

St Hilda's College



31st Crime Fiction Weekend

A DANCE *to*
the MUSIC *of*
CRIME

the artful path to murder

9th - 11th August 2024

Guest of Honour

Elly Griffiths

Kia Abdullah
Mark Billingham
Rev. Richard Coles
Harriet Evans
Doug Johnstone

Erin Kelly
Jake Lamar
Saima Mir
Lucie Whitehouse
David Whittle



HildasCrime

www.st-hildas.ox.ac.uk





Welcome

from the Chair of Programme Committee

Welcome to the 31st St Hilda's Crime Fiction Weekend! This is your guide to a great weekend of talks by acclaimed crime writers and discussions with fellow crime fiction fans. You will find the programme and timings here, along with bios for our speakers and our Programme Committee members. Emails have gone out to all attendees with the link to join us online and participate in the Live Chat. Remember that you will continue to have access to watch the recordings for a month after the last session. Your registration also gives you access to the Blackwell's Oxford online bookstall with special discounts available for books by our speakers and the authors referred to in their talks. For those attending in person, Blackwell's bookstall will be back, giving you a chance to stock up before the signing session on Saturday. Blackwell's Rare Books has kindly donated prizes for the 'Whodunnit' - one for our online audience and one for those attending the dinner. Thanks also to Ulverscroft Ltd for their free audiobook. We hope you enjoy the weekend!



Sarah Hilary
Programme Committee Chair & Programme Director

Emma Campbell
Deputy Development Director, St Hilda's College





St Hilda's College

31st Crime Fiction Weekend



A DANCE *to* *the* MUSIC *of* CRIME

the artful path to murder

A crime fiction weekend like no other – from its beginnings, St Hilda's Crime Fiction Weekend has drawn readers from all over the world to Oxford to hear their favourite authors explore the genre and the writers who have inspired them. Since 2020, we have offered this unique conference online, by popular demand from all over the world.

From the classic adventures of Sherlock Holmes and Lord Peter Wimsey to the killer tunes of the Fun Lovin' Crime Writers, music and performance have played a central role in some of our best-loved stories. Join us as the curtain rises on our 31st St Hilda's Crime Fiction Weekend with a host of award-winning authors who will put the poise into poison, explore the harm in harmony, and unfailingly strike the right note.

Our Guest of Honour is Elly Griffiths who will be joined by a stellar list of speakers.

PROGRAMME

Friday 9th August

For early arrivers: tea, coffee and biscuits are available in the SCR.

5.00 – 5.30pm

Meet & Greet

Welcome and introduction

5.30 – 6.00pm

Joan Cockin

Book Launch

An introduction to the life and work of re-discovered crime writer Joan Cockin, St Hilda's alumna and pioneering diplomat, with a chance to buy her books including the newly re-published *Deadly Earnest* (Courtesy of Galileo Publishers).



6.00 - 6.30pm

Rev. Richard Coles book signing

6.00 – 7.15pm

Drinks Reception

Pre-dinner fizz in the Pavilion and (weather permitting) on the Riverside Lawn

7.15pm

Reverend Richard Coles

Dinner with Guest Speaker

St Hilda's Dining Hall

The Reverend Richard Coles is a former Church of England parish priest and broadcaster who co-presented BBC Radio 4's Saturday Live until March 2023. He is a regular contributor to mainstream TV and radio, and an author whose debut crime novel, *A Murder Before Evensong*, was a number one Sunday Times bestseller. His latest novel, *Murder at the Monastery*, was published in June 2024.



Saturday 10th August

9.15am

Welcome from the Committee & Chair

SESSION 1

9.20 – 10.50am

Chaired by Abir Mukherjee

Mark Billingham

Songs In The Key Of Murder

Music might well be the food of love (though personally I think it's more of a side-dish) but for a long time it has proved to be an extremely tasty accompaniment to all manner of fictional foul play. Just why do detectives like music so much and why do only certain types tend to appeal? Where are the Pirate Metal-loving sleuths or the tortured cops who mull over cases while listening to Folktronica or Tuvan Throat Singing? Whether it's rock, opera or jazz (far too much bloody jazz, if you ask me) music has – from Sherlock Holmes to Rebus and beyond – provided the ideal counterpoint to the grisliest of murders. A tuneful, foot-tapping look at the history of murderous music, which will include some songs to die for and deliver proof beyond all reasonable doubt that country* music provides the perfect soundtrack to a crime novel.

