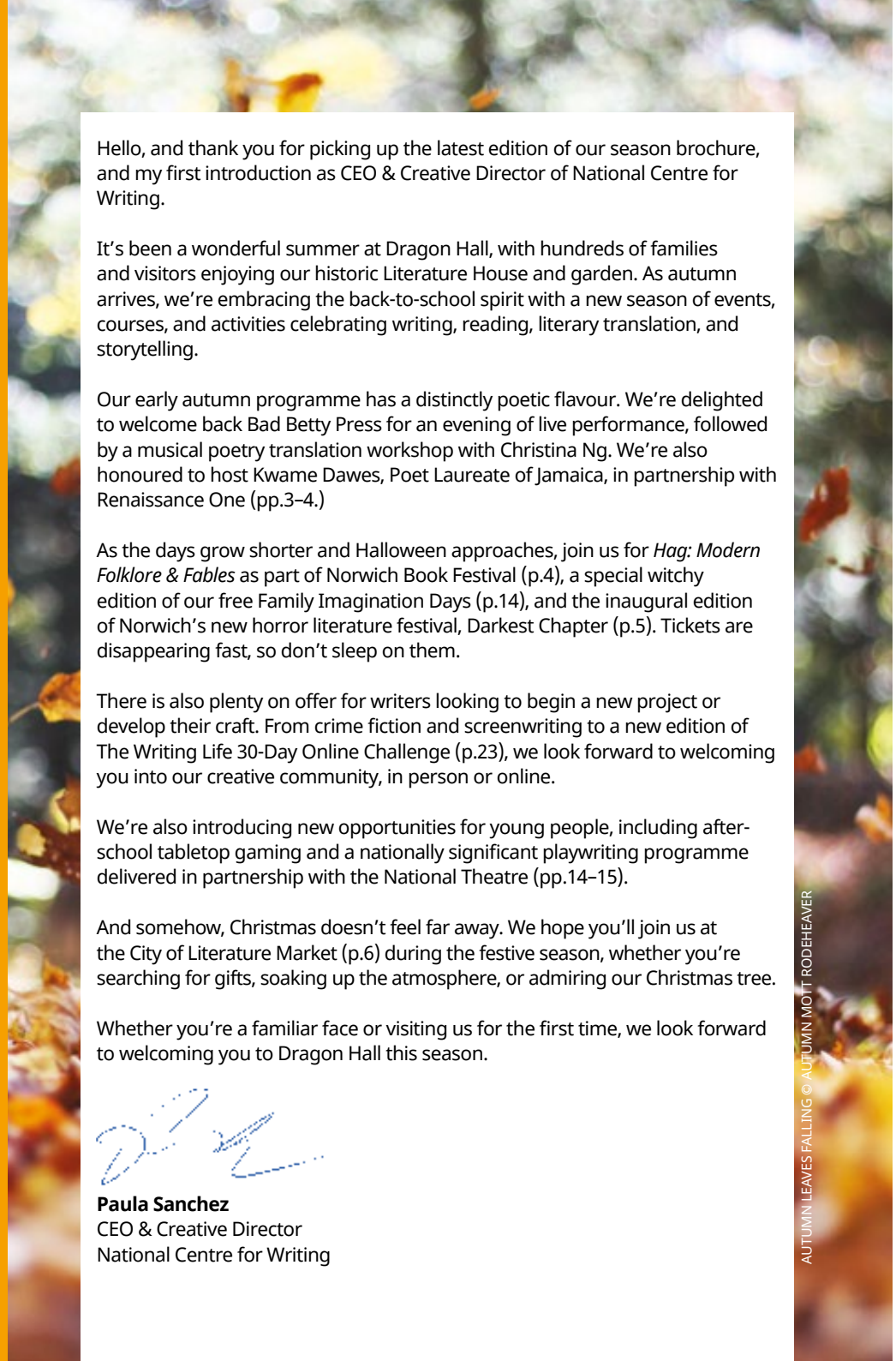
National Centre for Writing

WHAT'S ON

October 2026 — February 2027



Hello, and thank you for picking up the latest edition of our season brochure, and my first introduction as CEO & Creative Director of National Centre for Writing.

It's been a wonderful summer at Dragon Hall, with hundreds of families and visitors enjoying our historic Literature House and garden. As autumn arrives, we're embracing the back-to-school spirit with a new season of events, courses, and activities celebrating writing, reading, literary translation, and storytelling.

Our early autumn programme has a distinctly poetic flavour. We're delighted to welcome back Bad Betty Press for an evening of live performance, followed by a musical poetry translation workshop with Christina Ng. We're also honoured to host Kwame Dawes, Poet Laureate of Jamaica, in partnership with Renaissance One (pp.3–4.)

As the days grow shorter and Halloween approaches, join us for *Hag: Modern Folklore & Fables* as part of Norwich Book Festival (p.4), a special witchy edition of our free Family Imagination Days (p.14), and the inaugural edition of Norwich's new horror literature festival, Darkest Chapter (p.5). Tickets are disappearing fast, so don't sleep on them.

There is also plenty on offer for writers looking to begin a new project or develop their craft. From crime fiction and screenwriting to a new edition of The Writing Life 30-Day Online Challenge (p.23), we look forward to welcoming you into our creative community, in person or online.

We're also introducing new opportunities for young people, including after-school tabletop gaming and a nationally significant playwriting programme delivered in partnership with the National Theatre (pp.14–15).

And somehow, Christmas doesn't feel far away. We hope you'll join us at the City of Literature Market (p.6) during the festive season, whether you're searching for gifts, soaking up the atmosphere, or admiring our Christmas tree.

