

The Writers' Conference is brought to you by Writing East Midlands in partnership with the University of Nottingham. It is supported by Arts Council England and the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS).



Writing East Midlands is the Writer Development Agency for the region. We work closely with a range of organisations including schools, universities, galleries, museums and libraries, to help build strong relationships between writers and their communities. Our wide range of activities includes The Writers' Conference, The Writers Directory, Writing School East Midlands, Write Here residency programme, Young Writers' Groups, The Writer's Den, Mentoring & Critical Reads, and two writing competitions: Aurora and the Solstice Prize for Young Writers.



The University of Nottingham is a public research university based in Nottingham. It was founded as University College Nottingham in 1881 and was granted a Royal Charter in 1948. Its alumni have been awarded a variety of prestigious accolades, including three Nobel Prizes, a Turner Prize, and a Gabor Medal and Prize.



The **ALCS** is the British collecting society for all writers. It collects money from all over the world, then pays it to its members. So far ALCS has paid a total of £450 million. It also campaigns to ensure writers' rights are recognised and rewarded, and teaches people what copyright is all about.

ALCS was started by writers in 1977 and has around 90,000 members. It is a not-for-profit organisation.



Arts Council England was set up in 1946, by Royal Charter, to champion and develop art and culture across the country. It is governed by an executive board and national and area councils. ACE invests in

artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives, and supports activities across the arts, museums and libraries.



Writing East Midlands – The Writers' Conference Programme

Saturday 25th March 2017

9.30 – 10am	Arrival, Registration & Refreshments			
10.10am	Welcome Talk			
10.20am	Keynote Speaker: Alison Moore			
Slot One 10.45 – 11.40am	Writing for the Commercial Romance Market Tracy Bloom Caroline Bell Foster <i>Judith Allnatt</i>	Doing a Creative Writing PhD: Facts and Fiction Lynda Clark Laurie Cusack Oscar Delagado <i>Spencer Jordan</i>	Another land: Places, People and the stories they tell Ishi Khan-Jackson Eve Makis R.A. Villanueva <i>Sandeep Mahal</i>	Learn to free your imagination to bring it to the page: Scriptwriting Workshop Emteaz Hussain
Slot Two 11.45 – 12.40pm	After the book deal: You've been published, what next? Jamie Mollart Emma Pass <i>Judith Allnatt</i>	The Role of the Writer in Times of Change Nikesh Shukla Kerry Young Femi Oyeboade <i>Henderson Mullin</i>	The Short of it: Writing and Publishing Short Stories Alison Moore Ra Page Jacob Ross <i>Victoria Villaseñor</i>	Writing in Rhyme: Children's Writing Workshop Caryl Hart
12.40 – 1.45pm	Networking Lunch			
Slot Three 1.45 – 2.40pm	Writing Residencies: Working as a Writer in the Community Panya Banjoko Anthony Cropper Kevin Fegan <i>Cathy Grindrod</i>	Independent Presses: How could they work for you? Teika Bellamy Debbie Taylor <i>Anne Holloway</i>	Writing the Personal Jackie Hagan Cathy Rentzenbrink <i>Jonathan Taylor</i>	Creating Narrative Drive: Fiction Writing Workshop Rod Duncan
2.40 – 3.15pm	Coffee Break			
Slot Four 3.15 – 4.10pm	The Hero's Journey: Archetypes and how they can be used in your writing Shonaleigh Jacob Ross Andy Walsh <i>Nick Owen</i>	Pitching to an Agent Nelle Andrew Davinia Andrew-Lynch Julia Kingsford Oli Munson <i>Alex Davis</i>	The 21st Century poetry landscape Jackie Hagan Maurice Riordan <i>Jacqueline Gabbitas</i>	
4.15pm	Keynote Speech: Nikesh Shukla			
4.35pm	The Writers' Conference Storyteller in Residence: Shonaleigh			
4.50pm	Close from Chair			
5.00pm	Conference End			

SLOT ONE: 10.45 – 11.40am

Writing for the Commercial Romance Market

A good romance novel is constructed like any other piece of fiction, with characters the reader cares about, conflict, and compelling writing. But what are the fundamental elements of writing romance fiction? And how does this differ from other genres? Join best selling writers and hear about their thoughts on the subject, the current market for Romance Writing, and how to make your writing stand out from the crowd.

With Tracy Bloom, Caroline Bell Foster and chaired by Judith Allnatt

Doing a Creative Writing PhD: Fact and Fiction

Why do a Creative Writing PhD? What does it entail and what sort of thing can I do? These and other questions will be addressed by three students currently grappling with a PhD in creative writing. Chaired by Dr Spencer Jordan (University of Nottingham) and with plenty of time for questions, the session will provide a frank and open discussion about life as a creative writing doctoral student.