*Not country and western.



Kia Abdullah

Prose & Playlists: using music to amplify emotion

Crime fiction is famous for inciting fear – the slow-creep dread of a footstep upstairs, the neon panic of a stranger by your bed – but its capacity for emotion runs far deeper. Whether it's the unbridled joy of a new romance or the unbearable grief of losing a loved one, good crime fiction can capture and distil the human condition. Join Kia Abdullah as she explores how novelists use music both on and off the page to heighten emotion and enhance the reader experience.



SESSION 2

11.20am – 12.50pm

Chaired by Jane Casey

Erin Kelly

Murder on the Dancefloor

A crime writer setting out to write a novel set in a ballet company is spoilt for choice when it comes to inspiration. Behind the tiptoes and tutus this ostensibly delicate, feminine art form is deadly, its history including sex work, Stalin, on-stage suicide pacts, backstage violence and acid attacks in the street. Erin will explore how the story of the ballet mirrors the story of feminism and the rise and fall of empires. She will also look at the structural parallels between the narratives of the great classical ballets and contemporary crime fiction, with particular reference to her 2021 novel *Watch Her Fall*.



Saima Mir

From Bollywood to Bestseller

Saima Mir will take you on a whistle-stop tour of the songs she listened to whilst writing the Times bestselling novel, *The Khan*. From Bradford to Bombay, and Lahore to LA, she'll be introducing you to an eclectic collection of songs and sounds. All the way from Lata Mangeshkar to Leonard Cohen, taking in the sound of the rubaab, and ending in rap.



SESSION 3

3.00 – 4.30pm

Chaired by Abir Mukherjee

Doug Johnstone

A Lifetime of Dancing

About Architecture

'Writing about music is like dancing about architecture.' This variously attributed saying reflects the futility of trying to describe with words the intense emotions of listening to a song. But that hasn't stopped Doug Johnstone from trying, over and over again. He's written stories about songs and songs about stories, and music has featured heavily in many of his books, from early fictional scratchings to his forthcoming novel, named after a song. In this talk he will discuss the inspirations and connections between the two disciplines in his own work and try to unpick his obsession with 'dancing about architecture'.



Lucie Whitehouse

Is it 'Different for Girls'?

Making a *High Fidelity* style Top Five list of detectives to whom music is central is easy - Morse, Bosch, Rebus, Brunetti, Thorne? - but Top Five *female* detectives? Much, much harder. Top Five male crime writers who've released playlists for their novels? Doable. Female? Harder again. Off the page, appreciating music is universal, of course, so what explains this disparity in crime fiction? Referencing characters including Siobhan Clarke, Lisbeth Salander and Elizabeth Hand's Cass Neary among others, Lucie Whitehouse - whose DCI Robin Lyons really needs to spend some time uploading her CDs - will explore why music appears to be less integral to the lives of female detectives but also what the music they *do* love can tell us about them.



PROGRAMME

SESSION 4

5.00 – 6.00pm

Chaired by Jake Kerridge

David Whittle

Edmund Crispin: Crime and Carry Ons

Who better than Edmund Crispin to feature in this year's theme of 'A Dance to the Music of Crime'? As well as writing quirky detective novels and short stories in the Golden Age tradition, Crispin (1921-1978) was a composer under his real name of Bruce Montgomery. Although he had success with pieces for piano, orchestra and voices, his most lucrative work was composing the scores for films including the two series started by *Carry On Sergeant* and *Doctor in the House*. David Whittle, his biographer, discusses how Crispin's parallel musical career is reflected in his novels. Be ready for some music as well as chat!



SATURDAY EVENING

7.20 – 8.00pm

Drinks Reception and Group Signing JDP

Buy a book, get it autographed, take a glass while you mix and mingle.

