

## Opening Night - Stories Told Live *The Stories That Shape Us* 6.15pm-8.30pm, Friday 18 July ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$40

Join us for a captivating evening of live storytelling at the Marlborough Book Festival's ever-popular Opening Night Gala. *The Stories That Shape Us* is this year's theme. A group of talented guest authors will take the stage to share stories, fact, fiction or a mix of both, which have had a lasting impact on shaping who they/we are. Come along from 6:15pm to enjoy a complimentary drink and delicious canapés in the theatre's beautiful foyer. The session starts at 7:00pm in the auditorium.

## Delirious Damien Wilkins in conversation with Jane Forrest Waghorn 1.15pm-2.15pm, Sunday 20 July ASB Theatre Marlborough \$25

Damien won the 2025 Ockham New Zealand Book Award for his emotionally powerful novel about families and ageing. Addressing questions we will all face, if we are lucky, or unlucky, enough.



Photo: Ebony Lamb

## Conversation Starters Damien Wilkins and Richard Shaw in conversation with Jane Forrest Waghorn 7pm-8pm, Saturday 19 July Small Town Winery, \$25

Damien and Richard explore the legacy of colonisation through fiction and fact. They discuss how storytelling can start conversations about the past and help imagine a more honest future.



Photo: Ebony Lamb

## The Last Secret Agent Jude Dobson in conversation with Tessa Nicholson 9.30am-10.30am, Sat 19 July ASB Theatre Marlborough \$25

The late WWII heroine Phyllis "Pippa" Latour chose Jude Dobson to share her incredible story. Jude discusses *The Last Secret Agent* and her friendship with Pippa in this fascinating session.



Photo: Neil Gusey

## Library Lecture The Last Secret Agent 3pm-3.45pm, Sat 19 July Marlborough Library at Te Kahu o Waipuna, \$15

Hear the story of WWII secret agent Pippa Latour — shared by Jude Dobson in a 30-minute talk, followed by audience questions.



Photo: Neil Gusey

## Book Chats with Book Lovers Nalini Singh and Olivia Spooner in conversation with Tania Miller 12pm-1pm, Sunday 20 July ASB Theatre Marlborough \$25

A session to reignite your love of reading! Enjoy hearing passionate readers (who are also wonderful writers) talk about the books they love. Think of this session as listening into conversations at the coolest book club in town; expect tips for your TBR list!



# the schedule.



This year's Marlborough Book Festival features 20 sessions with 12 wonderful authors speaking at Blenheim's ASB Theatre Marlborough, Marlborough Library at Te Kahu o Waipuna, Picton Library at Waitohi Whare Matauranga and Small Town Winery. It's going to be a fabulous weekend of inspiring, informative and entertaining conversations. You don't need to be a book reader to love a book festival. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Friday 18 July

### ASB Theatre Marlborough

6.15pm Drinks and nibbles  
7pm Stories Told Live

A selection of guest authors share stories on the theme *The Stories That Shape Us*

## Saturday 19 July

### ASB Theatre, Whitehaven Room

9.30am **The Last Secret Agent**  
Jude Dobson in conversation with Tessa Nicholson  
12.00pm **Kāwai: The Trilogy**  
Monty Soutar in conversation with Peter Meihana  
2.30pm **An Hour with Stacy Gregg**  
Stacy Gregg in conversation with Rae Heta  
5.00pm **Wartime Stories**  
Olivia Spooner in conversation with Tessa Nicholson

### ASB Theatre, Anderson Theatre

10.45am **The Unsettled**  
Richard Shaw in conversation with Jane Forrest Waghorn  
1.15pm **Amma**  
Sara de Silva in conversation with Julie Zhu  
3.45pm **An Hour with Monty Soutar**  
Monty Soutar in conversation with Emma Tucker  
6.15pm **Romance Rockstar, Crime Queen**  
Nalini Singh in conversation with Courtney Clark Michaels (90mins)

### Picton Library at Waitohi Whare Matauranga

4.30pm **Sam the Trapman in Picton**  
Sam Gibson in conversation with Anna Polson

### Marlborough Library at Te Kahu o Waipuna

10.30am **Worlds of Her Own**  
Workshop with Nalini Singh (2hrs)  
3.00pm **Library Lecture**  
**The Last Secret Agent**  
with Jude Dobson

### Small Town Winery

7.00pm **Conversation Starters**  
Damien Wilkins and Richard Shaw in conversation with Jane Forrest Waghorn

## Sunday 20 July

### ASB Theatre, Whitehaven Room

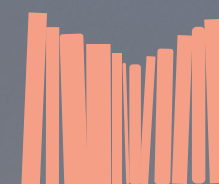
10.45am **Sam the Trapman in Blenheim**  
Sam Gibson in conversation with Johnny Joseph  
1.15pm **Delirious**  
Damien Wilkins in conversation with Jane Forrest Waghorn  
3.45pm **Make it Make Sense**  
Lucy Blakiston in conversation with Tania Miller