Whether you're a familiar face or visiting us for the first time, we look forward to welcoming you to Dragon Hall this season.

Paula Sanchez
CEO & Creative Director
National Centre for Writing

AUTUMN LEAVES FALLING © AUTUMN MOTT RODEHEAVER

What's on

On Tour with Bad Betty Press

THU 8 OCTOBER, 6.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, PAY WHAT YOU WISH

Join award-winning publishing house Bad Betty Press for a night of dynamic poetry performance and music. Featuring Keith Jarrett, Perla Kantarjian, Anja Konig, Jake Wild Hall, and William Wyld. Sign up on the night for a three-minute open mic slot!

Dragon Hall Social

WED 14 OCT, WED 11 NOV, WED 9 DEC & WED 10 FEB, DOORS 5.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, FREE & DROP-IN

Open to anyone who makes, reads, or works with words! Our monthly drop-in social is an opportunity to grab a drink, meet new people, cook up plans and compare notes, talk books, and hear what's happening in Norwich.

The Poem as an Instrument with Christina Ng

THU 15 OCTOBER, 2.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £30 (£15 CONC)

Tune your ear to the music of language in this poetry translation workshop with Singaporean writer and translator Christina Ng. Discover how listening closely and finding the right notes can bring writing to life in a new language.

In partnership with the Poetry Translation Centre and BCLT. Supported by the National Arts Council Singapore

Christina Ng

© CHRIS-ABANI

Kwame Dawes

Walk Good: An Evening with Kwame Dawes

TUE 20 OCTOBER, 7.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £10 (£5 CONC)

Don't miss this rare opportunity to experience one of the poetry sector's most highly regarded poets, Kwame Dawes, as he visits the UK in his role as Poet Laureate of Jamaica. Kwame will share readings from his collected works, followed by an audience Q&A.

Programmed in partnership with Renaissance One, supported by Peepal Tree Press

John Berger From Life: Tom Overton

SAT 24 OCTOBER, 3PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £12

Writer and editor Tom Overton explores the remarkable life of celebrated writer, critic, and artist John Berger — from his groundbreaking work on art and technology to his writing on migration, community and social justice.

Part of Norwich Book Festival

Hag: Modern Folklore & Fables with Emma Glass & Irenosen Okojie

THU 29 OCTOBER, 6.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £12

Discover the dark feminist fables of *Hag*, an anthology exploring the untold stories of our isles journeying through magic, mermaids and the monsters that haunt us. These uncanny short stories crack open forgotten folktales and spill their wild reimaginings across the page.

Programmed by the National Centre for Writing for Norwich Book Festival

NORWICH BOOK FESTIVAL

Darkest Chapter

Join us for Norwich's inaugural festival dedicated to dark, uncanny, and horror storytelling!

Evolution of Horror Presents: The Exorcist

FRI 6 NOVEMBER, 5.30PM, CINEMA CITY, FROM £9.35

To mark the publication of a special anniversary edition of William Peter Blatty's landmark novel *The Exorcist*, we're hosting a special screening of William Friedkin's legendary horror film at Cinema City.

Workshop: It's What's Inside That Counts

SAT 7 NOVEMBER, 10AM–12.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £45 (£35 CONC)

In this fiction-focused workshop, Amy Twigg will explore why the body horror subgenre resonates so strongly and how writers can harness its power in their own work.

Ghosts in My House: Hauntings & Queer Desire

SAT 7 NOVEMBER, 1PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £10

Drawing from classic ghost stories and enlivening them with themes of identity, desire and queer revelations, Eleanor Crewes makes the haunted house tale her own in her new graphic novel.

Unravelling the Modern Gothic

SAT 7 NOVEMBER, 3PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £10

Claire Fuller and T.H. Huddleston explore how classic gothic elements are reimagined for modern audiences in their latest books.

Unhallowed Gifts

SAT 7 NOVEMBER, 5PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £12

Dan Coxon, Lucie McKnight Hardy, and Robert Shearman present spine-tingling stories of cursed curios that bring misfortune, madness, and death upon their owners.

The Art of Foreboding: Folk Horror

SAT 7 NOVEMBER, 7PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £12

Lucie McKnight Hardy and Andrew Michael Hurley, two of Britain's foremost folk horror writers, explore how atmosphere and landscape can evoke claustrophobia, unease and dread; where the personal and the elemental intersect; and why folk horror continues to captivate readers and writers alike.

Darkest Chapter is programmed and delivered by National Centre for Writing and Norwich UNESCO City of Literature. Proudly sponsored by The Evolution of Horror and supported by 3AM Books, The Book Hive, and Vinosangre

© LUKE WITCOMB

City of Literature Christmas Market

City of Literature Christmas Market

SAT 21 NOVEMBER, 10AM–4PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, FREE & DROP-IN

Grab yourself (or a loved one) the perfect literary gift courtesy of publishers and makers from across the region! Enjoy festive refreshments and take a break to listen to our fascinating lightning talks about books and writing.

A Celebration of New East Anglian Writing

THU 11 FEBRUARY, 7PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £8

Our annual celebration of East Anglian writing dives into the latest books, the vital role of bookshops, and what makes our region of big skies such a compelling place for bold storytelling. Includes the announcement of the East Anglian Book of the Year 2026.

The East Anglian Book Awards are delivered in partnership with the Eastern Daily Press*, supported by the University of East Anglia Faculty of Arts and Humanities*

Out of Nowhere: Ian Nettleton

THU 4 FEBRUARY, 6.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £5

Beloved writer and tutor Ian Nettleton launches his debut novel at Dragon Hall. Winner of the Bath Novel Award, *Out of Nowhere* is a tense and disturbing literary thriller about an escaped prisoner on the run in the Australian outback.

