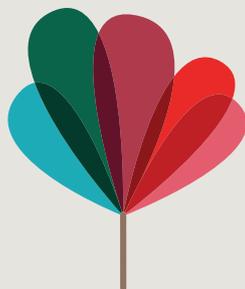


# HAY FESTIVAL WINTER WEEKEND 2021 REPORT



## HAY FESTIVAL WINTER WEEKEND





# CONTENTS

The Winter Weekend in 2021	5
The programme in detail	6
Education and outreach	9
The Festival in numbers	10
Festival bestsellers	13
The Festival in the media	14
The Festival in quotes	17
With thanks to...	21
About Hay Festival	22



# THE WINTER WEEKEND IN 2021

Hay Festival Winter Weekend returned with an ambitious programme for its first ticketed, in-person events in the UK for two years. The Festival brought writers and readers together from the 24 to 28 November with a programme to inspire, examine and entertain at a new festival site in the centre of Hay-on-Wye.

Over five days, more than 80 acclaimed writers and performers took part, launching the best new fiction and non-fiction, interrogating some of the biggest issues of our time, and spreading joy with conversations, candlelit storytelling, comedy, music, and family workshops.

In-person events took place in a new festival site in the centre of Hay-on-Wye against the stunning backdrop of the Brecon Beacons. Comprised of the Wales Stage – Llwyfan Cymru located on the Cae Mawr field and the Baillie Gifford Stage in the neighbouring Hay Primary School. The new site also included the Festival bookshop, hosting regular in-person signings, along with a food and drink court and exhibitors.

A vibrant online programme of live streamed sessions and digital exclusives amplified the in-person events further, embracing the Festival's new global audience with closed captioning offered for all digital events.

# THE PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

The Festival kicked off with a free Programme for Schools, offering young people the chance to see their favourite writers, get creative and celebrate the joys of reading for pleasure.

Music rang out on the opening night as Kadiatu Kanneh-Mason discussed her memoir *House of Music* with stunning performances by two of her multi-talented children. Great novelists took centre stage with Jeanette Winterson, Sarah Moss, Sarah Hall, Elizabeth Day and Christopher Meredith all talking about their latest work. Former Hay Festival Writer at Work Catrin Kean presented her Welsh Book of the Year-winning debut *Salt*, and writers Kit de Waal and Jack Underwood talked to Salena Godden in a Royal Society of Literature panel on grief.

Interactive events for families and young people through the weekend included conversations, readings and workshops with Lauren Child and Yuval Zommer while sports presenter Clare Balding spoke passionately about *Fall Off, Get Back On, Keep Going: 10 ways to be at the top of your game!*

Inspiring creatives and household names shared their life stories. Miriam Margolyes presented her memoir *This Much Is True*, Oscar-winning writer, director and actress Emerald Fennell discussed her latest project, and adventurer Bear Grylls spoke about his latest book *Never Give Up*. Anita Rani, John Barnes, Henry Blofeld, David Hare and broadcasters Fi Glover and Jane Garvey all engaged and enraptured audiences both live and online.

The past was reimagined with Neil Oliver in *The Story of the World in 100 Moments* while Dan Jones spoke about *Powers and Thrones: A New History of the Middle Ages* with *The Five* author Hallie Rubenhold. Science was discussed by Hannah Fry and Adam Rutherford while mathematician Marcus du Sautoy spoke about *Thinking Better: The Art of the Shortcut*.

Hay-on-Earth events explored the latest in climate science and debate including Jonathon Porritt on his new book, *Hope in Hell*, Jay Griffiths, Kaliane Bradley, and Testament on *Gifts of Gravity and Life* and Dan Saladino on *Eating to Extinction*. An expert panel led by Future Generations Commissioner for Wales Sophie Howe reviewed the action at COP26.

A curated selection of free, digital-only Winter Warmers added inspiration to the programme, bringing international writers into the homes of book-lovers everywhere, including conversations with Damon Galgut, winner of the 2021 Booker Prize (*The Promise*), Matt Haig (*The Comfort Book*), Siri Hustvedt (*Mothers, Fathers and Others*), environmentalist Bill McKibben (*The End of Nature*), and Steven Pinker.

