

PRESS INFORMATION FOR 26 April 2017:



**Ledbury Poetry Festival 2017:
Paddy Ashdown, Richard Dawkins, Simon Armitage, Bejan Matur
join all-star cast 'from all over the world'
to celebrate 21 years of the UK's biggest poetry festival**

30 June – 9 July 2017
www.poetry-festival.co.uk



'One of the most exciting and important literary festivals in England' Carol Ann Duffy
'The Ledbury Poetry Festival is the best in the country' Andrew Motion



Former leader of the Liberal Democrats **Paddy Ashdown**, leading scientist and author **Richard Dawkins**, multi-award winning poet **Simon Armitage**, comedian and poet **Sean Hughes**, acclaimed Kurdish poet **Bejan Matur**, legendary Romanian poet **Ana Blandiana** and novelist and journalist **Andrew O'Hagan** are among the new artists announced for Ledbury Poetry Festival 2017 (30 June – 9 July), as the full programme is released today, Wednesday 26 April 2017. Tickets go on sale to the general public on Saturday 20 May 2017.

Founded in 1997, by a group of local enthusiasts, Ledbury Poetry Festival is today recognized as the nation's pre-eminent and biggest poetry festival. In 2000, only four years in, Carol Ann Duffy called Ledbury 'one of the most exciting and important literary festivals in England' which 'exclusively features real writers'. In 2017, Ledbury Poetry Festival remains rooted in its local community, bringing audiences some of the most exciting names in poetry, politics and popular culture from across the world in the intimate venues, streets and parks of Ledbury, the picturesque rural market town near the Malvern Hills.

With over 135 events in 10 days, Ledbury Poetry Festival 2017 offers new and dedicated poetry fans the chance to fully immerse themselves in the diverse world of poetry. Ledbury Poetry Festival 2017 will take poetry off the page via talks, readings, performances, slams, sign language, translations, competitions, workshops, prescriptions, residencies, theatre, song, dance, puppetry, comedy, art, walks and bike rides.

The *Desert Island Poems* strand of events at the festival will see **Paddy Ashdown**, actor **Hugh Dennis** and pottery entrepreneur **Emma Bridgewater**, share the poems that have shaped their lives. **Richard Dawkins** will also share his favourite poems with **Lalla Ward** in *Rhyme and Reason* and Festival Patron and BAFTA nominated actor **Juliet Stevenson** will read the poems of American poet, radical and feminist Adrienne Rich. Actor and *I'm a Celebrity* star **Larry Lamb** will read poems nominated by the audience in *Poetry Jukebox*.

One of the hallmarks of 2017 programme is Outdoor Magic, as the Festival will explode like a party popper over the streets of Ledbury via a host of outdoor events and community initiatives including wrapping the town in poetry, outdoor poetry chairs, events in the walled garden and poetry-inspired shop window

displays. **Fair Field** will re-imagine Piers Plowman by local poet William Langland for the twenty-first century through a series of site-responsive performances in Ledbury and secret locations in the Malvern Hills. **7AIRS** will offer ground-breaking site-specific performances combining physical theatre, music and poetry spanning the stages of life as two poets, one from the UK and one from Europe, create one piece. On the final day of the festival, Sunday 9 July the whole of Ledbury high street will close to mark the festival's 21st birthday and the 400th anniversary of the town's iconic Market House, for a full day of poetry, music, entertainment, food and drink.

International poetry is ever a strong feature of the programme, with a focus on Romanian Women Poets lead by the Festival poet in residence **Fiona Sampson** including legendary poet **Ana Blandiana**. Acclaimed Kurdish poet **Bejan Matur** reads with T.S. Eliot award winner **Jen Hadfield**, American poets **Thomas Lynch** and **Tony Hoagland** read together and poet **Choman Hardi**, a Kurdish poet who sought asylum in the UK in 1993 will perform from her new collection. Annual festival highlight Versopolis will showcase emerging European poets, in performance and translation including **Charlotte Van de Broeck** (Belgium), **Nikolina Andova** (Macedonia), **Veronika Dintinjana** (Slovenia) with two of their UK counterparts, **Kayo Chingonyi** and **Helen Mort**.

A series of workshops offer aspiring and burgeoning poets practical advice on writing and editing poetry lead by poets ranging from 2016 Forward Prize Winner **Vahni Capildeo** to **Katharine Towers**, poet in residence at the Cloud Appreciation Society. The festival also provides ample chance to hear from some of the newest voices in poetry with *20 minutes with...* introductory events with emerging poets such as **Sam Buchan-Watts** and **Suzannah Evans** plus events featuring the winners of schemes such as Faber New Poets, the National Poetry Competition and the Eric Gregory Award. This year the Festival has also supported opportunities for new writing with the **Ledbury Poetry Festival Poetry Competition 2017** and the **Ledbury Forte Poetry Prize** for second collections – winners of each will be announced during the festival.

Chloe Garner, Ledbury Poetry Festival's Artistic Director says "happy 21st Ledbury! The celebrations spill onto the streets, into unexpected locations and places. To surprise all sorts of people who might not expect to, but find they do in fact enjoy poetry. This is a Festival in many languages, welcoming poets from all over the world. It celebrates translation, collaboration, exchange and sharing – of words, experiences, places, feelings, convictions, stories, histories, pleasures.'

LEDBURY POETRY FESTIVAL 2017 PROGRAMME

Ledbury Poetry Residential

In partnership with the University of Roehampton Poetry Centre

Refreshing the Word with Fiona Sampson and David Harsent

Monday 26 June – Thursday 29 June 2017

£450 (includes fully catered accommodation for 3 nights)

Poetry expresses the self, captures the world, and gives both poet and reader new ways of seeing. Whether you're a keen novice or working on your fifteenth collection, and whatever your background, award-winning poets **Fiona Sampson** and **David Harsent** will help you take your work to a new level, show how the craft of poetry leads to the art of poetry, and give you new skills and ways of going on to make your future work sing. Four days of workshops, one-to-one tutorials and readings in a friendly, inspiring working atmosphere and the beautiful setting of Hellens Manor.

Accommodation: Hellens Manor, Much Marcle, Nr Ledbury HR8 2LY. www.hellensmanor.com

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Chloe or Sandra at Ledbury Poetry Festival on 01531 636232 or email admin@poetry-festival.co.uk

Friday 30 June

21 Years of Ledbury Poetry Festival! Showcase and Celebration!

Hosted by **Brenda Read-Brown**

5pm – 6.30pm

Burgage Hall

Free but ticketed

This event showcases poets at all stages of their development: **John Masefield High School Students** have worked with the school's poet in residence **Brenda Read-Brown** to create their poems. The **Foyle Young Poets Award** for poets aged 11 – 17 is one of the largest and most prestigious literary prizes and past winners include **Theophilus Kwek**, **Richard Osmond** and **Mary Anne Clark** who will read tonight. Established poets include **Fiona Sampson**, recently made an MBE for services to literature and current Herefordshire poet in residence whose latest collection is *The Catch*; **Alison Brackenbury** whose ninth collection of poetry is called *Skies* and **Katharine Towers** whose second collection is *The Remedies*. American poet **Thomas Lynch** will feature among other renowned poets.

The Physic Garden Anthology Launch

7.15pm – 8.15pm

Feathers Hotel

Free but ticketed (bar available)

Healing poems inspired by healing plants in the Physic Garden at Hellens Manor. In 2016 a poem by **Adam Horovitz**, who was Herefordshire poet in residence at the time, inspired a botanica of digital contributions from poets all over the world and at all stages of their poetic development. This rich and varied collection led to this anthology, published by Palewell Press. Join us for the launch and raise a glass to the healing powers of mother nature!

Fair Field: Will's Vision

8pm - 10pm

Malvern Hills, secret location

Free but ticketed (Location revealed on booking)

Ac on a May mornnyng on Malverne hulles

Me biful for to slepe, for werynesse of-walked.

Follow in the footsteps of medieval poet William Langland in Fair Field's unmissable opening. Staged in the Malvern Hills at dusk, this outdoor performance follows the dreamer, Will, as he walks into the Hills and begins an extraordinary journey through an unreal landscape. Langland's 'fair field full of folk' comes to life as a bustling vision of England, where the modern mingles with the medieval. Immerse yourself in a riot of colour, sound and speech as Will discovers a society in spiritual free-fall and embarks on a quest to find Truth.

Sean Hughes Poetry and Stand-up

9pm – 10pm

Community Hall (bar available)

£9

Sean Hughes is best known for being a team captain on the BBC's hit quiz show *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*. He has toured up and down the country as well as abroad with his successful hilarious comedy stand up tours since then, along with a fortnightly podcast called *Under The Radar* where he has special guests from the world of comedy, sports and entertainment. His poetry collection is *My Struggle to be Decent* and he performs it with his unique brand of stand-up.

Sponsor Greendawn Accounting

Saturday 1 July

Saturday 1 July and Saturday 8 July

Outdoor Magic in the Walled Garden

11am – 4pm

Walled Garden, Ledbury

All these wondrous events and activities are FREE!

Make Time for Rhyme with the Word Wizards!

Saturday 1 July only / 11-11.45am / 2-2.45pm / Free

Hey diddle diddle, are you ready to riddle? Join wacky word wizards **Sara-Jane Arbury** and **Eleanor Holliday** as they travel through rhyme zones to take a playful look at the weird and wonderful world of Rhyme! Expect zany names, crazy games, and lots of words that sound the same. Whether you're young or old, shy or bold, this family show is a ton of fun for everyone! You'll have the rhyme of your life!

