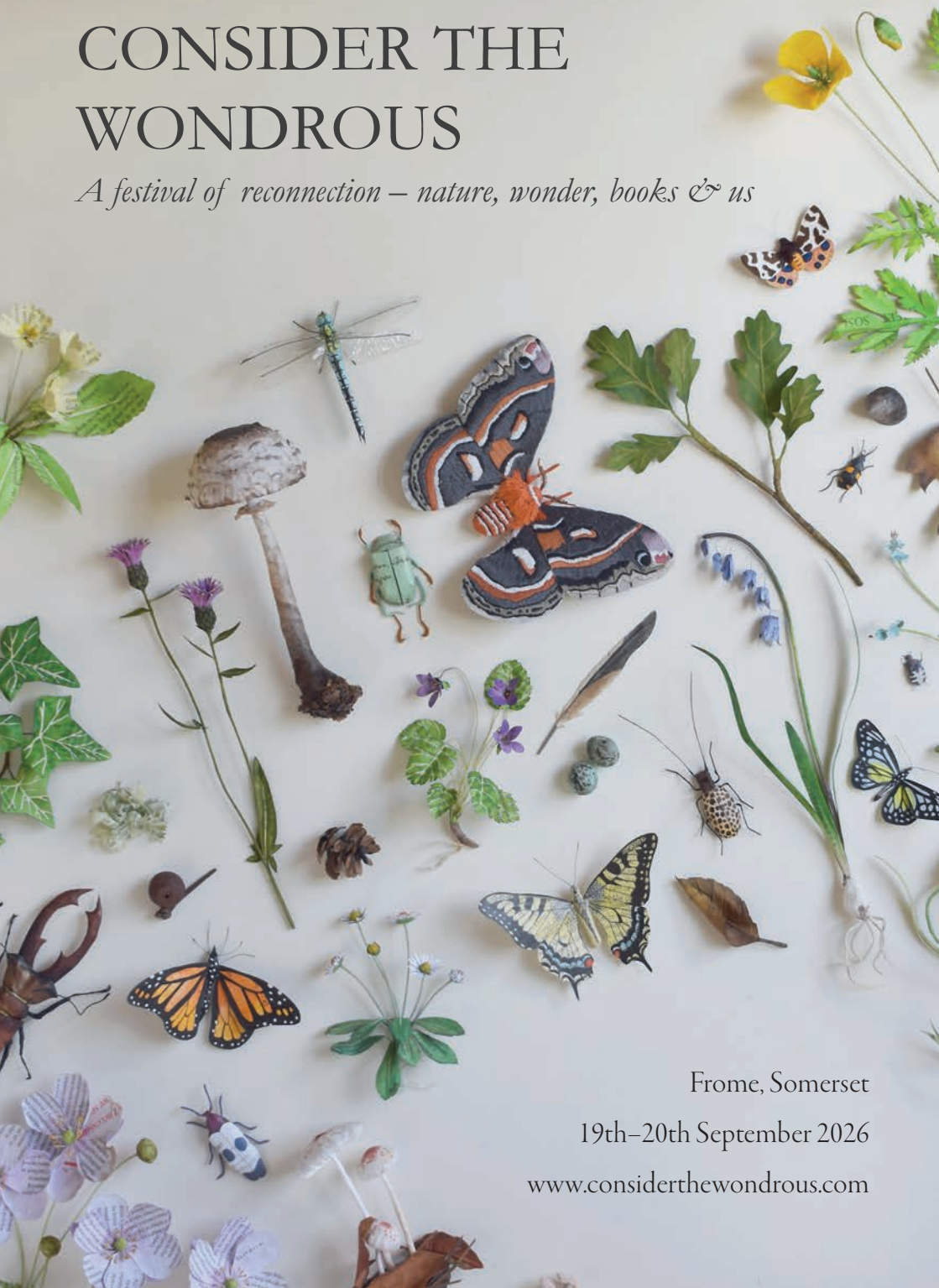


CONSIDER THE WONDROUS

A festival of reconnection – nature, wonder, books & us



Frome, Somerset

19th–20th September 2026

www.considerthewondrous.com

Thank you to our partners

We're deeply grateful to these Frome-based businesses who have given us encouragement and financial support.



Dennis Maps Ltd is the leading map printer in the UK, producing more than 2 million maps and charts every year. They offer a wide range of map printing services to a variety of clients, from large organisations to small businesses and individuals. They work with both the private and public sectors and are proud to be the trusted print partner of Ordnance Survey. They are firmly rooted in Frome, and trace their heritage all the way back to 1850.

dennismaps.co.uk



Forest Marble was launched in 2016 to fill the gap in the market between traditional estate agents and purely online models.

They are proud of their reputation across the South West and delighted to have been named as the number one local agent for seven consecutive years by the British Property Awards.

Forest Marble are grateful to be in a position to continue their support of local events, charities and community projects.

forestmarble.co.uk

And we're proud to be in partnership with both new bookshops in town...



As I stare at this rose in my garden, I see both the rose and the universe-in-the-rose because a rose cannot exist in isolation: all life is interconnected, sprung from the same source, that single cell in which all life on earth began.

Gareth Howell-Jones, *Do Not Call the Tortoise*

Welcome to Consider the Wondrous



...a brand-new book festival rediscovering our place in nature. It's a celebration of wondering at the real things around and within us, an antidote to cynicism and narrowness.

Talks and conversations take place in a lovely, light venue attached to the amazing Rye Bakery café and its peaceful garden. Around town are walks, workshops, music and general conviviality.

We hope you'll relish the quality of our speakers and the range of subjects we'll explore together – trees; how we see nature; the wildlife of towns & cities; indigenous wisdom and Western science; nature and our mental health; birds and birdwatchers; humans in the landscape; and many, many more.