*Real Estate* by Deborah Levy was named the Hay Festival Book of the Year 2021 after hundreds of book lovers nominated their favourite titles of the year online.

Twenty aspiring Welsh writers aged 16–18 joined us for our revived, in-person Beacons Project, where they enjoyed a tailored programme of inspiring events and closed workshops with Festival guests, while contributing to the Festival blog throughout.





# EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

For the first time at Hay Festival Winter Weekend, and with the support of the Welsh Government, we offered two days of school events for primary and secondary schools on 24 November and 25 November with three events each day.

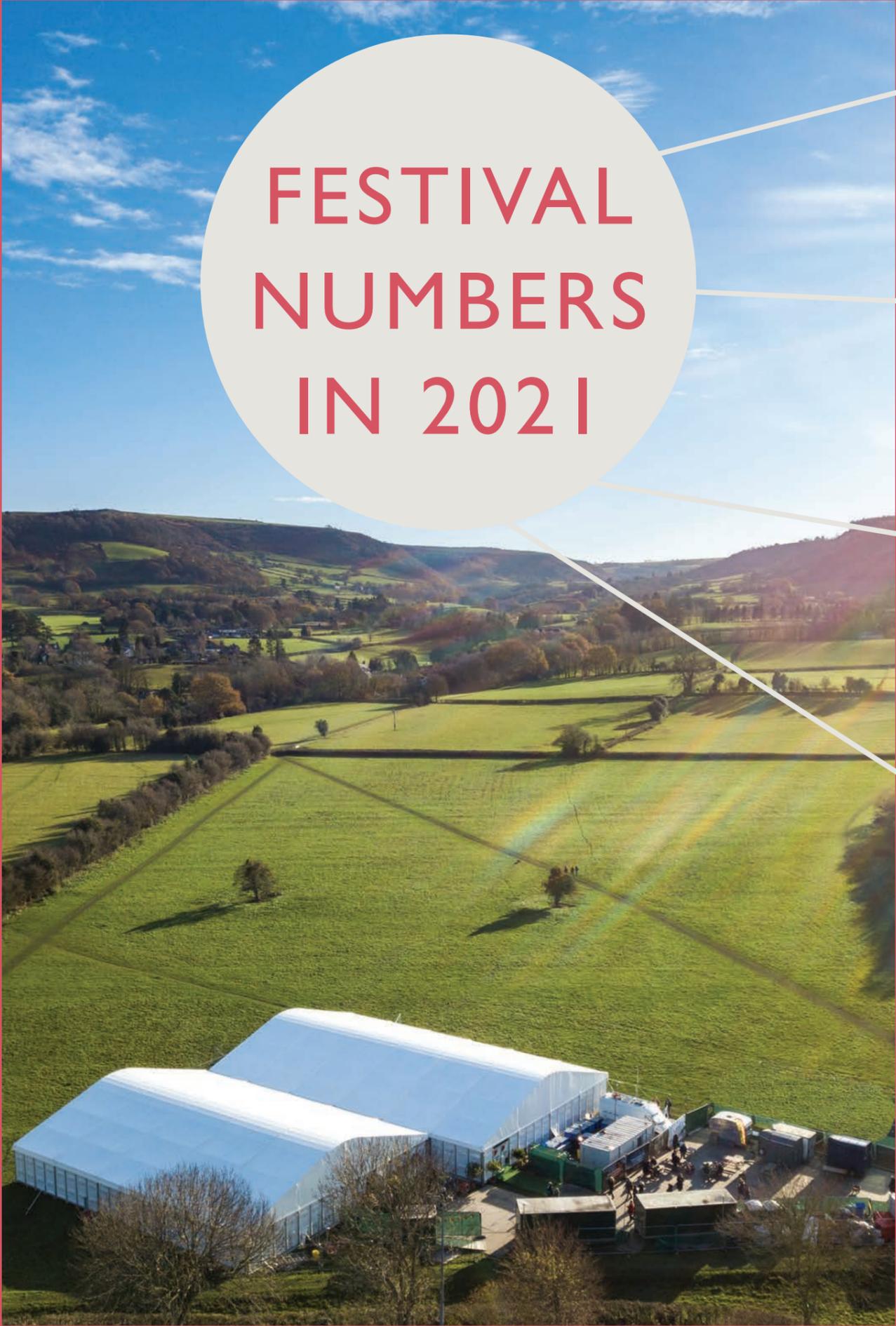
Writers included Onjali Q Raúf (*The Lion Above The Door*), Rob Biddulph (*Peanut Jones and the Illustrated City*), Emma Carroll (*The Week at World's End*), Sally Nicholls (*The Silent Stars Go By*), Karl Nova (*The Curious Case of Karl Nova*) and Nicola Davies (*The Song That Sings Us*). Teaching materials were available for each event and 600 pupils and teachers from 15 schools joined us on site across both days. All six events were also live-streamed with 20,160 online attendances.