8.15pm

**The PD James Dinner
St Hilda's College Dining Hall**

It's a tradition to celebrate with our PD James Dinner* with a specially written celebrity "Whodunnit" featuring a cast of your favourite authors.

Philip Gooden

Murder Con Brio

The Wolfgang Quartet are a famous foursome in the world of classical music. But beneath the surface things are far from harmonious. When Conor Brio, the first violinist and self-proclaimed bad boy, is pushed to his death from the roof garden of a chic hotel in Oxford's High Street, it seems that any one of the surviving quartet had the motive, means and opportunity for murder. Also in the frame are the manager of the Wolfgangs and a guest pianist. But who did it? Guided only by clues in the statements from the five suspects, that's for the guests at the St Hilda's Crime Fiction Weekend to work out. The winners will be announced on Sunday, at the start of the Guest of Honour Lecture.



*Proceeds go to the PD James Fund, which supports the work of the English School and students at St Hilda's College, kindly endowed by Honorary Fellow Lady James.



Sunday 11th August

9.30 – 11.00am

Chaired by Jane Casey

**Announcement of Murder Mystery Winners,
followed by Guest of Honour Lecture**

Elly Griffiths

Crime Fiction as Grand Opera

Detective fiction and Grand Opera emerged at roughly the same time. Edgar Allan Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue* was published in 1849, the same year that Meyerbeer's *Le prophète* debuted. 1847 saw the premiere of Giuseppe Verdi's first opera for Paris, *Jérusalem*. At first glance – and at first hearing – there seems to be little similarity between the genres. Grand Opera is sensational and melodramatic. Crime fiction is enclosed and interior; the locked room, the closed circle. And, yet, both art forms are primarily concerned with death and the punishment of wrong-doing. The most famous operas all include murders. Women take centre stage – and the title roles – in nineteenth century Italian opera but are almost always dead by the end. Is this also true of crime fiction? And what about the role of misunderstandings, letters, overheard clues and misdirection? Which crime novels would make great operas? Which operatic composers were secretly thwarted crime-writers?



11.00 – 11.30am **Break**

SESSION 5

11.30 – 1.00pm

Chaired by Jane Casey

Jake Lamar

Once Upon a Time in Harlem: Jazz and Crime, History and Mythology

Literary kinship is at the heart of this talk. Jake Lamar had already written four books when he first read a Chester Himes



novel and felt that he'd discovered some unknown direct ancestor. As personalities, Lamar and Himes were radically different. But they both published first novels that were racial satires. They both left the USA and settled in Europe. And they both embraced the crime genre, finding their earliest recognition in France. When Lamar decided to venture into the literary terrain of Himes' *Harlem Cycle*, he centred his story on the evolution of jazz from 1936 to 1961. The result is his "jazz noir" novel, *Viper's Dream*.

Harriet Evans

The Fine Art of Being Lord Peter Wimsey

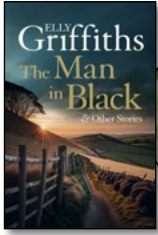
Cricket Blue, campanologist, incunabula collector, extraordinarily talented copywriter, one of the finest minds of his generation, diplomat, musician, expert connoisseur of art, wine, women and song (he even looks good dressed as Harlequin) Dorothy L. Sayers' detective Lord Peter Wimsey is a paragon amongst men, brilliant at everything he turns his hand to – and yet, thanks to the woman who created him, enormous fun. What does a crime novelist want from their detective, and how do they sustain (and contain) their character over the course of a series of novels? Harriet Evans, who has recently written her first detective novel, will be examining Sayers' creation of Wimsey; how he (and Sayers) develop and change over the course of eleven novels and why his appreciation of the finer things in life makes him not only an evergreen character but an intensely human one, too.



