

# WILD!

## LitFest 2016



Patron of the festival:  
Melvyn Bragg, Lord Bragg of Wigton

Senhouse Roman  
Museum  
Friday 18 – Sunday 20  
November





Now in its ninth year the Maryport Literary Festival is an initiative of, and takes place at the Senhouse Roman Museum. The festival is unique in having a theme inspired by the internationally significant collections that can be discovered at the Museum.

This year the inspiration for the theme is a contemporary altar which was made in 2000 by local sculpture Sky Higgins. Sky took her inspiration for the altar from the spirit of the wild which can be found in many ancient cultures. On the front of the altar can be found a representation of the Man of the Woods or Herne the Hunter. With



the antlers of a deer sprouting from his forehead he withstands the attack of the Roman imperial eagle. Representations of the pagan wild can be found in many medieval churches in the form of the Green Man. Maryport's own wild man can be found in the Museum's collection in the form of a Celtic armed warrior god.

Wild! explores aspects of the wild, both in the landscape and our inner wild. Several speakers over the weekend will look at how we interact with the wild and rationalise our impact on wilderness. In our modern lives there can be conflict between our need to engage with the natural world in the wild places and the impact that we have on the environment. A number of speakers will look at what wilderness means to them and the challenges they face in trying to find the truly wild. The festival is special in its opportunity to interact with the speakers, who are very generous with sharing insights into the creative process.

This year the festival will be launched by local hero Doug Scott CBE, who will be 'in conversation with' fellow mountaineer Robin Ashcroft when they will share their experiences of the wild.

## The Senhouse Roman Museum



The Museum is operated by a charity (Charity no. 516491) and opened to the public in 1990. The Museum is housed in the Victorian Naval Reserve Training Battery and is found at the western end of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. The Museum's collections



include one of the most significant discoveries of Roman Britain: a cache of 17 Roman military altars, which were recovered from the adjacent Roman fort and civil settlement by the Senhouse family in 1870. The collection is the largest collection of

Roman altars and inscriptions from a single site in Britain and dates back to 1570 when John Senhouse started to recover material from the site. This collection has provided the inspiration for creative writing for over ten years. In 2003 the Museum hosted a writer-in-residence as part of the Writing on the Wall project. That writer was Angela Locke and this collaboration was the beginning of a long association and the development of a number of creative writing initiatives for Museum users of all ages.



Since 2008 the Museum's collections have been an inspiration for the Festival themes including the enigmatic Serpent Stone, discovered in 1880 by local bank manager and amateur archaeologist Joseph Robinson. The Venus stone provided the inspiration for

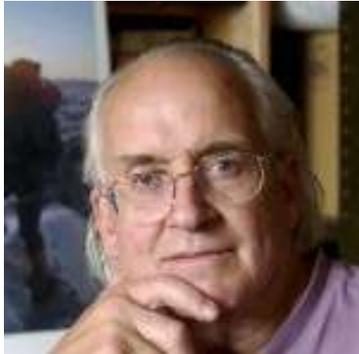
the 'Venus at the Gate: Aspects of Love' in 2010 and in 2013 a small altar dedicated to Neptune, the god of the sea was the inspiration for 'Neptune and his Realm'.

Although the Museum is relatively small, the Trustees, mindful of their charitable aims, continue to support research into Roman West Cumbria. In 2000 the Trust commissioned a programme of geophysical survey for the entire site, in total 150 acres of farm land. This was followed in 2011 by a five year programme of excavation on the site of the discovery of a cache of 17 altars and the discovery, in 1880, of two buildings by Joseph Robinson, which he interpreted as temples. During this excavation a new altar was discovered (in 2012), this discovery confirmed the context of the original deposition of the altars by the Romans as packing stones for at least two massive timber structures on the top of the hill to the north-east of the fort.



