



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

**19 November 2018 (embargoed to 00:01 20 November 2018)**

### **First authors announced for fifth Derby Book Festival**

The first authors are revealed today (19 November) for the fifth Derby Book Festival, which will be held from 31 May – 8 June 2019 in venues across the city. The Festival, which is now a well-established part of the city's cultural calendar, will celebrate the joy of books and reading and will once again include some of the very best writers in the country.

Authors already signed up for 2019 include Val McDermid, arguably the leading crime writer in the UK today, and recently appointed BBC Editorial Director and former Economics Editor, Kamal Ahmed, whose autobiography, *The Life and Times of a Very British Man*, recounts his experiences of being brought up in 1970s London with an English mother and Sudanese father. The Festival will also welcome author and former Times Editor, Sir Simon Jenkins as well as James Runcie, best known for his Grantchester series of novels, which have been turned into a successful ITV crime series with James Norton.

The Festival is keen to attract a younger audience with a series of events, including journalist, blogger and author, Dolly Alderton. Her book, *Everything I Know About Love*, has been shortlisted for Waterstones Book of the Year 2018. Dolly will be one of the judges for the 2019 Women's Prize for Fiction.

Local history is always popular at the Festival and the 2019 Festival will welcome biographer Kate Hubbard who will talk about Bess of Hardwick and the buildings of Elizabethan England, including Hardwick Hall.

The Festival is chaired by Liz Fothergill, who is also Chairman of Pennine Healthcare. Liz said: "We can't believe we are now celebrating our fifth Festival. We have established a Festival which is putting Derby on the literary map and attracting world class authors each year. We believe Derby Book Festival is the largest and most successful literary festival in the East Midlands and something Derby can be proud of."

“The Festival has grown each year, nearly doubling our ticket sales in four years, from 3040 in 2015 to 6832 in 2018. We have a loyal and enthusiastic core audience and have attracted new audiences with a range of different subjects each year.”

The Festival has been keen to celebrate local writing talent and debut authors. This year, historical fiction author Joanna Courtney will be talking about Lady Macbeth in her new book *Blood Queen*, the first of three novels featuring Shakespeare’s queens. Local author Sophie Draper will be one of the 2019 debut novelists and will talk about her gothic thriller, *Cuckoo*, which won the York Festival of Writing Friday Night Live Award.

Other Festival authors will be announced in the coming months and tickets for all events will go on sale on 12 April, when the programme is officially launched at a special *Derby Reads* event in QUAD. Tickets will be available online from the Festival website: [www.derbybookfestival.co.uk](http://www.derbybookfestival.co.uk) or in person from the Festival Box Office at QUAD and other venues.

To find out more, visit the Festival website and sign up for more information. You can also follow the Festival on Twitter at: @DerbyBookFest and ‘like’ the Festival on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/derbybookfestival](http://www.facebook.com/derbybookfestival)

## **ENDS**

**For further press information, please contact:** Sian Hoyle, Executive Director, Derby Book Festival on 0776 1379562 or email: [sian@derbybookfestival.co.uk](mailto:sian@derbybookfestival.co.uk)

## **Notes to editors:**

The fifth Derby Book Festival will again feature internationally acclaimed authors and celebrate local writing talent with the aim of bringing Derby’s residents together in a love of books and inspiring new readers to appreciate the pleasure and power of reading.

The nine day Festival programme will again include a broad range of events and activities aimed at all ages and interests children’s activities and book related crafts, to author talks, discussions, live performances, films, Masterclasses for budding writers and the annual Book Quiz.

The Festival is organised in partnership with all the major arts, cultural and educational partners in the city: Déda, Derby Cathedral, Derby City Council, Derby College, Derby LIVE, Derby Museum & Art Gallery, Derby Theatre, intu, Marketing Derby, QUAD, University of Derby and Waterstones, who will all be hosting events.