

Special guests include:

Nathen Amin, Dan Cruickshank,
Max Hastings, Katja Hoyer, Dan Jones,
Matt Lewis, Andrew Roberts,
Michael Scott, Nicola Tallis,
Alison Weir, Anna Whitelock
and many more ...

Plus History Extra Day

16 October 2026

Warwick
Words

History
Festival

5 to 11 October 2026



© Mark Kaiser

IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

📱 warwickwords

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Box Office: 01926 33 44 18

www.warwickwords.co.uk



Welcome to Warwick Words History Festival 2026

Since 2016, the Warwick Words History Festival has enjoyed fantastic support from you, our audience, and from our Festival guest speakers. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we bring you a very special programme of events to celebrate those 10 years.

Among the highlights are returning favourites **Max Hastings**, **Dan Jones**, **Michael Scott** and **Alison Weir**, plus brilliant guests new to the Festival, including **Dan Cruickshank**, **Jonathan Healey**, **Katja Hoyer** and **Andrew Roberts**. We are pleased that our association with local organisations continues: **Warwick Castle**, the **University of Warwick** and the **British Motor Museum** return with events this year, while there is a strong offering in our **In and Around Warwick** strand, featuring local historians and local histories.

As part of our 10 year celebrations, in April we welcomed another firm Festival favourite to Warwick: **Tracy Borman** launched her latest novel, *The House of Boleyn*, in a special extra event for us – and we were delighted when Tracy generously agreed to be our **Honorary Festival Patron**.

Regular visitors will have spotted that our brochure has a new look: we are proud to showcase the striking work of local artist, **Mark Kaiser**, on our front cover, as part of our celebrations.

And so, there's something for everyone at this year's Festival: we look forward to seeing you this autumn to join in our celebration of 10 years!

Warwick Words History Festival Committee

If you would like to receive the Warwick Words History Festival brochure as part of our annual postal mailing, or join the emailing list for news of our events, then please visit our website www.warwickwords.co.uk for more information.



'Warwick is a town steeped in history. The majestic castle was once the stronghold of the powerful 'Kingmaker' earl and his family, while the Lord Leycester Hospital is closely associated with Elizabeth I's chief favourite Robert Dudley, who is buried in the nearby church of St Mary's.

It is fitting, then, that there has always been a strong historical theme to Warwick Words. For ten years, the History Festival has been delighting audiences with a rich array of talks, tours and events featuring world-class speakers.

This year will be one of the best yet. From the Wars of the Roses to World War II, the Boleyns to the Suffragettes, there's something to entice festivalgoers of all ages.

I've been lucky enough to take part in the Warwick Words History Festival numerous times, and I feel hugely honoured to be Honorary Patron of the Festival in its tenth anniversary year. It promises to be a very special one indeed.'

Tracy Borman, Honorary Festival Patron





© St Mary's Church

4 Sunday
October

Warwick Words History Festival Service

St Mary's Church
10.30am

Join us in the marvellous setting of St Mary's Church as we celebrate 500 years of the Tyndale Bible, an early English translation of the bible made by William Tyndale directly from the original Hebrew and Greek texts.

St Mary's Church itself is a living document of history in Warwick, the British Isles and Europe.

The church historian will be in church from 12 noon onwards for anyone who wishes to learn more about St Mary's history.

All are welcome.

This service may be live-streamed or recorded.

For further information visit:
www.stmaryswarwick.org.uk

IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

FREE EVENT

www.warwickwords.co.uk



5 Monday
October

James Wright *The Buildings Archaeologist: Discovering the Secrets of Britain's Ancient Buildings*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
10.30am

Visit any settlement in the land and there will be ancient buildings hidden in plain sight. Behind a Victorian façade is a Tudor house. Underneath a Georgian frontage is a mediaeval cottage. What is now a modern farm may once have been a castle.

This book looks at the ways in which ancient buildings have been studied and conserved, the puzzling ways that some buildings became listed whereas others were overlooked, and how we can really understand the age and development of a structure.

With over a quarter of a century of field experience, **James Wright** uses case studies drawn from his career to explain the fascinating, enigmatic and frequently surprising world of the buildings archaeologist.

Event supported by



Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



© Jonathan Ring

5 Monday
October

Jonathan Healey *The Blood in Winter: A Nation Descends, 1642*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
2.00pm

After years of tension, by late 1641 England had reached a semblance of peace.

Then came winter: and with it, chaos, protests, political deadlock and, eventually, a remarkable attempt by King Charles I to destroy his opponents. On 4 January 1642, Charles marched his army on Westminster, seeking to arrest five Members of Parliament, setting in motion a series of events that led to bloodshed and civil war, changing the nation forever.

Jonathan Healey recreates the claustrophobic atmosphere of the months that sent England into that war. It is a story of remarkable but flawed characters, faced with unpalatable choices, and a frightening picture of a society in profound distress.

Jonathan will be in conversation with Festival Director **Aaron Manning**.

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments

WarwickWords



5 Monday
October

Katja Hoyer

Weimar: Life on the Edge of Catastrophe

Castle Hill Baptist Church
4.30pm

Join historian **Katja Hoyer** to explore the dramatic story of Weimar – the German town that gave its name to a bold democratic experiment but later became synonymous with the rise of Nazism.

Home to cultural giants such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, then, in the 20th century, overshadowed by the nearby Buchenwald concentration camp, Weimar stood at the crossroads of art, politics – and extremism.

Katja traces the lives of ordinary citizens of Weimar from 1919 to 1939, navigating revolution, creativity and creeping dictatorship: a powerful, human, portrait of a society on the brink of catastrophe.

Katja will be in conversation with Festival Director **Aaron Manning**.

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments



5 Monday
October

Michael Scott

Themistocles: The Rise and Fall of Athens's Naval Mastermind

Castle Hill Baptist Church
7.30pm

The ancient-Athenian statesman and naval commander Themistocles was called 'the most illustrious Greek of his time'.