With Lynda Clark, Laurie Cusack, Oscar Delgado and chaired by Spencer Jordan

Another Land: Places, People and the stories they tell

Our various forms of media seem filled 24/7 with images and arguments about the large scale movement of people and how this affects the way we think and live. What might this mean for us as writers? What are the opportunities for sharing literary cultures, sparking creative processes, and embracing new ideas, stories and truths? And where are the brick bats and pitfalls and how do we avoid them?

With Ishi Khan-Jackson, R.A. Villanueva, Eve Makis and chaired by Sandeep Mahal

Learning to free your imagination to bring it to the page: Scriptwriting Workshop

Join playwright and poet Emteaz Hussain for this scriptwriting workshop. As a group you will create approximately a ten minute piece with a beginning, middle and end, using applied drama techniques to free your imagination and to then bring this back to the craft on the page.

With Emteaz Hussain

SLOT TWO: 11.45 – 12.40pm

After the Book Deal: You've been published, what next?

You've dotted the i's and crossed the t's, but what happens once you have signed along the dotted line with a publisher? Join three experienced authors as they discuss how to run book launches, divulge tips for dealing with the media and discuss various ways a writer can connect with reader and writer audiences once your book is published.

With Emma Pass, Jamie Mollart and chaired by Judith Allnatt

The Role of the Writer in Times of Change

In times of great social, political, and technological change, as the traditional boundaries that shape lives become more, or less distinct, what is the role of the writer? Are they

custodians of worldly items, like truth, or anger, and are they responsible if they are lost? Or has that changed now that 'truth' seems so subjective, and there is so much anger, leaving the writer to entertain us with, as Neil Gaiman might say, 'stories that are lies, good lies, which pay the rent.'

With Nikesh Shukla, Kerry Young, Femi Oyeboode, and chaired by Henderson Mullin

The Short of It: Writing and Publishing Short Stories

Maybe you're an avid short-story writer. Or you write novels but are trying your hand at something briefer. Or does a chapter from your novel-in-progress work as a self-contained story? Whatever your journey into short stories, join our panel of experts to find out what makes the discipline of the short story so popular and accessible, and the different and innovative ways in which you can seek publication.

With Jacob Ross, Ra Page, Alison Moore, chaired by Victoria Villasenor

Writing in Rhyme: Children's Writing Workshop

Many successful children's books are written in rhyme. Rhyming books are wonderful to read and listen to, and children often find it easier to remember rhyming stories than those written in prose. But writing in rhyme is far from straight-forward, and getting a rhyming book published can be incredibly challenging. Find out how publishers view rhyming texts and explore techniques to improve your work.

You are welcome to bring a short sample of rhyming text to share. We may pick one or two examples of delegates work to discuss as a group.

With Caryl Hart

SLOT THREE – 1.45 – 2.40pm

Writing Residencies: Working as a Writer in the Community

From prison settings to schools and libraries, from working with refugees and asylum seekers to homeless young people, writing residencies can take a working writer to different settings and help them build new audiences and give them fresh ideas and perspectives. Join three established writers as they talk about their work in community settings and give practical tips on how to build your writing residency project.

With Kevin Fegan, Anthony Cropper, Panya Banjoko and chaired by Cathy Grindrod

Independent Presses: How could they work for you?

Just what is an independent press and what sets it apart from more mainstream, commercial presses? Join our panel of industry experts from three very different operations to de-bunk the myths and explore the various ways in which independent presses operate. Find out what drives them and how working with one could benefit you as a writer?

With Teika Bellamy, Debbie Taylor and chaired by Anne Holloway

Writing the Personal

Whether you're writing about a personal experience, a memoir or your work is entirely fictitious, arguably there is something of the person in all writing. But what are the

considerations when writing about something which has affected you, or your family and friends directly? Is this treated differently from any other piece of writing, and do you have a responsibility to yourself within the work? How much truth is too much? And can the writing process be healing? Join Jackie Hagan, Cathy Rentzenbrink and Jonathan Taylor to find out their experiences in writing in this area.

With Jackie Hagan, Cathy Rentzenbrink and chaired by Jonathan Taylor

Creating Narrative Drive: Fiction Writing Workshop

Narrative drive, page-turning quality, 'unreadability' - three descriptions which depict the elements of a story that impel its audience to keep reading. The publishing industry is calling for stories with these qualities. In this workshop you will explore an approach to writing them.

