



Joanne Harris & The Storytime Band



Grahame Howard



Gráinne O'Hare



Debbie Cannon



Cliff Hague



Jenn Ashworth



Wendy Pratt



Jenna Warren

## How to find Helmsley Arts Centre...

Helmsley Arts Centre,  
Old Meeting House Court,  
YO62 5DW

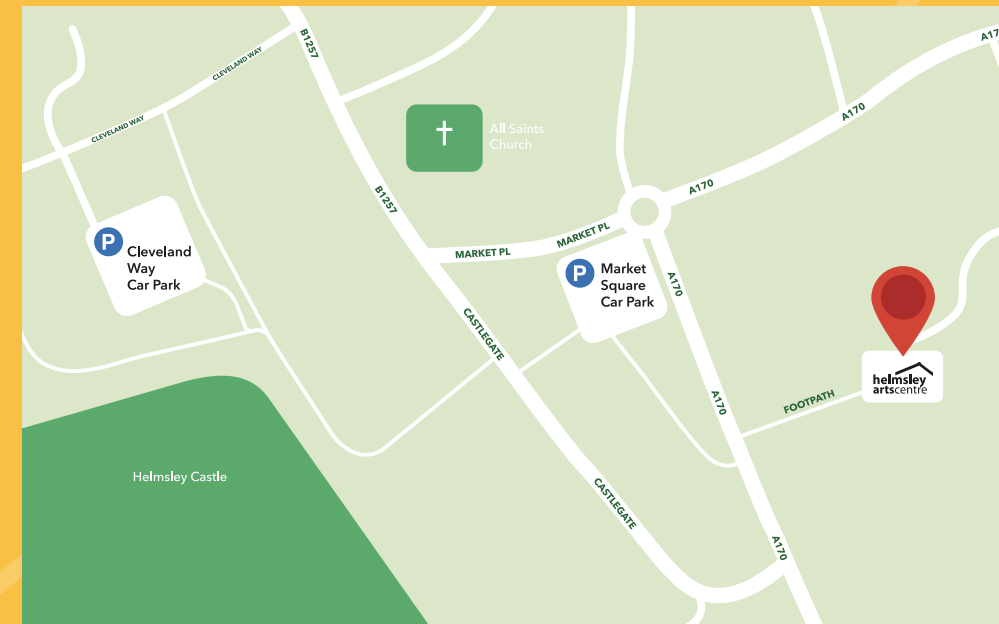
what3words: calculating.mammoths.thankful

### Accessibility info:

@sociability App or [www.helmsleyarts.co.uk](http://www.helmsleyarts.co.uk) | 01439 771 700

### Parking:

Market Square, YO62 5BL / Cleveland Way Car Park, YO62 5AZ



T-shirts provided by  
Foxstitch, Thirsk



The Helmsley Bookshop  
11 Market Place, Helmsley  
YO62 5BL | 01439 771130  
[info@helmsleybookshop.co.uk](mailto:info@helmsleybookshop.co.uk)



Helmsley Literary Festival  
logo by Panna Chauhan



Join us in our beautiful  
market town for...

# Helmsley Literary Festival

at Helmsley Arts Centre

Friday 12 - Sunday 14 September 2025

*A creative and entertaining weekend with writers, music,  
theatre and poetry, finishing with a literary quiz night!*



[www.helmsleyarts.co.uk](http://www.helmsleyarts.co.uk)



Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September

7.30 -9.30pm | £15  
JOANNE HARRIS &  
THE STORYTIME BAND

*The opening performance of the 2025 HLF!*  
A musical storytelling show , combining original music, songs, images and stories as part of an exploration of different forms of narrative. After the gig Joanne will sign copies of Vianne, her long-awaited prequel to *Chocolat*.



MUSIC

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September

2 - 3pm | £12  
GRAHAME HOWARD

*Retired consultant with his stories about Andy Norris and his hapless pals | Chair: Jocelyn Studdart*  
Grahame was a Clinical Oncologist in Edinburgh from 1986 until his retirement in 2016 when his take on the ageing population crisis, ‘ The Euthanasia Protocol’, was published; one reviewer described it as ‘Tom Sharpe does 1984’. A sharp sense of humour has always been a characteristic of Grahame’s writing, as in his latest comic novels, *Seeking Fleur* and *A Girl Called Crocker*.