In a dizzying rise to power, Themistocles masterminded Greek victory over Persia at Salamis, helping to preserve Greek freedom – yet his life was a rollercoaster of dazzling brilliance and catastrophic misjudgement.

In this electrifying talk, acclaimed author and broadcaster **Michael Scott**, professor of classics and history at the University of Warwick and presenter of, *inter alia*, the BBC's *Invisible City* series, uncovers the drama of Themistocles' rise and fall and offers a vivid insight into the turbulent world of ancient Athens.



In association with

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Tickets: £15.00



6 Tuesday
October

Corina Apostu

England's Maecenas: Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester as a Cultural Patron

Great Hall,
Lord Leycester Hospital
10.30am

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was more than just an ambitious courtier and Elizabeth I's life-long favourite. He was also one of the most important patrons of art and literature throughout the Elizabethan age, dubbed 'England's Maecenas' by multiple scholars.

Well-educated and enthusiastic about both European and English cultural advancement, Leicester was, perhaps, not as single-minded as popular narratives sometimes depict him to be, for his cultural goals are almost always intertwined with the political.

Corina Apostu explores why he put so much of his energy into patronising artists and writers. What were his goals and what were the impacts of his efforts?

Event supported by



**IN AND AROUND
WARWICK**

Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



© British Motor Industry Heritage Trust

6 Tuesday
October

British Motor Museum The History of the British Sports Car

Warwick Racecourse, 1707 Suite
10.30am

How do you define the sports car?

The first car to be accredited as Britain's first true sports car is the 1910 Vauxhall Prince Henry, but the desire for motoring speed, glamour and danger goes well back before this date – from the racing carriages of the 18th century, as far back as vehicles of the classical Roman and Egyptian eras.

Join volunteers from the **British Motor Museum** as they investigate a century of the development of the British sports car, from the earliest times to the current day. All the old favourites – Jaguar, MG, Triumph, Morgan – have their place, moulded by an ever-changing social, political and economic landscape.



Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



© WCRO Courtesy of Warwickshire County Record Office

6 Tuesday
October

Heritage and Culture Warwickshire Inside the Warwick Castle Archives

County Record Office, Priory
Park, Cape Road
12noon – 1.30pm

Discover how the archives of Warwick Castle were rescued from the Castle in 1978 and came to be cared for at Warwickshire County Record Office. Learn about the recent work to catalogue this remarkable collection of over 30,000 documents, some of which are now featured in a major exhibition at Market Hall Museum.

Archivists **Laura Orriss** and **Amanda Williams** will highlight fascinating items from the Greville family archive, spanning the 17th to the 20th centuries, including personal letters, records of daily life, First World War correspondence – and some of the collection's oldest and most unusual documents.

The event concludes with a guided tour of the Record Office strongrooms and a chance to view selected items on display.



Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



6 Tuesday
October

Alison Weir *The Boleyn Secret*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
2.00pm

Kate Carey is the daughter of Mary Boleyn. At the age of twelve, Kate attends her aunt Queen Anne Boleyn, to the scaffold. Horrified by Anne's grim end, and believing her innocent, Kate conceives a deep hatred for King Henry VIII, who sent his wife to such a terrible death.

Kate spends much of her young life as a companion to Anne and Henry's daughter, Elizabeth, and the two become close. As time passes, Kate begins to sense that there is a secret associated with her own background. Only when her mother is on her deathbed does Kate discover the awful truth ... and the bond between the Boleyn cousins will never be the same again ...

Join **Alison Weir** to explore her captivating new novel.

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments



© Kona Macphree, Royal Literary Fund

6 Tuesday
October

Max Adams

Domesday: 1,000 Miles on Foot Through the England of the Norman Conquest

Castle Hill Baptist Church
4.30pm

When William I sent his agents to survey every shire in England, he asked them to list his holdings and calculate his resulting wealth from the taxes due to him.

Yet the manuscript record of the Domesday 'Great Survey' is not just a tax record, but also a unique window onto the structure of English administration and economy before and immediately after the Norman Conquest: its shires and hundreds, acres, hides and townships.

In *Domesday*, **Max Adams** retreads the path taken in 1085 by William's agents, taking us on foot through the very sites covered by one of the most iconic documents of English history, exploring in a fascinating new history this unique portrait of a land and its people, bringing the past into intimate contact with the present.

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments



6 Tuesday
October

Warwick Castle History Team

Warwick Castle: Behind Closed Doors

Meet at the Stables Car Park,
Warwick Castle
5.30pm – 7.00pm

Have you ever wondered just what is behind the locked doors at Warwick Castle?

Join **Warwick Castle History Team** for an evening of exploration into the secret areas of the Castle – some of these rooms have not been seen by the public for many, many years.

Please note that this event will involve lots of steep steps and very dark areas, so a decent level of fitness and appropriate footwear will be required

Limited places available – please book in advance

Parking in the Stables Car Park will be free for all attendees



IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

Tickets: £15.00



6 Tuesday
October

Gary Mead

Montgomery: Unbeatable, Unbearable

Castle Hill Baptist Church
7.30pm

Known to all simply as 'Monty', perhaps Bernard Law Montgomery's greatest achievement was to give the British Army self-belief after Dunkirk, ensuring that his troops were inspired to embark on the long struggle to defeat Nazi Germany.

Montgomery secured famous wins in North Africa, most notably at El-Alamein, then led his troops into Europe with the invasion of Italy. He commanded the 1944 D-Day landings ... but his strategy for the Battle of Arnhem was to prove a costly failure.

No other general was held in such affection by the ordinary ranks and by the public – or was so hated by his peers. Fifty years after his death, Montgomery remains a highly controversial figure.

Gary Mead will be in conversation with **John Jefferies**, Senior Tutor and Head of Politics at Warwick School.

