-loved poets and a former Chancellor of Manchester University. For the past decade, he has composed a short poem as dawn breaks each morning. Witty, life-affirming and full of wonder, these poems chronicle his own battle with darkness and are fuelled with resilience and defiant joy.

An ode to morning rituals and carving out space each day for reflection and creativity, several of these poems appear on streets and buildings across the UK.




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**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

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**Time:** 7.30pm

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**Tickets:** £18. Licensed bar

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SATURDAY 10TH MAY

## 'HAVING LIFE TWICE' THE JOY OF THE JOURNAL



### Creative workshop on journal writing with Julia McGuinness

In this workshop, we will explore a range of aspects of personal journalling, how a journal is different from a diary, and how we might make the most of its potential - whatever our experience in finding our way with words.

Keeping a journal enables us to enrich our lives with words. We can use its pages to re-experience joys, solve problems, set priorities, celebrate achievements, express feelings, gain insight, record reflections and process what puzzles or distresses us. As writer Jessamyn West puts it, 'People who keep journals have life twice.'

Julia McGuinness is a writer and teacher, based in Flintshire. She runs workshops in various locations, from a journalling group at Hawarden's Gladstone's Library to poetry workshops at Chester Cathedral, where she is Poet-in-Residence Emeritus. Julia belongs to the Lapidus International network of well-being writing practitioners.



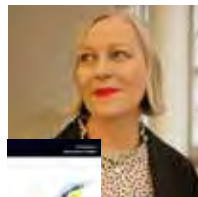
**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

**Time:** 10.30am – 12.30pm

**Tickets:** £14, including tea/coffee

SATURDAY 10TH MAY

## A CELEBRATION OF LOCAL WRITERS



### With poet Sarah-Clare Conlon and historical novelist David Bissenden

Sarah-Clare Conlon performs an inspiring sequence of new poems '*Flight Patterns*' about British birds on the red endangered list. Written in tribute to Didsbury naturalist Emily Williamson, who set up the RSPB in 1889, the poems take flight against a background of birdsong and church bells.



After the interval, local historical novelist David Bissenden takes us behind the scenes of his 2021 Napoleon III crime thriller '*The French Emperor's Woman*' and drops off in Frodsham for a chapter in his new novel '*Rivers of Silver*', published this January.

**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

**Time:** 2.30pm

**Tickets:** £10, Including tea/coffee

## SATURDAY 10TH MAY

# NICHOLAS NICKLEBY ONE MAN SHOW BY GERALD DICKENS



Gerald Dickens, great, great grandson of Charles Dickens, makes a welcome return to Weaver Words with a stunning show based on his famous relative's novel *Nicholas Nickleby*.

In an unforgettable one-man performance, Gerald takes us on a fast-paced journey around Devonshire, London and Yorkshire, as he plays the hero Nicholas Nickleby, cruel schoolmaster Wackford Squeers, simple Smike and dozens of other characters to tell this dramatic and much-loved complex Victorian tale.



**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

**Time:** 7.30pm

**Tickets:** £16. Licensed bar

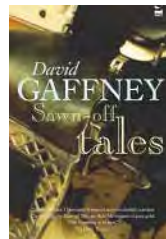
## SUNDAY 11TH MAY

# FLASH FICTION WORKSHOP WRITING SHORT, SHORT STORIES WITH DAVID GAFFNEY



Can you tell a story in fewer than 500 words?

David Gaffney thinks you can, and in this workshop, you will learn how to reduce ideas to an ultra-short format – how to condense while keeping your story effective, powerful and easy to understand; how to manage character, description, point of view and dialogue; and how to reduce a thousand words to 150 without losing a thing. Full of practical, fun exercises, this session will leave you wondering why anything has to be longer than one side of A4.



**Place:** Frodsham Community Centre

**Time:** 10.30am - 12.30pm

**Tickets:** £14, including tea/coffee

SUNDAY 11TH MAY

## FRODSHAM FLASH FICTION PRIZE

Adult creative writing competition  
Sponsored by RSK Group, Helsby



**Judges:** David Gaffney and Professor Sue Zlosnik  
**Word limit:** 300 words (not including the title)  
**Prizes:** 1st £300, 2nd £150, 3rd £50  
**Entry fee:** £6 per entry. No limit on the number of entries  
**Deadline:** Sunday 6th April 2025.

### What is flash fiction?

Flash fiction is a bite-sized story and often contains the classic story elements: protagonist, conflict, obstacles, complications and resolution. Stories which involve humour or surprise work particularly well and there is often a twist in the tale.