The Beacons Project, a creative writing residential for twenty 16–18-year-olds also took place for the first time during the Winter Weekend. Students were immersed in the Hay Festival experience attending events and experiencing creative writing workshops with authors and poets including Jeanette Winterson and Owen Sheers.

Twenty young carers from Merthyr Tydfil attended the Programme for Schools for the first time, thanks to the Stevens & George Charitable Trust. Adult Learning Wales brought a group of 15 adult learners made up of refugee ESOL learners and adults with low levels of literacy, none of whom had attended Hay Festival before.

Tickets for the Festival were also distributed freely to local schools, youth organisations and students as part of our continued local outreach and engagement offer.





# FESTIVAL NUMBERS IN 2021

5  
days

9,502  
live in-person  
audience

2,800  
live online  
audience

44  
countries  
represented

44,392  
total online audience

24,232  
online live and  
replay audience

2.6m  
Twitter  
impressions

379k  
Instagram  
impressions

62  
events

27.8m  
social  
impressions

600  
pupils and teachers  
on site from 15  
schools across two  
Schools Days

1,744  
public posts

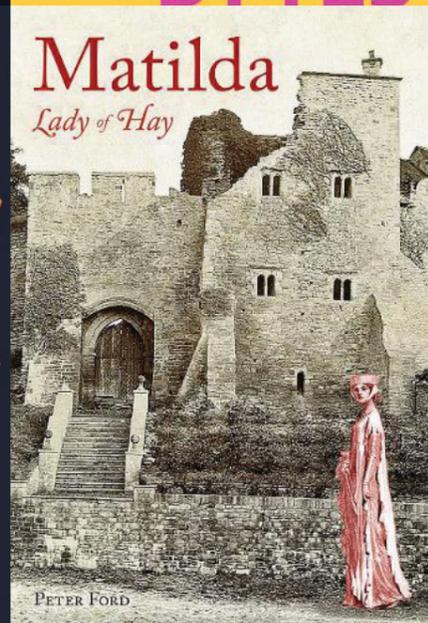
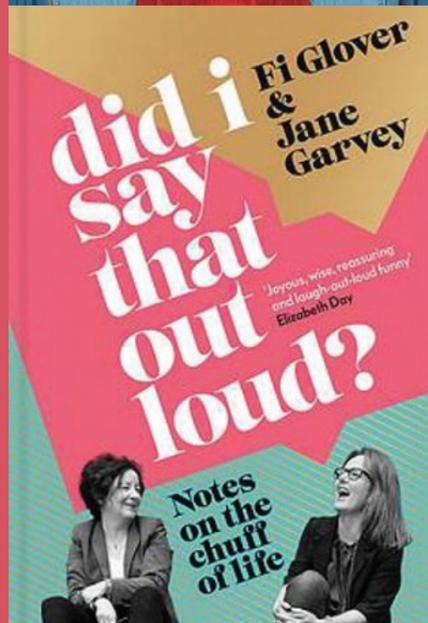
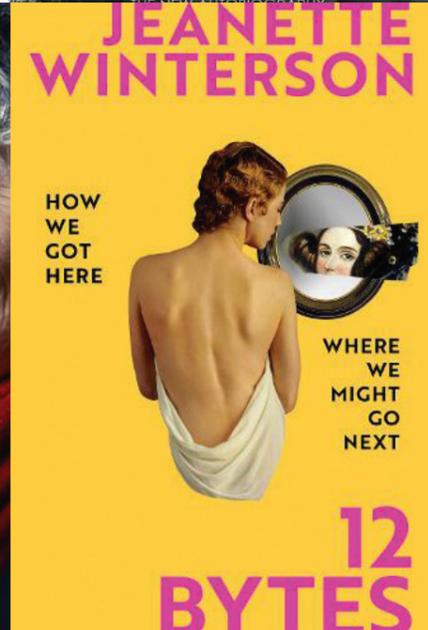
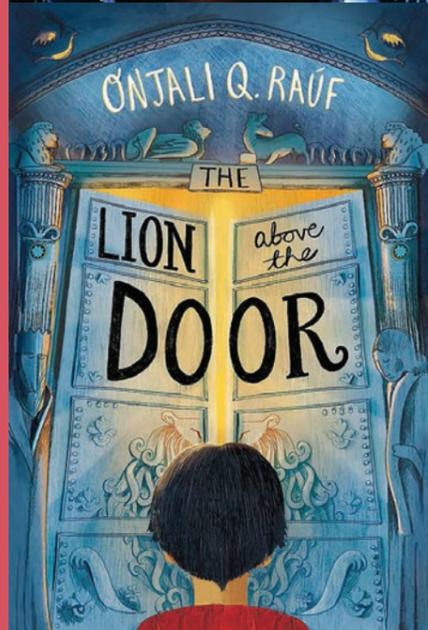
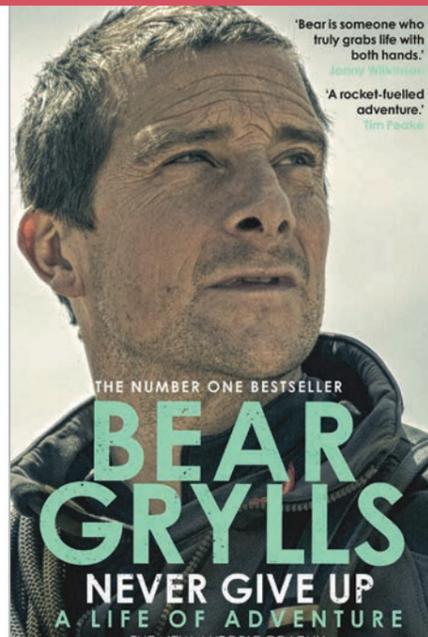
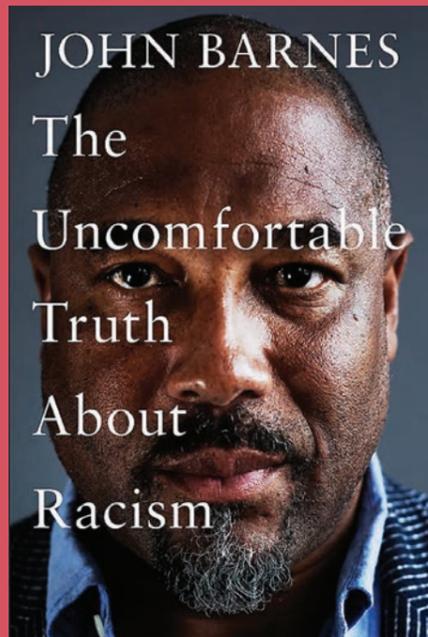
1.4m  
Facebook post  
impressions