Supported by Salt Publishing

Norwich Science Festival at Dragon Hall

Step into a space where science meets creativity and curiosity sparks new possibilities!

Relative: TOAST Family Writing Workshop

WED 17 FEBRUARY, 10.30AM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £8

Join TOAST's Daisy Henwood for a family writing workshop with a science twist! Pool your favourite science facts, comb through STEMM-inspired writing prompts, and use your best words to craft the ultimate family poem. No spelling or grammar skills needed!

Co-programmed by National Centre for Writing and Norwich Science Festival

It's the End of the World (But Not as We Know It) with Chris Farnell & Stefan Mohamed

TUE 16 FEBRUARY, 7PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £10

Chris Farnell and Stefan Mohamed explore the strange and compelling realm of apocalyptic writing. They'll dissect how science fiction interacts with real world science and strip back the genre's tropes to better understand why so many of us seek out these stories.

A History of Our Letters and How We Use Them with Dr Danny Bate

THU 18 FEBRUARY, 7PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £10

Over millennia, we humans have learned to love our letters. But how? And what if you invented writing from scratch? Join Dr Danny Bate, linguist and bestselling author of *Why Q Needs U*, on a journey into the history and science of writing things down.

Bears vs Gravity! with Isabel Thomas

SAT 20 FEBRUARY, 10.30AM & 1.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £8 PER CHILD

Bring your favourite soft toy along for a STEMM adventure with science author Isabel Thomas. Enjoy a blend of interactive storytelling and science, plus a little engineering as you build a bear-launching contraption to take home! Suitable for ages 4+.

Co-programmed by National Centre for Writing and Norwich Science Festival

Norwich Science Festival is presented by The Forum and a partnership of organisations and institutions including Norwich Research Park and the University of East Anglia

Meet the World

Meet the World is the home of NCW's work on the international stage. Rooted in Norwich UNESCO City of Literature but with a global reach, we are proud to collaborate with writers, translators, and organisations from across languages and cultures.

The Global Page

Online events celebrating the art of writing and literary translation in all their forms.

On Bonds and Boundaries: Making the Best of Author-Translator Relationships

TUE 13 OCTOBER, 4.30PM BST, ONLINE, FREE

Soje, Marilyn Booth, and Annie Rutherford explore the conditions that can promote a thriving working relationship between author and translator, including how authors can support translators in producing a compelling pitch for their book. Chaired by Rosalind Harvey.

In partnership with BCLT and LTI Korea

Who Represents the Translator?

TUE 20 OCTOBER, 7PM BST, ONLINE, FREE

Translators Anton Hur and Sawad Hussain deep-dive into representation and the many kinds of labour that surround literary translation. Chaired by NCW's virtual translator-in-residence, Ecre Karadag.

Part of Visible Communities

Stories in the Air: Voice, Translation, and Immersive Audio

TUE 24 NOVEMBER, 7PM GMT, ONLINE, FREE

Literary translator Natascha Bruce, audio director and writer Jo Tyabji, and NCW's virtual translator-in-residence Yaqi Xi come together for a conversation about storytelling at the meeting point of literary translation and immersive audio.

Part of Visible Communities

Anton Hur

Erni Salleh

Meet our residents

Meet our artists-in-residence at the National Centre for Writing, who will be staying with us between October 2026 and February 2027.

Seoul-based artist **Dong I-Hyang** is a playwright, theatre director, and filmmaker. Her play collections *One Day*, *Four Doors* and *Liver and River* are published in Korean.

Roua Horanieh is an architect and writer based in London. Her work explores how places shape our stories, from the home, city, and natural world to the landscapes of art, literature, and the imagination.

Felicia Low-Jimenez is a Singaporean writer and former bookseller with an MA in Literary Theory and Asian Studies. She co-writes the bestselling middle-grade mystery series Sherlock Sam and is the author of *Tiger Girls*. She works in comics publishing.

Erni Salleh is a Singaporean author, former librarian, and museum educator. She writes The Travelling Library Chronicles of Maizey Lee, a middle-grade adventure series. The first book, *The Road to Bangkok*, won Best Young People's Fiction at the Singapore Book Awards 2025.

Virtual residencies

Jonathan Chan is a Singaporean writer, editor and poet. He is the author of the poetry collections *going home* and *bright sorrow*, with *azalea dialogues* forthcoming. He is the recipient of the 2025 Gasher Two Languages Prize and serves as Managing Editor of poetry.sg.

Chrystal Ho is a Singaporean writer and poet. She is the author of *Elsewhere, the Cosmos Cracks* (AFTERIMAGE Press), a finalist for the 2024 Gaudy Boy Poetry Book Prize. Her poetry and non-fiction have appeared in publications including *Portside Review*, *PR&TA* and *Sine Theta Mag*.

Sher Ting is a Singaporean-Chinese writer and poet. She is the author of the poetry collection *Burn After Dawn* and the chapbooks *Bodies of Separation* and *The Long-Lasting Grief of Foxes*.

With thanks to Arts Council Korea, Counterpoints, and National Arts Council Singapore

International residencies and events are generously supported by the Hawthornden Foundation

Hawthornden Foundation

In the smallest of spaces

Anaïs Van Ertvelde

Belgian writer and historian Anaïs Van Ertvelde explores how creativity emerges through embodied experience, finding connections between place, movement and the enduring influence of Julian of Norwich. Her residency in Norwich was part of an exchange with Passa Porta house of literature in Brussels.

