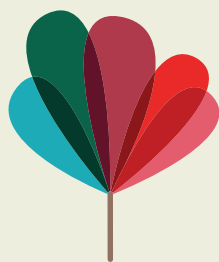


HAY FESTIVAL WINTER WEEKEND 2023 REPORT



HAY FESTIVAL WINTER WEEKEND





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HAY FESTIVAL WINTER WEEKEND 2023

After a year of global change, ideas sparkled at Hay Festival Winter Weekend 2023 as we marked the year's end with bold new visions for the future and a heady dose of entertainment and joy. With a new home in the grounds of Hay Castle, funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, we widened the capacity of this year's event, offering access to more Festival-goers than ever, live and online.

Hay Festival Winter Weekend 2023 launched the best new fiction and non-fiction, while engaging with some of the biggest issues of the moment, spreading festive joy with conversations, storytelling, comedy, music, workshops and (of course) the annual Christmas lights switch-on.

Sixty-two events formed the base of our programme of activities in and around Hay-on-Wye, filling venues across town including our Hay Castle marquee, plus the Great Hall and Clore Learning Space, St Mary's Church and the Poetry Bookshop.

By the end of the weekend, 10,000 tickets were sold, up 133% on the previous year, with footfall tripling. Online, we saw 23 million content engagements (and counting), proving once more that digital accessibility is in high demand.

Thanks to our community of writers, readers, performers and friends, Hay Festival Winter Weekend capped an extraordinary year for our charity and sees us head into 2024 with renewed purpose and hope.

Julie Finch, Hay Festival CEO

THE PROGRAMME IN DETAIL

The best new fiction took centre-stage in the programme with the Booker Prize 2023 shortlisted authors sharing their work in an exclusive event, including Sarah Bernstein (*Study for Obedience*), Jonathan Escoffery (*If I Survive You*), Paul Harding (*This Other Eden*), Paul Lynch (*Prophet Song*), Chetna Maroo (*Western Lane*), and Paul Murray (*The Bee Sting*), chaired by Gaby Wood.

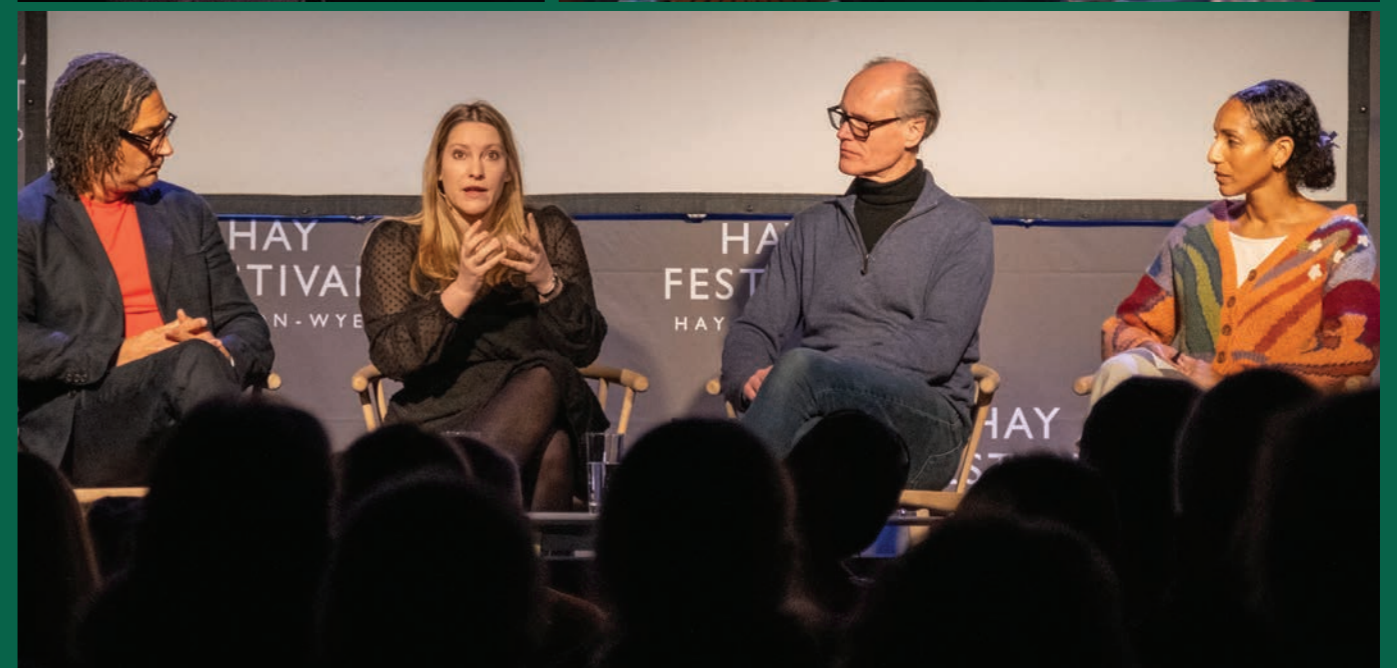
Hay Festival President Stephen Fry launched his new book *Mythos: The Illustrated Story*. Writers including Sebastian Faulks (*The Seventh Son*), Louis de Bernières (*Light Over Liskeard*), Kim Sherwood (*Double or Nothing*) and Ava Glass (*The Traitor*) launched new novels, while Miranda Aldhouse-Green joined Daniel Morden for an afternoon of *Enchanted Wales: Myth and Magic in Welsh Storytelling* and poet Nii Ayikwei Parkes discussed his new novel *Azúcar*.