Tickets: £15.00



7 Wednesday
October **8** Thursday
October

British Motor Museum Talking Shop

Coffee#1, High Street
10.00am – 4.00pm

Do you have a connection to the motor industry or motor trade here in the Midlands? Perhaps you worked for one of the car manufacturers or for a company that was part of the extensive network of suppliers? Then we want to hear from you!

The **British Motor Museum's Talking Shop** aims to capture the diverse experiences of people in and around Britain's motor industry, both at work and in your social life.

We'll be holding a number of drop-in sessions in places that flourished as a result of the car industry. We'd love to add your story, with your unique perspective, to the archive at our Museum.

Why not pop in for a chat at our Talking Shop here in Warwick?



FREE EVENT

Talking Shop has been made possible by the generous support of Arts Council England

www.warwickwords.co.uk



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7 Wednesday
October

Anna Whitelock *The Sun Rising: James I and the Dawn of a Global Britain*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
10.30am

1603: Elizabeth I has died, bringing the Tudor line to an end. Is England on the edge of crisis?

Enter King James from Scotland, who now establishes a new dynasty on the English throne, and, with it, the first 'united' kingdom of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales was born: the Stuarts have arrived.

Join **Anna Whitelock** as she celebrates the reign of the first King of Great Britain, a King with global ambitions. From the historic voyage of the *Mayflower* to the alliance between James and the Persian shah – over a joint love of silk – *The Sun Rising* revolutionises our understanding of the early 17th century and the figures that forged a global Britain and sowed the seeds of the future British Empire.



7 Wednesday
October

Rachel Trethewey *Muv: The Story of the Mitford Girls' Mother*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
2.00pm

Everyone knows the six flamboyant Mitford sisters, but their formidable mother – known to the family as Muv – has long been undeservedly overlooked.

In *Muv: The Story of the Mitford Girls' Mother*, leading historian **Rachel Trethewey** uncovers Sydney Redesdale's pivotal role in shaping her daughters' strong wills, confidence – and even their extremism.

A divisive figure in life and legacy, she was seen as saint or scapegoat depending on which Mitford was speaking.

In this vivid talk, Rachel brings Muv centre stage for the first time, revealing the remarkable woman at the heart of one of Britain's most famous – and infamous – families.

Event supported by



Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments

 **WarwickWords**



© Colin West

7 Wednesday
October

Antonia Senior

*Stalin's Apostles:
The Cambridge Five and the
Making of the Soviet Empire*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
4.30pm

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the 1951 defection to Moscow of Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, the moment that first exposed the Cambridge spy ring and sent shockwaves through the Cold War world.

In *Stalin's Apostles*, **Antonia Senior** revisits the infamous Cambridge Five – Burgess and Maclean, Kim Philby, Anthony Blunt and John Cairncross – revealing new facts, showing how their betrayal reshaped global politics.

Antonia offers urgent lessons for understanding Russia's complex relationship with the West today in this unflinching look at the Cambridge Five: a tale of treachery, arrogance, British exceptionalism ... and murder.

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments

 [warwickwordsfestival](https://www.facebook.com/warwickwordsfestival)



7 Wednesday
October

Aaron Manning

*England's Bears:
The Blood and Glory of the House of Warwick*

Book
Launch

Great Hall, Warwick Castle
7.30pm

For 650 years, the House of Warwick shaped the political and cultural destiny of England: from the 'Black Dog' to the 'Devil Warwick', the 'Kingmaker' to the Dudleys, this is the story of a Midlands dynasty that rose from regional warlords to (briefly) usurping the English Crown.

Some ruled in the name of kings, others incited war and rebellion in the name of God, ruling the Midlands like emperors.

In the 18th century, however, the overwhelmed family dispensed with landed and political power in favour of the arts, transforming from a house of despots to dilettantes.

Historian – and Festival Director – **Aaron Manning** brings to life the world of a bloody and glorious dynasty, exploring how one family and their quest for power – and survival – shaped British history.

Event supported by



IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

Tickets: £20.00
includes a glass of fizz

Box Office: 01926 33 44 18



8 Thursday
October

Adam Wood

*Crime and Punishment
in Victorian Warwick*

Unitarian Chapel
10.30am

Join crime historian and author **Adam Wood** as he opens the casebook of Victorian crime in Warwick, revealing some of the most gruesome – and often amusing – crimes committed on the streets we walk today: from murder, suicide and drunken brawls to medieval skeletons, stolen peacocks ... and Jack the Ripper.

What happened once the judge donned his black cap? And why did old ladies take the hand of the executed criminal, as he was still hanging on the end of a rope?

Adam is a regular consultant for television crime documentaries and an authority on sharing grisly tales from the past in a captivating and accessible way!



8 Thursday
October

Angie Hobbs

*Why Plato Matters Now –
An In-Depth Conversation*

Friends Meeting House
12noon

How can we relearn the crucial art of dialogue? What is involved in living a good life? How can we protect a democracy from being subverted into autocracy by an opportunistic demagogue?

In this in-depth audience conversation, based on her recent book, **Angie Hobbs** explores how the ancient Greek philosopher Plato can help us with all these urgent questions and many more.

Angie shows how she has used Plato's ideas and arguments in a variety of sectors to address contemporary issues and invites the audience to discuss with her what further lessons can be applied.

We are living in fast-moving and uncertain times and need ancient wisdom more than ever. Plato really does matter, right now!

**Limited places available –
please book in advance**

**A copy of Angie's book is included
in the ticket price - please collect
in advance from Warwick Books**



8 Thursday
October

Guy Walters

Stealing Hitler's Rocket

Castle Hill Baptist Church
2.00pm

The V-2 rocket was part of Adolf Hitler's plan to break British morale. The world's first rocket warhead, the V-1 'Doodlebug', had already killed thousands when a new, and more terrifying, weapon appeared, seemingly out of thin air. As tall as a four-storey building, the V-2 blasted to the edge of space before falling back to Earth at supersonic speed, killing thirty thousand in one fell swoop.