I end up wandering into the cell of Julian of Norwich. In my pocket, a dusty hazelnut that I've taken from the bowl on display in the church where she once was an anchoress. I sit down in the remains of her long-lost anchorite cell, roll my illicitly begotten hazelnut between my fingers, and I contemplate most writers' paradoxical urge to both retreat from the world and to greedily, rapturously drink it up. I imagine Goodwife Julian, before her days of writing down her visions, returning from a walk on Mousehold Heath, opening up her knapsack to reveal all she has foraged.

© ADOBE STOCK

For her to hold one of those little hazelnuts in her hand, years later, when she found solace in her cell, after she had survived a sickbed that should have killed her, when she was turning herself into England's first known visionary woman writer, and then to ask that most writerly of questions: 'What may this be?' and to write down such an answer. It is all that is made.' Centuries before William Blake saw worlds in grains of sand and heaven in a wildflower.

—

Wandering the Norwich lanes is its own way of thinking and writing, not despite the distractions the city has to offer, but through them.

For writing is as much a way of feeling deeply as reading is.

And sparks of divine inspiration hide in the smallest of spaces.

Scan the QR code to continue reading.

Step into Dragon Hall this autumn

Step into Dragon Hall, one of Norwich's most important medieval buildings and home to the National Centre for Writing.

Our unique city-centre venue is open weekly **on Sunday and Monday 10am–3pm**, until Tuesday 27 October when we close for the winter. Pick up a trail map, explore the historic Great Hall, get creative in our arts-and-crafts activity space, or enjoy nature in our enclosed garden.

Entrance is free – no booking required.

National Centre for Writing, Dragon Hall, 115-123 King St,
Norwich, Norfolk NR1 1QE
01603 877177
nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/visit

Dragon Hall

© DAVID KIRKHAM, FISHEYE IMAGES

Discover the story of medieval Norwich

Dragon Hall is at the heart of Norwich's medieval history; a rare example of a merchant's trading complex with a hidden story which dates back to the Anglo-Saxon period. Pick up a map from our entrance or download our audio tour to begin your journey.

Become a Dragon Hall Explorer!

Meet Dragon, our resident fire-breathing friend, who has made the Great Hall his Dragon's Lair. Embark on our trail and complete creative activities as you explore the building to earn your explorer stamp!

Find inspiration and get creative

There's plenty of inspiration to be found in our unique building, which welcomes writers and artists from all walks of life every day. Get involved with a workshop or activity session, make friends, and share your story — designed for adults and kids alike!

Relax and unwind

Join us for nature trails in the garden, poem writing, or light reading in the Gallery and Great Hall. The garden is also the perfect spot for you to bring your lunch, sit with a friend, or bathe in the autumn sunshine.

Guided Heritage Tours

MON 19 OCTOBER, MON 16 NOVEMBER, MON 14 DECEMBER, MON 18 JANUARY & MON 15 FEBRUARY, 2PM, £5 SUGGESTED DONATION

Take a guided tour of Dragon Hall and learn more about its architectural and social history from an experienced volunteer guide. Please book in advance as spaces are limited.

Drop-in and Write (ages 60+)

MON 12 OCTOBER, MON 9 NOVEMBER, MON 14 DECEMBER, MON 11 JANUARY & MON 8 FEBRUARY, 2–4PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, FREE & DROP-IN

A quiet, supportive space to start something new or make progress on an existing writing project alongside fellow writers. Tea and coffee are provided, and a facilitator will be on hand with prompts, encouragement, and guidance whenever you need it.

Supported by the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, Home Instead Charities, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Limbourne Trust, Norfolk Community Foundation through the Connecting Older People Fund, Norwich Consolidated Charities & WG Edwards Charitable Foundation

GET INVOLVED

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Young people and families

Family Imagination Days

MON 26 & TUE 27 OCTOBER, 10AM–3PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, FREE & DROP IN

Discover Dragon Hall, a vibrant space for play, creativity, and storytelling. Relax with a book, enjoy giant games, and take part in free creative activities, including witch puppet-making on Monday and folklore adventures on Tuesday (10am to 12.30pm).

We'll also be celebrating The Big Draw by inviting visitors of all ages to leave their mark on our enchanted paper forest!

Suitable for all ages.

Made possible with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, with additional support from Norwich Freemen's Charity and National Arts Council Singapore. Part of The Big Draw, Norwich Book Festival and Where the River Meets Us

Meet us at the Imaginarium! Norwich Book Festival

WED 28 OCTOBER, 10AM–4PM, THE FORUM, FREE

We're taking part in Norwich Book Festival's celebration of creativity, stories, and imagination by hosting family-friendly activities throughout the day. Come and say hello! Suitable for all ages.

Roll With It: Stories Get Dicey! with A. J. Low

THU 29 OCTOBER, 10AM–12NOON, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £5

Geek out with Felicia and Adan, the authors of the Sherlock Sam mystery series, and use dice to roll up character stats, TTRPG-style! Create detectives and suspects and collaborate to tell stories with predicaments that may – or may not! – roll your way. Suitable for 11–13 years.

Questing Buddies with Jon Langdale

WED 18 NOVEMBER, 4.30–6PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £5

Join us after school for a Dungeons & Dragons-inspired adventure with a storytelling twist. This fun and collaborative session will guide you through creating your own character before embarking on an interactive quest together. No experience needed! Suitable for 13–17 years.

New Views: Young People's Playwriting Course

BEGINS MON 11 JANUARY FOR EIGHT WEEKS, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, FREE

Discover how to turn your ideas into compelling theatre. Through games, exercises and collaborative creative tasks, you'll explore how to develop ideas and build structure, characters, and dialogue.