Quirky Folk

Make your own 'quirky' folk, like all the best characters in books, someone who is strange, and interesting and very cool. You can create your person from wood, fabric, paper, wool, tin foil, and anything else we can find. Working with community artist **Jeanette McCulloch**, a drop-in workshop, fun for all ages.

Make a Map of Outdoor Magic

Saturday 1 July only

Join author/illustrator **Sally Kindberg** and add words and pictures to make a giant Map of Outdoor Magic. Sally has just finished a book series called *Draw It!*, recently made comic strips for CBBC and has drawn maps for many books and newspapers. She will be bringing her Hat of Surprise to inspire you with its contents. Invent a magical landscape, and have fun exploring!

Minstrels of Magic

11am, 12am, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm

Join an all-age musical wand making workshop! Construct your own personalised wand and once it's complete you will create your very own magic word and bring a well-known verse of poetry to life using riffs, rap and rhythm. Finally we'll layer all of these elements together to create a polyphony of marvellous, musical magic spells!

Sally Crabtree Creativity Conjurer

Come and wave your magic wonder with **Sally Crabtree** and discover that creativity really is magic – conjuring something out of nothing! Sally's unique approach to poetry has been adding a little magic to the world and she has just returned from the Far East with dazzling new tricks up her sleeve!

Nursery Rhymes Trail

The folk at Ledbury Fairy Door Trail, have invited our larger-than-life friends from well-loved nursery rhymes specially to meet you! Come and seek them out, go round and round the Walled Garden, march to the top and back down again! Humpty Dumpty and other delightful characters may be found on the walls, hiding in the trees, peeping from the bushes. Mind the tuffet and look out for Polly making tea! Join us and other wonderful rhyming creations on a fun-filled day of enchantment.

Flit, Flap and Fly: A Squawking Adventure!

Saturday 8 July only / 11.30am, 1pm, 3pm

Flit, flap & fly is a squawking adventure that follows a young chick's frantic and funny journey towards independence, and his relationship with his fine-singing father. Suitable for all ages (but particularly aimed at 4-7 year olds) the audience is invited to join the pair in the nest, where they find themselves part of the daily life of a unique bird family.

Sponsor The Worcestershire Branch of the English-Speaking Union

Emergency Poet: The World's first poetic first aid service

A mix of the serious, the therapeutic and the theatrical, The Emergency Poet offers consultations inside her ambulance and prescribes poems as cures. In the waiting room under an attached awning **Nurse Verse** dispenses poemcetamol and other poetic pills and treatments from the *Cold Comfort Pharmacy*.

Workshop with Katharine Towers: *I wandered lonely ...*

10am – 12noon

Old Cottage Hospital

£20

Wordsworth created perhaps the most famous cloud in poetry – although, of course, his poem is not about clouds at all. In this workshop **Katharine Towers** (Poet-in-Residence at the Cloud Appreciation Society) will take you up into

the ether to help you capture that most elusive of creatures, the cloud poem. Explore the language of clouds and find out just how far a cumulonimbus or a cirrostratus can take you.

Sponsor: Fenton Arts Trust

Bejan Matur and Jen Hadfield

11am – 12noon

Burgage Hall

£9

Acclaimed Kurdish poet **Bejan Matur** presents a new chapbook of her poems, in English translation by T.S. Eliot Prize-winning poet **Jen Hadfield**. Join us for an electrifying hour of poetry in Kurdish, Turkish and English, by a pair of poets whose work explores the language of landscape and of home.

Presented in partnership with the Poetry Translation Centre

20 minutes with... Faber New Poet Elaine Beckett

12.15pm – 12.35pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Elaine Beckett's first pamphlet was published under the Faber New Poets scheme in 2016. Her poems have been longlisted for The Bridport Prize.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

A.E. Stallings and Matthew Francis: Rhyming the Classics and other poems

12.45pm – 1.45pm

Burgage Hall

£9

An event celebrating poetry that uses rhyme and meter: **A.E. Stallings** is an American poet, a MacArthur Fellow, who studied Classics. She has published three collections of poetry, *Archaic Smile*, *Hapax*, and *Olives*, and a verse translation (in rhyming fourteeners!) of *Lucretius*, *The Nature of Things*. Her new translation of Hesiod's *Works & Days* is published by Penguin in November. **Matthew Francis's** poetic retelling of the first four stories of the Welsh national epic *The Mabinogi* captures the magic and strangeness of this medieval Celtic world.

Sponsored by BRM

Fair Field: The Marriage of Lady Mede

2pm - 3pm

St Michael & All Angels Church

£6 (£20 for all four Fair Field events)

You are invited to the wedding of the year! With the country beset by economic crisis, join socialite and millionaire heiress Lady Mede as she ties the knot with False. But behind the glamour lurks Conscience and a surprise revelation that threatens to spoil the party... In this modern adaptation of one of the key scenes in *Piers Plowman*, playwright Annette Brook explores the use and abuse of money – from cash for questions to pay-day loans – and asks: Can money ever be good?

Hedgespoken

Rima Staines and Tom Hiron

Hellens Manor Garden

Saturday 1 July and Sunday 2 July

Paintings in a Minor Key

Rima Staines is an artist using paint, wood, word, music, animation, clock-making, puppetry and story to attempt to build a gate through the hedge that grows along the boundary between this world and that.

Workshops for children on storytelling, maskmaking and puppetry

The Fairytale Circus

Hedgespoken children's shadow puppetry workshop

11am – 12noon

£3 per person

Make giants ride unicycles! Make clouds dance! Make dragons sing! Make Baba Yaga fly!

Come and join artist and puppeteer **Rima Staines** and other Hedgespoken crew (big and small) for a shadow puppetry workshop in our audience marquee beside the truck-stage. Choose to make a paper character from our favourite folk tale and bring them to life on the shadow screen with music. Materials provided. Ages 5+. Parents must stay with their children.

The Golden Antlered Reindeer

Hedgespoken children's storytelling workshop

2.30pm – 3.30pm

£3 per person

Come and learn to tell The Golden Antlered Reindeer with Hedgespoken's **Tom Hirons** in our audience marquee. From learning the bare bones to fleshing it out and bringing it to life, Tom will use over twenty years' experience as a storyteller to guide you through this short, but magical Finnish tale. Never be storyless again! Ages 5+.

The Singing Bone

5pm – 6.15pm

£9

'Magic of a real, old, golden kind.'

Beside a river grows a Juniper tree. By the tree, a shepherd unearths a bone and fashions a flute from it. The song of this bone flute forms the thread of this uncanny and beautiful story — the story of the youngest of three sisters, of her magical glass apple and silver plate and of what happened to her and the shepherd who plays her song on the singing bone flute. The Singing Bone is a tale about truth and lies, about empowerment and faith. Hedgespoken use storytelling, masquerade and puppetry, song and immersive theatre to present a tale that is told from Iceland to Russia, in Pakistan and by the brothers Grimm.

Recommended for 8+.

Workshop on Prose Poems with Christopher Merrill

2pm – 4pm

Old Cottage Hospital

£20

Participants are welcome to submit prose poems in advance and **Christopher Merrill** will lead the group to offer constructive and useful feedback and workshop the poems during the session. This session will also offer some writing prompts to stimulate your ideas around this exciting form. Christopher Merrill is a respected poet and director of the world-renowned International Writing Program at the University of Iowa.

20 minutes with... Faber New Poet Crispin Best

2pm – 2.20pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Crispin Best lives in London and at www.crispinbest.com. His first pamphlet was published under the Faber New Poets scheme in 2016.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Thomas Lynch and Tony Hoagland

2.30pm – 3.30pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Two American poets who share a wry, dark humour: **Thomas Lynch**, hailed by *The New York Times* as a cross between Garrison Keillor and William Butler Yeats, gives us glimpses of ordinary people and the ways they approach their own mortality. He lives in Milford, Michigan where he has been the funeral director since 1974, and in Moveen, Co. Clare, Ireland where he keeps an ancestral cottage. **Tony Hoagland's** poems poke and provoke at the same time as they entertain and delight. He is American poetry's hilarious 'high priest of irony', a wisecracker and a risk-taker whose disarming humour, self-scathing and tenderness are all fuelled by an aggressive moral intelligence. He pushes the poem not just to its limits but over the edge.

Sponsored by David and Ann Tombs

20 minutes with... Faber New Poet Rachel Curzon

3.40pm – 4pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Rachel Curzon's first pamphlet was published under the Faber New Poets scheme in 2016. Her poems have appeared in *The Rialto* and *Poetry London*.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Fair Field: The Confession of the Seven Sins

4pm - 5pm

Barrett Browning Institute

£6 (£20 for all four Fair Field events)

Got something to confess? Follow the dreamer, Will, into the crumbling labyrinth of the Barrett Browning Institute and discover an anarchic, medieval self-help group. The seven sins will all be there – from Gluttony, high on icing sugar, to Lechery, teller of the dirtiest tales. Map your own route through the Institute in this immersive, provocative and comic experience of the dark side of human nature.

Rhyme and Reason with Richard Dawkins

4pm – 5pm

Community Hall

£12

Richard Dawkins is one of the most respected scientists in the world and from 1995 to 2008 was the Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. His most recent books are his two-part autobiography *An Appetite for Wonder* and *A Brief Candle in the Dark*. He will appear in conversation with **Lalla Ward**.