Yet Churchill's intelligence chiefs had known of the weapon weeks before it first struck. British operatives hatched a plan with Polish resistance forces to smuggle a V-2 rocket out from under Hitler's nose.

In *Stealing Hitler's Rocket*, **Guy Walters** reveals the true extent of the extraordinary, secret and life-threatening operation that changed the course of history forever.

IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments & copy of the book

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments



8 Thursday
October

Elizabeth Goldring
Holbein: Renaissance Master

Castle Hill Baptist Church
10.30pm

In this illustrated talk, **Elizabeth Goldring** introduces *Holbein: Renaissance Master*, her biography of Hans Holbein, the artist who fixed the appearances of Henry VIII, his wives, would-be wives and leading courtiers in the eyes of his contemporaries and of posterity.

The German-born Holbein brought Continental techniques and practices to Henry VIII's England, where he applied them in new contexts, for new patrons, transforming in the process the Tudors' relationship with painting and opening their eyes to the political power of portraiture.

Join Elizabeth to learn more of her richly illustrated and critically acclaimed biography of Holbein, published to mark the 500th anniversary of his arrival in England.

Event supported by



Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



8 Thursday
October

David Kynaston
*Deep into the Sixties:
Britain 1965 – 66*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
7.30pm

Sixties Britain – the Beatles and the Stones vie at the top of the charts in a confident and free-spending youth culture, there is education reform, urban redevelopment and England win the World Cup – heady optimism and patriotism abound.

But this is not the full story of mid-Sixties Britain. Everyday life for many, especially beyond the big cities, bears a striking resemblance to earlier decades.

Covering the short but intense period from after Churchill's death in early 1965 to England's Wembley triumph in July 1966, **David Kynaston** uses a plethora of contemporary sources to paint a richly nuanced picture in unrivalled detail, as part of the *Tales of a New Jerusalem* series.

David will be in conversation with **John Jefferies**, Senior Tutor and Head of Politics at Warwick School.

Tickets: £15.00



9 Friday
October

Francis Young
Fairies: A History

Castle Hill Baptist Church
10.30am

The truth about belief in fairies is far stranger than clichéd images of tiny figures with wings and wands.

Imagine instead a vast range of supernatural human-like creatures, from prehistoric nature spirits, through medieval theology, Renaissance literature and Enlightenment scepticism ... to Tolkien's mythology. Even in our apparently disenchanted contemporary world, fairy belief endures in surprising ways.

Join **Francis Young** as he restores fairies to their full historical and cultural complexity. This is not mere superstition, he argues, but a serious expression of how people have made sense of a mysterious world. To study fairies is to study ourselves – our evolving morality, our negotiation of the boundaries of the natural and supernatural and how we imagine our place in the cosmos.

A cultural history stranger, and more relevant, than you'd ever imagine.

Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



9 Friday
October

British Motor Museum The RAF Gaydon Story

Unitarian Chapel
10.30am

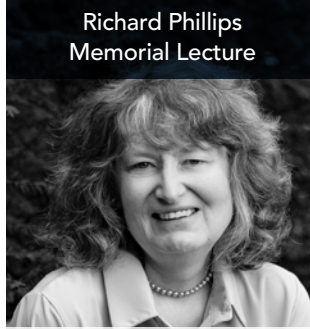
Between 1942 and 1974, one area of Warwickshire played a significant part in the defence and security of Britain. That site is now home to the British Motor Museum, the Jaguar Land Rover test track and JLR's Research and Development Department ... but in 1942, it was the home of RAF No 12 Operational Training Unit, where newly qualified aircrew prepared for operational duties with Bomber Command. Then, with the emergence of the Cold War in the 1950s, RAF Gaydon became a base for the famous V-Bombers, a key component of Britain's nuclear deterrent.

Yet there is more to the Gaydon site than simply as an air base: this **British Motor Museum** History talk traces the site's development over three decades and uncovers many surprising stories – some tragic, some truly heartwarming.



IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



Richard Phillips
Memorial Lecture

9 Friday
October

Stella Fletcher Edwin F Reynolds – A Warwickshire Architect

Unitarian Chapel
12.30pm

As a student in the 1980s, Renaissance historian and writer **Stella Fletcher** lodged with Richard and Veronica Phillips at Northgate in Warwick, a house acquired by Richard's grandfather, architect Edwin F Reynolds (1875-1949).

Stella focuses on Reynolds' architectural legacy in Warwickshire. Before the First World War, Reynolds designed houses – inspired by those he studied throughout the Midlands – and churches, influenced by his travels abroad. In the leaner times of the inter-war years, he designed war memorials and public houses and worked on historic buildings, including Packwood House and various Shakespeare properties.

Warwick Words' co-founder Richard Phillips sought to promote an appreciation of his grandfather's work, and so both we and Stella are delighted to present this event.

IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



9 Friday
October

Hayley Nolan *Notorious: Anne Boleyn and the Great Tudor Hoax*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
2.00pm

How did a young housemaid catapult herself into the centre of Henry VIII's divorce, going head-to-head with Anne Boleyn? And why was the sordid truth behind her story erased?

Elizabeth Barton's remarkable rise from poverty to celebrity stunned the Tudor court. As the most notorious influencer of her day, she was adored by the public and had the most formidable Tudor power players under her spell – until she was silenced. Was the girl a deluded fantasist, a cold-hearted con artist ... or the victim of her corrupt celebrity managers?

Join **Hayley Nolan** as she breathes life into a story that has been relegated to the footnotes of history. A thrilling story of prophecy, fame, manipulation and deceit – showing what's at stake in the ruthless court of Henry VIII.