Led by professional playwrights, this course offers an inspiring introduction to the playwriting process, alongside the chance to attend a performance at a local theatre.

Work created during the course will be submitted to the National Theatre's New Views Festival 2027 in London. For ages 14+.

In partnership with the National Theatre

Family Imagination Days

MON 15 & TUE 16 FEBRUARY, 10AM–3PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, FREE & DROP IN

Join us as we transform Dragon Hall into a vibrant, safe space for play and storytelling! Relax with a book, play giant games, and get involved with drawing and colouring. Plus, help us create an illuminated city using shadow puppetry and projection at our drop-in craft table between 10am–12.30pm. Suitable for all ages.

Made possible with the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Further supported by Norwich Freemen's Charity

Relative: TOAST Family Writing Workshop

WED 17 FEBRUARY, 10.30AM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £8

Join TOAST's Daisy Henwood for a family writing workshop with a science twist! See p.7 for details.

Co-programmed by National Centre for Writing and Norwich Science Festival

The Art of Animation with Edalia Day

THU 18 FEBRUARY, 10AM–12NOON, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £5

Bring stories and poems to life through the art of animation in this fun, hands-on workshop. Using simple apps on provided iPads, you'll create your own animated stories and poems while learning creative skills to continue exploring at home. No experience required. Suitable for 11–13 years.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Kickstart Your Young Norfolk Writing Prize Journey

THU 18 FEBRUARY, 10–11AM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, OR 2–3PM, ONLINE, FREE

Thinking of entering the Young Norfolk Writing Prize 2027 but not sure where to start? Join us for a friendly introductory session to meet the organisers, hear readings from past winners, pick up editing tips, and kick-start your submission alongside other young writers. Suitable for 10–18 years.

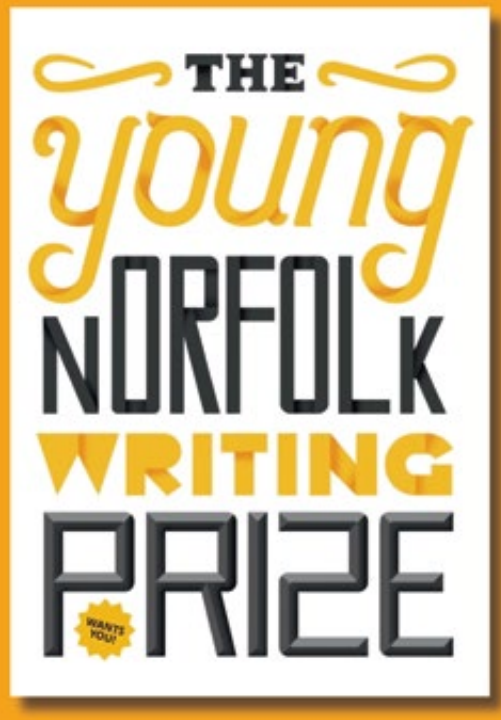
Young Norfolk Writing Prize is supported by Arts Council England & Norfolk County Council

Bears vs Gravity! with Isabel Thomas

SAT 20 FEBRUARY, 10.30AM & 1.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £8 PER CHILD

Bring your favourite soft toy along for a STEMM adventure with science author Isabel Thomas. Enjoy a blend of interactive storytelling and science, plus a little engineering as you build a bear-launching contraption to take home! Suitable for ages 4+.

Co-programmed by National Centre for Writing and Norwich Science Festival



National Centre for Writing

Aged 10–18? Love writing? We're looking for the freshest, boldest words in Norfolk.

Send us stories, lyrics, game narratives, graphic stories, poems, scripts, podcasts, plays, essays, journalism or spoken word for the change to win prizes!

Submissions open from Mon 15 February until Mon 26 April 2027.

Supported by Arts Council England & Norfolk County Counci

ACADEMY

Workshops

Try something new or sharpen your writing skills with a friendly one-off creative workshop.

Bringing Place to Life in Your Narrative with Dan Richards

SUN 4 OCTOBER, 10AM–12.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £45 (£35 CONC)

Discover how to bring place vividly to life on the page. Dan Richards will explore the art of observation, interpretation, and research, helping you to create immersive narratives that transport readers and deepen their connection to the landscapes, communities, and environments you describe.

What Can a Novelist Learn from Standup? with Fran Fabriczki

SAT 24 OCTOBER, 2–4.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £45 (£35 CONC)

By comparing iconic stand-up routines with extracts from comic fiction, you'll uncover techniques for creating humour through voice, character, structure, and timing, and learn how to apply them to your own writing. Expect practical exercises, close reading, and plenty of laughs along the way.

The Shape of an Idea with Roua Horanieh

THU 19 NOVEMBER, 6.30–9PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £45 (£35 CONC)

Feeling stuck in a writing project? In this practical and imaginative workshop, writer and artist Roua Horanieh will guide you through simple making and drawing exercises designed to help you visualise ideas, overcome creative blocks, and discover new directions for your work.

Following a Character's Lead: Screenplay Writing with David Drake

SAT 27 FEBRUARY, 2–4.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £45 (£35 CONC)

What happens when character, rather than plot, drives a story? Explore how putting character first can create more compelling, dynamic screenplays.

Forging Plot & Structure in Fantasy Fiction with Rym Kechacha

SAT 13 MARCH, 10AM–12.30PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £45 (£35 CONC)

From epic quests to intimate magic, fantasy is the perfect genre for exploring innovative approaches to story and structure. Join us for an inspiring workshop and discover how to plot your next writing adventure.

© ZSÓFIA BODNÁR

Fran Fabriczki

© JO RYAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Elizabeth Haynes

Evening courses

Weekly in-person sessions designed for you to practise skills and workshop ideas.