Ledbury Poetry Competition Winners

4.15pm – 5.15pm

Burgage Hall

Free but ticketed

Hosted by **Imtiaz Dharker**, with guest appearance from previous winner **Jacqueline Saphra**. The prestigious Ledbury Poetry Competition has helped many emerging poets including Jacob Polley who won the 2016 T.S. Eliot Prize.

'Winning the Ledbury Poetry Competition in 2001 gave me a huge boost. I'd never won anything, and the confidence the win gave me pushed me forward, towards more poems, my first book and beyond.'

Sponsor: Severnprint

20 minutes with... Faber New Poet Sam Buchan-Watts

4.40pm – 5pm

Panelled Room

Free

Sam Buchan-Watts's first pamphlet was published under the Faber New Poets scheme in 2016. His poems have appeared in *Poetry London* and *Salt's Best British Poetry* series.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

FIRST ACTS – Spoken word on film

5pm – 6pm

Market Theatre

Free but ticketed

Rural Media present a screening and live performance of some bold, innovative micro-short spoken word films made by West Midlands-based Spoken Word Artists for the Channel 4 Random Acts strand. The artists include 1990sChris, Paul Stringer (Beatfreaks), Aliyah Hasinah, Siphon Dube, Dion Kitson and Tom Chimiak. The event and Q&A with artists will be hosted by Ben Norris (2013 UK All-Star Poetry Slam Champion).

Sponsor: Rural Media, First Acts

Three Romanian Women Poets Hosted by Fiona Sampson

Ana Blandiana, Liliana Ursu and Magda Carneci with translator Viorica Patea

6pm – 7.30pm

Burgage Hall

£9

This event is curated by our poet in residence **Fiona Sampson**. She says, 'Poetry opens a door on the world. Right now, Romania's women poets are among the best writing anywhere. I love their work, which is extravagant, surreal, sexy and often socio-political too. They encourage us to take risks, and to feel beholden to nobody.'

Ana Blandiana is a legendary figure in Romanian literature. She has recently been awarded the European Poet of Freedom Prize (2016) among her many honours. Ana Blandiana will read from *My Native Land A4* and her new collection *The Sun of Hereafter & Ebb of the Senses*. **Liliana Ursu** is an internationally acclaimed poet, prose writer, and translator. **Magda Carneci** is a poet, essayist and art historian who has published numerous books of poetry.

Fair Field: The Ploughing of the Half-Acre

8pm - 9pm

Barrett Browning Institute

£6 (£20 for all four Fair Field events)

Will's quest to find Truth has stalled, until a chance meeting with Piers the Plowman puts him on the right track. But can Piers recruit enough workers to plough his half-acre of land before Hunger strikes? Return to the soil in this dream-within-a-dream about labour, food and hunger. Breach Theatre combine a dramatic retelling from Piers Plowman with original film tracing the journey of modern food from field to fork.

An evening of Poetry and Song with Grace Petrie and MacGillivray

8pm – 10.30pm

Hellens Manor

£15

Grace Petrie is a folk singer, songwriter, and activist. Her unique takes on life, love and politics, and the warmth and wit with which they are delivered have won over audiences everywhere. She has performed and collaborated with Billy Bragg and Peggy Seeger. **MacGillivray's** second collection is *The Nine of Diamonds*. She reads and sings not just poems but also old Gaelic songs. Her presentation is other-worldly and electrifying, drawing on ancient traditions but ultramodern.

Ledbury Poetry Slam

8pm – 10.30pm

Market Theatre

£9

Brace yourselves for a knockout night of performance poetry! It's a cut-and-thrust contest where do-or-die versifiers parade their poems. Random judges award points for style, content and warmth of the applause, so who will fire on all syllables and become Ledbury's Slam Luminary? Join heavenly hosts **Elvis McGonagall** and **Sara-Jane Arbury** for an energetic evening of good verbal vibrations and support those taking a stanza on stage. For further details or to enter the Slam, please contact Sara-Jane on 07814 830031 or email sjarbury@gmail.com

Fair Field: The Tower of Truth

9.30pm - 10.30pm

St Katherine's Hall

£6 (£20 for all four Fair Field events)

Destitute and seeking redemption, Will finds shelter in an empty hall. Will he ever find Truth or the answers he seeks? The outside world threatens to break in and he falls again into a dream, with the angry shouts of protestors combining with nightmarish visions of the underworld. Discover the Truth in this powerful crescendo of Will's journey, staged in a medieval hall and modelled on the ancient Christian tradition of the Easter Vigil.

All The Journeys I Never Took

Pre-book a 30 minute performance time between 12 noon and 8pm.

£8

All The Journeys I Never Took with **Rebecca T Antony** is a personal account of what it's like to discover our place in the world; a place which echoes with unravelling journeys, first dates, travel, break-ups, family and confidences. At turns both confessional and an exploration of current affairs, this show explores what a contemporary definition of home might be. Become the observer. Sit back. Absorb and enjoy the journey!

This unique performance is 30 minutes long for one or two audience members at a time and a mystery location!

Suitable for audiences 16+

Sunday 2 July

Brexit Breakfast

9.30am – 10.30am

Under the Market House

£9 including coffee/tea and a croissant

Nicholas Murray performs his new poem *A Dog's Brexit*. This is political poetry at its best – brimful of wit and charm, easily keeping the attention of the audience. So come and hear this enjoyable poem.

Mslexia at Ledbury Poetry Festival – Meet the Poetry Editors

11am – 12noon

Burgage Hall

£9

Mslexia will be making an appearance at 'the UK's most popular poetry festival'. This time poets are invited to come along to our Meet the Poetry Editors event featuring an informal Q&A session with **Neil Astley** (*Bloodaxe Books*), **Amy Wack** (*Seren*) and **Luke Allen** (*Carcanet Press* and *PN Review*). Come along to pitch your questions alongside host *Mslexia* Editor **Debbie Taylor**.

A.E. Stallings Workshop – Forms of Repetition

'Repetition is a Form of Change' – Brian Eno, Oblique Strategies

11am – 1pm

Old Cottage Hospital

£20

In this workshop, participants will look at the contemporary triolet, a 8-line form pivoted on two rhymes and repeated lines that somehow covers more ground than its wheel-spinning cousin, the villanelle--a little hand-grenade of a form packing a lot of power into a tiny space. The focus is on rhyme as unreason, and repetition as movement.

20 minutes with... Smith | Doorstep poet Jenny Danes

12.15pm – 12.35pm

Panelled Room , The Master's House

Free

Jenny Danes won *The Poetry Business* New Poets Prize and her work has appeared in various magazines including *The Rialto* and *Magma*.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Tabish Khair readings and conversation with David Punter

12.45pm – 1.45pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Born and educated in Gaya, a small town in Bihar, India, **Tabish Khair** is the author of various acclaimed books, including the poetry collections, *Where Parallel Lines Meet* and *Man of Glass*. In 2016, he published a study, *The New Xenophobia* and a new novel, *Just Another Jihadi Jane* to critical acclaim. Khair has won the All India Poetry Prize. He will appear in conversation with poet and Professor of Poetry, **David Punter**.

Sponsored by Bristol Poetry Centre

John Masefield Inspires

1pm – 1.30pm

Baptist Hall

Free But Ticketed

Join the Herefordshire Stanza Poets in their marking of the 50th Anniversary of the death of Ledbury's Poet Laureate as they read their own poems inspired by his life and writings.

20 minutes with... Smith | Doorstep poet Suzannah Evans

2pm – 2.20pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Suzannah Evans' pamphlet *Confusion Species* was published as one of the winners of the Poetry Business Competition. She is currently working on a collection of apocalyptic poems.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Tony Hoagland Workshop – Shifting the Frame

2pm – 4pm

Old Cottage Hospital

£20

In our era, one default assumption of much poetry is that the poem's proper subject is the self of the speaker. The result of this assumption is a claustrophobia in many poems, an enclosed world-view preoccupied with first person pronoun. This workshop will be about consciously shifting the frame of the poem from the private ego into the wider world; getting more playful, and more knowledgeable, more elliptical and polyphonic in the making of your poems. To incorporate the manifold world into a poem is not to leave the self behind, but enlarges and deepens everything: structure, tone, soulfulness, veracity, and ambition.

Death Salon with Thomas Lynch

2.30pm – 4pm

Handley Organics Cafe Upstairs

£5 Coffee and delicious cakes available to purchase

Thomas Lynch chronicles of small-town life and death through the eyes of a poet who is also an undertaker. He will chat about his writing and work on last things and funerals and enable an open conversation on subjects ranging from couplets to corpses that will be lively and invigorating.

Sponsored by Ledbury Funeral Services

Choman Hardi and James Sheard

2.30pm – 3.45pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Choman Hardi was born in Sulaimani, Kurdistan, and lived in Iraq and Iran before seeking asylum in the UK in 1993. Her collection *Considering the Women* explores the equivocal relationship between immigrants and their homeland and the plight of women in an aggressive patriarchal society and as survivors of political violence. The poems in **James Sheard's** remarkable third book, *The Abandoned Settlements*, are about love and leaving, of how the rift of departure brings on a kind of haunting, of loss, ghost towns, war-zones, deserted villages or resorts. **André Naffis-Sahely** was born in Venice in 1985 to an Iranian father and an Italian mother, but raised in Abu Dhabi. *The Promised Land: Poems From Itinerant Life* is forthcoming in August and his depictions of dispossessed labourers in the United Arab Emirates and of ruined, decaying communities in what is now Trump's America resonate powerfully.