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments



9 Friday
October

Adam Busiakiewicz

Sir Fulke Greville – Collector,
Builder, Gardener, Poet and
Warwickshire Man

Castle Hill Baptist Church
4.30pm

Sir Fulke Greville (1554-1628), born in Beauchamp Court, Alcester, lived through one of the most exciting periods of British history. He served at the courts of Elizabeth I, James I and Charles I, and held several important positions including Treasurer to the Navy, Chancellor to the Exchequer and member of the Privy Council. In 1604 he was granted ownership of Warwick Castle, transforming it from a derelict fortification into a lavish stately home.

Adam Busiakiewicz will focus on Fulke Greville's career, material world and Warwickshire connections. Adam analyses several fascinating but neglected inventories and documents which show Greville to have been a discriminating patron of the arts and collector of fine tapestries, paintings, furniture, musical instruments, ceramics and other *objets d'art*.

IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

Tickets: £12.00

includes refreshments



9 Friday
October

Rachel Morley

Church Crawling:

The Secret Lives and Hidden Stories of England's Churches

Bridge House Theatre

7.30pm

The poet John Betjeman coined the phrase 'church crawling' to describe his days out visiting churches. In the spirit of Betjeman, Rachel Morley's book captures the magical experience of poking around a deserted rural church – then seeing it transform, through her expert eyes, into a portal to the past, bringing England's people and history to life in the most colourful, moving and unexpected ways.

Wall-paintings and monuments, graffiti and plaques, carved beams and crypts, furniture and oddities: Rachel shows these buildings to be the living expression of centuries of communal history and folk culture, time capsules of wonder and connection. An experience so rich and so layered, offering a close encounter with the past.

Rachel will be in conversation with **Dominic Sandbrook**, historian, writer and broadcaster and co-host of *The Rest is History*.



10 Saturday
October

Matt Halford

A Tour of the Grounds,
Gardens and Veteran Trees

Meet at the Stables Car Park,
Warwick Castle

9.00am - 11.00am

Warwick Castle has sixty acres of grounds and gardens – and over one thousand trees. The landscape as we see it today has been developed since the mid-eighteenth century, when Francis Greville employed a young Lancelot Brown to landscape the Castle Courtyard.

In subsequent decades, further tree planting and expansion of the pleasure grounds continued. During the 1860s, Robert Marnock, the famed designer of Regents Park, provided the design for the formal parterre garden, known today as the Peacock Garden.

Join **Matt Halford**, Warwick Castle's Head of Estates, to learn more about the wonderful variety of veteran and notable trees.

Limited places available
– please book in advance

Parking in the Stables Car Park
will be free for all attendees



IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

Tickets: £15.00

includes refreshments in the Conservatory Tea House



10 Saturday
October

Gareth Russell

A Night Mis-Remembered:
The Splendour and
Tragedy of the *Titanic*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
10.30am

The 1912 disaster of RMS *Titanic* became one of the century's most famous, perhaps infamous, events – and spawned many legends.

From her construction in the Harland and Wolff shipyards amid political chaos in Belfast, to her nickname as the 'millionaire's special', the *Titanic* became a perfect window into the Edwardian era that created her.

Historian **Gareth Russell** makes a welcome return to Warwick to explore the myths of the *Titanic*: what life was really like onboard the supposedly unsinkable 'ship of dreams', and the mistakes, heroism and scandals of its tragic sinking.

Tickets: £15.00

includes refreshments

Warwick University Talk



10 Saturday
October

Penny Roberts

Letters Hidden in a Basket of
Cheese: Uncovering a
Clandestine European Network

Unitarian Chapel
12noon

On 10 May 1570, at the chateau of Dieppe in Normandy, a cloth-merchant was interrogated about the contents of a basket he was carrying to England, which included thirty notes and letters 'concealed in a bed of straw under cheeses'.

This chance interception piqued **Penny Roberts'** curiosity about the wider context of this episode: from where and to where, from whom and to whom, were the messages being taken?

Further investigation eventually uncovered a European network of Protestant contacts – ambassadors, aristocrats, clergymen, diplomats, double agents and spies. Their connection was upholding the Huguenot cause, as part of a wider international operation – shedding light on the experience of exile and how communication networks were maintained through correspondence smuggled across borders.

In association with



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Tickets: £12.00

includes refreshments



10 Saturday
October

Dan Cruikshank

*The English House:
A History in Eight Buildings*

Castle Hill Baptist Church
2.00pm

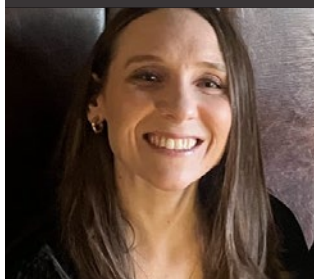
Elegant early-eighteenth century Pallant House in Chichester. In Spitalfields, 19 Princelet Street, built for a Huguenot silk-weaver, ultimately a synagogue. Yet this is also the story of two-up, two-downs in Toxteth, a block of flats in London's East End and what *Ideal Home* magazine described in 1926 as Britain's 'first modern house' – in Northampton.

Dan Cruikshank weaves architectural and social history to create a series of brilliantly observed portraits of eight buildings that tell the story of modern Britain.

Together these diverse buildings reveal the ways in which English homes have developed and changed over the centuries. At the same time, they have much to tell us about the lives of their first occupants: their aspirations, their struggles, their place within society and relationship with their local community.

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments

Warwick University Talk



10 Saturday
October

Sophie Mann

*Double Nature, Double Care:
Religion and Medicine in
Early Modern England*

Unitarian Chapel
4.00pm

Through the lens of two pre-modern concepts – 'double nature' and 'double care' – **Sophie Mann** explores an innovative history of the relationship between religion and medicine in early modernity.

These 'double' terms were used to characterise human nature and the healing process, which involved concurrent attendance upon the body and the soul. In this context, being sick, and treating illness, involved managing an ensouled body. This necessitated 'double care': therapies catering to a patient's 'double nature' of flesh and spirit.