Why are we doing this? Because it's fascinating and fun, because it makes us more fully who we are, because, as the festival will show, all the manifold problems the world is facing have their origin in the way we understand our surroundings.

Have a fantastic time!



Gareth Howell-Jones

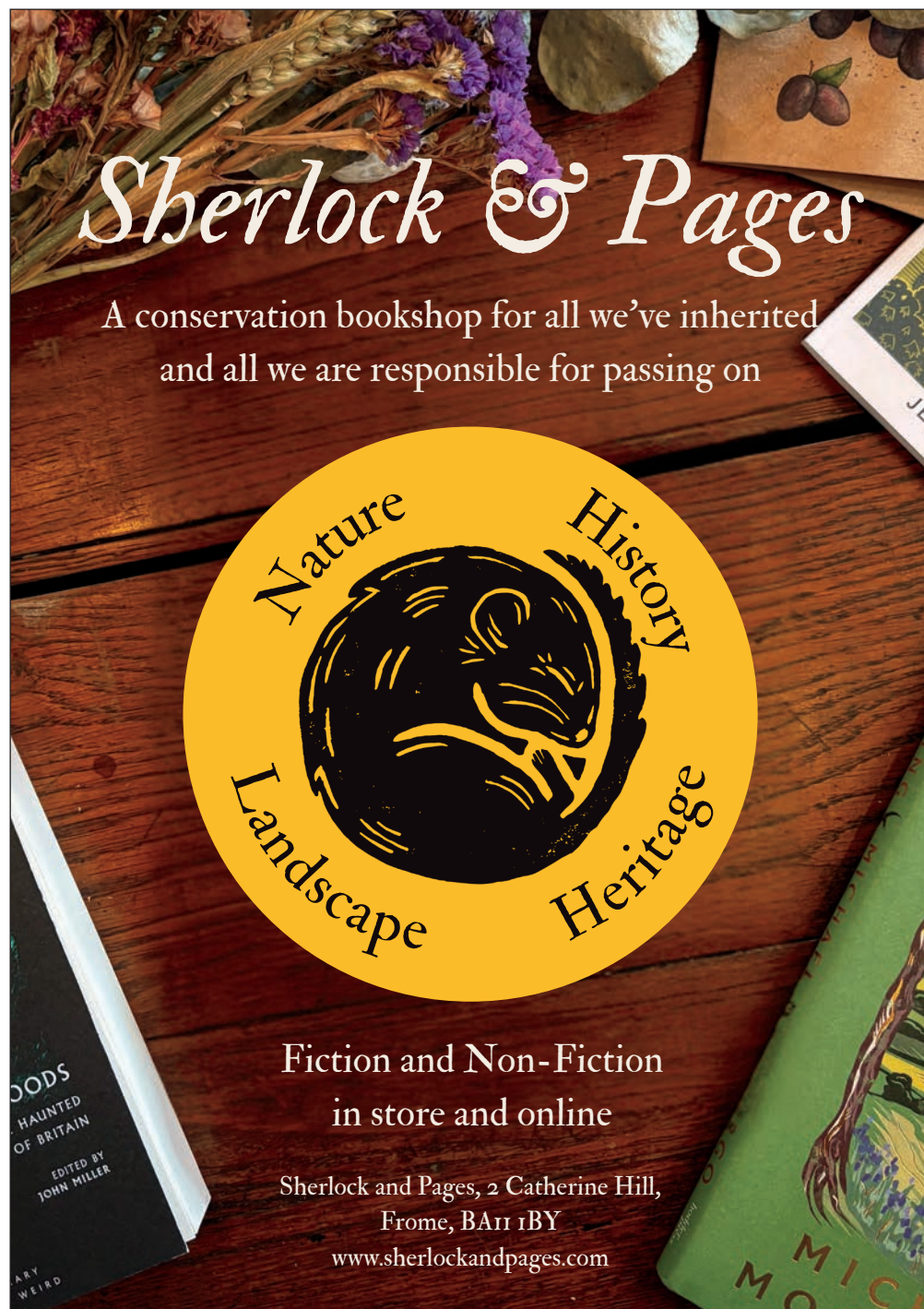
Gareth's books include *Your Lowly Hedgehog Knows* and *Do Not Call the Tortoise*. He lives in mid-Wales where he also designs gardens and runs the Hay Festival Bookshop. His passion is reimagining our place in the living world. His essay on page 20 explains the reasons behind this weekend.



Tina Gaisford-Waller

Tina is manager of Winstone's Hunting Raven Bookshop on Cheap Street in Frome. She is also an actor, singer, dancer and stunt artist. Previously, she worked in children's publishing. Her passion is promoting reading and community work in the town where she was born, bred and lives.





Booking information



Tickets are available online at www.considerthewondrous.com.

If you prefer, you can book in person at Hunting Raven Bookshop, Cheap Street, Frome.

There are no booking fees.

Our main venue is RISE, Whittox Lane, Frome BA11 3BY, right in the heart of the town. What3words: [rise.select.drum](#).

All details are correct at time of going to print. In the event of cancellation, we will refund tickets. Otherwise, we operate a no return/refund policy.

If you have tickets you can't use, please consider handing them in at the bookstall at RISE, where they can be resold to benefit a local charity.