Friday 18 November, 7pm for 7.30pm

## Festival Launch with Doug Scott CBE



Doug Scott's extensive mountaineering career includes over thirty expeditions to inner Asia and he is regarded as one of the world's leading high altitude and big wall climbers. He is best known for the first ascent of the south-west face of Everest in 1975, with Dougal Haston, an expedition led by Sir Chris

Bonnington.

Doug is a past president of the Alpine Club and was made a CBE in 1994. In 1999 he was awarded the Patron's Medal of the Royal Geographical Society. He was presented with the Golden Eagle Award by the Outdoor Writers and Photographers Guild in 2005. Having spent much time in Nepal, and becoming aware of the challenges that the indigenous peoples face, Doug founded the charity *Community Action Nepal* and spends much of his time fundraising for this cause, especially from his public lectures. On Friday evening Doug will be talking about the second volume of his award winning (Kekoo Naoroji Award) autobiography *Up and About: The Hard Road to Everest*, which will be published shortly.

Doug will be 'in conversation with' Robin Ashcroft. Robin Ashcroft is an author and photographer, well known for his scrambling and climbing articles in *Trail* magazine. He has been a keen mountaineer for over 30 years, climbing both in the UK and abroad, with trips to the Alps, Norway, the Canadian Rockies, Antarctica and Central America.

The launch will include an opportunity to mingle over a glass of wine.

Saturday 19 November, 11am

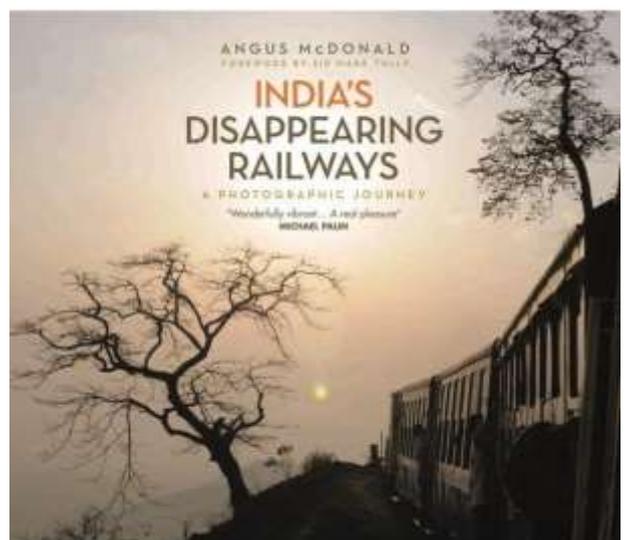
## Catherine Anderson: Memoirs of an explorer / Lost Himalayan railways



Catherine Anderson FRGS is a writer who has contributed to numerous publications including *The Guardian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, and *Geographical* magazine. She is a Huffington Post columnist, where she writes on UK politics. Her first book, a memoir called *The End of All Exploring*, will be published in February 2017.

Catherine was educated at schools in Italy and Austria, and at Durham University. In 2005 she set up a not-for-profit initiative working with Tibetan refugees in the Indian Himalaya, where she lived for 6 years and where she met the Australian photojournalist Angus McDonald. Catherine posthumously edited and contributed to McDonald's work *India's Disappearing Railways* (Carlton Books, 2014; The Times 'Book of the Year', 2014) which she also curated as an exhibition in London, Sydney and Melbourne.

In 2014 she established The Angus McDonald Trust in McDonald's memory, a healthcare charity working in some of Burma's poorest areas. Since 2010 she has worked as chief-of-staff to Cumbrian MP Rory Stewart, and lives near Penrith with her saluki lurcher dog.



Saturday 19 November, 1.30pm

### John Manning: Featuring the wild with the Editor of Cumbria magazine



John Manning, editor of *Lakeland Walker* and *Cumbria* magazines, has blended passion for his career with a passion for walking wild places since completing the 260-mile Pennine Way in 1986. On Saturday he'll describe some of his far-flung adventures and share the joys – and frustrations – of editing magazines that celebrate the great outdoors.