The Fundamentals of Fiction with Ian Nettleton

BEGINS MON 22 FEBRUARY FOR TEN WEEKS, 7–9PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £250 (£225 CONC)

This supportive and engaging course explores the evolution of the short story — from its origins to contemporary techniques — while helping you build confidence, develop your craft, and establish a regular writing routine. Ian's courses always sell out quickly, so book now to avoid disappointment.

Captivating Crime Fiction with Elizabeth Haynes

BEGINS THU 25 MARCH FOR EIGHT WEEKS, 7–9PM, NATIONAL CENTRE FOR WRITING, £180 (£160 CONC)

Discover the craft of writing compelling crime fiction with bestselling author Elizabeth Haynes. Explore the foundations of the genre, from building believable characters and motivations to developing intricate plots, sustaining tension, and delivering satisfying twists. Suitable for both new and experienced writers, this course will equip you with practical techniques for planning, writing, and editing your crime novel or short story.

Self-discovery through life writing

Life writing can be the mirror you need to understand yourself and the world around you. Memoirist Camilla Balshaw (author of *Named*) reflects on the power of life writing as a form of self-discovery and introspection.

Life writing is a powerful process of self-discovery. I often tell my students it is 'for anyone who is interested in finding out what it means to be human, in all its complicated messiness.'

Our lived experiences remind us that some of the most painful or difficult moments we may encounter do not define who we are. Instead, they become part of our unique personal stories. When we read about how other people have navigated life, it can shape how we view aspects of our own struggle and difficulties.

Camilla Balshaw

In a recent study by the National Institute of Health, life writing, including expressive journaling and narrative reflection, reduced stress and improved emotional well-being. Rather than suppressing difficult emotions, life writing provides the space to process thoughts and experiences.

Through writing our stories, we often discover that resilience is not about avoiding difficulties but about learning, adapting and moving forward. Sharing lived experiences encourages empathy and understanding and shows that it is possible to move on from trauma or setbacks. By doing so, you may discover you are much stronger than you imagined.

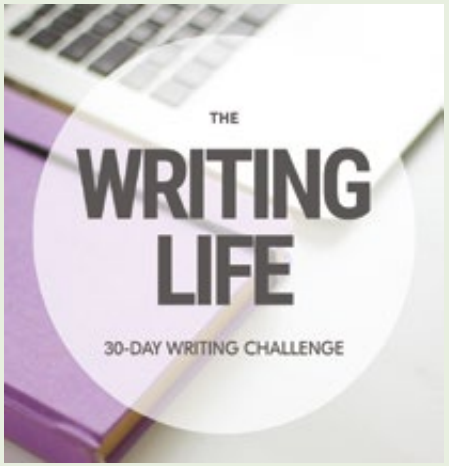
When you write about a life, it gives you the space, time, and permission to make sense of who you are. The reflection this brings has enabled me to grow and develop not only as a writer but as a person.

And that, for me, is the power of life writing.

Scan the QR code to read the full article.

The Writing Life: 30-Day Challenge

Take part online from anywhere, at any time that suits you. Once purchased, it's yours to keep forever!



NEW!

The Writing Life: Inspire

FRI 1 JANUARY, £30

New for 2027! Discover the extraordinary possibilities hidden in the world around you with this inspiring 30-day writing challenge. Designed to spark creativity and generate fresh ideas, it's all about following your imagination and seeing where it leads.

Rather than focusing on producing polished pieces or perfect drafts, this challenge encourages you to write spontaneously and playfully. Often, the most exciting discoveries happen when you embrace curiosity, trust your instincts and stay open to the unexpected.

By setting aside just 15 minutes a day, you'll establish a sustainable writing habit, strengthen your creative confidence, and uncover new sources of inspiration that can enrich your writing long after the challenge ends.

The Writing Life

TUE 1 SEPTEMBER & SUN 1 NOVEMBER, £30

The original writing challenge! Spark your creativity and build a sustainable writing practice over 30 days. Each day, you'll receive a fresh 15-minute prompt or exercise straight to your inbox, designed to inspire new ideas, develop your skills, and keep you writing.

The Writing Life: Reflect

THU 1 OCTOBER & MON 1 FEBRUARY

Ready to take your writing further? Building on the habits established in The Writing Life, this 30-day challenge focuses on craft, helping you develop your voice, strengthen your storytelling skills, and approach your work with greater confidence.

Book now at nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/writinglifechallenge

ACADEMY

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Online tutored courses

Join a global writing community and receive personalised feedback on your work with our flexible creative writing courses.

Designed for writers of all levels, our practical online courses feature engaging exercises, interactive Zoom sessions, curated resources, and fortnightly tutor feedback — whether you're embarking on your writing journey or refining your craft.

Courses designed in partnership with the University of East Anglia

University of East Anglia

How to Write Fiction (12-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 FEBRUARY, ONLINE, £495

Master the essential tools to craft compelling fiction — from creating memorable characters and building captivating plots to discovering and honing your unique voice. This course is perfect for anyone starting out as a novelist or short story writer, offering the foundation you need to bring your stories to life.

An Introduction to Crime Writing (12-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 FEBRUARY, ONLINE, £495

Explore the themes and enduring appeal of the UK's biggest-selling genre. Learn how to create credible worlds and characters, structure compelling stories, and build page-turning, tension-filled scenes.

An Introduction to Memoir (12-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 FEBRUARY, ONLINE, £495

Explore different forms of memoir, uncover your motivations for writing, and develop key techniques to strengthen your work. Learn how to craft a compelling life story while embracing vulnerability with confidence.