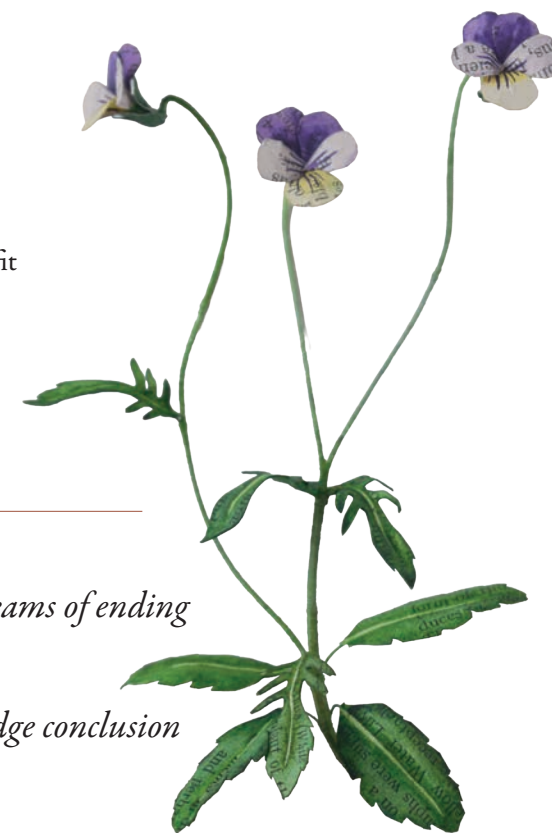
Both the venue and Rye Bakery café are wheelchair accessible.

All venues have unreserved seating.

Please do not use audio or video recording equipment during events, nor cameras and mobile phones.

There is an FAQs page on the website www.considerthewondrous.com. If you have any unanswered queries, please contact considerthewondrous@gmail.com.

There will be a book signing at the bookshop in Rye Bakery café after each talk.



*Though we live in a world that dreams of ending
That always seems about to give in
Something that will not acknowledge conclusion
Insists that we forever begin.*

Brendan Kennelly, 'Begin'

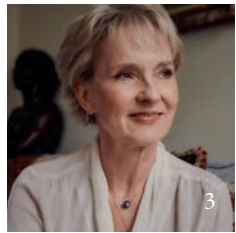
Look who's coming



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



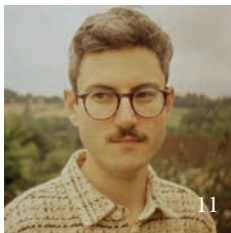
8



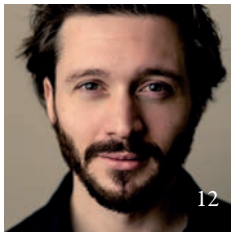
9



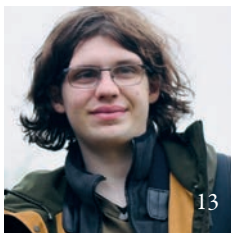
10



11



12



13



14



15



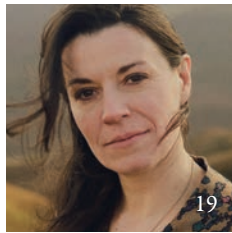
16



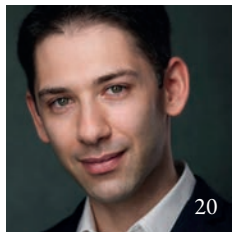
17



18



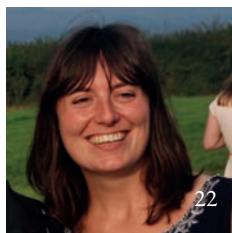
19



20



21



22

- 1 Jay Griffiths Multi-award-winning writer and author of *How Animals Heal Us*
- 2 Horatio Clare Nature lover, wildly eclectic author and mental health campaigner
- 3 Julia Samuel Psychotherapist and author of *This Too Shall Pass*
- 4 JC Niala Anthropologist and author of *The New Eden*
- 5 Amanda Tuke Author of *Wild Pavements* and urban naturalist
- 6 Rosa Vásquez Espinoza Biologist, conservationist and author of *The Spirit of the Rainforest*
- 7 Eloise Kane Archaeologist and author of *Wilderlands*
- 8 Stephen Moss Naturalist and bird biographer
- 9 Jon Gower Linchpin of the Welsh literary scene and author of *Birdland*
- 10 Iain Ballamy World-renowned jazz saxophonist
- 11 Elliot Galvin Multi-talented musician and composer
- 12 David Oakes Actor, conservationist and host of natural history podcast *Tree's a Crowd*
- 13 Dara McNulty Advocate of nature for young people and author of *Wild Child*
- 14 Michael Malay Lecturer in Environmental Humanities at Bristol University and author of *Late Light*
- 15 Anita Roy Writer, editor, environmentalist and cloudmaker
- 16 Julian Hight Heritage tree specialist and author of *The Ancient Tree Explorer*
- 17 Mark Cocker Doyen of naturalists and author of *The Nature of Seeing*
- 18 Charles Foster Vet, barrister and author of *The Edges of the World*
- 19 Cal Flynn Adventurer and author of *The Savage Landscape*
- 20 Joseph Jebelli Neurologist and author of *The Brain at Rest*
- 21 Harriet Rix Tree science consultant and author of *The Genius of Trees*
- 22 Nicola Cutcher Journalist, film producer and environmental campaigner



EVENTS Saturday 19th September

10.30am • £10 • Event 2

Gareth Howell-Jones & Jay Griffiths

Our Place in the Living World

Consider the Wondrous opens with Director Gareth Howell-Jones explaining how the festival came about, why it's in Frome, what it is for and what we hope it can begin to achieve. He'll talk too about the simple but radical way of looking squarely at nature that underpins his books *Do Not Call the Tortoise* and *Your Lowly Hedgehog Knows*.

Jay Griffiths has won many awards and written on a variety of subjects with guts and grace and passion.

In *How Animals Heal Us*, she draws on deep research to show how animals not only help our physical and mental health but have influenced our society and carry a deep spiritual charge.