PATERSON

3pm – 5pm

The Market Theatre

£6

Director and screenplay: Jim Jarmusch

Cast: Adam Driver, Goldshifteh Farahani, Barry Shabaka Henley

Adam Driver gives a beautiful performance as Paterson, a bus driver and aspiring poet who lives in Paterson, New Jersey, the town which inspired the epic of the same name by American poet Williams Carlos Williams. 'Quiet, thoughtful and deeply human, this is one of Jarmusch's finest works.' (*Empire*)

20 minutes with... Smith | Doorstep poet Tom Sastry

3.40pm – 4pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Tom Sastry was one of Carol Ann Duffy's Laureate's Choice poets. His pamphlet, *Complicity*, is full of things which alarm him such as clowns, grandmothers and spiders.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Jacqueline Saphra and Benjamin Tassie

4.15pm – 5pm

Baptist Hall

£9

This specially devised performance combines musical ‘miniatures’ by composer **Benjamin Tassie** and readings from *All My Mad Mothers*, which explores love, sex and family relationships in vivacious, lush poems that span the decades and generations. Ledbury Poetry Competition winner **Jacqueline Saphra’s** poems are described by Naomi Shihab Nye as ‘gutsy transfusions of wondrously vivid characters, described with painterly richness’.

Sponsored by Jim and Mo Denning

20 minutes with... Smith | Doorstep poet Stephen Knight

4.40pm – 5pm

Panelled Room, The Master’s House

Free

Stephen Knight has published four collections of poems, two of which, *Flowering Limbs* and *Dream City Cinema*, were shortlisted for the T S Eliot Prize.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Hedgspoken presents

The Singing Bone

Hellens Manor Gardens

5pm – 6.15pm

£9

(See page xx for full details of workshops and the exhibition to accompany this event.)

In story, puppetry, masquerade and song – an old tale told anew of love, betrayal and the truth hidden beneath. Hedgspoken is a travelling off-grid storytelling theatre run from a 1966 Bedford RL lorry, converted to be a home and a goanywhere stage. Storyteller, mask-maker and writer **Tom Hiron** and internationally-respected artist, puppeteer and musician **Rima Staines** live in the HEDGESPOKEN truck full-time and tell tales and spark imaginations wherever they can.

Katharine Towers and Amali Rodrigo

5.30pm – 6.30pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Katharine Towers’ first poetry collection *The Floating Man* won the Seamus Heaney Centre Poetry Prize. Her second *The Remedies* was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize. Katharine will read poems from this latest collection, alongside new material including poems written during her tenure as Poet-in-Residence at the Cloud Appreciation Society.

Amali Rodrigo’s first collection *Lotus Gatherers* ‘is an astonishingly sensual book, in the literal sense – these are poems we can feel; poems we can hear resonating on the page, aromatic poems, laced with breathtaking imagery; poems we can hold up to our lips and taste.’ (John Glenday)

Sponsored by LJI and BRM

Desert Island Poems with Emma Bridgewater in conversation with Mark Fisher

6pm – 7pm

Community Hall

£12

Emma Bridgewater’s book *Toast & Marmalade and Other Stories*, provides insight into the moments which have shaped her ceramics business in the last 29 years. She will share her best-loved poems in conversation with **Mark Fisher**.

Sponsored by Butler and Sweatman

Poets’ Ways of Life with Christopher Merrill, Maria Galina and Patrick Dubost. Hosted by Fiona Sampson

7.15pm – 9.15pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Curated by poet in residence **Fiona Sampson** who says, 'To work internationally is to understand that poets' working lives differ according to their home culture. Here are three fine poets, all with international reputations of their own, who are also key culture-makers in their own national culture: the Russian-Ukrainian editor, critic and writer; the North American director of an exemplary and pioneering university writers' workshop; and the French musician-experimental performer.'

French poet **Patrick Dubost's** work, both visual and oral, often experimental, leads him to encounters with sound poetry, music, theatre. He also works under his alter ego Armand Le Poète. **Maria Galina** was born in one of the oldest Russian towns – Tver, but spent her childhood and youth in Ukraine. As a poet she has one of the most prestigious Russian poetry awards and works in the oldest Russian Literary magazine *Novyi Mir*. **Christopher Merrill** has published six collections of poetry and books of non-fiction, among them, *Only the Nails Remain: Scenes from the Balkan Wars*. As director of the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa, Merrill has conducted cultural diplomacy missions to more than fifty countries.

Sponsored by BRM

Elvis McGonagall and Luke Wright

9.30pm – 11pm

British Legion (Bar Available)

£9

Stand-up poet, armchair revolutionary and recumbent rocker, **Elvis McGonagall** is the sole resident of The Graceland Caravan Park. Expect to laugh and cry over poems including *Carry On Up The Brexit* and *53 Quid A Week*. Having stolen the show from John Cooper Clarke in 2015, **Luke Wright** returns with *The Toll*: discover a country riven by inequality and corruption but sustained by a surreal, gallows humour.

Sponsor Sitara restaurant

Monday 3 July

Mslexia: How to put a Poetry Manuscript Together with Clare Pollard

10am – 12noon

Old Cottage Hospital

£20

If you have lots of poems and feel ready to start sending them out, whether as pamphlet or full-length collection, this workshop is for you. We will cover all the essentials - from editing, ordering and titles to covering letters and targeting the right publisher - with group exercises and insider tips. **Clare Pollard** has published five collections of poetry including *The Heavy-Petting Zoo*, which she wrote while still at school, *Ovid's Heroines* and her latest, *Incarnation*.

COMMUNITY SEGMENTS

11am – 12 noon

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Following last year's admired event, participants from the Festival's vital programme of community workshops present a fascinating set of poetry, sparked at the sessions and written throughout the year. Listen to pieces inspired by artefacts and art from Hereford Museum & Art Gallery alongside poems written in response to the ordinary and extraordinary world around us. In the words of one contributor, 'the energy in the workshops flows into my pen and sets it dancing!'

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

The Prose Alternative: A Masterclass on the Prose Poem with Christopher Merrill

1pm – 3pm

Burgage Hall

£20

Christopher Merrill is a respected poet and director of the world renowned International Writing Program at the University of Iowa. The prose poem is a longstanding preoccupation of his, as demonstrated by *After the Fact: Scripts & Postscripts* and this masterclass will kindle or deepen your knowledge and interest in this form.

Poetry Gallery

2pm - 4pm

Trumpet Corner Tea Room and Galleries, Ledbury HR8 2RA

Free

A free afternoon of original work from **Just Write Poetry**, **Malvern Writers' Circle** and **Trumpet Corner Artists**. Come and enjoy the galleries and garden. Tea and cake available. Sunshine booked but not guaranteed!

Tony Hoagland - The American Poetic Voice

3.45pm – 4.45pm

Burgage Hall

£9

What is most distinctive about the American contemporary poetic voice? It may be its democratic vernacular, its elasticity, its plainness of style, its life-giving vulgarity, its pragmatism, its materialism, its self-regard, or its humour. All of these features are embedded in that mysterious element we call Voice, that rhythmic undulating metabolism which transports and delivers whatever 'information' a poem contains. This talk will use examples to analyze, admire and illustrate some of the specific secrets of the American voice, and will provide a means for considering the craft of any poetic voice.

Journeys With Seamus

5.30pm – 6.30pm

Burgage Hall

£9

The novelist **Andrew O'Hagan** travelled with Seamus Heaney, and their friend the great editor Karl Miller, to Scotland, Ireland and Wales, and in this talk he describes those journeys traversing over language and language, in the footsteps of great poets. O'Hagan uses letters and journals to reconstruct the story, and begins, at the same time, to tell a personal tale of growing up with Heaney's writing and finding a great love of poetry.

Forget Me Not - The Alzheimer's Whodunnit

7pm – 8pm

The Market Theatre

£9

Comic, poet and ex-psychiatric nurse **Rob Gee** presents a murder mystery set on an Alzheimer's ward. Jim's wife, a patient on a dementia ward, has died from what appears to be natural causes. Jim is a retired police detective and he smells a rat. He's determined to solve this one last murder. The problem is he also has dementia. Narrated partly by Jim, partly by a happy-go-lucky nurse and partly by the baffling Detective Inspector Rae.

Excavations of Eternity...

A tribute in words and music to Nick Alexander

8.30pm – 10.30pm

Burgage Hall

£6 (to include a drink or two!)

Brilliant, eccentric, witty... so Nick has been described. This evening will extend those qualities to the surprising, the absurd and the wondrous, as his friends play and sing and recite beyond the limits of the normal. Many of Nick's own songs and poems will be included. The line-up will present stars of Ledbury night-life and low-life, including **Sara-Jane Arbury**, **Angie Hughes**, **Mark Stevenson**, **Nick Trigg**, **Echo Road** – and, of course, Nick's own band **pOxymoron**, who will squat hideously on the second half of the programme, performing classic numbers such as *Ghost Train*, *100 in the Shade*, and the *Poxy Manifesto*. Finally, a finale, everyone welcome to join in.

Entrance £6. Nick's books, the pOxymoron CD and prints from 'Excavations of Eternity,' (his collection of poems illustrated by Jeanette McCulloch) will be on sale at modest prices. All proceeds to St Michael's Hospice.

