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INITIAL LINE-UP ANNOUNCED FOR GUILDFORD BOOK FESTIVAL 2015

A glittering line-up is promised for the 2015 Guildford Book Festival (11-18 October) as organisers announce the preliminary list of authors, writers and thinkers coming to the town for what is now recognised as the premier literary event in the South of England.

Larger than life and twice as loud, the much-loved actor **Brian Blessed** makes a triumphant return to Guildford. A brilliant storyteller, he will be reading excerpts from his memoir, crammed with anecdotes from his illustrious career.

Martinis will be shaken not stirred as the suave and debonair film star **Roger Moore** gives an enthralling and witty account of his colourful life, including his time as HM's longest serving 007 agent.

Acclaimed journalist **Max Hastings** will reveal the stories behind the real-life global espionage stories of World War II in *The Secret War – spies, codes and guerillas 1939-1945*.

Top fiction writers include **Deborah Moggach**, author of successful novels *Tulip Fever* and *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* - subsequently a blockbuster at the cinema. Moggach's new work, *Something to Hide*, is a warm, witty and wise novel about the unexpected twists that later life can bring.

S J Watson's unnerving debut *Before I go To Sleep* was a phenomenal international hit and made into a film starring Nicole Kidman and Colin Firth. Watson's follow up psychological thriller, *Second Life*, promises to be just as tantalizing, as it asks, 'How well do we really know ourselves?'

The non-fiction programme will be topped by a fascinating biography about the life of HRH the Prince of Wales by **Catherine Mayer**, who has been writing about the Windsors for three decades. The new book, *Heart of A King, Charles, Prince of Wales*, offers fresh insights and sheds new light on the heir to the throne. The Royal Family is also represented by **HRH Princess Michael of Kent**, now a respected historical novelist, who will talk about the third book in her *Anjou* Trilogy.

Terry Waite has published five non-fiction books and is of course known as a humanitarian, hostage negotiator and for the ordeal he endured as a hostage himself for over four years in The Lebanon. What is less known is that he has an unexpected talent for writing comedy, which is put to great effect in his debut novel, *The Voyage of the Golden Handshake*, an entertaining story about life on board a cruise ship.

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Another debut work receiving great reviews is *Campari for Breakfast*, a quirky coming of age novel by award-winning actress **Sara Crowe**. Known for her television, stage and film work including the iconic *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, Sara will be telling all in what promises to be a funny and lively session.

Spirits are also given top billing in **Olivia Williams'** *Gin glorious Gin - How mother's ruin became the spirit of London*, as she explores the vibrant cultural history of London.

Readers' Day is always greatly anticipated by book-lovers, and this year's event promises to thrill! The line-up includes **Gill Hornby**, whose first novel, *Hive*, was the hit of 2013, with her new work, *All Together Now*, a hilarious and heartwarming novel about a singing group in a small town; **Liz Fenwick**, who has penned three highly popular romantic novels set in Cornwall; **Guy Saville**, with the sequel to his action thriller *The Afrika Reich*; **Saira Shah**, whose remarkable, funny and frank novel *The Mouseproof Kitchen* tells how motherhood may not turn out how you expect it to be; and historian **Kate Williams**, whose debut novel *The Storms of War* is an evocative tale about the tumultuous lives of the De Witt family during the First World War.

There is also the chance to meet **Clare Mackintosh**, a Richard and Judy's Book Club featured author, and have morning coffee and chat with romantic novelist **Giovanna Fletcher** (*Billy and Me*).

Fresh from his role at the heart of the government, **Vince Cable** gives an incisive examination of what might be on the horizon with *After The Storm – The World Economy and Britain's Economic Future*. The political life in times gone by is considered by **Lord William Waldegrave** in his memoir *A Different Kind of Weather*, in which political successes and failure, and the passing of an era, are assessed. Elected to Parliament in 1979, Waldegrave served as a minister under Margaret Thatcher and John Major.

Historical events are also in the spotlight. History buffs will enjoy *Vera Brittain and the First World War* by **Mark Bostridge**, while **Paul Cox** examines *Wellington: Triumphs, Politics and Passions*, a timely reminder of the Iron Duke's achievements in this 200th anniversary year of the Battle of Waterloo.

The year also sees the 200th anniversary of the publication of Jane Austen's *Emma*, and to celebrate Guildford Book Festival is delighted to welcome back **Austentatious**. An improvised comedy play based on nothing more than a title from the audience, and performed in Austen's incomparable style, the evening was a sell-out in 2013, and is expected to be a huge draw again.

Each year, Guildford Book Festival works in partnership with local community groups and other charities to bring unique and inspirational events to members and prospective members, and to raise awareness of these organisations within Guildford and the surrounding area.

This year the Festival looks forward to working once again with GEDFAS and West Surrey Area NADFAS to bring a special day of art related events. Internationally renowned bookbinder, artist and conservator **Dominic Riley** will be giving two talks in which he'll share his passion for beautiful and interesting books, with examples from his own vast collection. There will also be a

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lecture by leading art expert, **Douglas Skeggs**, who will be examine the ground-breaking work of Picasso and Hockney, and their influences as ‘the old masters of modern art.’

The Amnesty International event will this year see **Caroline Moorhead** share stories about the resistance movement in France during the Second World War, reading excerpts from her *Village of Secrets* trilogy.

Guildford Book Festival has also scheduled an exciting programme for schools, and a strong children’s section, led by **Piers Torday**, who’ll be talking about the final installment in *The Last Wild Trilogy*.

Would-be writers will be able to kick-start their writing career by taking part in a ‘plotting’ workshop with romantic comedy novelist **Chris Manby**, and in the session ‘How to get published’, led by bestselling author and Books Editor at Woman & Home **Fanny Blake** (Orion) and journalist turned writer **Lucy Atkins** (Quercus).

Commenting, Jim Parks, Guildford Book Festival Creative Director, said: “Each year we are able to build upon our successes and this is just a taste of the huge array of literary treats that we have in store for 2015. With such an eclectic mix, we are sure to have something for everyone, so be prepared to be inspired, challenged, and of course entertained!”

The full line-up will be revealed in August. WHSmith will once again be the official bookseller.

Advance tickets for select events will go on sale late July at www.guildfordbookfestival.co.uk or from box offices at Guildford’s Tourist Information Centre and Electric Theatre. See website for more information and for latest updates.

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Notes to Editors:

Guildford Book Festival

Established in 1989, Guildford Book Festival is staged annually over 7 days across venues within the town. Many of the UK’s most successful authors have appeared at the Festival, including Sebastian Faulks, Joanna Trollope, Joanne Harris, and Ian Rankin alongside household names such as Jonathan Aitken, Kate Adie and Matt Dawson.

A registered charity, Guildford Book Festival receives core funding from Guildford Borough Council and the University of Surrey as well as support from a number of key local businesses, including sponsors rhw Solicitors, TWM Solicitors, WH Smith and supporters Experience Guildford and Radisson Blu Edwardian, Guildford.

Festival patrons are Elizabeth Buchan, Michael Buerk, Adele Parks, Michael Rosen, Sandi Toksvig, Fay Weldon, Timothy West and Jacqueline Wilson.