Sophie reveals novel ways in which religion informed bodily experiences, regimens of health, medical reasoning and the dynamics of clinical encounters. This will prove crucial for new readings of early modern medicine more generally.



Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments



10 Saturday
October

Lesley Smith

Florence Nightingale

Castle Hill Baptist Church
4.30pm

Florence Nightingale, born in 1820, led a very unusual life for a woman of her class and time: highly educated, speaking several languages and tremendously well-travelled, she rejected her wealthy family's social status, believing she had a vocation from God to nurse.

In 1854, during the Crimean War, she and a highly disciplined group of 38 nurses cared for the wounded and dying, bringing a new respectability to nursing. Florence was also a statistician, the first woman to be elected to the Society of Statisticians – her data collection and analysis in nursing practices brought forward new ideas that inform modern nursing.

Independent and never married, she became an icon of the Victorian period and nursing profession. The 'Lady with the Lamp'. This is her extraordinary story, brought to life by **Lesley Smith**.

Torry's Hardware
& DIY



Tickets: £20.00
includes refreshments



10 Saturday
October

Nathen Amin, Nicola Tallis and Matt Lewis
Women of the Wars of the Roses: Blood, Crowns and Power

Castle Hill Baptist Church
7.30pm

The so-called 'Wars of the Roses' are often remembered as a bloody clash between brothers, cousins and ambitious men.

And yet, this was also a time of extraordinary female energy, where women became active players in the events through which they were living in a way that hadn't been seen in England before.

Women who were wives, mothers, sisters, cousins ... who drove the conflict from behind the throne – and even on the battlefield.

Join **Matt Lewis, Nathen Amin and Nicola Tallis** as they return to Warwick to unpick the fierce political intelligence, resilience, and determination of some of the most extraordinary women of the 15th century.

Tickets: £20.00

www.warwickwords.co.uk



11 Sunday
October

Lucy Noakes
The People's Victory:
VE Day, 1945

The Court House Ballroom,
Jury Street
10.30am

In May 1945, the quirky social survey organisation Mass Organisation asked its volunteer writers to keep a diary for VE Day.

This talk by **Lucy Noakes** introduces these diaries and shows that, alongside the street parties, bonfires and public celebrations, many marked the day more quietly – or did not to mark it at all. Worries about what to eat and whether the shops would be open, were recorded alongside tales of walks in the countryside, church services and gardening. Lucy's talk outlines and explores the varied and complex reactions to the end of the war in Europe.

Lucy is a Trustee of Mass Observation, whose archives give us an unparalleled window onto the feelings and experiences of the people of mid-20th century Britain.

In association with



Tickets: £12.00
includes refreshments

WarwickWords



11 Sunday
October

Tara Morton

Votes for Women! The
Fight for Female Suffrage in
Warwickshire and Coventry

Unitarian Chapel
12noon

Women fought long and hard to
vote in general elections in Britain,
finally winning this right on the
same terms as men in 1928.

The story of the women's suffrage
movement is most popularly
viewed through the lens of Mrs
Pankhurst's rebellious suffragettes
and their activism in London and
other major metropolitan centres.
Yet, women and men in suburban
towns and villages across the
country vigorously campaigned for
'Votes for Women', in ordinary and
extraordinary ways that are often
lost.

Join historian **Tara Morton** as she
brings to life women's struggle
for the vote in Warwickshire and
Coventry, through a selection of
diverse and inspirational local
stories: those who campaigned,
their sacrifices and their legacies.

IN AND AROUND
WARWICK

In association with



**UNIVERSITY
OF WARWICK**

Tickets: £12.00

includes refreshments



11 Sunday
October

Erin Goeres

*Nineteen Days in Autumn:
A New History of 1066*

The Courthouse Ballroom,
Jury Street
2.00pm

The definitive, character-led history
of the most famous year in history,
written in authoritative and dynamic
prose by **Erin Goeres**.

On 5 January 1066, Edward the
Confessor's death plunged England
into a succession crisis that would
change the kingdom forever.

Mere hours after Edward's
remains had been laid to rest,
his brother-in-law Harold seized
power, inciting the wrath of two
formidable challengers: King
Haraldr Sigurðarson of Norway and
Edward's ambitious cousin William,
Duke of Normandy.

In this startling new history, Erin
unveils the intense drama that
then unfolded, culminating in the
tumultuous nineteen autumn days
between the battle of Stamford
Bridge and the battle of Hastings,
leading to the death of two
monarchs and the end of Anglo-
Scandinavian rule in England.

Tickets: £15.00

includes refreshments

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**History
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Wrapped in History *Unwrap a New Adventure*

Celebrate Warwick Words
History Festival's
10 years with us.

Wrapped history books
have been hidden in
our venues, in cafes and
around the town for you
to discover, enjoy and
share.

If you find one, take it
home and read it or pass
it on to your friends.

Happy reading and
thank you for being
part of the adventure!





11 Sunday
October

Max Hastings

Plunder: The Last of the War in Europe, 1945

Bridge House Theatre
3.00pm

The last weeks of the Second World War on the Western Front in Europe witnessed extraordinary scenes of heroism, horror, melodrama and pathos.

In his new book, **Max Hastings** presents a cast of fascinating characters from those final weeks – British, American and German – some of whom distinguished themselves through wonderful deeds, others through the basest crimes.

The book takes its title from Montgomery's 'Operation Plunder', the 23 March 1945 Allied crossing of the Rhine. *Plunder* follows events after that action, culminating in the German surrender. With his signature narrative of blending personal experiences into the 'big picture', Max mingles accounts of the battles with stories of the people who played many and various roles in the last European act of history's most terrible war.

Max will be in conversation with Festival Director **Aaron Manning**.