The book is teeming with eye-opening stories – about the life-saving justice of dogs and lions; about the ethics of wolves; about fieldfares who demonstrate the power of community in the most unexpected way!



12pm • £12 • Event 3

JC Niala & Amanda Tuke talk to Stephen Moss

Wildlife in Towns and Cities

Did you know there are seahorses living wild in the Thames? Nature isn't just about the countryside and cities aren't just for people. Anthropologist JC Niala and 'Urban Naturalist' Amanda Tuke show how the non-human world co-exists with us, from the tiniest plants and lichen we tread underfoot to the lions and rhinos in JC's hometown Nairobi.

JC (*The New Eden*) tells the charged history of urban nature from the Diggers to community gardening in the wake of Grenfell, from the canalization of rivers to the cows that shaped London. Amanda (*Wild Pavements*) brings her infectious delight to toad-patrolling, 'vismigging' and finds fish making their homes in shopping trolleys.

"As cities grow, the danger is not only ecological but emotional ... If we want a future that is not only liveable but meaningful, we must learn to care differently. That begins by paying attention – to the cracks in the pavements, the stories in trees, the silence that follows loss" – JC Niala.

Stephen Moss has himself written about urban wildlife in *The Accidental Countryside*.

Amanda is also leading a pavement plant walk around Frome this afternoon (see page 11).

1.30pm • £12 • Event 4

Horatio Clare talks to Julia Samuel

Nature and Our Minds

Horatio has always been a lover and close observer of nature. Among many epic journeys, he has followed the migratory paths of swallows from South Africa to south Wales, and crossed Europe in search of the curlew.

In 2018 he had a mental breakdown; he was fully, psychotically delusional. He wrote about that experience with great bravery in *Heavy Light*, and a wonderfully generous and informative guide to mental health and the paths to recovery in *Your Journey Your Way*.

Mental health is infinitely complex, and 'nature-loving' is no panacea, but when, in the midst of fantasy and derangement, Horatio encountered a goshawk and stared into its golden eye, for a moment all delusions fell away before the utterness of the wild world. Nature has a longer and deeper perspective than the stresses and preoccupations of work, the media, even family life, and that can be deeply restorative.

He writes, "My parents were moved and soothed by nature in the same way, and I learned this from them. It was always there for us, and we were united in those moments, free from pain and worry. That is what nature has always done for me."

Julia Samuel is a psychotherapist and author.

3pm • £12 • Event 6

Rosa Vásquez Espinoza talks to Nicola Cutcher

The Secrets of the Amazon

Rosa grew up in Peru with the rainforest as her back garden, learning its lessons from her grandmother, a native healer in natural medicine. Now as a biologist and conservationist, she re-explores the Amazon with a unique blend of scientific enquiry and ancient insight.

In her book *The Spirit of the Rainforest*, we meet pink dolphins, killer caterpillars, stingless bees, fish the size of a VW Beetle and a river whose waters flow at boiling point.

Rosa takes ayahuasca with the shamans and travels with the Ashaninka community who practise kametsu asaiki 'living beautifully' – 'honouring the invisible spiritual bond we have with the natural world'.

She writes, "The Amazon brings us back to our roots: to the simple yet profound truth that we are an extension of nature and beauty. It teaches us strength and resilience in the face of change. It shows us that generosity overpowers unfairness."

Nicola Cutcher is an investigative journalist and campaigner against river pollution.



EVENTS Saturday 19th September

4.30pm • £12 • Event 7

Eloise Kane talks to Horatio Clare

When Were We Wild?

In *Wilderlands*, archaeologist Eloise Kane takes us on a fascinating and unfamiliar tour through 12,000 years of our history.

When the glaciers finally retreated at the end of the last Ice Age, our ancestors crossed the land-bridge from the continent and reinhabited these islands. There have been humans here ever since, working the land, taking from it what they needed (and often taking more). So, when was Britain last truly wild?

Archaeology has made amazing advances in recent decades, changing our view of the past. Perhaps when we realise that humans have always been a part of this landscape, we can see our own problems in a new light. Eloise shows how all plants and animals manipulate their environments, just as we do.

“In this way of thinking, it is easier to envisage humans as part of the world, as one node in a much vaster set of relationships, rather than the be-all and end-all of existence.”



6pm • £12 • Event 8

Jon Gower & Stephen Moss in conversation

Bird Talk

An unmissable conversation between two great bird enthusiasts.

Jon Gower has loved birds since one of his collier grandfather's canaries hatched in the palm of his hand. In *Birdland*, he travels Britain from Portland Bill to the Hebrides in search of kittiwakes, bustards and turtle doves as well as a remarkable cast of characters – poets, soldiers, ‘The Goose Whisperer’ – who observe, conserve and marvel at them.

Stephen Moss is a naturalist, broadcaster and author of many books including the acclaimed series of bird biographies which will hatch a new addition, *The Puffin*, this October. He has written an introduction to the classic books written in the 1950s by remarkable musician and bird-woman Len Howard, now republished in a single volume as *Bird Life*. He is President of the Somerset Wildlife Trust.

Both authors, in Jon's words, “want to tell people about birds in the hope that it kindles the light of care.”



7.45pm • £25 • Event 9

David Oakes, Iain Ballamy & Elliot Galvin

We Are Nature

A gala evening of words and music inspired by the natural world.

End the day with flowing jazz, beauty, poignancy and rapture. From earliest times, human art and music has celebrated and sought to understand the mysterious world around us. We're thrilled to have such a stellar line-up for this gala where human creativity reflects back the creativity of nature.