295  
schools  
registered

15.4m  
accounts:  
estimated reach  
on social media

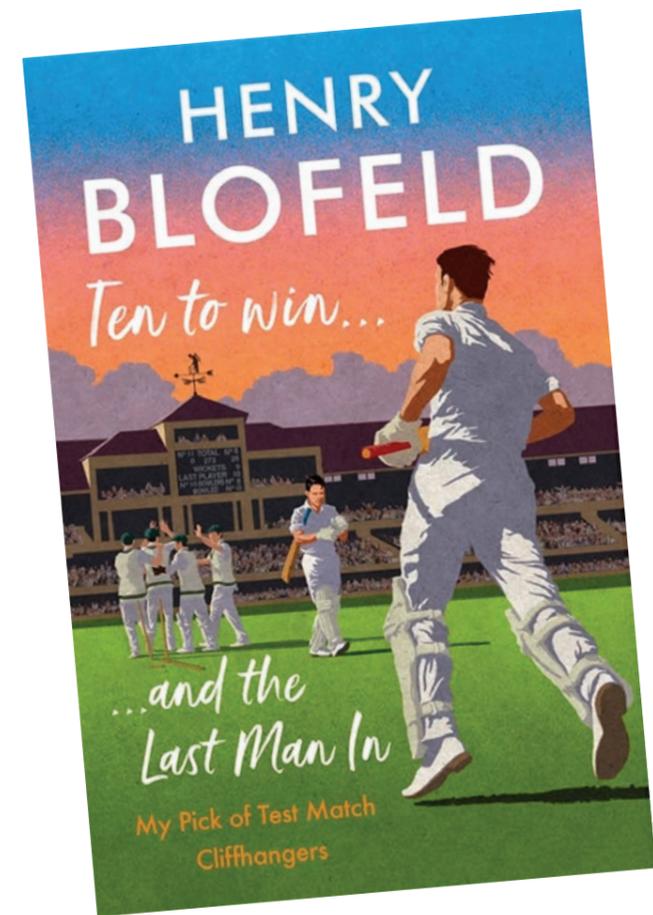
16  
schools  
attended live

20,160  
online pupils  
attendance



# FESTIVAL BESTSELLERS

- 1 *This Much is True*  
Miriam Margolyes
- 2 *Did I Say That Out Loud?*  
Fi Glover & Jane Garvey
- 3 *Never Give Up*  
Bear Grylls
- 4 *Rutherford & Fry's Complete Guide to Absolutely Everything*  
Adam Rutherford & Hannah Fry
- 5 *Thinking Better*  
Marcus du Sautoy
- 6 *The Uncomfortable Truth About Racism*  
John Barnes
- 7 *Ten To Win... And The Last Man In*  
Henry Blofeld
- 8 *The Lion Above the Door*  
Onjali Q Rauf
- 9 *12 Bytes*  
Jeanette Winterson
- 10 *Matilda – Lady of Hay*  
Peter Ford



# THE FESTIVAL IN THE MEDIA

In the press, our campaign generated 337 media mentions with a potential press reach of 76 million (source: Gorkana). Coverage included The Guardian, FT, iNews, London Evening Standard, The Week, Juno, The Educator, The Bookseller, The National, Western Mail, BBC Radio 2, BBC Wales, ITV Wales, Monocle24, and more, plus support from media partners The TLS, Literary Hub and BBC Radio H&W, .

On social media, our campaign generated: 2.6 million Twitter impressions, 1.4 million Facebook post impressions, 583k Instagram

impressions, and our new TikTok channel launched with 14k likes in a month. During the Festival week, there were 1,744 public posts about Hay Festival across social platforms, generating 27.8 million social impressions with an estimated reach of 15.4 million accounts. Our total follower number grew to 284k globally.

Print materials were sent direct to some 32k festival-goers, while 48 independent bookshops and libraries supported the Festival with displays across the UK.





# THE FESTIVAL IN QUOTES

“It’s such excellent news that we end the year with a return to in person events – while also delivering the online sessions. Hay Festival’s global programme is unlike any other in the way that it focuses on some of the biggest topics affecting the world today. While it showcases Welsh talent to the world, the new hybrid format has also afforded more contributions from the best international talent than ever before.”

**Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport**

“Attending Hay Festival events allowed a new world of learning and words to open in front of our learners’ eyes; they were completely mesmerised, from start to finish. Travelling through the Brecon Beacons from South Wales, the wandering around Hay town itself, and the Festival; the experience has served as a lovely low-key, gentle introduction and exposure to all that the Hay Festival offers, and we are absolutely thrilled by the success of the trip.”