Tickets: £20.00

www.warwickwords.co.uk



11 Sunday
October

Iain MacGregor

Battle: The Moments that Transformed Warfare from Ancient Greece to Ukraine

The Court House Ballroom,
Jury Street
5.00pm

Across three millennia, wars have been won not simply by numbers or weapons, but by morale, leadership, innovation and timing.

In this talk, author and historian **Iain MacGregor** takes us on a gripping journey – from Marathon and Alesia to Gettysburg and Stalingrad, exploring the decisive moments when history turned on a single battle.

Drawing on eyewitness testimony, battlefield research and fresh analysis, Iain reveals why certain clashes mattered – and why their lessons continue to shape modern conflict.

A compelling exploration of how human decision making under extreme pressure has forged nations, empires and the world we inhabit today.

Tickets: £15.00
includes refreshments

 **WarwickWords**



© Peter Clark

11

Sunday
October

Dan Jones

Castles: A Fortified History of the World

Bridge House Theatre
7.30pm

Join bestselling author **Dan Jones** as he returns to Warwick to introduce his latest book, *Castles*, a gripping history of the world told through twenty iconic strongholds.

Dan leads us on a journey through centuries and across continents, as each castle tells a unique story of power, politics and survival, revealing the shifting tides of warfare, the rise and fall of empires, the resilience of people under siege and the flourishing of new ideas.

Castles is an epic story of how humans first came to build those fortifications which have so powerfully captured our imagination.

With Dan's trademark scholarship and flair, he shows how defiance, endurance – and imagination – have been carved into the landscapes we've inherited.

Dan will be in conversation with Festival Director **Aaron Manning**.

Tickets: £20.00



16

Friday
October

Andrew Roberts

Napoleon and His Marshals: Victory, Rivalry, Betrayal

Castle Hill Baptist Church
7.30pm

Join award-winning and bestselling historian, **Andrew Roberts**, to explore the story of Napoleon and the elite generals who built him up ... and ultimately led to his ruin.

In 1804, immediately after his coronation as Emperor, Napoleon created the Marshalate, the supreme martial rank of the Empire. Over the next decade, he elevated to it some of his most outstanding generals: some the sons of aristocrats, others the sons of innkeepers or coopers, all now carried the baton of a Marshal of France.

Yet Napoleon was to find that he had created a nest of vipers, whose lust for glory descended into destructive competitiveness and mutual recrimination ... and, in the end, just two of them rode beside him at Waterloo.

Tickets: £20.00

Mark Kaiser Art.

www.markkaiserart.com

Find Mark at the Saturday Market in Warwick's Market Square!

Hundreds of British cars, and countless stories to tell...

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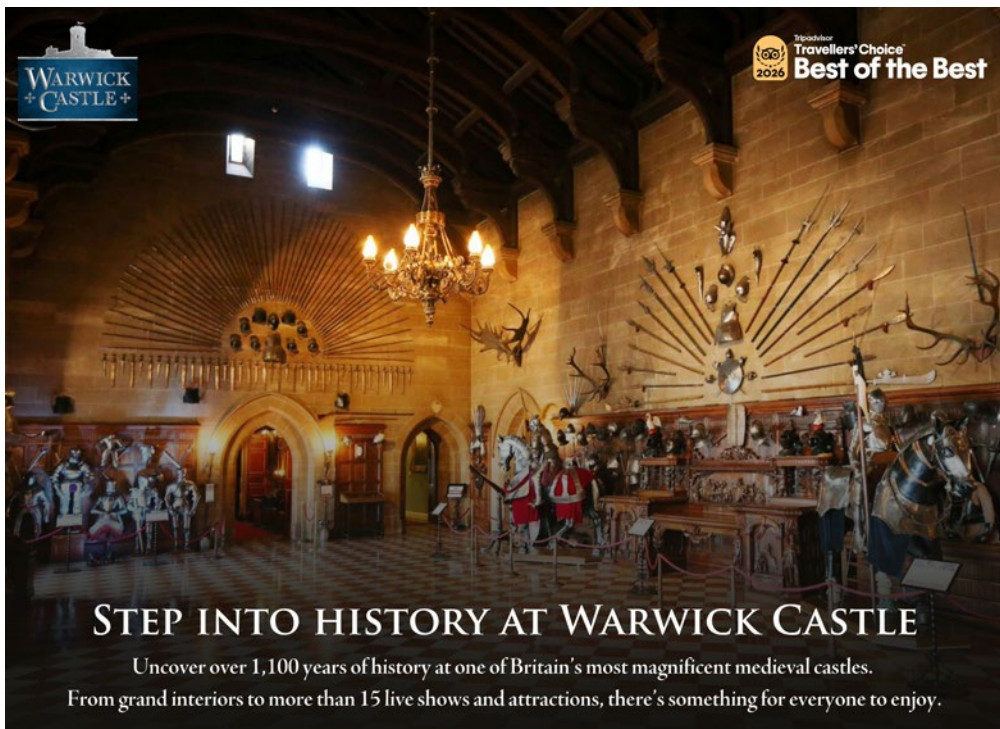
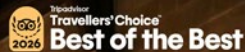
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Uncover over 1,100 years of history at one of Britain's most magnificent medieval castles.

From grand interiors to more than 15 live shows and attractions, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Brethren's Prayers at the Lord Leycester

Open to the public for the first time in 455 years



Witness a tradition unchanged since 1571...

Join the Master & Brethren, in Tudor robes, for a half-hour service in the Lord Leycester's 900-year-old Chapel, following the Order of Service established by Robert Dudley himself.

First Wednesday of every month - 09:30 (seated by 09:25)

FREE TO ATTEND

Tea & coffee with the Master & Brethren available after.