Iain Ballamy is an internationally feted composer and saxophonist. His latest album *Riversphere* blurs genre divisions and boundaries between composition and improv. Recently he's been working with multi-instrumentalist Elliot Galvin on a new project, *Instant Nature*.

David Oakes is a leading actor familiar to us all from stage and screen, but he's also an ecologist and producer of the natural history podcast *Tree's a Crowd*.

This special evening will be hosted by actor, bookseller and festival co-director Tina Gaisford-Waller.

Ticket price includes a £3 donation to Friends of the River Frome.

*Sponsored by Brook Street Pottery
brookstreetpottery.co.uk*

Extra Activities on Saturday

10am • £15 • Event 1

Heritage Tree Walk led by Julian Hight

A chance to meet some of Frome's most majestic trees, and hear about their history, legacy and lore from the arboreal expert Julian Hight, author of many books including the beautiful new *The Ancient Tree Explorer*.

This will be an easy walk, lasting about 90 minutes. It will start at the Cheese & Grain BA11 1BE. Children are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. Places are limited so please book early.

2.30pm • £15 • Event 5

Pavement Plant Prowl led by Amanda Tuke

Join urban naturalist and *Wild Pavements* author Amanda Tuke for a pavement plant prowling and hear some of the fascinating stories behind the urban plants we find. What will she discover in the famous leat running down Cheap Street? What other marvels do we ignore every day?

The walk will begin at our main venue RISE and last 75–90 minutes. Places are limited so please book early.



PROUD SUPPORTERS
& OFFICIAL BOOKSELLERS

Consider the Wondrous

Winstone's Hunting Raven Books has been part of the fabric of Frome for over 40 years.

Stocking the widest range of fiction, non-fiction and children's titles and offering bespoke subscriptions, a range of book clubs and a full programme of events

Pop into our shop at 9-10 Cheap Street, Frome
Order online at winstonebooks.co.uk
Or drop us a line 01373 473111 /
winstonebooks3@gmail.com

Five top tips for festival-goers

- 1 Go to the talks that interest you, but also try at least one you don't expect – the surprises are often the most illuminating.
- 2 Hang out, eat and drink in the brilliant Rye Bakery café and continue the conversations. The talks are only the start.
- 3 Buy books, because these are writers and they have all said very much more in their written works than they have time for on stage.
- 4 Talk to the people sitting next to you or queuing next to you for coffee. Life-long friendships, even marriages, are made at book festivals.
- 5 Explore Frome – the narrow streets, Rodden Meadow by the river, the independent shops, the leat running down Cheap Street, the museum, the churches and the bathing gorillas. It's a beautiful, friendly and frankly quite unusual town.



EVENTS Sunday 20th September

10am • £10 adults/£7 u16s • Event 11

Dara McAnulty talks to Michael Malay

Wild Child | FAMILY EVENT

Do you yearn to climb oak trees, to get a bird's eye view of the world, to feel the wind of leaves? Can I show you the magic of nature? Let me take you on a journey. A wild wandering. A fascinating world awaits...

Dara is passionate about inspiring children with the excitement that he feels for the natural world. His series of *Wild Child* books combine amazing facts with a sense of the poetry of the wild, beautifully illustrated by Barry Falls. He never talks down to children but feeds their natural curiosity with wonders like bioluminescence and bird migration, and gives practical advice on making moth traps, terraria and bird feeders.

Did you know that baby swifts do press-ups? That a fox can hear a beetle move thirty metres away? There's so much to discover all around us!

Michael Malay is author of the Wainwright Prize-winning *Late Light*.

Family event – 7+ years

11.30am • £12 • Event 12

Cal Flynn talks to Charles Foster

The Savage Landscape

In *The Savage Landscape* Cal Flynn goes in search of wildness, “because I wanted to live my life more intensely... tap into a rawer, more authentic, more capable, part of myself.”

She meets gorillas in Uganda, blue sheep in Nepal, and writes luminously of the terror and fascination of the new world created in front of her eyes by a volcanic eruption in Iceland. But she travels into thought and ideas as well as landscape, exploring the historical and political context of what she sees. Everywhere she encounters the contradictions of wildness on a crowded planet – the clutter of research bases in the pure whiteness of Antarctica, a ‘Welcome’ sign in an officially designated ‘wilderness’, the shocking but commonplace eviction of people from their ancestral lands in the name of nature conservation.

Nonetheless, again and again there is astonishment. “Within each landscape one might hit a bedrock of pure feeling... This is freedom. This is awe. This is horrified delight.”

Sponsored by Sherlock & Pages
sherlockandpages.com

1pm • £12 • Event 13

Michael Malay, Anita Roy, Julian Hight & Guests

A Library of Wonder

Nature-writing has boomed in the last twenty years. Books by two of our authors, Cal Flynn and Mark Cocker, recently appeared on *The Sunday Times* list of the most important non-fiction titles this century.

The best books continue to inspire new generations with hope and with the love that great naturalists, storytellers and artists show for the living world. So, we want to build a Library of Wonder, a booklist of the very best nature-related writing to guide new readers and embolden us all to know that there are truer, more positive and more fascinating things in the world than the stories the media tell. Our expert panel will make their personal recommendations...

Which nature-related books mean most to you? Which have opened your eyes and your minds? Which must you re-read and buy as gifts for your friends? Come along to offer your suggestions, and let's share our knowledge and wonder.

2.30pm • £12 • Event 14

Charles Foster & Mark Cocker in conversation

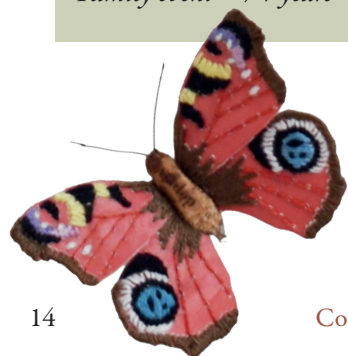
Seeing the World Afresh

We're privileged to host this conversation between two of the most generous-minded thinkers concerned with the natural world.