TALK

4.30 - 5.30pm | £12  
GRÁINNE O’HARE

*With her dazzling debut novel about friendship, Thirst Trap, set in Belfast | Chair: Bridget Foreman*  
A writer from Belfast, now based in Newcastle upon Tyne, she has recently completed her PhD at Newcastle University on eighteenth century women’s life-writing. *Thirst Trap*, however, is very definitely set in the 21st Century. It is a blazing, bittersweet, bitinglly funny, and painfully relatable story about the friendships that endure through the very best and the very worst of times. ‘*Hilarious and gut-wrenching*’ - Alice Slater, author of *Death of a Bookseller* ‘*Think Dolly Alderton, but with the sharp edges of Eliza Clark*’ - Independent



TALK

7 - 8pm | £15  
THE REMARKABLE DELIVERANCES  
OF ALICE THORNTON

*Debbie Cannon in her own play based on notebooks of this extraordinary North Yorkshire woman*  
Born in Dundee, Debbie is an actor and writer, with a DPhil in Medieval Studies. She has performed her solo play in venues as diverse as Durham Cathedral and the Scottish Storytelling Centre. It is based on the notebooks of Alice Thornton, who was born in Kirklington and died, over eighty years later, within five miles of Helmsley. Expect scandal, faith, family fallouts and insights into the life of the gentry in general, and this singular woman in particular, during dangerous times, including the Irish Rebellion of 1641 and the English Civil War.



THEATRE

8.30 - 10.30pm | Free!  
POETS’ CORNER -  
Open Mic Poetry Night in HAC’s Studio Bar

Feel free to bring your own poetry or a favourite poem by someone else. Or just come along and sit with a drink and listen. Hosted by Steve Harvey.



OPEN MIC

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September

2 - 3pm | £12  
CLIFF HAGUE

*Cup Finals: Football Stories of Great Games, Heroes and Villains Chair: Steve Harvey*  
Cliff Hague, OBE, is Emeritus Professor of Planning and Spatial Development at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. He is also a massive football fan and Manchester United supporter. These contrasting interests have fuelled two books: *Programmes! Programmes!*, in which he has drawn on his vast collection of football programmes from many decades, and his latest, *Cup Finals - Football Stories of Great Games, Heroes and Villains*, featuring sporting stories of high drama, pathos and humour, showing there’s more to football than football!



TALK

4.30 - 5.30pm | £12  
JENN ASHWORTH & WENDY PRATT  
Two Northern authors share their physical and emotional journeys  
Chair: Kate Fenton

WENDY PRATT  
The Ghost Lake – A memoir of grief, nature and rural Yorkshire roots

Wendy Pratt is a poet, author, and editor, living and working on the North Yorkshire Coast, where she grew up. In 2021 she founded *Spelt* magazine, which celebrates rural living through poetry, creative non fiction and poetry film. Her book, *The Ghost Lake*, is a pilgrimage through her local and emotional landscape.  
*Photo Credit: James Thackeray.*



TALK

JENN ASHWORTH  
Join Jenn as she recalls her post-COVID coast-to-coast walk, recounted in The Parallel Path

Jenn was born in Preston and studied at Cambridge and Manchester. She is Professor of Writing at Lancaster University. Her latest book, *The Parallel Path*, subtitled *Love, Grit and Walking the North*, tells the story of how, emerging from lockdown, she followed her urge to undertake the Coast to Coast Walk. ‘*Reading The Parallel Path feels like going on a long walk with an old friend: Jenn Ashworth is exceptionally good company. I loved it.*’ Mark Haddon.



7 - 8pm | £12  
JENNA WARREN

*The Saltburn bookshop owner talks about her new novel, The Hometown Bookshop | Chair: Barbara Greig*  
Jenna Warren will discuss her latest novel, *The Hometown Bookshop*, a novel exploring the possibilities of new chapters in life. It has been called ‘an emotional reset, a reminder of the importance of connection and an antidote to loneliness.’ Jenna runs Book Corner, an independent bookshop in Saltburn-by-the-Sea, which she opened in 2014. She has drawn on her own bookselling experience to tell the story of a fictional bookshop in a small town, which brings together two characters, Charlotte and Greg, in a tale of unlikely friendship.



TALK

8.30 - 10.30pm | £20 for a table of 4  
HAC STUDIO BAR LITERARY QUIZ

We conclude our festival weekend with a literary quiz!  
Gather a group of 4 bookworms, bibliophiles or people who just like reading and join us in the studio bar! Members of the winning team will each be able to choose a signed copy by one of our authors, as well as claim victory in the first Helmsley Literary Festival quiz. If you don’t know for whom the bell tolls, where the crawdad sings, or who’s afraid of Virginia Woolf, try to find three teammates who might.





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Booking Info

Book Tickets

Visit: [www.helmsleyarts.co.uk](http://www.helmsleyarts.co.uk) (+£1.50 booking fee per ticket)  
Call: Box Office 01439 771700  
Pop in: Box Office - Wed-Fri 10am-2pm & Sat 10am-12noon in term time

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