Creative Non-Fiction: An Introduction (12-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 FEBRUARY, ONLINE, £495

Explore various forms within the genre, including biography, reportage, nature writing, and more. Learn how to effectively research and convey information, structure engaging narratives, and express your unique perspective.

How to Write Historical Fiction (12-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 FEBRUARY, ONLINE, £495

Go beyond the fundamentals of research, structure, and writing in historical fiction. Study a range of contemporary texts, while exploring the idea of authenticity over accuracy, ensuring your narratives and characters are rich, complex, and compelling.

Develop Your Fiction (18-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 FEBRUARY, ONLINE, £995

This intensive course deepens your fiction skills, guiding you through more sophisticated techniques and diverse approaches to storytelling. You'll experiment creatively, read widely, and emerge with a polished draft of a short story.

How to Write a Novel (eight-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 MARCH, ONLINE, £300

Learn the essential tools and techniques for planning, drafting, and refining your first novel. This course will help you develop the core elements of compelling fiction, from creating memorable characters and shaping engaging plots to building immersive worlds and sustaining narrative momentum.

How to Edit a Novel (eight-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 MARCH, ONLINE, £300

This course is designed to help writers refine their manuscripts and approach their work with a fresh perspective. Through in-depth exploration of structure, perspective, and point of view, you'll learn how to transform your narrative and deepen its connection with readers.

The Narrative of Place (eight-week course)

BEGINS MON 22 MARCH, ONLINE, £300

This course for fiction and non-fiction writers is designed to inspire and improve your writing about journeys, places, and people. Discover new ways to relate and rhapsodise about voyages, misadventures, pilgrimages, and general wanderlust, whether in your own voice or that of your characters.

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Online, self-paced courses

These short online courses can be completed at your own pace, and once purchased, they're yours to keep. Explore writing habits and routines, build confidence, develop character and plot, or experiment with a new genre.

Writing Science Fiction: Plotting & Endings
ONLINE, £45
On this self-paced course, Ian Nettleton, author of *The Last Migration* and *Out of Nowhere*, will guide you through the essential tools and techniques for planning, plotting and refining compelling science fiction stories.

You'll explore how to build convincing worlds, craft engaging scenes, and use dialogue and subtext to bring your ideas to life.

Craft
- How to Write Real People in Memoir
- How to Write True Crime
- New Ways with Short Form Poetry
- How to Write Unreliable Narrators
- How to Write Young Adult Fiction
- Writing Characters for Middle-Grade Fiction
- How to Create Suspense in Fiction
- How to Create Suspense in Fiction

Professional insights
- How to Make Money From Your Writing

Confidence & productivity
- How to Write More and Stay Happy
- How to be a Confident Poet
- Supercharge Your Writing

Many of our courses are free!

One-to-one mentoring

Looking for advice? Need feedback on your writing? Our expert mentors are uniquely placed to help writers of all levels, from the finer details of a specific project to the bigger picture of your life as a writer. Working one-to-one, each session is focused on how best to help you, wherever you are in your writing journey.

Single or introductory mentoring session
£95 FOR A ONE-HOUR SESSION
Try mentoring for the first time and get a taster of what the relationship can offer. Also useful if you have a particular challenge or area of advice you would like to address.

The Full Story: 12-month mentoring package for prose writers
£3,000 (PAYMENT PLANS AVAILABLE)
Guided by Megan Bradbury, you will grow a long-form prose project from its conception to its completion. Megan's teaching is process-led and uniquely tailored to each writer. You will receive feedback on up to 60,000 words of writing.

Aspire: mentoring package (three session minimum)
FROM £256.50
Sign up for a bespoke package of support and meet regularly with your mentor to refine your manuscript, work on a funding application, or implement an action plan to improve your creative practice – whatever it is that will help you to achieve your writing goals.

Book three or more sessions in one transaction with the same mentor and receive a 10% discount on your total purchase.

ACADEMY

Support for writers

How to connect, get involved, and access support for your creative projects this season.

Resources & advice

Writing Hub

Our free online collection explores the craft of writing, inspires creative ideas, and showcases new work.

Explore now at nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/writing-hub.

The Writers' Room at Dragon Hall

Your place to write in Norwich! The Writers' Room offers free, bookable desk space on Thursday each week, providing a retreat in the city for use by writers, artists and creatives. Facilities include free WiFi and access to the garden. Please book your desk in advance.

To book your spot, visit nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/writers-room.

Opportunities

City of Literature residencies

NCW hosts a year-round residency programme for UK and international writers and translators: a mix of in-person opportunities and virtual residencies. We collaborate with a variety of partners and funders to support our residencies, while promoting international residencies from sister Cities of Literature around the world.

For the latest opportunities, visit nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/residencies.

Dragon Hall Retreats

A retreat in the Dragon Hall Cottage in the centre of Norwich is an investment in your writing and an opportunity to get away from everyday life. We welcome expressions of interest for single or joint retreats from anyone interested in creative writing or literary translation.

To find out more, visit nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/dragon-hall-retreats.

TLC Free Reads

We're offering up to ten low-income writers in the East of England the opportunity to have their manuscript assessed by The Literary Consultancy for free. The scheme gives priority to writers from under-represented backgrounds, including women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic writers, disabled writers, and LGBTQ+ writers.

Applications will be open from Monday 16 November 2026 until Monday 25 January 2027.

To apply, visit nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/free-reads.

DRAGON HALL

Marry. Celebrate. Meet.

Dragon Hall is a magnificent 15th-century timbered trading hall and courtyard garden in the heart of Norwich. Blending historic detail with sleek contemporary touches, it's the perfect creative canvas for weddings, parties, and events that seek to do things a little differently.