Mark Cocker is one of our leading naturalists. He leads courses in nature watching and writing and will be leading a guided nature walk at the festival (see page 17). His new book *The Nature of Seeing* encourages us to reclaim our inner gift for wonder and to see the living world in all its infinite detail and mystery.

Charles Foster is a qualified vet, barrister and Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford. In *The Edges of the World*, he shows how in both nature and our culture, creativity, change, freshness come from the edges of things, not the complacent, self-regarding centre. It's the perfect book for a creative and 'different' town like Frome!

To give the authors time to explore their ideas, this event will be 90 minutes long.



4.30pm • £12 • Event 15

Joseph Jebelli talks to Anita Roy

The Brain at Rest

We're constantly badgered to do more, to aim higher, to make the most of our time. Our phones and social media which pose as a break from work only keep our minds over-stimulated and anxious.

In *The Brain at Rest*, Joseph Jebelli explains why stress is so damaging and introduces us to the brain's 'default network', the circuitry that helps us daydream, reflect and imagine.

"Activating the default network can enhance your intelligence, creativity, social empathy and long-term productivity. It can improve your health and help stave off neurological disease."

He shares tips on reorganising your life to prioritise sleep, finding silence, walking and spending time in nature. Rest is not a lazy alternative to work, but an essential part of it.

Anita Roy is a writer, editor, environmentalist and regular contributor to *The Guardian Country Diary*.



6pm • £12 • Event 16

Harriet Rix talks to Julian Hight

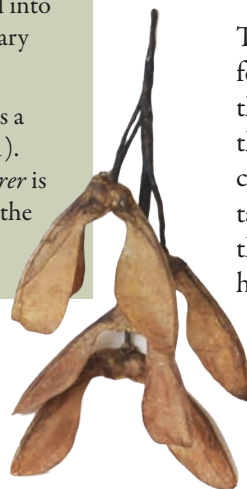
The Genius of Trees

Our hope is that Consider the Wondrous can help us to rethink our place on the planet, as one remarkable species among so many others. So, it's fitting that our final event this year should show something as commonplace as trees in a radically different light.

It's easy to think of trees as noble, beautiful but ultimately passive presences in the landscape. Harriet Rix's extraordinary book *The Genius of Trees* tells a different story. Trees have agency, modifying and working with the animals, plants and fungi around them: they manipulate the clouds to produce the climate they like, they shiver rock into fertile soil, they change the very atmosphere.

"This is a story of how tree-ish trees are, and how ... they have woven the world into a place of great beauty and extraordinary variety," writes Harriet.

Julian Hight is a tree-expert (and leads a walk around Frome for us, see page 11). His new book *The Ancient Tree Explorer* is a fascinating and sumptuous guide to the most magnificent trees in Britain.



10am • £15 • Event 10

Guided Nature Walk led by Mark Cocker

Mark is one of the UK's leading naturalists, author of many award-winning books. His newest title *The Nature of Seeing* (see event 14) is all about the way we look at our surroundings, so this is a wonderful opportunity to accompany him as he explores Rodden Meadow by the river near the centre of town.

This will be an easy walk, lasting about 90 minutes. It will start at the Cheese & Grain BA11 1BE. Children are welcome if accompanied by a responsible adult. Places are limited so please book early.

AFTERWARDS

Continuing the Conversation

The weekend's events end here, but the festival doesn't. It'll continue first in the pub where we'll all retire to relive this extraordinary weekend, in the conversations and connections that the talks have inspired and, back at home, in the books we read, deepening all that we have heard.

5pm • FREE • ST JOHN'S CHURCH

'Come and Sing' Choral Evensong

We're delighted and moved that the parish church in the centre of town is allying with us in this service of words and music reflecting on the theme 'Consider the Wondrous'.

Experienced singers who would like to add their voices to those of St John's Occasional Choir are invited to join the rehearsal at 3.30pm.

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING

The Festival's Future

Consider the Wondrous is about reconnecting – sharing thoughts, hopes and experiences. It is not primarily a commercial venture. The organisers are taking no remuneration, but it costs a lot to stage. If you like what we're doing, please consider supporting us financially so that we can keep it going. You can make donations online or simply by BACS:

Consider the Wondrous CIC
Co-operative Bank a/c 67508477
Sort code: 08-92-99

If you'd like to support us in any other ways, please let us know on considerthewondrous@gmail.com.

A word about Frome

Frome is a remarkable town. A recent history claimed it is characterised by 'creativity and dissent', which makes it the ideal location for Consider the Wondrous.

Our main venue is RISE, Whittox Lane, Frome BA11 3BY.

RISE is a beautifully restored former Congregational chapel right in the heart of the town. Our auditorium is the lovely, light Old School Room. Also here are the renowned and spectacular Rye Bakery café (pictured opposite) and, upstairs on the gallery, SHINE, an exhibition by the Frome Arts Collective.

This weekend, our Festival Bookshop, run by local indy Winstone's Hunting Raven Books, will be located in the Rye Bakery café. After each talk, authors will sign their books here.

There is a restful, sunny garden too, the perfect place to hang out with a coffee and croissant between events.



Frome has fought to keep its old artisan housing and its independent character. Its Town Council is dominated by members of Independents for Frome rather than national political parties. The UK's first community fridge and first 'library of things' were established here. Despite the loss of its industry, Frome has reinvented itself as a town of arts and creativity, with two theatres, the Frome Museum, Black Swan Arts Centre, and the Cheese & Grain, with events of all types happening seemingly every night. The Frome Festival in July, the Kindness Festival in March and the famous Frome Independent market on the first Sunday of every month are just the best known of its many locally driven initiatives.