Inspiring life stories marked the changing seasons with hope as actor Hugh Bonneville presented his memoir *Playing Under the Piano*, farmer Helen Rebanks talked *The Farmer's Wife*, journalist Louise Minchin offered *Fearless*, cyclist Lee Craigie shared *Other Ways to Win*, sailor Suzanne Heywood talked

Wavewalker and Welsh former international rugby union referee Nigel Owens discussed *The Final Whistle*.

With the UK election on the horizon for 2024, Wales today and the role of Britain in the wider world came into focus in conversations with politicians Chris Bryant (*Code of Conduct*) and Lisa Nandy (*All In*); journalists James O'Brien (*How They Broke Britain*), John Crace (*Depraved New World*), Jennifer Nadel (*How Compassion can Transform our Politics, Economy and Society*), Gavin Esler (*Britain Is Better Than This*) and Afua Hirsch (*Decolonising the Body*); and geographers Tim Marshall (*The Future of Geography*) and Danny Dorling (*Shattered Nation*).

Hay Festival 2023 Thinkers in Residence – curator Will Gompertz, Everyday Sexism founder Laura Bates and historian David Olusoga – took stock of the role of festivals today and shared their bold visions for the future, while biologist Lewis Dartnell offered *Being Human: How our Biology Shaped World History* and historian James Holland launched *The Savage Storm: The Battle for Italy 1943*.





The natural world was explored and celebrated in conversations with gardener Naomi Slade (*RHS The Winter Garden*), wildlife cameraman Hamza Yassin (*Be a Birder*), and broadcaster Kate Humble (*Where the Hearth Is*), while classicist Adam Nicolson shared *How to Be: Life Lessons From the Early Greeks*.

There was much seasonal joy and laughter to be enjoyed with lexicographers Susie Dent (*Roots of Happiness*) and Sarah Ogilvie (*The Dictionary People*), comedian Matt Lucas (*The Boy Who Slept Through Christmas*), chef Gelf Anderson (*River Cottage Great Roasts*), wine writer Oz Clarke (*Oz Clarke's Story of Wine*), a new set from comedian Reginald D Hunter, and music with Father Richard Williams offered an atmospheric performance of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

At Hay Castle, audiences enjoyed full-day writing and book-art workshops, drop-in crafting sessions for families, and a special panel discussion around their current Dark Skies exhibition. And extra sparkle to live events came from the town's Market Square as Hamza Yassin turned on the Christmas lights on Friday 24 November, in what has become an annual highlight.

After another transformative 12 months at Hay Festival HQ, CEO Julie Finch invited the public to share their visions for the Festival's future in an open forum event to kick off the weekend programme.

Revisit highlights from the weekend over on Hay Festival Anytime now at [hayfestival.org/anytime](https://www.hayfestival.org/anytime).