**Beth John, Adult Learning Wales**



# THE FESTIVAL IN QUOTES

“Thank you so much for the opportunity to participate in the Beacons Project, the last few days have been an incredible experience and I could’ve never imagined that it’d be as inspiring and transformative as it turned out to be. The Beacons Project leaders treated us as individuals with our own valid interests and opinions. I don’t think I can say thank you enough, but I just wanted to tell you that it’s been a mind-blowing experience.”

Beacons Project participant

“We have had the best day at the Hay Festival! The children were so inspired and it really ignited their passion for reading and writing. All the parents commented that they couldn’t stop their children reading or writing their own stories that evening! It is a real pleasure and honour to be part of the festival.”

Teacher, St Francis Xavier's Primary School





# WITH THANKS TO...

Sponsorship, grant funding and donations to the Hay Festival Foundation all contributed to this year's successful Hay Festival Winter Weekend.

A Cultural Recovery Grant from Arts Council of England and major sponsorship from Visit Wales and Baillie Gifford ensured we could sustain our creative programming and wider operations to produce the Festival.

Special thanks to our Friends, Patrons and Benefactors, whose continued financial support helped us throughout the pandemic and into a brighter future.

We would also like to thank the following sponsors and funders for their invaluable support: Accenture, Arts Council Wales, Booker Prize, BMW Cotswold Hereford, Lit Hub, The Royal Society of Literature, TLS, Too Far Media and The British Council.

We are also incredibly grateful to all of our event sponsors and partners who helped us create a very special live festival back in Hay-on-Wye for the first time since May 2019: Addymans Books, Bartrums Stationery, Bluestone Gallery, Claire Vaughan Designs, Cosmo's, Ewemoo, Fred's Yurts, Freerein Riding Holidays, Hard Lines, Hay & District Chamber of Commerce, Hay Castle Trust, Hay Public Library, Hay Primary School, Home Light, Literati and Light, Ludlow Gin, Marsh Commercial, Moray Luke, Mostly Maps, The Old Black Lion, Partners &, Red Indigo, Saddle Up and Ride, Saddle Travel, Shepherds, Sugar & Loaf, Hay Makers, The Pizza Box, Vertu Motors, The Woodee, The Woodland Trust and WWF.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**



*Actual Investors*



# ABOUT HAY FESTIVAL

Hay Festival is a not-for-profit organisation that brings readers and writers together to share stories and ideas in sustainable events live and online. The festivals inspire, examine and entertain globally, inviting participants to imagine the world as it is and as it might be.

Nobel Prize-winners and novelists, scientists and politicians, historians, environmentalists and musicians take part in the Festival's global conversation, sharing the latest thinking in the arts and sciences with curious audiences. A wide programme of education and outreach work runs alongside all of the festival's events, supporting coming generations of writers and culturally hungry audiences.

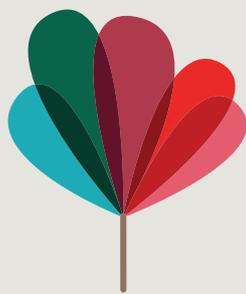
In 1987, the Festival was dreamt up around a kitchen table in the booktown of Hay-on-Wye, Wales. Thirty-four years later, the unique marriage of exacting conversations and entertainment for all ages has travelled to editions in 30 locations, from the historic town of Cartagena in Colombia to the heart of cities in Peru, Mexico, Spain, and Croatia.

The organisation now reaches a global audience of millions each year and continues to grow and innovate, building partnerships and initiatives alongside some of the leading bodies in arts and the media. Hay Festival was awarded Spain's Princess of Asturias Award in Communication and Humanities in 2020.

Coming up... Hay Festival Medellín, Colombia (January 2022); Hay Festival Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (January 2022); Hay Festival Hay-on-Wye, Wales (26 May–5 June 2022).

[hayfestival.org](http://hayfestival.org)





**HAY**  
**FESTIVAL**  
WINTER WEEKEND