Cumbria is a much-loved magazine that has always had a close affinity with the wild and celebrates the real Cumbria in all its variety. We are delighted that Cumbria has agreed to support the Maryport LitFest.

Saturday 19 November, 4.30pm

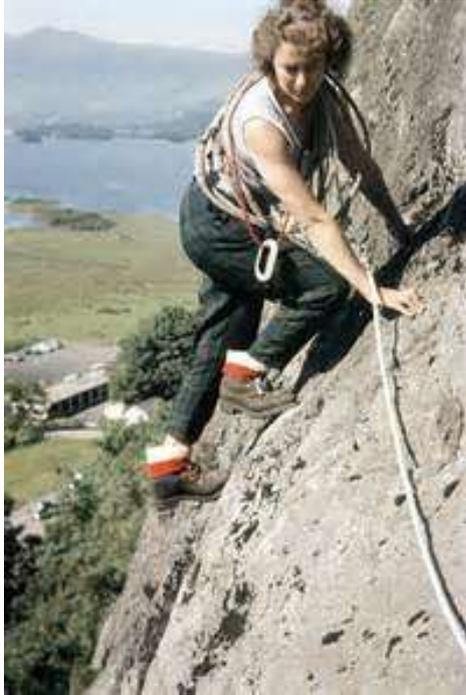
### Eric Robson: Wild



These days Eric Robson is best known as Chairman of Radio 4's *Gardeners' Question Time*, author, broadcaster, Chairman of the Wainwright Society and farmer in Wasdale. In 2015 Eric was unable to get out of the valley due to flooded roads but, this year, we will have a boat on stand-by to ensure that his audience will not be disappointed. Eric will be talking about his experiences in the wilds of Cumbria during his illustrious career as a writer and broadcaster.

Saturday 19 November, 6pm

## Operation Moffat



A BMC TV production, *Operation Moffat* is a film that takes inspiration from the colourful climbing life of Britain's first female mountain guide, Gwen Moffat.

Grappling with her preference for mountains over people, adventure over security, wilderness over tick-lists, Claire Carter and Jen Randall climb, run, scramble and swim their way through some of Gwen's most cherished British landscapes. Including candid interviews with 91 year old Gwen, a fresh take on

landscape photography, previously unseen archive material and real action sequences, this film captures Gwen's infectious excitement for a life constantly seeking something strange or beautiful around the next bend.



Saturday 19 November, 7.30pm

### Simon Yates: The Wild Within



Simon Yates is an internationally acclaimed mountaineer, best known for his part in the 'Touching the Void' epic. In his career spanning over 30 years he has travelled the globe and climbed with some of Britain's leading mountaineers, establishing

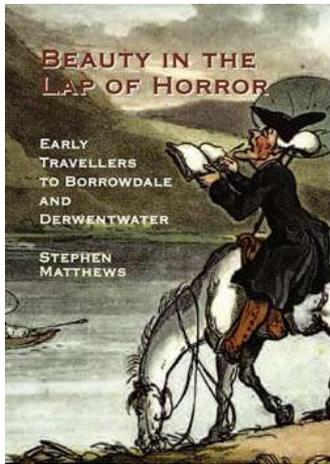
many first ascents in the process. Simon's three books have all been released to critical acclaim. In addition he is a popular public speaker, as well as operator of commercial expeditions.

The Wild Within is the third book from Simon Yates, one of Britain's most accomplished and daring mountaineers. With his insatiable appetite for adventure and exploratory mountaineering, Yates leads unique expeditions to unclimbed peaks in the Cordillera Darwin in Tierra del Fuego, the Wrangell – St Elias Ranges on the Alaskan-Yukon border and Eastern Greenland. Laced with dry humour, he relates own experience of the rapid commercialisation of mountain wilderness, while grappling with new commitments as a family man.