With Rod Duncan

SLOT FOUR: 3.15 – 4.10pm

The Hero's Journey: Archetypes and how they can be used in your writing

Why do certain stories continue to appeal to us throughout the ages? What are the commonalities which can be seen, are they part of the collective human consciousness, or do they travel as we do across borders and continents, genres and writing disciplines? From the hero to the mentor to the villain, explore how these archetypal characters occur in literature and how you can use them to create compelling narratives.

With Shonaleigh, Jacob Ross, Andy Walsh, chair Nick Owen

Pitching to an Agent

Hear from a range of highly regarded Literary Agents who will answer all your questions about the pitching and publishing process. Pose your questions and find the best pathway to publication for your work as the panellists share their wealth of experience and insights from the ever-changing world of publishing.

With Oli Munson, Davinia Andrew-Lynch, Nelle Andrew, Julia Kingsford, chaired by Alex Davis

The 21st Century Poetry Landscape

If we believe the hype and the tales of publishing woe, the poetry terrain is both rich with new possibilities (from film poetry to performance to a surge in short collections & pamphlets) and a publishing minefield (with high competition for just a few slots).

Drawing from their own experiences, our panellists will help us navigate this landscape and the poetry publishing possibilities.

With Jackie Hagan, Maurice Riordan, and chaired by Jacqueline Gabbitas



Guest Speakers and Panellists

Judith Allnatt is an acclaimed novelist with novels shortlisted for the Portico Prize, EMBA and featured on Radio 5 Live. She has lectured widely on Creative Writing for universities and freelance for over two decades. www.judithallnatt.co.uk

Davinia Andrew Lynch aims to find writers and illustrators whose material can be told through varying mediums. A small and intimate agency, Andlyn is for storytellers who want to nurture their talent and ultimately their careers.

Nelle Andrews is a literary agent at PFD, Bookseller Rising Star 2016 and published novelist in her own right.

Panya Banjoko is a published writer whose work reflects her cultural landscape. She runs a Black Writers Network and is Patron for Nottingham City of Literature.
panyabanjoko.wordpress.com

Dr Teika Bellamy is the award-winning director of Nottingham-based independent press Mother's Milk Books; she is passionate about the role of indie presses and women authors in the publishing world.

Caroline Bell Foster is a best-selling, multi award-winning author of diverse fiction and named as one of the most influential people in culture & entertainment by the Nottingham Post.

Tracey Bloom's number 1 bestselling romantic comedy *NO-ONE HAS SEX ON A TUESDAY* was a self-publishing sensation in 2013. She has since published three novels with Penguin Random House.

Lynda Clark. After several years working in the videogame industry as a writer and producer, Lynda returned to academia to undertake a PhD in interactive fiction.

Anthony Cropper has published two novels and a collection of short stories. His play won the BBC Alfred Bradley Award for Radio Drama. Anthony has held numerous residencies, including work for First Story.

Laurie Cusack is scraping at the underbelly of Irish Diaspora through a collection of short stories for his Creative Writing PhD at Leicester University. His writing influences include: John McGahern, Kevin Barry, Eimear McBride, Claire Keegan and Colin Barrett.

Alex Davis is an experienced events organiser, writer and publisher based in Derby. Most recently he has started work as Literature Officer for QUAD, working at a year-round programme of writing, reading and performance events.

Oscar Delgado moved from Costa Rica to England to undertake postgraduate studies in Creative Writing. He obtained his MA at Lancaster University and is now writing a novel for his PhD at the University of Nottingham.

Rod Duncan. Creative writing lecturer and author of six crime and fantasy novels, including *Backlash*, which was shortlisted for the John Creasey Award and *The Bullet Catcher's Daughter*, which was shortlisted for the Philip K. Dick Award.

Kevin Fegan. Playwright & Poet. He has written over 50 plays for a wide variety of theatre plus plays and drama serials for BBC Radio 4 and Storyline Writer for Coronation St. He has published 10 collections of poetry.

Cathy Grindrod is an award-winning writer of poetry, plays and memoir. A lecturer, consultant and facilitator, she was awarded an honorary Masters degree in 2014 for her work enhancing wellbeing through writing in Derbyshire communities.

Jackie Hagan is a multi-award winning theatre-maker, poet and performer. She has 3 publications; is working on her second solo show and her first play has just been commissioned to tour nationally.

Caryl Hart is an award-winning children's author based in Derbyshire. She writes picture books and young fiction and runs creative literacy workshops for schools and libraries across the UK.

Emteaz Hussain. Produced and published: *Sweet Cider* 2008, *Blood* 2015, *Outsiders* 2015. Currently commissioned by Royal Court Theatre and BBC3 The Break and has toured internationally as a Performance Poet including a tour with the Benjamin Zephaniah band.