1.00pm **CLOSING REMARKS**

1.15pm **Traditional Sunday Lunch followed by goodbyes, St Hilda's College Dining Hall**

BIOGRAPHIES



GUEST OF HONOUR **Elly Griffiths** Sunday | Lecture

Elly Griffiths is best known for her award-winning Dr Ruth Galloway series and for The Brighton Mystery series, the latest of these being *The Great Deceiver*. Her standalone *The Stranger Diaries* won an Edgar Award. She has been shortlisted six times for the Theakstons Crime Novel of the Year, and was awarded the CWA's coveted Dagger in the Library in 2016.

www.ellygriffiths.co.uk



Kia Abdullah Saturday | Session 1

Kia Abdullah is a Times bestselling author and journalist. Her novels include *Truth Be Told* which was shortlisted for a Diverse Book Award, and *Next of Kin* which was longlisted for the CWA Gold Dagger Award and won the Adult Fiction Diverse Award 2022.

www.kiaabdullah.com



Mark Billingham Saturday | Session 1

Mark Billingham first crime novel, *Sleepyhead*, was published in 2001 and became an instant bestseller. A new series featuring DS Declan Miller began in 2023 with *The Last Dance* and continues in 2024 with *The Wrong Hands*.

www.markbillingham.com

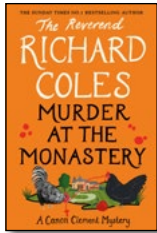




Harriet Evans
Sunday | Session 5

Harriet Evans is the author of fourteen bestselling novels, most recently *The Stargazers*. *D is for Death: A Dora Wildwood Mystery*, her first crime novel as Harriet F Townson was published in June.

www.harriet-evans.com



Rev. Richard Coles
Friday | Dinner

Rev. Richard Coles has been Chancellor of the University of Northampton since 2017 and is a former Honorary Chaplain to the Worshipful Company of Leathersellers. His first novel in the crime series *The Canon Clement Mysteries* was a number one bestseller.

www.richardcoles.com



Philip Gooden
Saturday | Dinner

Philip Gooden writes both fiction and non-fiction. His mystery novels include the *Nick Revill* series, a sequence based in Elizabethan London and set around Shakespeare's Globe theatre. The third book in the series, *The Pale Companion*, was shortlisted for the Ellis Peters Historical Dagger Award. Among recent non-fiction is *Bad Words*, a history of how taboo expressions in language change over time.

www.philipgooden.com



BIOGRAPHIES



Doug Johnstone
Saturday | Session 3

Doug Johnstone is the author of sixteen novels, many of which have been bestsellers. *The Space Between Us* was chosen for BBC Two's *Between the Covers*, while *Black Hearts* was shortlisted for the Theakstons Crime Novel of the Year, *The Big Chill* longlisted for the same prize. Three of his books – *A Dark Matter*, *Breakers* and *The Jump* – have been shortlisted for the McIlvanney Prize for Scottish Crime Novel of the Year.

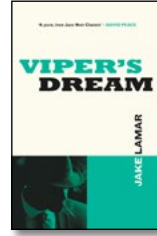
www.dougjohnstone.com



Erin Kelly
Saturday | Session 2

Erin Kelly is the author of nine novels, most recently *The House of Mirrors*, a sequel to her bestselling debut, *The Poison Tree*, which was adapted for television. Her Sunday Times bestseller *He Said/She Said*, was shortlisted for the Specsavers National Book Awards and for Crime and Thriller Book of the Year, and was a Simon Mayo Radio 2 Book Club pick and a Richard and Judy Book Club pick.

www.erinkelly.co.uk



Jake Lamar
Sunday | Session 5

Jake Lamar was born in 1961 and grew up in the Bronx, New York. He has lived in Paris since 1993 and is the author of a memoir, seven novels, numerous essays, reviews and short stories, and a play. His most recent work, *Viper's Dream*, is both a crime novel and an audio drama, set in the jazz world of Harlem between 1936 and 1961. His debut, *Bourgeois Blues*, won the Lyndhurst Prize.

www.jakelamar.com

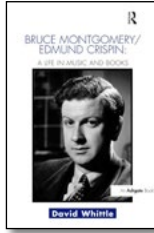




Saima Mir
Saturday | Session 2

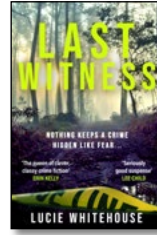
Saima Mir is an award-winning journalist and writer, whose debut novel, *The Khan*, has been optioned by BBC Studios. She has written for The Guardian, The Times, The Independent and The Daily Telegraph. Saima is a recipient of The Commonwealth Broadcast Association World View Award, and The K Blundell Trust Award.