Sponsored by a Friend of the Festival

NERUDA In Spanish with English Subtitles

Introduced by Adam Feinstein, author of *Pablo Neruda: A Passion for Life*

8.30pm – 10.30pm

Market Theatre

£6

Director Pablo Larraín

Cast: Gael García Bernal, Luis Gnecco, Mercedes Morán.

Neruda is an inventive as well as playful film about the great Chilean poet and senator during his years of flight and exile in the 1940s. Beautifully filmed, Neruda transcends the traditional biopic structure interweaving fiction with a surreal form of truth.

Tuesday 4 July

Summoned by Bells

Tuesday 4 July – Friday 7 July

12.30pm – 2pm / 5pm – 6.30pm

Saturday 8 July

12.30pm – 2.30pm / 3.30pm – 5pm

St Michael's Church

Free

The bells will ring out from St Michael's Church Ledbury at lunchtime on Tuesday 4 July to mark the start of 15 hours of **sponsored poetry reading** in the church in 10 themed sessions over five days. Come and hear poems with a variety of themes including independence, freedom (4 July!), place, travel, protest, nature, childhood and The Bard! All poems chosen by sponsors will be included, with an appropriate dedication, in the booklet which will form the programme for the event and will be available both in the Festival Box Office and in the church before the Festival begins. Refreshments will be available.

There is no charge for attending but you may wish to make a donation.

Traitor or Translator? Why we must not untangle Pablo Neruda's life from his work, nor the music from the poetry

A seminar by Adam Feinstein

10am – 11.30am

Burgage Hall

£9

As Neruda's acclaimed biographer, **Adam Feinstein**, will demonstrate in this seminar, the extraordinary life of the Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet was so intimately interwoven with his work that it is impossible to untangle them. Feinstein will illustrate with telling examples, including some of his own new English translations of Neruda's celebrated poems.

Dreamcatcher: Schools Showcase

10.30am – 11am

Community Hall

Free

Pupils from Ledbury and Eastnor Primary Schools will perform the poems they have made into songs as part of a partnership project with Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, inspired by Edward Elgar's The Dream of Gerontius. The pupils have worked with voice coach Robbie Jacobs, composer Freya Waley-Cohen and poet Roz Goddard. The pupils will be accompanied by professional musicians.

The Canterbury Tales

12 noon – 2pm

The Talbot Hotel

£9 per event / £16 when booking Days 1 and 2 together

(lunch optional, pre-order on arrival)

This year the Length Matters team, **Sara-Jane Arbury**, **John Burns** and **Martyn Moxley**, invite you to join a merry throng as they turn their attention to the great English poet of the Middle Ages, Geoffrey Chaucer. Over two convivial lunchtimes, the trio present a spirited reading of selected stories from The Canterbury Tales. Suitable for all appetites...

Two Paths to the Same Point: Masterclass with James Sheard and Deborah Alma

3pm – 5pm

Burgage Hall

£20

Poets **Deborah Alma** and **James Sheard** have very distinct approaches to both the construction of their own poems and the mentoring of poetry-writing in others. In this masterclass, they offer these different strands of poetic practice in a practical, interactive session which aims to equip participants with possible new approaches to writing poems, and the beginnings of new work to show for it.

Homend Poets

6.30pm – 8.30pm

Icebytes

Free

Local poets read their work in this informal poetry and music event. All are welcome to bring along poems or music to share, or simply relax and listen during an evening that is guaranteed to be enjoyable.

An Edward Thomas Miscellany

6pm – 7pm

Ledbury Books and Maps

£9

This talk marks the launch of an anthology of Thomas's lesser-known prose and poetry for those who, like Thomas, have an interest in the 'outdoors' – such as walking, topography and wildlife. The writing contained in this selection, which includes essays, stories and travel writing, shows Thomas's enduring pursuit of joy found in nature. The talk will feature readings of extracts from the anthology, and an introduction by the anthology's editor, **Dr Anna**

Stenning.

Sponsor: Friends of Dymock Poets

Roy McFarlane and Deborah Alma

6.30pm – 7.30pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Roy McFarlane reads from his first collection *Beginning With Your Last Breath* which opens with a deeply moving account of the discovery of an adoption and moves through lost love and friendships, the politics of place, race and culture and the power of music. **Deborah Alma** shares poems from *True Tales of the Countryside* about sex, love and ageing in rural Shropshire and Wales and her experiences as a mixed-race, Anglo-Indian woman.

An Evening with An Immigrant

8pm – 9.30pm

Market Theatre

£9

Littered with poems, stories and anecdotes, award-winning poet and playwright **Inua Ellams** will tell his ridiculous, fantastic, poignant immigrant-story. Tales of escaping fundamentalist Islam in Nigeria, performing solo shows at the National Theatre, and drinking wine with the Queen of England, all the while without a country to belong to or a place to call home.

Wednesday 5 July

7AIRS

Wednesday 5 July – Saturday 8

All performances are free

Drop in to experience these short 10 minute events in locations around Ledbury

Ground-breaking site-specific performances combine physical theatre, music and poetry spanning the stages of life. Two poets, one from the UK and one from Europe, create one piece, connecting through the air as they breathe in two countries.

Directed by Rachel Lambert and Estelle van Warmelo

Music by Kim Humphreys, Jenny-May While, Leo More and Livi van Warmelo

11.15am Infant

The Children's library at The Master's House meets a Children's hospital in Slovenia for the first in the series of site-inspired events; with remarkable text from poets Alison Brackenbury and Aleš Šteger.

12 noon Schoolchild

The Ledbury Recreation Park meets a schoolyard in Croatia evocatively encapsulated by poets Sara-Jane Arbury and Goran Čolakhodžič.

1.30pm Youth

The air of Ledbury High Street spills into a city park in Macedonia, breathed out by Megan Barker and Nikolina Andova.

2.15pm Worker

We witness the voices of the Ledbury Market Place in counterpoint with the market in Sibiu, Romania through the words of poets Fiona Sampson and Lilliana Ursu.

3pm Statesman

The air of authority inside the Market House and a council building in Slovakia push at bureaucratic borders as illustrated by Jonathan Edwards and Martin Solotruk.

3.45pm Graveyard

'Born astride of a grave,' we step into St Michael's churchyard simultaneously breathing in the ambience of a cemetery in Poland through poets Paul Henry and Katarzyna Ewa Zdanowicz.

7AIRS The Beginning and The End

Saturday 8 July 8pm – 8.30pm

A one-off event bringing together the week's poetry in a celebratory promenade performance uniting people through song and air.

Workshop with Inua Ellams - Writing In Response

11am – 1pm

Old Cottage Hospital

£20

In this workshop, participants will discuss, dissect and explore various ways into writing counter or companion poems. Participants should come with favourite poems, a clear sense of their preoccupations in poetry, and be ready to play, experiment and write.

Fenton Arts Trust

The Canterbury Tales

12 noon – 2pm

The Talbot Hotel

£9 per event / £16 when booking Days 1 and 2 together

(lunch optional, pre-order on arrival)

Enjoy poetic intercourse between lunch courses as **Sara-Jane Arbury**, **John Burns** and **Martyn Moxley** continue to bring pilgrims from The Canterbury Tales to vocal life with their vigorous reading of selected stories from Chaucer's classic work.

Close Reading Session Led by John Parham

Dappled and Discordant: On poetry and our 'off-beat' relationship with nature

2pm – 4pm

Burgage Hall

£9

John Parham will highlight English poetry's long engagement with 'green' issues and what this might mean for how we understand nature at a time of climate crisis. Comparing two writers, the Victorian 'priest-poet' Gerard Manley Hopkins and the contemporary poet, Alice Oswald, that question will be considered alongside a broader discussion of how poetry has traditionally confronted an English landscape peppered with agricultural and industrial activity. The talk will offer an opportunity for participants to read from the poems and to discuss and raise questions. Dr John Parham is Associate Head for Research in the Institute of Humanities & Creative Arts at the University of Worcester. Sponsor: Friends of Dymock Poets

Angela France: *The Hill*

5.15pm – 6.15pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Angela France uses audio and visual material from the county archives in her presentation of her fourth collection *The Hill*, a multi-layered exploration of Leckhampton Hill, near Cheltenham, where she has walked for fifty years. The

poems blend her own experience of the hill with a rich human and natural history reaching back to the Iron Age. In 1902, working men rioted to preserve rights of way on the hill, raising questions about land ownership.

Sponsor: Friends of Dymock Poets

Afterhours at The National Poetry Library with Inua Ellams and Chris McCabe

7pm – 8pm

Burgage Hall

£9

In 2014, poet **Inua Ellams** turned 30 and wished to mark it with a project...to reconstruct his youth by writing response-poems to the work of British and Irish poets. Join Inua and **Chris McCabe**, Librarian at The National Poetry Library, to discuss the library's collections and how Inua's new book, *#Afterhours*, a curious anthology, diary, memoir and book of poems, evolved in response to this special place.

Sponsored by Alan and Judy Lloyd

Desert Island Poems with Hugh Dennis

7pm – 8pm

Community Hall

£12

Hugh Dennis found fame with *The Mary Whitehouse Experience* and as an actor and comedian is known and loved for *The Now Show*, *Outnumbered*, *Mock the Week* and cult hit *Fleabag* among many other brilliant shows. He will share his favourite poems with **Jill Abram**.