Leamington Literary Society *presents*

Shakespeare and the Supernatural

Darren Freebury-Jones

Tuesday 13th October 7.30pm

Leamington Spa Baptist Church
13 Chandos St, Leamington Spa CV32 4RN

Ghosts, sprites, elves, fairies, nymphs, witches, wizards, and demons. All of these are mentioned in Shakespeare's plays. This talk explores Shakespeare's engagement with the theme of the supernatural. How might theatre audiences have responded to these representations on stage? And how did some of these spooky figures inform popular play genres? Darren Freebury-Jones delves into the literary, theological and theatrical context lying behind some of Shakespeare's most magical, and most terrifying, creations.

**Admission: £5.00 or FREE to members
of Leamington Literary Society**

Enquiries: 01926 88 78 38

Box Office: 01926 33 44 18



Richard Phillips 1940 - 2026

Richard Phillips MBE helped found what was to become Warwick Words in 2002. He guided our Festival of Literature and Spoken Word, and later, the History Festival, alongside his work with Leamington Music, finally stepping down from our committee in 2021. Richard died in January 2026 and will be greatly missed, but his legacy in the arts in Warwick and Leamington lives on.

Committee Members:

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Directors

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Sarah Swinburne – Festival Treasurer

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Sue Rigby – Secretary

Sue Wallbank – Marketing Co-ordinator

Pauline Giacomelli-Harris

Ellie Fisher

Technical Advisor

Trevor Langley

Festival Friends 2026



Thank you to all our Festival Friends for their support, including:

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John Wright

and those Friends who wish to remain anonymous.

If you enjoy the Festival and would like to support us, then why not become a Friend of Warwick Words?

Please contact Helen Meeke on 07944 768607 or email info@warwickwords.co.uk

Warwick Words would like to thank the following organisations for their generous support during 2026:

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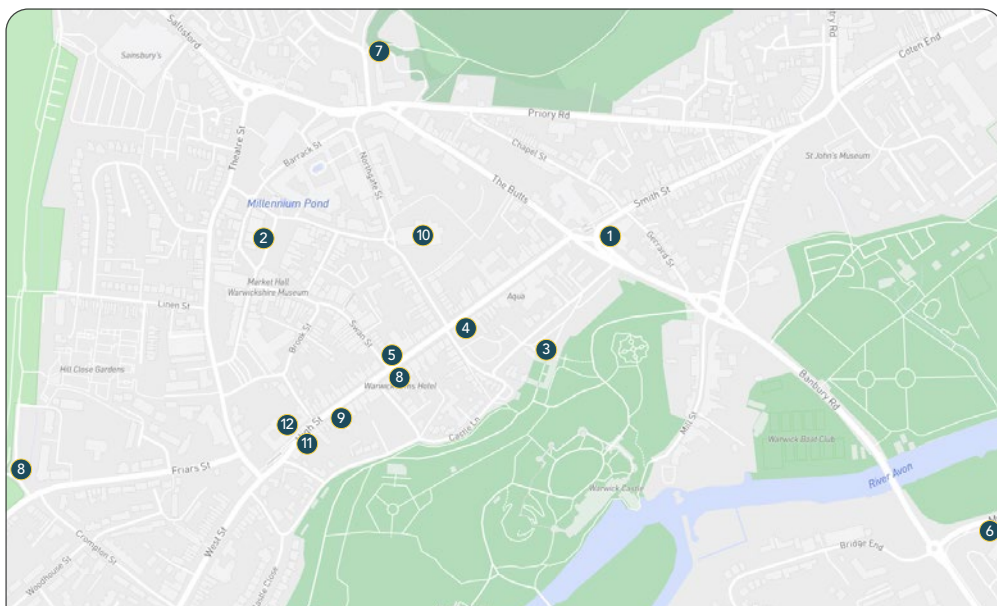
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Particular thanks go to all our guest speakers, Simon Dainty, John Jefferies, Mark Kaiser, Trevor Langley, Rose Sawyer, Mike Swinburne, Sue Wallbank, publishing companies and all our fantastic venues. And thanks to our Festival Volunteers, without whom the Festival would not be possible.



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2. Warwick Books, Market Place CV34 4SL
3. Warwick Castle, Stables Car Park CV34 4QU
4. VIC, Court House Ballroom CV34 4EW
5. Coffee#1, High Street CV34 4AP
6. Bridge House Theatre CV34 6PP

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9. Unitarian Chapel CV34 4AX
10. St Mary's Church CV34 4RA
11. Friends Meeting House CV34 4AX
12. Lord Leycester Hospital CV34 4BH

Booking & other information

We strongly advise you to book your tickets in advance to avoid disappointment.

① Online Booking

To book online, visit www.warwickwords.co.uk

① Leamington Spa Visitor Information Centre

Royal Pump Rooms, The Parade, Leamington Spa CV32 4AA

Open for bookings in person and by telephone on **01926 33 44 18**

Monday to Friday: 10.00am – 4.00pm

Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays: 10.00am – 3.00pm

Tickets booked by telephone can be collected during normal opening times from this Box Office or at the event. Please note that tickets **will not** be posted out.

The ticket price is inclusive of a flat rate transaction fee of £2.00.

① Ticket Sales at the Event

Tickets may be **purchased at the event** on the day, **subject to availability** – payment in cash or cheque only, please. We are unable to accept payment by card.

Please check your tickets as soon as you receive them. A refund or exchange will only be offered should an event be cancelled.

Please note seating at all venues is unreserved and is on a first come, first served basis.

Warwick Words reserves the right to change and/or cancel authors, programmes or venues, if unavoidable, without prior notification.

All details are correct at the time of going to press.

Festival contact details: Phone 07944 768607
or email info@warwickwords.co.uk

Book signings: Authors will usually sign their books at the end of an event

Festival Bookshop: Warwick Books,
24 Market Place, Warwick CV34 4SL

Disabled access: All venues have disabled access, except as advised

Visiting Warwick: Contact the Visitor Information Centre on 01926 49 22 12 or visitwarwick.co.uk

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