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

While thousands of book lovers came to Hay-on-Wye for a weekend of inspiration, Hay Festival reached outwards as part of its mission to diversify cultural inclusion and develop the audiences of the future with Scribblers Cymraeg

Ahead of the weekend, five days of dynamic Welsh language workshops brought Hay Festival inspiration to over 550 pupils across Wales with writer Nia Morais, the current Bardd Plant Cymru, singer-songwriter Casi Wyn and Aneirin Karadog, both of whom have been Bardd Plant Cymru, and staff from all the Welsh Departments taking part. The events were hosted in Aberystwyth University, Bangor University, Cardiff University, Swansea University and Wrexham University, igniting creativity in Cymraeg for pupils aged 11–14 years.

Meanwhile, after a transformative 12 months at Hay Festival HQ in which new CEO Julie Finch was welcomed, the transition into a fully-fledged charity completed, and an ambitious expansion of education and outreach work across Wales and the wider world began, organisers invited the public to share their visions for the Festival's future in an open forum event to open the weekend.





FESTIVAL NUMBERS IN 2023

4
days

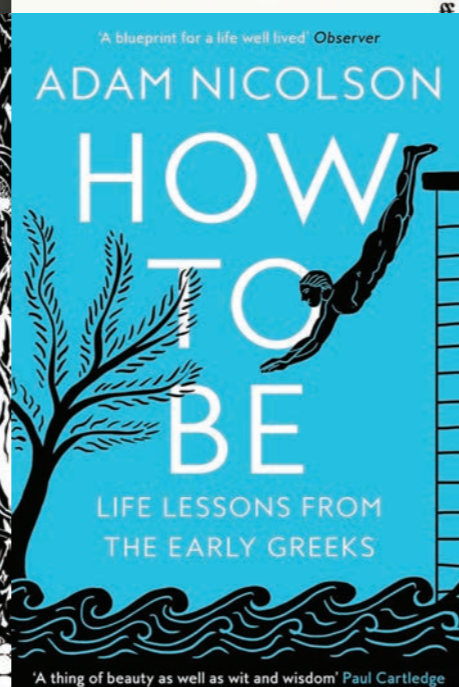
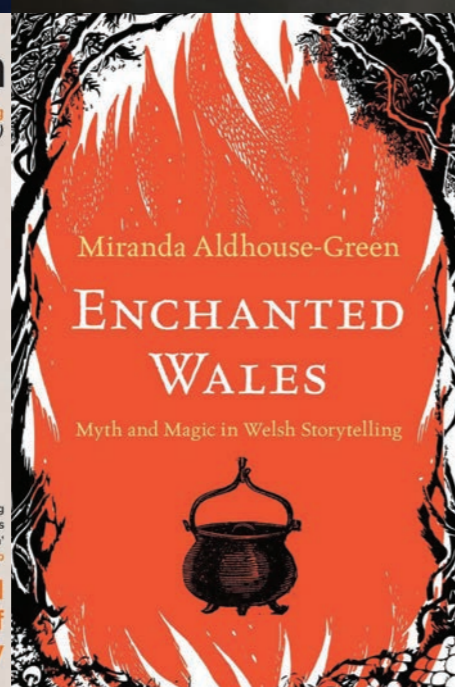
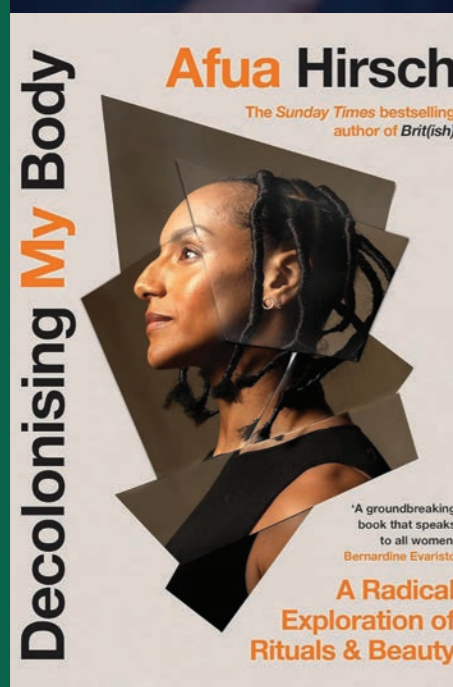
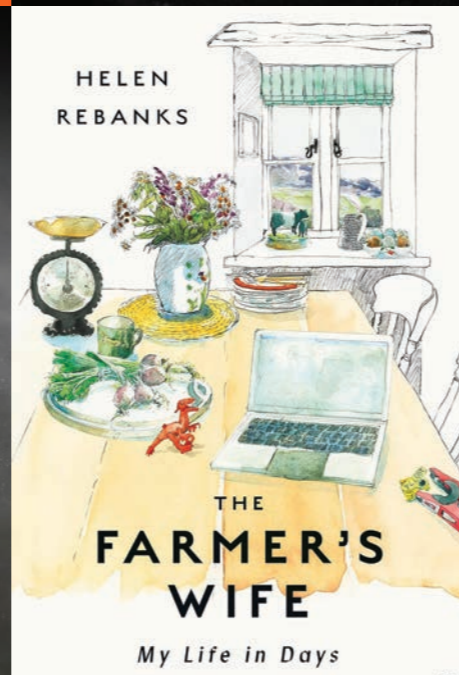
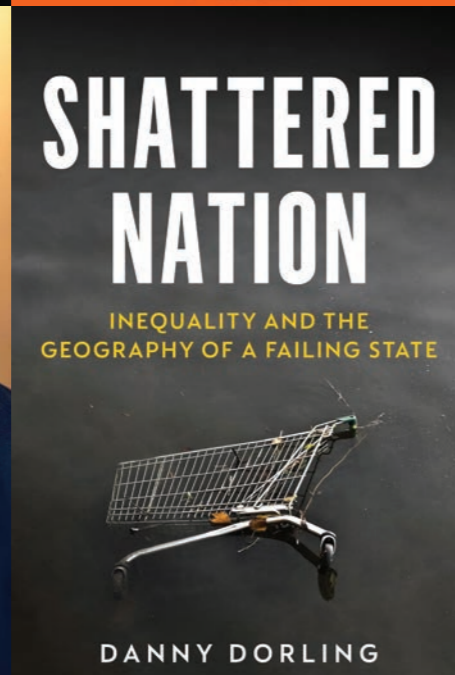
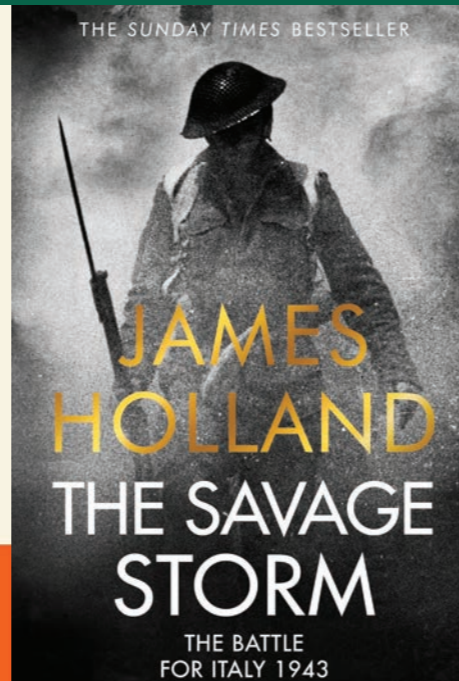
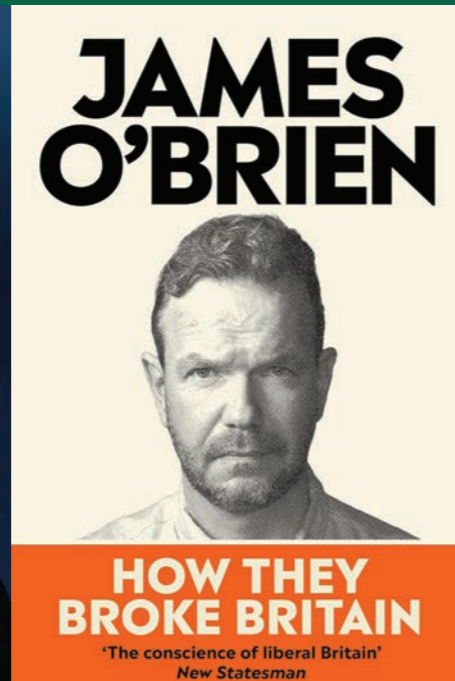
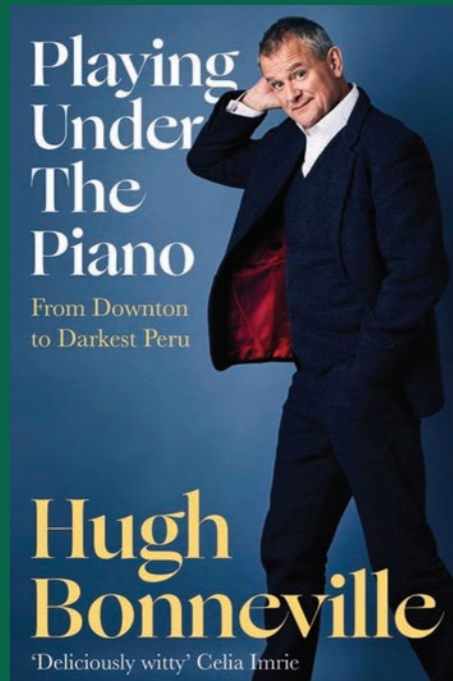
62
full capacity
events