Sponsors: John Goodwin and Feathers Hotel

Keith James presents

DUENDE - a unique and breath-taking concert of Spanish Poetry set to music

8.30pm – 10.30pm

Market Theatre

£11

The haunting and exotic poetry of the most celebrated writers in the Spanish Language: Federico García Lorca, Isabel Allende, Gabriel García Márquez and Pablo Neruda. Their dramatic and sensual poems are performed as songs and meticulously set to **Keith James'** rich, daring and fiery classical guitar. This concert is sung both in English and Spanish and mostly features the Classical and Flamenco guitar.

'Some of the most atmospheric and emotive music you will ever hear'. (*The Independent*)

Sponsored by Viv Arscott

Thursday 6 July

National Poetry Library Presents:

Shared Reading: Elizabeth Barrett Browning

10am – 11am

Burgage Hall

£5

Join us for a shared reading of poems and letters by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, curated by **Erica Jarnes** and The National Poetry Library. By reading aloud together we will explore Barrett Browning as poet, translator, lover and human rights campaigner. Through Browning's own words, and the words of those who knew her, this Shared Reading will bring you closer to the mind and character of one of the nineteenth century's most interesting poets. No preparation necessary, just bring your voice and ears.

Paddy Ashdown's 'Desert Island Poems'

5pm – 6pm

Community Hall

£12

Paddy Ashdown was the Liberal Party leader. He is the author of seven books and an outspoken critic of Brexit. He will share the poems that have travelled with him through his life with **Tom Hodgkinson**, editor of *The Idler*.

John Hegley: Peace, Love and Potatoes

7pm – 8pm

Community Hall

£9

Adults and children 9+

One of the country's most popular poets – eccentric and very funny – **John Hegley** returns to Ledbury! The reading (and singing) will consist largely of poems from John Hegley's latest book: *Verses on Keats, Dickens, Daleks* and digging into memory of childhood days.

Sponsored by Stuart and Wendy Houghton

THE CAUSE: THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

7pm - 8pm

The Burgage Hall

£9

'The Cause' was the Victorian name for what we now call feminism and was adopted by women's movements as they fought for the vote. Tonight, **Jan Long** takes you on an immersive journey exploring the political and passionate turmoil of the struggle for female emancipation, illuminated by the emotionally charged poetry of those who were involved read by **Sara-Jane Arbury**. As the story unfolds we pose the provocative question, 'how would those pioneers view the position of women today?' The answers may give us all pause to think.

Chopping Chillies - a mystical tale of love, loss & soul-food

8.30pm – 9.30pm

Market Theatre

£9 (£7 for Friends of Ledbury Poetry Festival)

A big hit at Edinburgh 2016: From Kerala to Camden, an epic, mystical tale of love, loss and soul-food. A cobbler and a cook concoct a delicious transcontinental enchantment as tragedy and chance entwine. Katie dreams of curries and chapattis; Ajna, of holy souls and reincarnation... Written and performed by **Clair Whitefield**, Chopping Chillies is a delightful, poetic, magical yarn that conjoins the spirit of India with the heart of London.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Festival

In Person: World Poets: An international collaboration between Bloodaxe Books editor Neil Astley and award-winning film-maker Pamela Robertson-Pearce

9pm – 10pm

Hellens

£9 (to include a drink)

In Person: World Poets is an international collaboration between Bloodaxe Books editor **Neil Astley** and award-winning film-maker **Pamela Robertson-Pearce**. Her style of filming combines directness and simplicity, sensitivity and warmth – the perfect combination for the intimate readings by poets from around the world included in this highlights film. This hour-long film features a selection from the 14 hours of footage of poets from many parts of the world, including America, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, India, Italy, Jamaica, Korea, Kurdistan, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malawi, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Romania and Sweden, as well as from Britain and Ireland.

Friday 7 July

John Hegley: I Am A Poetato

Schools Event

10.30am – 11.30am

Community Hall

£1 per pupil (This event is aimed at primary school groups.)

Much-loved poet and musician **John Hegley** is a master at spontaneous audience participation, with call-and-response songs and poems and humorous word-riff chorales. This will be a fun-packed event for school pupils, with drawings and verses, spoken and sung in part by John Hegley and partly by the assembled. Creatures covered will be armadillos, bees, cats, dodos and many more in this funny and engaging show!

Eric Gregory Poets

11.30am – 12.30pm

Burgage Hall

Free

The Eric Gregory Awards consistently identify some of the best young poets including Sarah Howe, Andrew McMillan and many of the poets who headline the Festival. Come and hear this year's winners.

National Poetry Competition Winners

1.15pm – 2.15pm

Burgage Hall

Free But Ticketed

First prize winner **Stephen Sexton** lives in Belfast where he is studying at the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry. His pamphlet, *Oils* was published by The Emma Press. Second prize winner **Caleb Parkin** is a freelance poet, performer, facilitator, educator and filmmaker, based in Bristol. Third prize winner **TL Evans** has been writing poems mainly on his phone on the train to and from London over the last year or so. He is a member of The Poetry Society's Brixton Stanza.

The Ledbury Doors Poetry Trail!

1.30pm – 3pm

The walk will start and finish at The Market House

Free

Come on a walk with a difference as pupils from Ledbury Primary School take you on a guided tour around the town and perform poetry in various doorways! This event builds on last year's successful Bench Poetry project, with a return visit from poet Sara-Jane Arbury. The children created poems and films inspired by selected doors around Ledbury, and explored ways of linking values with their local environment. You can view their work online through the QR codes on the doors or better still, why not join our jolly jamboree today and see the children performing live!

Irish Poets: Jane Clarke, Rita Ann Higgins and Louis de Paor

3pm – 4.45pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Three Irish poets all published by Bloodaxe. **Jane Clarke's** first collection is *The River*. 'Clear, direct, lovely: Jane Clarke's voice slips into the Irish tradition with such ease, it is as though she had always been at the heart of it.' (Anne Enright) **Rita Ann Higgins** has published ten books of poetry including most recently *Tongulish*. She is a hugely enjoyable poet known for her wit, warmth and telling social comment. **Louis de Paor** is one of Ireland's leading Irish-Language poets and his most recent bilingual edition is *The Brindled Cat and the Nightingale's Tongue / Cló Iar-Chonnacht*.

Poetry Jukebox with Larry Lamb and David Sibley

5.15pm – 6.15pm

The Community Hall

£12 (nominate a poem when you book tickets)

I'm a Celebrity star **Larry Lamb** is well known for his roles in *Gavin and Stacey*, *EastEnders* and most recently the film *The Hatton Garden Job*. He will read poems nominated by the audience alongside renowned character actor **David Sibley** in what is bound to be a lively and fun evening.

Denise Riley and Vahni Capildeo

5.30pm – 6.30pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Say Something Back, described by *The Guardian* as 'heartfelt and deeply necessary', will allow readers to see just why the name of **Denise Riley** has been held in such high regard by her fellow poets for so long. It includes a profoundly moving poem of grieving and loss, and poems contemplating the natural world and physical law. **Vahni Capildeo's** *Measure of Expatriation* won the Forward Prize for Poetry and is, according to Malika Booker 'poetry that transforms. When people in the future seek to know what it's like to live between places, traditions, habits and cultures, they will read this.' This event is hosted by **Ursula Owen**.

Simon Armitage

7pm – 8pm

Community Hall

£9

Following his celebrated adventures in drama, translation, travel writing and prose poetry, **Simon Armitage's** eleventh collection of poems, *The Unaccompanied*, heralds a return to his trademark contemporary lyricism. The poems are set against a backdrop of economic recession and social division, where mass media, the mass market and globalisation have made alienation a commonplace experience and where the solitary imagination drifts and conjures. Insightful, relevant and empathetic, these poems are a bold new statement of intent by one of our most respected living poets.

Sponsor Orme and Slade

Tal Nitzán and Basem el-Nabres

7.15pm – 8.15pm

Burgage Hall

£9

We celebrate the solidarity artists create across borders and amidst conflict. Palestinian poet **Basem el-Nabres** has been writing since 1976 and has published eight books of poetry. The last was about the war in Gaza. Israeli poet **Tal Nitzán** has published six collections and is the editor of the anthology *With an Iron Pen: Hebrew Protest Poetry 1984 – 2004*.

Beyond The Water's Edge - poetry from our world

8.45pm – 10.15pm

Market Theatre

£9

Hear voices from around the world, distilled into poetry in this unique performance. Midland Creative Projects take the words of the world's poets and present them on stage with live music to create a celebration of our lives in all their forms. The drama of love, loss and re-birth mingles with the comedy of daily life, resulting in a captivating series of portraits presented through the words of some of the world's best poets.

Saturday 8 July

Workshop with Vahni Capildeo

Tongueless Whispering/Double Codes

10am – 12 noon

Old Cottage Hospital

£20

This workshop builds on **Vahni Capildeo's** continuing engagement with the late Guyanese revolutionary and enigmatic poet Martin Carter. Some of Martin Carter's work will be read closely as examples. The standard edition is *University of Hunger: Collected Poems & Selected Prose*. How to integrate non-human, historical, silent, or musical elements as 'voice' into poems: At the level of story and substance, this might mean the actual imagined or remembered voices of a place or its inhabitants. At the level of language, techniques of 'double coding' to overlay voices will be explored. Participants will be encouraged to bring physical objects and non-poetic (including non-English-language) text that they might like to use as inspiration.

