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Polygon gets behind Alderney's famous Literary Festival

Guernsey-based investment company Polygon Collective has been announced as the headline sponsor for this year's Alderney Literary Festival.

Featuring a line-up of best-selling and award-winning authors, the Festival focuses on historical writing and runs from Friday March 17th to Sunday March 19th with talks, panel discussions and fringe events.

Family-owned Polygon has tracked the progress of the Festival, an event which has commanded international respect across the literary community since its inception in 2015.

"We are delighted to be sponsoring the prestigious Alderney Literary Festival this Spring," said Polygon Collective's Henry Mowbray. "The event's popularity within Alderney and further afield continues to grow and we're grateful for the opportunity to support it."

This year's author line-up includes:

- **Nick Jubber**, a winner of the Dolman Travel Book Award whose latest work, *The Fairy Tellers*, explores the people behind our most iconic fairy tales from medieval times to the development of

the children's book industry in the nineteenth century. Nick will be paying a visit to St Anne's School where pupils are studying that very subject.

- **Sean Lusk**, prize-winning author of the magical debut novel *The Second Sight of Zachary Cloudeley*, set in the 18th Century and a *Sunday Times* Historical Fiction book of the month, shortlisted for the Saltire Prize and a BBC Between the Covers Book Club pick. Sean is also a prize-winning short story writer.
- **Christina Ezrahi**, an award-winning historian of Soviet cultural politics and Russian ballet. Her novel, *Dancing for Stalin*, is the true story of dancer and choreographer Nina Anisimova who disappeared in 1938 at the height of Stalin's Great Terror yet miraculously survived the Soviet gulag.
- **Julia Boyd**, author of the Sunday Times bestseller *Travellers in the Third Reich: The Rise of Fascism through the Eyes of Everyday People* and *A Village in the Third Reich: How Ordinary Lives were Transformed by the Rise of Fascism*.
- **Jacque Bloese**, a freelance ELT consultant, writer, and editor. She grew up on Guernsey, an upbringing which provided plenty of inspiration for her debut novel, *The French House* (Hauteville House, Victor Hugo's former residence-in-exile).
- **José Day**, daughter of Guernsey's Louis Guillemette OBE (1910-1977) and **Ken Tough**, former H.M. Greffier and Occupation Historian, will provide fascinating insights from Guillemette's diary – he was Assistant Secretary to the Bailiff at the outbreak of war, then appointed Secretary to its President, a position which he held throughout the Occupation.
- **Helen Castor**, a historian of the Middle Ages and 16th Century, is a Bye-Fellow of Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Author of *Joan of Arc: A History*, she will frame the story of the renowned visionary within the political and religious turmoil of 15th Century France and reveal the human being behind the saintly myth.
- **Andrew Taylor**, a bestselling crime and historical novelist. He has won the Diamond Dagger of the Crime Writers Association, the Gold Crown of the Historical Writers Association, and many other awards. He has written over 50 books, including TV storylines (Bergerac), children's and young adult books, novellas and short stories, three of which have been televised. He will focus on his *Ashes of London* Restoration series and the challenges of trying to construct a plausible fictional narrative involving historical characters.
- **Carl Graves**, Director of the Egypt Exploration Society, will unveil the first colour version of Amelia B. Edwards' *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*, first published 140 years ago. Graves will tell the story of this remarkable woman and her legacy to British Egyptology
- **Anne Sebba**, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, biographer, lecturer, journalist, former Reuters foreign correspondent and author of eleven books, mainly about iconic women who enjoyed using power and influence in different ways. She will tell the story of Ethel Rosenberg who with her husband Julius was sent to the electric chair in 1953 in the United States for allegedly spying for the Soviet Union, despite very questionable evidence.

- **A K Blakemore**, award-winning author of two full-length collections of poetry, will discuss ‘in conversation’ her debut novel *The Manningtree Witches*, a fictional account of the Essex Witch Trials, based on the witch trial documents and exploring the role of the Devil as a prominent figure in Puritan imagination.
- **Anthony Riches**, Committee Member of the Historical Writers Association, returns as much-loved Festival Chairman. In the opening panel with Helen Castor and Sean Lusk he asks: Do historical narratives reflect historical reality?

Festival organiser Dr Isabel Picornell, Director of the Alderney Literary Trust, said: “We exist to inspire the love of reading and writing for pleasure, and this year’s line-up is quite frankly inspirational in its diversity and depth of talent. We are grateful to the Polygon Collective for getting behind this year’s prestigious event and to all of the individual speaker sponsors.”

Another Channel Islands/Isle of Man investment company, Ravenscroft, who were author sponsors at the 2022 Festival, has now opened offices in Alderney and become overall sponsor of the Alderney Literary Trust. The Trust works with volunteers from the local community to enhance an appreciation of literature and organises several events throughout the year in addition to the annual Festival, including high-profile author appearances, educational initiatives and writing workshops.

Other Festival sponsors include Alderney Electricity Ltd (AEL), Julius Bär, AY Enterprise Trust, Liberation Pubs & Bars, and Nigel Meyer & Susan Smyth. A few sponsorship opportunities remain – contact Tracey Farquhar-Beck, 07715 880516 or email tracey@alderneyliterarytrust.com. The Festival is also supported by the States of Alderney.

Tickets go on sale on Monday January 16 at the Alderney Visitor Centre, two weeks before becoming available online. Full details can be found at www.alderneyliterarytrust.com/festival.

Ends

Note to editors: For further information, images and interviews, please contact Alistair Forrest on email alistair29110@gmail.com or Isabel Picornell info@alderneyliterarytrust.com

Images attached: Polygon Collective logo, Nick Jubber, Jacquie Bloese





Nick Jubber



Jacquie Bloese