www.saimamir.com



David Whittle
Saturday | Session 4

David Whittle was Director of Music at Leicester Grammar School for 32 years. He wrote his doctoral thesis on composer Bruce Montgomery, better known to crime fiction fans as Edmund Crispin, and then wrote a biography of Crispin/Montgomery.



Lucie Whitehouse
Saturday | Session 3

Lucie Whitehouse is the author of eight novels, including *Before We Met*, which was a Richard and Judy Summer Book Club and ITV Crime Thriller Book Club selection, and *The Bed I Made*, which was a Channel 4/TV Book Club pick. Lucie studied Classics at Oxford and worked in publishing in London before moving to Brooklyn.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS



Sarah Hilary
Programme Chair

Sarah Hilary's debut, *Someone Else's Skin*, won the Theakstons Crime Novel of the Year and was a World Book Night selection, a Richard and Judy Book Club pick, and a Silver Falchion and Macavity Award finalist in the US. Her latest book, *Sharp Glass*, came out in July. Sarah's short stories have won the Fish Criminally Short Histories Prize, the Cheshire Prize for Literature, and the SENSE Prize.

www.sarahhilary.com @sarah_hilary



Jean Buchanan

St Hilda's alumna Jean Buchanan is co-founder with Eileen Roberts of the Crime Fiction Weekend, which began in 1994 with 'Women Crime Writers'. Jean is mostly a scriptwriter. She created and wrote many episodes of the children's tv sitcoms *The Wild House* (BBC, series 3 short-listed for a British Comedy Award) and *Welcome to Orty-Fou* (ITV). Her first foray into TV was a play, *The Princess and the Lute-Player*, for the series Jackanory Playhouse. Jean tackled crime with her Radio 4 dramatisation of David Dodge's 1952 novel *To Catch a Thief*, the book behind the iconic Hitchcock film, and tracked down Dodge's small rented villa on the Riviera for a tie-in Radio 4 Arts feature, *In Search of the Villa Noel Fleuri*, written up for Kindle as Mr Dodge, Mr Hitchcock, and the French Riviera. She used to work for Oxford University Press on the revision of OED and on quotations dictionaries, and began her writing career in the traditional way, with short stories in magazines.



Mick Herron

Mick Herron is a bestselling and award-winning novelist and short story writer, best known for his *Slow Horses* thrillers. Raised in Newcastle upon Tyne, Mick studied English Literature at Oxford, where he continues to live. He was awarded the Theakstons Crime Novel of the Year 2022 for *Slough House*, the seventh book in the series. Mick has also won both the CWA Steel and Gold daggers.

www.mickherron.com



Jane Casey
HCFW 2024 Chair

Jane Casey was born and brought up in Dublin, and studied English at Jesus College, Oxford. A former editor, she has written twelve novels for adults and three for teenagers. Her books have been international bestsellers and the *Maeve Kerrigan* series has won many awards. *The Killing Kind* was a Richard and Judy Book Club pick in 2021 and was filmed for television in 2023.

@JaneCaseyAuthor



Jake Kerridge
HCFW 2024 Chair

Journalist and literary critic. He has been the crime fiction reviewer of the *Daily Telegraph* since 2005 and has judged many crime and thriller prizes.