Spencer Jordan is Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Nottingham.

Ishi Khan-Jackson is a happy comedian. Her latest show, "Ishi Khan-Jackson: I'mMigrant!" tackles migration, identity & belonging. Her first show "I am Happy!" was nominated for Funny Women's best show award at Edfringe. www.2funny.org.uk

Julia Kingsford is a literary agent at Kingsford Campbell which she co-founded in 2014. Prior to that she's had roles across the booktrade including as CEO of World Book Night and Marketing Director of Foyles.

Eve Makis has written four novels and a screenplay. Her latest book, *The Spice Box Letters*, was shortlisted for the Jerwood Fiction Uncovered Prize and the East Midlands Book Award. She teaches writing at Nottingham University.

Jamie Mollart runs his own advertising agency and has won awards for marketing. Patrick Neate called him 'quite a writer' on the Book Slam podcast. His first novel, *The Zoo*, was published in April 2015.

Alison Moore is a novelist and short story writer. Her first novel, *The Lighthouse*, was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Awards. Her most recent novel is *Death and the Seaside*.

Oli Munson joined A.M.Heath in 2012. His client list includes award-winning, bestselling authors of crime, suspense and speculative fiction and he's always on the hunt for novels with high concept plots, compelling characters and interesting locations.

Femi Oyebo was born in Lagos, Nigeria. He is Professor of Psychiatry University of Birmingham & Consultant Psychiatrist National Centre for Mental Health Birmingham. His books include *Mindreadings*; *Madness at the Theatre* and *Sims' Symptoms in the Mind*.

Ra Page is the founder and Publisher at Comma Press. He's the editor of numerous anthologies, including *The New Uncanny* (winner of the Shirley Jackson Award, 2008) and *Litmus*.

Emma Pass is the award-winning author of two novels for young adults, *ACID* and *The Fearless*. She runs regular creative writing workshops in schools and community settings and is a First Story writer-in-residence.

Cathy Rentzenbrink. Cathy's first book *The Last Act of Love* was a Sunday Times bestseller and shortlisted for The Wellcome Trust Prize. *A Manual for Heartbreak* comes out this June. She is Contributing Editor at *The Bookseller*.

Maurice Riordan. His latest poetry collection is *The Water Stealer* (Faber, 2013). He is a former editor of *Poetry London* and *The Poetry Review*. He is Professor of Poetry at Sheffield Hallam.

Jacob Ross is Associate Editor for Fiction at Peepal Tree Press, author of several story collections and editor of five short story anthologies. His novel, *Pynter Bender*, was one of The Society of Authors 'Best first Novel'. His current novel is the *The Bone Readers*. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Shonaleigh. Shonaleigh is a Drut'syla (storyteller) from the Yiddish oral tradition and the UK Deputy National Storytelling Laureate. She works as a professional storyteller, travelling internationally and has had commissions from Hay-On-Wye, the Barbican and National Theatre. She also teaches at the International School of Storytelling.

Nikesh Shukla is the editor of Rife Magazine, an online magazine for young people and the author of the novels *Coconut Unlimited* (Quartet) which was shortlisted for the Costa First Novel Award and *Meatspace* (Friday Project). He is the editor of the award-winning collection of essays about race and immigration by 21 writers of colour, *The Good Immigrant* (Unbound), for which he was shortlisted for the Liberty Human Rights Arts Award.

Debbie Taylor is the founder and Editor of Mslexia, the magazine for women writers. She's also a novelist, journalist and writing tutor. Her novel *Herring Girl* (Oneworld), a paranormal historical murder mystery, is out now.

Jonathan Taylor's books include the memoir *Take Me Home: Parkinson's, My Father, Myself* (Granta, 2007), and the novel *Melissa* (Salt, 2015). He is Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Leicester. His website is www.jonathanptaylor.co.uk.

R.A. Villanueva is the author of *Reliquaria*, winner of the Prairie Schooner Book Prize. He is also the winner of the inaugural Ninth Letter Literary Award for poetry.

Victoria Villasenor is an editor with a New York publishing house and teaches writing courses in the Midlands and internationally. She's also an author of more than twenty published short stories and several novels.

Andrew Walsh is an award-winning writer/director with credits in television, radio, animation, theatre and more than 70 videogames including *Prince of Persia*, *Harry Potter*, *Fable Legends*, *Shadow of the Beast* and *Need for Speed*.

Kerry Young is the author of three novels: *Pao* (2011) *Gloria* (2013) and *Show Me A Mountain* (2016). She is a Reader for The Literary Consultancy, an Arvon Foundation tutor and a Royal Literary Fund Fellow.