211
press mentions

10,000
tickets sold

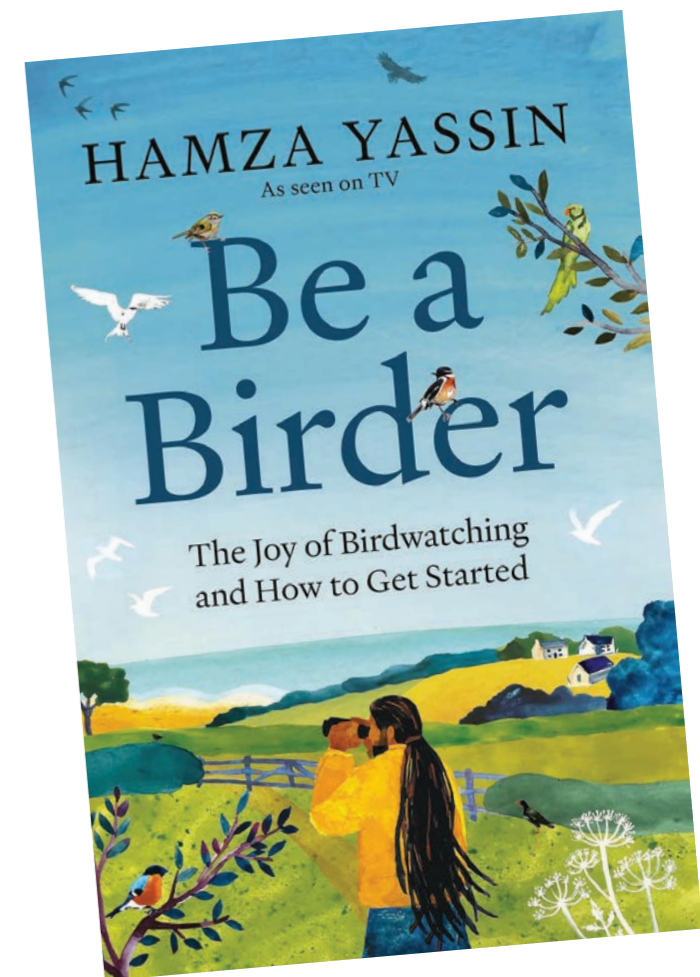
50 million
press reach

**23
million**
social media impressions



FESTIVAL BESTSELLERS

- 1** *Be a Birder*
Hamza Yassin
- 2** *Playing Under the Piano*
Hugh Bonneville
- 3** *How They Broke Britain*
James O'Brien
- 4** *The Savage Storm*
James Holland
- 5** *The Final Whistle*
Nigel Owens
- 6** *Shattered Nation*
Danny Dorling
- 7** *The Farmer's Wife*
Helen Rebanks
- 8** *Decolonising My Body*
Afua Hirsch
- 9** *Enchanted Wales*
Miranda Aldhouse-Green
- 10** *How To Be*
Adam Nicolson



THE FESTIVAL IN THE MEDIA

In the press, our campaign generated 211 media mentions with a potential press reach of 50 million (source: Gorkana).