Yates's subsequent escape to some of the world's most remote mountains isn't quite the experience it once was, as he witnesses first hand the advance of modern communications into the wilderness, signalled by the ubiquitous mobile phone masts appearing in once deserted mountain valleys. He is left to dwell on the remaining significance of mountain wilderness and must rediscover what the notion of 'wild' means for him now.

Sunday 20 November, 11am

### Steve Matthews: Beauty in the Lap of Horror



Charles Avison, the Newcastle composer, looked at Borrowdale and saw "Beauty in the lap of Horror". Borrowdale became a touchstone as travellers explored the wilder areas of Britain and learnt to appreciate the beautiful, the sublime, the Romantic and the Picturesque.

Steve Matthews, bookseller, publisher and author, reports on how ten writers created our view of Borrowdale and influenced the way we look at wild landscapes.

Sunday 20 November, 1.30pm

### Juliet Barker: The Brontës - Inspiration of the Wild



Juliet Barker is an internationally recognised authority on the Brontës, a former curator and librarian of the Brontë Parsonage Museum and author of many works on the family, including the definitive biography *The Brontës*. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and lives in the Yorkshire Dales.

On Sunday Juliet will be 'in conversation with' Angela Locke in a fascinating and in-depth look at how the wild northern landscape influenced the writing of one of our most famous literary families.

Sunday 20 November, 3pm

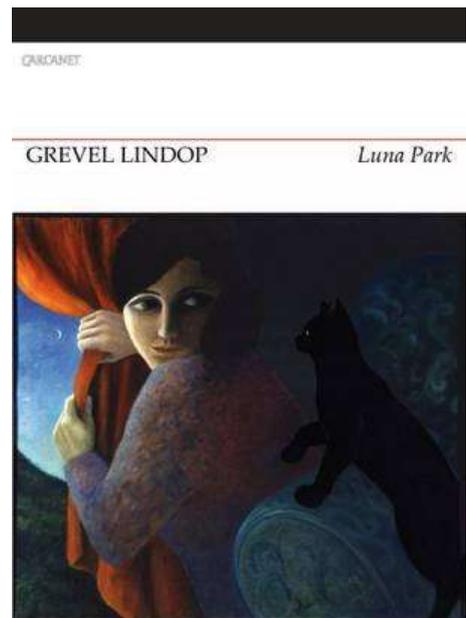
## Grevel Lindop

Grevel will be substituting for Kim Moore who, unfortunately, has had to drop out due to illness. He will be reading a selection of his latest poetry.



Grevel's latest collection of poems, *Luna Park*, has been widely praised: Adam Tavel, in the US journal *Plume*, wrote that it 'achieves a rare harmony, proving itself one of [the] year's best books'; Rory Waterman in the TLS called it 'socially and humanely attuned ...and often highly memorable'.

His major literary biography *Charles Williams: The Third Inkling*, was hailed by Rowan Williams as 'in almost every way, all that one would want in such a study: comprehensive, judicious, sympathetic, but also properly surprised by its subject'. In the US, Sorina Higgins called it 'a work of consummate scholarship that is well written and completely readable'.



Sunday 20 November, 4pm

### Tim Pickard: Winter Migrants



Tom Pickard's *Winter Migrants* is just published by Carcanet. Tom worked with some of the most important poets in the 60s and 70s, including the hugely influential beat poet Allen Ginsberg who said of him: "I am an old admirer of Tom Pickard's poetry and believe, as does Basil Bunting, that

he is one of the most live and true poetic voices in Great Britain". His collected poems *HOYOOT* was published in 2014. Three previous collections published in Chicago, including *Ballad of Jamie Allan*, a finalist in the USA National Book Critics Circle Awards. Tom was born on Tyneside 1946 and now lives in Maryport.