Sponsor Fenton Arts Trust

20 minutes with... Tiziano Fratus

10.30am – 10.50am

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Tiziano Fratus lives in a little village at the foot of the Italian Alps. He has coined the concepts of Homo Radix (Rootman) and Alberografia (Treegraphy). His latest collection is *Ogni albero è un poeta (Every Tree is a Poet)*.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Poetry and Mental Health with Melissa Lee-Houghton

11am – 12noon

Baptist Hall

£5 including coffee

Next Generation Poet **Melissa Lee-Houghton** has been affected by mental health issues. The themes this event will explore include trauma/anguish, mental health and the therapeutic benefits of writing poetry, in conversation with **Chloe Garner**.

'I am black, I am black': Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Hope End and anti-slavery poetry

11am – 12noon

Burgage Hall

£9

In 1847 *The Liberty Bell*, a Boston Anti-slavery annual, published Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *The Runaway Slave* at Pilgrim's Point, one of the most powerful, shocking poems in the long and distinguished tradition of anti-slavery verse. Elizabeth Barrett Browning came from a major slaveholding family—the large Barrett holdings in Jamaica paid for 'Hope End'. **Cora Kaplan's** talk explores the complex political and poetic legacies of British slave-ownership through this astonishing poem by one of the nineteenth century's greatest poets.

Outdoor Magic in the Walled Garden

11am – 4pm

The Walled Garden

Free

Wondrous events and activities for families including **Flit, Flap and Fly: A Squawking Adventure! Quirky Folk, Minstrels of Magic, The Nursery Rhyme Trail and Sally Crabtree Creativity Conjurer.**

20 minutes with... Yekta

11.30am – 11.50am

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Born in Vallée-aux-Loups, near Paris, **Yekta** is a composer, author, guitarist, pianist, singer and prolific collaborator. Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Air Poems in the Key of Voice

A work of translation by Kyra Pollitt featuring the British Sign Language poetry of Paul Scott and the vocal gestures of Victoria Punch, with supporting film-poetry by Helen Dewberry and Chaucer Cameron.

12 noon – 1pm

Market Theatre

£9

For Britain's native sign language community, poetry is a linguistic, visual, kinesthetic and visceral experience. Form in sign language poetry is created through play with language, space, image and movement.

For this work performed live, **Kyra Pollitt** analyzed the image-rhyming in **Paul Scott's** poems to create a basic score onto which **Victoria Punch** mapped a series of vocal gestures inspired by the Estill method.

For those who don't sign, access to the content of the poems is offered through film-poetry by **Helen Dewberry** and **Chaucer Cameron** simultaneously superimposed onto Paul and Victoria's live performance.

The piece will offer hearing audiences something of the rich, immersive, spine-tingling experience conjured by sign language poetry.

20 minutes with... Charlotte Van den Broeck

12.15pm – 12.35pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Belgian poet **Charlotte Van den Broeck's** collection *Kameleon* reveals poetry greatly influenced by her background as an onstage poet: narrative, rhythmic, contradictory, colloquial, multi-layered.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Luke Kennard and Melissa Lee-Houghton

1.45pm – 2.45pm

Burgage Hall

£9

'I was dazzled by **Luke Kennard's** *Cain* – its central sequence of 31 prose-poems, each an anagram of the same few verses of Genesis, is the cleverest and funniest thing I've read this year.' (Alan Hollinghurst) Luke Kennard has published five collections of poetry and *The Transition*, his debut novel. **Melissa Lee-Houghton's** much lauded third collection *Sunshine* 'is a beautiful, brutal book... but also wry, funny and self-aware.' (Helen Mort) She is working on two forthcoming poetry collections, one of which will be published by Pinned in the Margins in 2018, titled *Erotomania*.

20 minutes with... Nikolina Andova

2pm – 2.20pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Nkolina Andova was born in Skopje and has published two books of poetry and won the prestigious Bridges of Struga award and contributes to the new wave of Macedonian haiku.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

Epic Youth/Two Kids Lost

3pm – 5pm with interval

Market Theatre

Free But Ticketed

The culmination of the Festival's outreach project with young people from Close House and Shypp housing project in Hereford. In the first half, Jonny Fluffypunk will compère performances of the young people's poetry, accompanied with film.

The second half is a showing of *Two Kids Lost*, a short action film recently nominated for the prestigious Into Film Awards in March 2017. The film is a modern day re-telling of the Hansel and Gretel fairytale where two sisters find their home life with their dad and stepmother intolerable. Young people were involved in all stages of the film from coming up with the concept, writing the script, location scouting, acting, shooting and directing with mediaSHYPP. For this showing they have specially created live poetry and music to perform alongside. The film features poetry created with spoken word impresario Joelle Taylor in sessions provided by Ledbury Poetry Festival, and is jam-packed with visual and emotional impact enhanced by live performances.

Stairs & Whispers: D/deaf and Disabled Poets Write Back

3.30pm – 5pm

Community Hall

£9

Stairs & Whispers is a major UK anthology of poetry and essays from D/deaf and disabled writers, published by Nine Arches Press. Join writers, disability activists and co-editors of this groundbreaking anthology – **Sandra Alland**, **Khairani Barokka** and **Daniel Sluman** – for an afternoon of readings, performances, films, and discussion around disability poetics, D/deaf culture, and poetry as text, performance, recording and translation. At this accessible venue in a BSL-interpreted set, the *Stairs and Whispers* editors will present poems from the book. They will be joined by several other writers and performers from the anthology, live or via captioned film-poems in BSL and English. Poets include Rachael Boast, Markie Burnhope, Andra Simons, Gary Austin Quinn, Nuala Watt, Bea Webster and Donna Williams.

In a political climate that constantly threatens to marginalise disabled and D/deaf people, Ledbury Poetry Festival hosts this afternoon of poetry and discussion that explores, empowers and represents the realities of disabled and D/deaf poets in their own words.

Sandra Alland's work includes *Blissful Times* and *Naturally Speaking* and Khairani Barokka's works include *Indigenous Species* and *Rope*. Daniel Sluman has two books *Absence has a weight of its own* and *The Terrible*.

20 minutes with... Veronika Dintinjana

3.40pm – 4pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Veronika Dintinjana combines poetry with translation and her work as a surgeon. Dintinjana has represented Slovenia in the final of the first European Poetry Tournament in Maribor.

Supported by Herefordshire Libraries

The Bughouse: The Poetry, Politics and Madness of Ezra Pound

6pm – 7pm

Ledbury Books and Maps

£9

Daniel Swift presents a fascinating new biography of Ezra Pound, one of the most controversial poets of our times, told through the stories of his visitors at St. Elizabeths Federal Hospital for the Insane.

Kayo Chingonyi and Miriam Nash

6pm – 7pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Voices of the Isle of Erraid echo through **Miriam Nash's** first collection, *All the Prayers in the House*. The poems take the form of songs, letters, fragments, formal verse – many kinds of prayer perhaps, for many kinds of storm. The poems of **Kayo Chingonyi's** *Kumukanda* range between worlds, ancestral and contemporary; between the living and the dead; between the gulf of who he is and how he is perceived. 'A brilliant debut – a tender, nostalgic and, at times, darkly hilarious exploration of black boyhood, masculinity and grief.' (Warsan Shire)

Joy with Sasha Dugdale and Linda Bassett

7.45pm – 8.45pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Joy is a long poem by **Sasha Dugdale** in the voice of Catherine, the widow of the poet William Blake. Sasha Dugdale will introduce and talk about the research and writing of the poem, which won the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem in 2017. Actress **Linda Bassett**, who is well known for her role in *Call the Midwife*, will read this beautiful and tender poem in what is bound to be a unique and special event.

Sponsored by Jo Kingham

7AIRS The Beginning and The End

8pm – 8.30pm

The Market House

Free (See page x for full details)

A one off event bringing together the week's poetry by poets from the UK and Europe in a celebratory promenade performance uniting people through song and air.

Malika's Poetry Kitchen

9pm – 11pm

Market Theatre

£9

Malika's Poetry Kitchen is a community of poets dedicated to developing their craft. Founded in 2001 and based in London, the collective's influence on the contemporary poetry and spoken word scene has reached far beyond the capital. This is a unique opportunity to hear the work of two Kitchen founders, **Malika Booker** and **Jacob Sam La Rose**, plus **Jill Abram**, **Rishi Dastidar**, **Seraphima Kennedy** and **Peter Raynard**.

Sunday 9 July

John Masefield Walk

9.30am – 12 noon

Free But Ticketed

Meet at the Master's House.

£9

"So hey for the road, the west road, by mill and forge and fold,
Scent of the fern and song of the lark by brook, and field, and wold,"

Join **Peter Carter**, past chairman of The John Masefield Society, for his final romp through Masefield country. The walk will start and end at the Master's House and will take in both town and footpaths so sturdy footwear essential. Frequent stops for readings. Dogs on leads welcome.

Festival Bike Ride

10.30 am start. Meet under the Market House

Free but ticketed

Join a leisurely 12 mile bike ride along quiet country lanes with pauses for poetry. Half-way refreshments at Dragon Orchard for a small donation. Return to Ledbury in time to buy your lunch at the Ledbury Celebration Day.

Accompanied children welcome. Cycle hire next to the railway station.

THE GREAT LEDBURY CELEBRATION on LEDBURY HIGH STREET!

A celebration of 21 years of Ledbury Poetry Festival and the 400th anniversary of the town's iconic Market House.