Frome has its difficulties like anywhere else, but there's an appetite for community action and finding different solutions to problems, like The Good Heart café or Purple Elephant, providing services for children and families.

It's a fascinating place to explore.

Frome has a railway station with direct lines to London, Bath, Bristol, Cardiff. The station is a 20 minute walk from RISE.

For information about travel, accommodation and other attractions in the town and surroundings, visit discoverfrome.co.uk/plan-your-visit.



MOVE BETTER
FEEL BETTER



Move well for life

Feel stronger, steadier, and more confident with supportive Pilates designed for real bodies and real life.

Posture • Strength • Balance • Flexibility • Energy • Less Stress • Move Better • Feel Better • Thrive



Book Now

Sign up today at thrivepilatesfrome.co.uk



Do we need another book festival?

Well, anything that encourages reading, sharing ideas, listening to other voices needs no apology, but Consider the Wondrous has a more specific aim too. It's about working out our place in the living world, and reconnecting with the extraordinary and beautiful creatures we have evolved alongside and with whom we co-exist. Nature isn't just sunsets and nightingales; it's earwigs, trees, our gut flora, us, everything that hasn't been made-up. Being alive to this vibrant world makes us alert, delighted, with a sense of belonging and the creativity that these feelings inspire; it broadens our empathy and reaffirms our agency in a culture that often makes us feel powerless. This weekend we hope to show what an exhilarating difference it can make when we stop, wonder and accept the privilege of being a part of it all.

Amid the gloom and anxiety about the environmental omni-crisis, there is a positive message: we belong here too. But we need to learn how to fit in and behave! From the news, you might believe that the world is run on money, oil and political manoeuvrings. It isn't. It's run on sunlight, photosynthesis and pollinating insects, among countless other life-sustaining miracles. When we recognise wonder in the natural world, not as screen-based entertainment, but as the real, everyday

context in which we live, we can begin to address the problems we face together with understanding rather than fear and denial. This is the paradigm shift in perspective at the heart of Consider the Wondrous and one of the big ambitions of this very little festival.

The world is vaster, stranger, more various than we know. It cannot be shrunk to fit our pre-conceptions; we need to grow to imagine it more fully. Paying attention is key. To hear the roar of sap surging through the trunk of an oak-tree in spring and realise that every blade of grass is playing the same tune, albeit inaudibly to us; to see dust motes fall in the afternoon light and know that every one of them is a world thickly peopled with microscopic life and that each of those microbes shares a common ancestor with me and so is, quite literally, my cousin – these are mind-expanding miracles all around us.

Clearly, political, economic, legal, technological work could mitigate the present crisis, but we can't rely wholly on top-down change from those already prospering in authority. So, like everything in nature, Consider the Wondrous starts small, addressing us firstly as individuals who, in turn, can build relationships, communities, societies, a world. This weekend we will hear innumerable examples of small-scale individual and

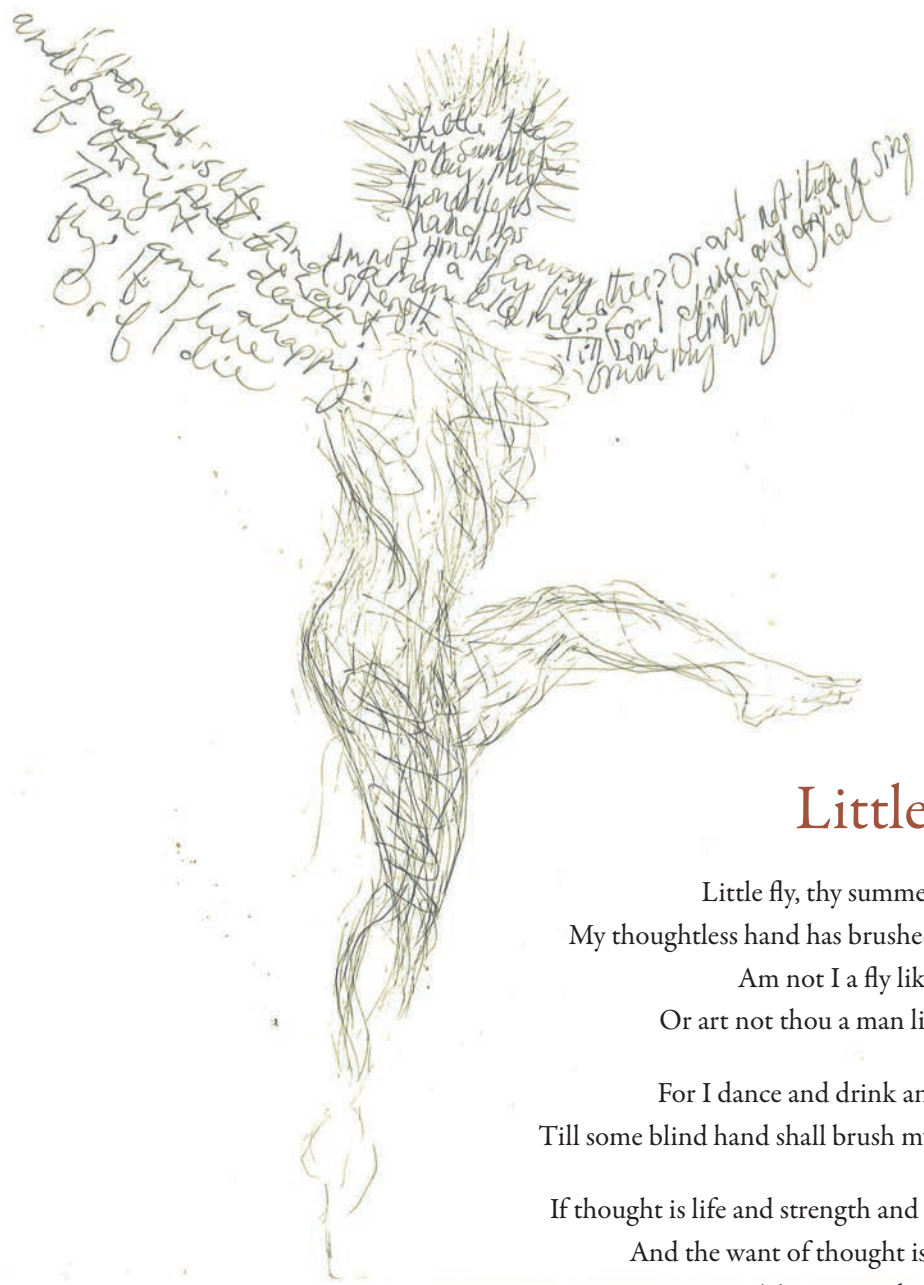
community actions that are cherishing and sustaining what's around us. "It's a good thing to be small because it makes you ... more relational, and so in a more vibrant conversation with what's outside you. Conversations produce results," writes Charles Foster.