Home to the National Centre for Writing

nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/hire

Sleeping kings, demon dogs, witch marks, and concrete keyboards...

Norwich is a city of historic and modern folklore and fables.

As one of Britain's oldest counties, with its maze of medieval cobbled streets, hidden alleyways and curious buildings, it is perhaps no surprise that Norwich and Norfolk are rich in folklore, fables, myths and ghost stories. Traces of many of these tales remain woven into the landscape today, inspiring new generations of storytellers.

Some of the most infamous include...

- **The Legend of King Gurgunt at Norwich Castle:** Gurgunt was a mighty ruler who 'loved Norfolk so well he built a Fine City' where Norwich now stands. Local legend says he was buried beneath Norwich Castle, sword in hand, ready to rise again and defend his beloved county.

© CHRIS SPALTON / UNSPLASH

- **Black Shuck:** Part of a wider tradition of ghostly black dogs said to stalk communities across Britain, East Anglia's Black Shuck is among the most famous. This great black hound is said to haunt the region's coastlines and countryside.
- **The Wild Boy of Bridewell Alley:** Said to have captured the imagination of both Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, Peter the Wild Boy was a mysterious child who escaped from Hertfordshire before later being imprisoned in Bridewell Gaol, now the Museum of Norwich.
- **The ghost of Catherine Gurney:** It is said that the spirit of Catherine Gurney, sister of prison reformer Elizabeth Fry, appears at Earlham Hall each June on the anniversary of her death.
- **The mystery of Jack Valentine:** A tradition still observed by many today, the mythical Jack Valentine leaves gifts on doorsteps on Valentine's Eve before vanishing unseen. Will it be a trick or a treat inside?
- **Norwich keyboard:** At the corner of Princes Street and Elm Hill, passers-by can spot a strange keyboard-shaped imprint in the ground. Some believe it resembles a modern computer keyboard, while others claim it is an 18th-century printing plate from a monastery.

Want to discover more of Norfolk's myths, legends and ghost stories? Visit the Norfolk Folklore Society at norfolkfolkloresociety.co.uk, or pick up a copy of Peter Tolhurst's book *This Hollow Land: Aspects of Norfolk Folklore*.

People's Poem for Wensum

WED 28 OCTOBER, 4–7PM, THE LIONS' DEN RIVER, FREE & DROP-IN

Help us tell the story of the River Wensum and its connection to our city! Everyone is invited to help shape a unique community poem inspired by the river that flows through the heart of Norwich. No writing experience needed.

Delivered by National Centre for Writing in partnership with Norwich City Council and Where the River Meets Us

Weird & Wonderful Story Walk

VARIOUS DATES, 7.30PM, CITY HALL, £10 (UNDER 17'S FREE)

Discover the lesser-known landmarks, infamous characters, and the weird and wonderful events that have shaped our city's history! Norwich Story Walks hosts a regular 1.5 hour guided walking tour of the unusual and fascinating sites across Norwich. **norwichstorywalks.co.uk**

Norfolk Folklore Society: Ghost Stories for Christmas

WED 2 DECEMBER, 8.30PM, CINEMA CITY, £9.35

Experience two classic episodes from the BBC's beloved series, both with ties to Norfolk: *The Stalls of Barchester* (1971) and *A Warning to the Curious* (1972). Adapted from the work of M. R. James, these haunting films helped define a uniquely British tradition of Christmas horror. **picturehouses.com**

NORWICH UNESCO CITY OF LITERATURE

Norwich Film Festival: Where great stories come to life

Every great film starts with a story. This November, Norwich Film Festival returns for ten days celebrating the writers, filmmakers and creative voices bringing extraordinary stories to the screen.

From 6–15 November 2026, the BAFTA-qualifying and BIFA-recognised festival will showcase an exciting programme of British and International short films, spanning drama, comedy, animation, documentary and emerging talent, alongside filmmaker Q&As, special screenings, and industry events.

For writers, it's an opportunity to experience storytelling in a different form — to discover original voices, explore how character, dialogue and ideas translate to screen, and perhaps find inspiration for your own work.

Whether you're a writer, filmmaker, film lover or simply someone who enjoys a brilliantly told story, we'd love you to join us.

norwichfilmfestival.co.uk

Help write the next chapter for Norwich's children

Norwich is England's first UNESCO City of Literature, renowned for its rich storytelling heritage and vibrant community of writers and creatives. Yet, despite this cultural legacy, the city faces some of the UK's poorest educational and literacy outcomes.

Just 11% of children write for pleasure every day. Together, as a community of readers in England's first UNESCO City of Literature, we're helping to change that story, engaging more than **4,500 young people every year** through free creative activities and storytelling that inspire a lifelong love of reading.

'I would definitely come again! I wrote a story that was really good and I wouldn't be able to do it anywhere else'

How you can help

Scan today to donate. Every £1 helps spark confidence and creativity!

- Experience an **event**: Every ticket helps!
- Explore the **shop**: Prints, bags, and more!
- **Advertise** to 3,000+ readers: Book an advert in our brochure.

nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk/donate-26

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Registered Charity 1110725

Exploring the Book Nook at a Family Imagination Day

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Contact us

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Email: info@nationalcentreforwriting.org.uk

Office hours are between 9am–5pm
Monday to Friday for queries
by telephone or email.

Visit Dragon Hall

National Centre for Writing, Dragon Hall,
115–123 King St, Norwich NR1 1QE

Open every week, Sunday & Monday,
10am–3pm, until Tuesday 27 October.
Free, no booking required.

Registered Charity in UK 1110725

National Centre for Writing

NORWICH CITY OF LITERATURE

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