Poetry, music and entertainment 11am – 6pm

Food market 12pm – 4pm

Immerse yourself in this really special day when Ledbury pulls out all the stops to create a magnificent celebration. The Poetry Festival, Ledbury Food Group, and Ledbury Town Council bring you the best of local food and drink accompanied with the most exciting poetry, music and entertainment collected on Ledbury's High Street for many a year. Be thrilled and enthralled by the Baltic inspired melodies of **Flatworld**, the 70s drenched tones of **Sequins**, and the hip swaying **Samba Galez**, "the beat hit me to my primal core". Poetry Slam champions **Brenda Read-Brown** and **Nick Lovell** will serve up brilliant cut and thrust performance poetry. Look out for contemporary pop up **Dancefest** performances. Dancefest's community companies of all ages have created new dances inspired by poetry and will be dancing on the High Street and in outdoor spaces around the town. **Clapperbox** puppet theatre will entertain all day, and **Ledbury Fringe** buskers will fill the nooks and crannies. The Town Council has arranged heritage exhibitions and art displays, birthday cake and a Bake Off! It will be an unmissable day, made even more special by the appearance of local beatboxing legend, **Dave Crowe**. Since wowing the judges of Britain's Got Talent in 2008 with his incredible vocal percussion, Dave has gone on to become an international beatboxing superstar, and returns to perform in front of his home crowd.

Parking: Bye Street and St Katherine's Car Parks are FREE all day. Overspill car parking at John Masefield High School, Mabel's Furlong, HR8 2HF (by donation), and Ledbury Primary School, Longacres, Ledbury HR8 2BE

Producers who will be present include: Old Granary Pierogi, Wychbold Fudge, Imaginative Gourmet, Pixley Berries, Croome Cuisine, Crazy Creperie, Wykeham Gardens, Hanley Swan Bakery, Just Rachel, Canapés by Gill, The Handmade Scotch Egg Company, Myrtles Kitchen, Jus, Bentleys Castle Fruit Farm, Pork & Two Veg and Monkland Cheese Dairy.

Sponsors: Authentic Bread Company, New Grove Trust, Tilley Printing

Helen Mort and Tara Bergin

11am – 12noon

Burgage Hall

£9

Helen Mort was born in Sheffield. Her first collection *Division Street* won the Fenton Aldeburgh Prize. *No Map Could Show Them* explores the narratives of Victorian and modern women – mountaineers, campaigners, runners – and considers, more broadly, the marks, narratives and pathways we leave, or don't leave, behind us. **Tara Bergin** is from Dublin. Her first collection, *This is Yarrow*, won the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry Prize, while her second collection *The Tragic Death of Eleanor Marx* refers to Karl Marx's daughter.

Coffee Morning with Malika's Poetry Kitchen: *Fantastic Beasts*

11am – 12noon

Muse Cafe

Free

Coffee and delicious cakes available to purchase

A special event giving you the chance to read poems with members of this influential London collective of writers.

Bring your own poem or a favourite by someone else on the theme *Fantastic Beasts*.

20 Minutes with... Jack Thacker

12.15pm – 12.35pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Jack Thacker is studying for a PhD on contemporary poetry and agriculture at the Universities of Bristol and Exeter.

He won the 2016 Charles Causley International Poetry Competition

Translation Duel hosted by Sasha Dugdale

12.45pm – 1.45pm

Burgage Hall

£9

Two poet-translators rattle their sabres and sharpen their swords for a duel of words and French poetry. Join **Olivia McCannon** and **Susan Wicks** to compare their translations of a contemporary French poet and get involved in the debate! A translation duel is a fascinating and illuminating way to engage with a brilliant new poem and learn more about the mechanics of poetry translation. Olivia McCannon is a translator of Balzac and winner of the Jerwood Aldeburgh First Collection Prize. Susan Wicks' translations of Valérie Rouzeau have won prizes and her own seventh collection, *The Months* was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation.

In partnership with Modern Poetry in Translation.

Sponsored by Alison and Nigel Falls

20 minutes with... Ellie Daghlian, Mel Pettitt and Catherine Choate

1.20pm – 1.40pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Bristol University Poetry Centre and the scene in the city nurtures a wealth of young talent, reflected in the promise shown by undergraduates **Ellie Daghlian**, **Catherine Choate** and **Mel Pettitt**.

Juliet Stevenson reads Adrienne Rich

2.30pm – 3.30pm

£12

Community Hall

Adrienne Rich (May 16, 1929 – March 27, 2012) was an American poet, essayist and radical feminist. *The Los Angeles Times* called her 'one of the most widely read and influential poets of the second half of the 20th century'. Her books include *Diving into the Wreck*, *Dream of a Common Language* and *A Wild Patience Has Taken Me This Far*. Poems read by **Juliet Stevenson**, narrated by **Mark Fisher** and **Chloe Garner**.

Sponsored by Mrs Carolyn Beves

Jill Abram presents Stablemates, a poetry salon with Roger Robinson, Nick Makoha and Seni Seneviratne from Peepal Tree Press.

2.30pm – 3.30pm

Market Theatre

£9

Roger Robinson is a dub poet writing songs about common people and their plight. He co-founded Malika's Poetry Kitchen and King Midas Sound. **Nick Makoha** is director of the Youth Poetry Network. He won the Brunel African Poetry Prize in 2015 and toured the UK with his solo show *My Father & Other Superheroes*. **Seni Seneviratne's** performances are a delicate mix of spoken word and folk/jazz song. She likes to change hearts as well as minds through the medium of poetry. Peepal Tree aims to bring you the very best of international writing from the Caribbean, its diasporas and the UK.

20 minutes with... Ruth Stacey and Katy Wareham Morris

3.40pm – 4pm

Panelled Room, The Master's House

Free

Ruth Stacey and **Katy Wareham Morris** launch their new pamphlet *Inheritance*.

Versopolis: A Celebration of Emerging European Poets

4.15pm – 5.30pm

Market Theatre

Free but ticketed

Versopolis is a platform that unites 13 European Festivals to promote and translate their most exciting new poets. **Tiziano Fratus** (Italy), **Charlotte Van de Broeck** (Belgium), **Nikolina Andova** (Macedonia), **Veronika Dintinjana** (Slovenia), **Yekta** (France) will share the stage with two of their UK counterparts, **Kayo Chingonyi** and **Helen Mort**.

This event is now an established Festival highlight. Come and enjoy strong performers, writing vivid and original poetry that opens windows and transcends borders.

Enemies: Ledbury

Contemporary Poetry in Collaboration

6.15 – 7.15pm

Market Theatre

£9

The Enemies project, led by S.J. Fowler, has created over 200 events, in 18 countries, with over 500 poets. Enemies: Ledbury will première collaborations written by poets both attending and participating in the Festival. Expect original, dynamic new poetry, evidencing the open, inventive power of collaborative poetry in the 21st century. The poet comes up against something other than themselves in the writing of every poem, and in the shaping of every fragment of language there is a response taking place. When the other in question is the equally avid mind of another poet then expect the extraordinary!

For media enquiries about Ledbury Poetry Festival please contact :

Becky Fincham at Bigmouth Book Events & PR on becky@bigmouthpresents.com / 07545 760590 or
Phillippa Slinger, Festival Manager on manager@poetryfestival.co.uk / 01531 636232

Notes to Editors

Images of participating authors and previous festivals are available from

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Ledbury Poetry Festival Ticket Information

Tickets for individual events at Ledbury Poetry Festival will go on sale to members on 18 May 2017 and on general sale on 20 May 2017 from the festival website www.poetry-festival.co.uk. For regular updates follow @ledburyfest on Twitter or on Facebook.

Ledbury Poetry Festival

The Ledbury Poetry Festival takes place over ten days each summer (30 June– 9 July, 2017). It is the biggest and best poetry festival in the UK, featuring poets from all over the world. If you think you know what poetry is, come along and let the festival surprise you. There are live readings, performances, workshops, open mics, music, exhibitions, films, family events, street events, a slam and much more. 2017 is our twenty first year – come along for a celebration of poetry in the rural heartland of England.

In March 2017, Ledbury was listed as the third best place to live in the Midlands as part of a Top 20 by the The Sunday Times, who described Ledbury as ‘a town that likes making history as well as living with it’.

The Festival also runs a Community Programme, a Schools Programme, and a New and Emerging Writers’ Programme all year round as well as an annual Poetry Competition. Go to www.poetry-festival.co.uk for full details.

Ledbury Forte Poetry Prize

Ledbury Poetry Festival has launched a new prize for second poetry collections: The Ledbury Forte Poetry Prize. The Prize is the first of its kind dedicated to poets' second collections, poetry's version of 'the difficult second album'. The biennial Ledbury Forte Poetry Prize is a response to poetry's increasing emphasis on debuts and seeks to shine a light on poets' more accomplished, though often overlooked second collections.

The Ledbury Forte Poetry Prize will be judged by 2016 Forward Prize winner Vahni Capildeo and poet Tara Bergin. Eligible for entry are book-length second collections by poets from Britain and Ireland who have previously published book-length first collections.

The shortlist for the Ledbury Forte Poetry Prize will be announced on Monday 12 June 2017. The winner will be announced at Ledbury Poetry Festival in early July 2017.

Poets' praise for Ledbury Poetry Festival

'A rare and genuine joining of place, poetry and people' **Carol Ann Duffy**

'The Ledbury Poetry Festival is the best in the country' **Andrew Motion**

'For a while we all breathed poetry and music --- and ate and drank some of the best the Three Counties has to offer. It was a bit like walking around for a few days in a paradise garden.' **John Burnside**

'Ledbury Poetry Festival stores up the essence of poetry throughout its packed, intense and sunlit days.' **Helen Dunmore**