Any book is a conversation between reader and writer. At Consider the Wondrous the dialogue is more public, a physical, social meeting with the chance to ask questions of each other, both during the events and afterwards in the café where many of the writers will be lingering. We want this to be a forum for enlarging thoughts, so don't be afraid to approach and talk to authors in a friendly spirit of shared discovery, but please be respectful. (If you want to harangue them, show them your manuscript, or release any bees in your bonnet, there are other festivals you can attend!)

I hope you have a wondrous weekend with us, listening, thinking, exploring, reading, just being together and appreciating your fellow creatures whether they be famous authors, audience members, baristas or birds in the garden.

Gareth Howell-Jones





Little fly

Little fly, thy summer's play
 My thoughtless hand has brushed away.
 Am not I a fly like thee?
 Or art not thou a man like me?
 For I dance and drink and sing,
 Till some blind hand shall brush my wing.
 If thought is life and strength and breath,
 And the want of thought is death,
 Then am I a happy fly,
 If I live, or if I die.

William Blake (1757–1827)

About the artists



Our beautiful programme cover is by Kate Kato. Each of these creatures – insects, fungi, feathers, flowers – is a life-size paper model, made, arranged and photographed by Kate. You can read the print on the petals and wings. In its close attention to nature, its love and wonder, skill and artistry, its use of words and paper, its feeling for relationship, its sheer beauty, it encapsulates all that this festival dreams of emulating. It has been a privilege to work with her. She leads workshops and undertakes commissions. www.katekato.com

'Little Fly' (opposite) is by Rachel Ricketts, RBSA. Rachel is primarily a sculptor of natural and imagined creatures, though she is sceptical of all categorisation in art or nature. www.rachelrickettsrbsa.biz

Much environmental writing catalogues the devastations of *Homo sapiens* and concludes the world would be better off without us, but how beautiful we are when, as Rachel and William Blake combine to show, we lose our obsession with divisions and accept our togetherness in life.

About our name

The festival's name comes from a Biblical quote – 'Stand still and consider the wondrous things of God' (Job 37:14). Whether we attribute their creation to God, the random actions of particles or anything else, we can't dispute the wondrousness of our natural world.



Thank you

There are so many people to thank: the sponsors we have already mentioned, those who donated anonymously, those who have helped in kind, the publishers who helped cover the costs, the volunteers who leaflet, put up posters, steward the events, look after authors and ensure they don't get lost on their way from the station; Rye Bakery and all those who feed us during the weekend. To those whose help came after this programme went to print, we're very grateful too!

Personal thanks to Ruth Knagg for administrative insight, Nicki Cheyne for co-ordination, Kavi Susee for her fund-raising and belief in the festival, Lila Phillips Le Bailly for website, Jesse Ingham for print programme production and Lara Huddleston for programme development and the initial impetus to make it happen. Consider the Wondrous would not exist without you all.

Most of all, to you for coming to the festival. Doubtless we'll make mistakes. This is our first year. But we have high hopes and we'll learn.

At a glance

Consider all the Wondrous events...

Saturday 19th September

10am	Event 1	Julian Hight	Heritage Tree Walk
10.30am	2	Gareth Howell-Jones & Jay Griffiths	Our Place in the Living World
12pm	3	JC Niala & Amanda Tuke	Wildlife in Towns and Cities
1.30pm	4	Horatio Clare	Nature and Our Minds
2.30pm	5	Amanda Tuke	Pavement Plant Prowl
3pm	6	Rosa Vásquez Espinoza	Secrets of the Amazon
4.30pm	7	Eloise Kane	When Were We Wild?
6pm	8	Jon Gower & Stephen Moss	Bird Talk
7.45pm	9	David Oakes, Iain Ballamy & Elliot Galvin	Music & Poetry Gala

Sunday 20th September

10am	Event 10	Mark Cocker	Guided Nature Walk
10am	11	Dara McAnulty	Wild Child
11.30am	12	Cal Flynn	The Savage Landscape
1pm	13	Michael Malay & Guests	A Library of Wonder
2.30pm	14	Charles Foster & Mark Cocker	Seeing the World Afresh
4.30pm	15	Joseph Jebelli	The Brain at Rest
6pm	16	Harriet Rix	The Genius of Trees

7.30pm onwards

Join us all in the pub – not sure which one yet!

www.considerthewondrous.com