Coverage included Politico, Service95, The Week, My Weekly, Good Housekeeping, NFU Countryside, The Bookseller, Western Mail, Wales 24/7, Brecon & Radnor Express, West Wales Chronicle, BBC Wales, BBC Radio Shropshire, BBC Radio Hereford & Worcester, Swansea Sound, Sunshine Radio and more.

On social media, our campaign generated: 3 million X (Twitter) impressions, 2.1 million Facebook impressions, 700K Instagram impressions, and 40K TikTok impressions.

During the Festival week, there were 1,305 public posts about Hay Festival across social platforms, generating 23 million social impressions with an estimated reach of 16 million accounts. Our total follower number grew to 357K globally.





WITH THANKS...

We are extremely grateful to all those who contributed to the success of this year's Hay Festival Winter Weekend, with funding from the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, sponsorship from Visit Wales, and the continued support of our Friends, Patrons and Benefactors.

Our venue partners enabled us to hold events in inspiring settings throughout Hay-on-Wye: Hay Castle, St Mary's Church, Richard Booth's Bookshop Cinema and The Poetry Bookshop. Hay Castle and marquee decorations were kindly supplied by Festive Forestry Christmas Tree Farm and The Old Railway Line Garden Centre with support from Rosanna Bulmer. Meanwhile, event photography was supplied by the talented Billie Charity and Adam Tatton-Reid.

Finally, we would like to extend our thanks to all of our event sponsors and partners who helped us create a very special festival: Addyman Books, By the Wye, Festive Forestry Christmas Tree Farm, FW Golesworthy & Sons, Gabbs Solicitors, Gay on Wye, Hay & District Chamber of Commerce, Hay Castle Trust, Hay Public Library, Hay Thursday Market, Hay Tourist Information Bureau, Literature Wales, Origin Pizza, Partners&, Red Indigo, Serious Readers, Shepherds Ice Cream, Sinclair Group, Tanners, The Old Black Lion, The Old Railway Line Garden Centre, The Poetry Bookshop and Tomatitos Tapas Bar.



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ABOUT HAY FESTIVAL

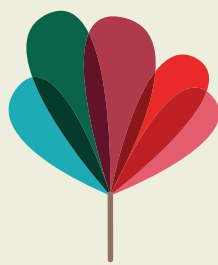
Hay Festival is run by Hay Festival Foundation Ltd (England and Wales charity number 1070073), bringing readers and writers together to share stories and ideas in sustainable events live and online. The Festivals inspire, examine and entertain globally, inviting participants to imagine the world as it is and as it might be. Nobel Prizewinners 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. In 1987, the Festival was dreamt up in the booktown of Hay-on-Wye, Wales. Thirty-seven years later, the Festival 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 the USA. 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. Over the past year, the Festival earned 1.5 million web visits and passed one million event views online, while its social media following climbed to 344,000, making it one of the most impactful literary events in the world.

Alongside its hybrid events, Hay Festival runs a series of digital initiatives to expand its global audience, including the Hay Festival Podcast in English and Spanish, the Imagina el Mundo film series, and the Hay Festival Book of the Month offering. Meanwhile, thousands of audio and film recordings from the Hay Festival archive can be enjoyed on Hay Festival Anytime ([hayfestival.org/anytime](https://www.hayfestival.org/anytime)).

A wide programme of education and outreach work runs alongside all of the Festival's events, earning multiple awards over the years, including Festival of Sanctuary status from refugee charity City of Sanctuary UK and, in 2020, Spain's Princess of Asturias Award in Communication and Humanities.

Festival calendar... Hay Festival Jericó, Colombia (19–21 January 2024); Hay Festival Medellín, Colombia (23–24 January 2024); Hay Festival Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (25–28 January 2024); Hay Festival, Wales (23 May–2 June 2024); Hay Festival Querétaro, Mexico (5–8 September 2024); Hay Festival Segovia, Spain (September 2024); Hay Festival Arequipa, Peru (7–10 November 2024); and Hay Festival Winter Weekend, Wales (28 November–1 December 2024).





HAY
FESTIVAL
WINTER WEEKEND