

East Neuk Festival

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FURTHER PRESS INFORMATION:

Debra Boraston
T. +44 (0)20 7483 1950
M. +44 (0)7989 434388
E. debra@henrymoorestudio.co.uk
www.eastneukfestival.com

NEW FESTIVAL PROGRAMME STRAND LITTORAL: WRITING, TALKING, WALKING...

Featured Writers:

Andrew Greig Kathleen Jamie
Richard Holloway Richard Mabey
Sara Maitland Tom Pow

The East Neuk of Fife is a place steeped in history, its seascapes and landscapes rich in natural beauty. It's this spirit of place that continues to inspire East Neuk Festival director Svend Brown's assured and imaginative programming in much-loved venues and ever more new and evocative spaces. Entwined with the music, there's definitely a feel of roaming and travel in 2012, with a Pilgrimage theme and *Littoral*, a major new writing and ideas strand which begins this year and will build over the next three years.

Curated by the formidable duo of **Catherine Lockerbie** and **Jenny Brown** (both former directors of the Edinburgh International Book Festival), the *Littoral* agenda will feature walks, readings, conversations and discussions with renowned Scottish and international writers inspired by personal and spiritual journeys in nature and landscape. As well as readings and open discussion between writers in venues specially chosen for their ambience and character, several of the writers will also lead walks.

"In past years we have woven threads of the East Neuk's history and character into reading events, with ghost stories, poetry and the like," comments Festival director Svend Brown. *"But this year we are embarking on a major exploration of how the natural environment feeds the creativity of some of the finest writers around. What an opportunity for our audiences to get really close to these authors and share on a quite intimate level the personal inspiration and revelations they find in the natural world!"*



FROM EAST ANGLIA TO EAST NEUK: The most famous pioneer and doyen of nature writing in Britain is undoubtedly **Richard Mabey**. Not only will he discuss his passion for the countryside and writing with Richard Holloway at an event inside Crail Church, but he will also lead a Sunday morning walk along part of the Fife Coastal Path from St Monans. Coming from East Anglia to the East Neuk for the first time, filled with lore and expertise on flora, fauna, and birdlife, he will offer his own perceptions, personal stories and profound natural knowledge. Mabey's ground-breaking *Food For Free*, magisterial *Flora Britannica*, and intensely moving memoir of breakdown and recovery *Nature Cure*, have been seminal works and inspired a new generation of authors. His latest work, *Weeds: A Cultural History*, even teaches us to love the outcasts of the botanical world.

A PERSONAL PILGRIMAGE: **Richard Holloway** has illuminated previous East Neuk Festivals with his sonorous voice and probing reflections on Festival themes. This year, for the first time, the former bishop and prolific author has published a deeply personal memoir, *Leaving Alexandria* – an account of the formation of a mind and a man, of doubt and faith. In the quiet simplicity of Kilrenny Church, in a year with a pilgrimage theme, he will contemplate demons and epiphanies and his own journey through religion to a different philosophical perspective.

FAIRY TALES IN ENCHANTED WOODS: Fairy godmothers, folklore and fairy tales are several of **Sara Maitland's** passions, while her celebrated *A Book of Silence* rooted her firmly in the rawness of nature. In the nooks and crannies of Kellie Castle's walled gardens and the secret thickets of the surrounding woodlands, she will talk a spellbinding walk with re-told tales of the Brothers Grimm on the occasion of their 200th anniversary.

NATURE AROUND US: **Kathleen Jamie**, who lives in Fife, has proven herself a poet and writer of entrancing sensibility and perception in her much-loved work *Findings* and, more recently, *Sightlines*. She joins Sara Maitland in Kilrenny Church for what will surely be a luminating discussion on their joint responses to the natural environment.

THE COAST AND THE VILLAGES: **Andrew Greig** and **Tom Pow** are two of Scotland's most highly regarded poets and novelists and their work resonates with the value and magnitude of 'place' in our lives. Andrew Greig grew up in Anstruther and was something of a musician before establishing himself as one Scotland's most engaging and critically lauded authors. His latest collection includes poems specifically of the East Neuk. Tom Pow equally mixes poetry and prose and his latest work is about the changing and dying villages in Europe – with strong resonance for the settlements of the Fife coastline. They come together for frank discussion in a new Festival venue, upstairs in the relaxed privacy of the Smuggler's Inn Hotel, right above the mouth of the Dreel Burn in Anstruther looking out over the wide waters of the Firth of Forth.

As ever, music is at the heart of the Festival, performed in venues of both intimate and enormous proportions by distinguished musicians from all over the world, including the legendary **Leipzig** and **Hagen String Quartets**, celebrated Beethovenian **Llŷr Williams**, choral maestro **Paul Hillier** and his **Theatre of Voices**, harpist **Andrew Lawrence-King**, prizewinning young guitarist **Sean Shibe**, violinist **Alexander Janiczek** with the **Scottish Chamber Orchestra** and talented young professional musicians of **Live Music Now**. Octets – by Mendelssohn, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert and Stravinsky – are in the spotlight, it being the Festival's eighth birthday, while the continuing exploration of Beethoven focuses primarily on the composer's late period. Atmospheric venues include the churches at Crail, Dunino, Kilconquhar, Kilrenny and St Monans and, for the first time, a wondrously acoustic potato barn on the Cambo Estate.

Tuned in, as ever, to the vibrations of history in the East Neuk, the Festival has commissioned a labyrinth (from local artist **Hilke MacIntyre**) and *Pilgrimage*, a special exhibition (curated by **Ian Gray**) celebrating the medieval age of religious tourism to St Andrews and the East Neuk when pilgrims roamed the region in search of spiritual redemption and revelation. Pilgrims will also be the subject of another masterful sand sculpture, created on Crail High Street by the popular **Sand in your Eye** team.

EAST NEUK FESTIVAL Box Office: Hub Tickets T. 0131 473 2000 www.hubtickets.co.uk
Festival information: www.eastneukfestival.com

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