Sunday 15 November, 5pm

### Poetry Afternoon Tea

The results of the poetry competition will be announced by judge **Josephine Dickinson**. The winners will be invited to read their poems, followed by afternoon tea. We will then hear readings of poetry by **Sheona Lodge** by her daughter Anne Mathieson **Josephine Dickinson** and **Angela Locke**. The LitFest will conclude with an open mic. (includes tea and home-made cakes)

## Sheona Lodge read by Anne Mathieson

Sheona Lodge was well-known as a fisherwoman of extraordinary knowledge, daughter of the famous fisherman Dr William Baigent, and as a widely respected poet. Her daughter Dr. Ann Mathieson will read some of Sheona's poems, which connected her deeply with the Wild!

## Festival host: Angela Locke



Recently shortlisted for the Bridport Poetry Prize Angela Locke has had six fiction/non-fiction books published, which have been translated across the world, four poetry collections and the film script *In the Mind of Man*, commissioned by the Theatre by the Lake. Her novel *Dreams of the Blue Poppy*, which is set in Cumbria and the Himalayas, was published by Robert Hale in 2007. Her most recent book *On Juniper Mountain* was inspired by a visit to Nepal and Tibet and her experiences with local tribes. Angela has worked widely in radio and television and leads Creative Writing Retreats across the UK. Her workshops for the Senhouse Roman Museum include a series for children and for the Maryport Writers' Group. Angela was instrumental in the founding of the international education and health charity The Juniper Trust and is now the President.

Angela, with Grevel Lindop, will be hosting the weekend and chairing many of the sessions. There will be an opportunity to hear her read some of her poetry during the afternoon tea on Sunday.

## Poetry competition winners (in no particular order)

### Just past the village sign

At first, I thought it was a white plastic bag  
caught in the hedge and luminous  
in the looming dusk.

The wind was fresh, full of edges  
and this thing seemed to struggle  
as if it could twist and tear itself free.

As if it needed to be. And now I could see:  
an owl! An owl wrestling the wind  
with wide soft muscular wings.

The bird, barely balanced, over some small prey,  
and the wind had the air tied up in knots  
between the owl and the ground; wouldn't let the owl down.

You could see the wind's muscles  
and the owl's clever feathers  
twisting and feinting; straining the air.

Like two demons wrestling  
in colloidal slow motion  
and this astonishing silence.

Then whatever-it-was must have darted away  
belly to earth, stuttering,  
because the owl in a surge, shook off the wind

angled a wing and slid on the rim of grey light  
along the wall where it stops  
and folds up the wide space it spilled in the air,

drops out of flight.  
Becomes a tiny neat thing, perched on a wall.  
Little angry cat-face snaps up to stare

and a predator's eyes pin me down.  
In the pin-sharp definition of those eyes  
I am shapeless, misplaced.

Heidi Bailey

## Going to the funeral

I first caught sight of you in my wing mirror  
half way up the Sma' Glen; high place, grey rock  
smoothed and polished by four clean winds,  
bog myrtle, sphagnum moss, bent over bushes  
stunted, blunted down the years.

You were parked up in a layby,  
about to get back in your old silver hatchback,  
your kilt aswirl in the breeze.  
Who knew we were going to the same place?

And when you stood later by the grave,  
you and your fellow pipers resplendent  
in black and red, the silver pins on your plaid shawls  
glistening, the sharp point Schiehallion poking the heavens behind,  
I knew you'd filled your pipes with mountain air  
for you blew all the wild wonder of the glen  
into your pibroch lament.

Kirsty Hollings

## Wild garden

Is the slow fell path we climbed  
on honeysuckle evenings  
when blackbirds and pipistrelles  
scratched the orange glow off a night sky

Your married hand  
knuckled warm in mine  
etched with land weather sheep trails  
threading Beacon larches -

those low implicit trees  
clinging to acid soil that knows  
the distance roe deer run  
shelter to shelter

in storm and snow.  
And on that white-still morning I came here  
without you  
two buzzards wheeled and cried

I could see all the salt way  
to Black Combe Hoad Heysham  
pale as bird wings  
pausing on the tide.

Kerry Darbyshire





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