@JakeKerridge



Carolyn Kirby

Carolyn Kirby is the author of two novels. *The Conviction of Cora Burns* was longlisted for the Historical Writers' Association Debut Crown Award and shortlisted for the Specsavers Debut Crime Fiction Award. *When We Fall*, published in May 2020, was chosen by *The Times* as one of the best novels of 2020 and described by the *Daily Mail* as 'a terrific World War II novel'. Carolyn studied History at St Hilda's College, Oxford. Before becoming a full-time writer, she worked in social housing and as a teacher. She has two grown-up daughters and lives with her husband in rural Oxfordshire.

www.carolynkirby.com @novelcarolyn



Abir Mukherjee
HCFW 2024 Chair

Glasgow native Abir Mukherjee is the Times bestselling author of the Wyndham & Banerjee series of novels set in Raj-era India, which have sold over 400,000 copies worldwide and been translated into 15 languages. He's won the CWA Dagger for best Historical Novel, the Prix du Polar Européen, the Wilbur Smith Award for Adventure Writing and the Amazon Publishing Readers Award for E-book of the year. His latest novel, *Hunted*, is out now.

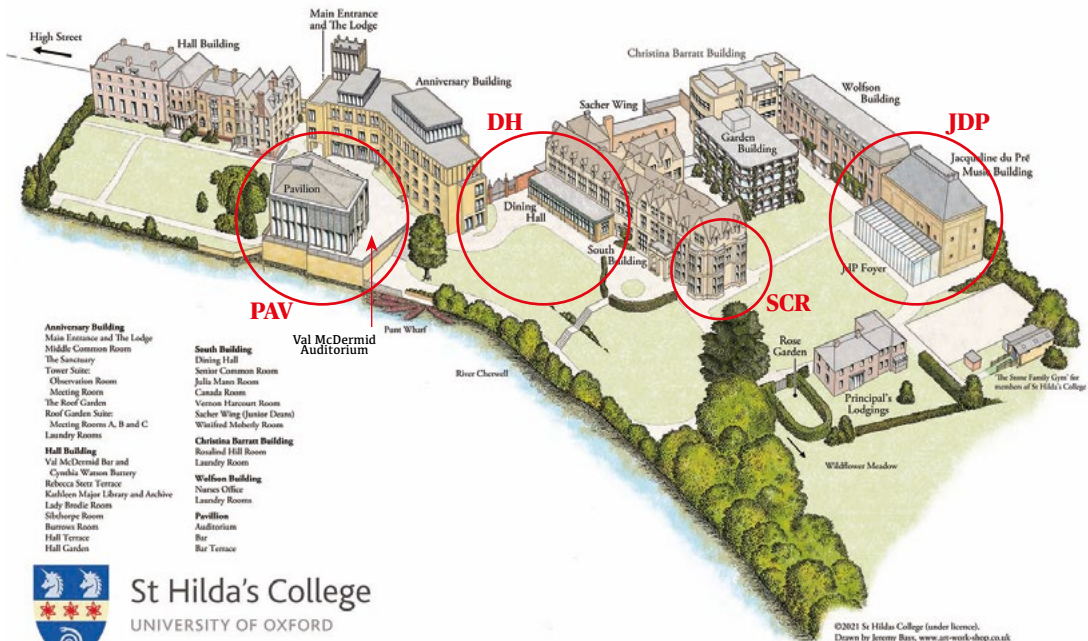
www.abirmukherjee.com @radiomukhers



TIMETABLE

BST British Summer Time

Friday 9th				Location
5.00 - 5.30 pm	Meet and Greet			PAV
5.30 - 6.00pm	Book Launch	Galileo Press		PAV
6.00 - 6.30pm	Book Signing	Rev. Richard Coles		PAV
6.00 - 7.15pm	Drink Reception			PAV
7.15pm	Dinner and Guest Speaker		Rev. Richard Coles	DH
Saturday 10th				
9.20 - 10.50am	Session 1	Mark Billingham	Kia Abdullah	JDP
11.20am - 12.50pm	Session 2	Erin Kelly	Saima Mir	JDP
3.00 - 4.30pm	Session 3	Doug Johnstone	Lucie Whitehouse	JDP
5.00 - 6.00pm	Session 4	David Whittle		JDP
7.20 - 8.00pm	Drinks and Author Signing			JDP
8.15pm	PD James Dinner	Philip Gooden		DH
Sunday 11th				
9.30 - 11.00am	Guest of Honour Lecture		Elly Griffiths	JDP
11.30am - 1.00pm	Session 5	Jake Lamar	Harriet Evans	JDP



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