### Eligibility

The Frodsham Flash Fiction Prize is open to any UK resident. Stories can be about any subject. Or take inspiration from the festival theme 'A Celebration of Cheshire'.



### How to enter

All entries will be judged anonymously. Do not include your name, address or any identifying mark on the story document, other than the story title at the top of the first page.

You can enter online or by post. For a full list of competition rules or to submit an online entry, go to [www.weaverwords.org.uk](http://www.weaverwords.org.uk).

For postal entries, stories should be typed. Each entry should be accompanied by a separate sheet of paper giving the entrant's name, address, date of birth, contact telephone number and email address (if available). You should also include on this sheet, the title(s) of your story(s). You can enter as many stories as you like but each flash fiction piece must be accompanied by an entry fee of £6. Please enclose a cheque for the total made out to Frodsham Community Association.

Send postal entries to Flash Fiction Prize, Weaver Words Festival, Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham, Cheshire, WA6 7QN.

### Results

Writers of the best ten short-listed entries will be invited to attend the Festival Gala Evening on Sunday 4th May, 8pm. The results will be announced at the event. Finalists will be notified before Friday 25th April.



## GREAT WEAVER WORDS

### Children's Writing Prize (7-14yrs)

Sponsored by Rotary in Frodsham and Helsby



**Closing Date: Friday 28th March. Word limit: 300 words**

North Cheshire school children are invited to weave their own magical words and win fabulous prizes in a fantastic writing competition. Cheshire is home to two amazing, world-leading science centres – Sci Tech Daresbury, which includes Daresbury Laboratory (Part of the Science and Technology Facilities Council, involved in the James Webb Space Telescope) and Jodrell Bank (radio telescope and astronomy observatory, visitor attraction and UNESCO World Heritage Site)

**Task:** Imagine you are in Outer Space on a spaceship whose messages are being tracked by astronomers at Jodrell Bank. You may be visiting one of the planets of our solar system, such as Mars or Jupiter, or you may want to fly further afield to explore new worlds in deep space.

What do these strange new worlds look like? Do they have plants or animal life? What does it feel like to see these extraordinary sights and be so far away from home.

**Write a 'Letter to Planet Earth'** to tell everyone about your incredible journey, what you found in outer space and how you feel about your amazing new discoveries. Entries should be hand-written, with no illustrations. Children can enter either through their school or send their letter (with name, age, address and contact details on the back) to [Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham, WA6 7QN](#) (marked [Weaver Words writing prize](#)) or email: [info@weaverwords.org.uk](mailto:info@weaverwords.org.uk). Only one entry per person please.

**Judge:** The competition will be judged in two categories Key Stage 3 (age 11-14) and Key Stage 2 (age 7-11) by festival patron and award-winning writer Tim Firth.

**Prizes:** A total of £300 in book tokens, prizes and certificates will be awarded. Shortlisted writers and their families will be invited to a special awards ceremony on Sunday 4th May, 6pm, at Frodsham Community Centre.

## Festival Events take place at:

### Frodsham Community Centre

Fluin Lane, Frodsham, WA6 7QN.

### Frodsham Library

Princeway, Frodsham, WA6 6RX.

### Main Street Kitchen

86 Main Street, Frodsham, WA6 7AR.

### Anderton Boat Lift

Lift Lane, Northwich, CW9 6FW.

### Parking

Free parking is available at Frodsham Community Centre and Frodsham Library. A pay and display carpark operates at Anderton Boat Lift.

### Disabled access

Wheelchair access is available at Frodsham Community Centre, Frodsham Library and Main Street Kitchen.

### Ticketing Policy

Tickets may not be exchanged or refunded once purchased

The Weaver Words Festival Bookshops will be managed by the Curious Cat Bookshop (Frodsham) and Curiosity Bookshop (Runcorn).

### Grateful thanks to all our sponsors:

RSK Group (Helsby), Encirc Glass (Elton), Rotary in Frodsham and Helsby Rotary, Main Street Kitchen (Frodsham), Bill and Julie Holroyd.

**A big thank you to the many organisations and individuals who have supported the festival, especially Frodsham Community Centre, Daresbury Laboratory, Frodsham Library, the Danny Steamship, Curious Cat Bookshop and our wonderful volunteers.**

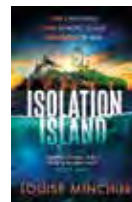




# WEAVER WORDS

## FRODSHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Book tickets at [www.weaverwords.org.uk](http://www.weaverwords.org.uk) or Box Office 0333 666 33 66



Saturday 3rd - Sunday 11th May 2025

# WEAVER WORDS

## FRODSHAM LITERATURE FESTIVAL