### ASB Theatre, Anderson Theatre

9.30am **Then and Now**  
**Fresh Perspectives on History Telling**  
Monty Soutar, Peter Meihana, Richard Shaw with Liz Ward  
12.00pm **Book Chats with Book Lovers**  
Nalini Singh and Olivia Spooner in conversation with Tania Miller  
2.30pm **Amplifying New Voices**  
Julie Zhu and Sara de Silva in conversation with Courtney Clark Michaels

### Marlborough Library at Te Kahu o Waipuna

1.00pm **Small Cats, Big Journeys**  
Young readers session with Stacy Gregg



# Marlborough Book Festival 2025



18-20 July

[www.marlboroughbookfest.co.nz](http://www.marlboroughbookfest.co.nz)

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## Make It Make Sense

**Lucy Blakiston in conversation with Tania Miller**

**3.45pm-4.45pm, Sunday 20 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Lucy Blakiston, CEO and editorial director of media company Shit You Should Care About (SYSCA), discusses her debut book *Make It Make Sense* and the success story that is SYSCA.



## Kāwai: The Trilogy

**Monty Soutar in conversation with Peter Meihana**

**12pm-1pm, Saturday 19 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Monty Soutar discusses his extraordinary historical novels - *Kāwai: For Such a Time as This* (2022) and *Kāwai: Tree of Nourishment* (2024), the first two novels of a planned trilogy.



## An Hour with Monty Soutar

**Monty Soutar in conversation with Emma Tucker**

**3.45pm-4.45pm, Saturday 19 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Monty Soutar reflects on his life story from boyhood in Ruatoria in the Gisborne region to writing significant works of history. He looks back at a rich life of academic and social contribution and his pivot to sharing history through fiction.



## Romance Rockstar, Crime Queen

**Nalini Singh in conversation with Courtney Clark Michaels**

**6.15pm-7.45pm, Saturday 19 July**

## ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25

Join international bestselling author Nalini Singh for a 90-minute dive into her world of paranormal and fantasy romance and compelling murder mystery stories. Hear about her writing journey, creative process, and how she builds unforgettable worlds.



## Worlds of Her Own

**Workshop with Nalini Singh, introduction by Courtney Clark Michaels**

**10.30am-12.30pm, Saturday 19 July**  
**Marlborough Library at Te Kahu o Waipuna, \$40**

Internationally bestselling author Nalini Singh will guide participants through the essential elements of world building. This workshop is ideal for emerging and established writers alike, offering both inspiration and tangible tools.



## War-time Stories

**Olivia Spooner in conversation with Tessa Nicholson**

**5pm-6pm, Saturday 19 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Olivia discusses her bestselling historical fiction novels, *The Girl from London* and *The Songbirds of Florence*; fictional stories about brave female characters living through little known true events in World War II.



## The Unsettled

**Richard Shaw in conversation with**

## Jane Forrest Waghorn

**10.45am-11.45am, Saturday 19 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Richard discusses his books which share his own experience and those of New Zealanders who are descended from early settlers who are trying to figure out how to live with the legacy of colonisation, and how those actions resonate today.



## Sam the Trapman in Picton

**Sam Gibson in conversation with Anna Polson**

**4.30pm-5.30pm, Saturday 19 July**  
**Picton Library at Waitohi Whare Matauranga, \$15**

Sam talks about his adventures in the great outdoors - hunting, fishing, trapping - with a particular focus on looking after the bush and its ecosystems.



## Sam the Trapman in Blenheim

**Sam Gibson in conversation with Johnny Joseph**  
**10.45am-11.45am, Sunday 20 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Sam shares captivating adventures living and working in the ngahere, from Te Urewera to Fiordland, and his deep commitment to looking after the environment.



## Amma

**Saraïd de Silva in conversation with Julie Zhu**

**1.15pm-2.15pm, Saturday 19 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Saraïd discusses her stunning debut novel *Amma*, a deeply moving exploration of family, memory, and the ties that bind us across space and time.



## Amplifying New Voices

**Julie Zhu and Saraïd de Silva in conversation with Courtney Clark Michaels**

**2.30pm-3.30pm, Sunday 20 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Julie Zhu and Saraïd de Silva share stories from their acclaimed audio and video series, *Conversations With My Immigrant Parents*, produced for Radio New Zealand. Julie and Saraïd will reflect on the stories behind the podcast, their creative partnership, and their ongoing work to elevate underrepresented voices through storytelling.



## An Hour with Stacy Gregg

**Stacy Gregg in conversation with Rae Heta**

**2.30pm-3.30pm, Saturday 19 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Stacy Gregg discusses her two latest books, award-winning coming-of-age novel *Nine Girls* and - just released! - *The Last Journey*, a heartbreaking beautiful story starring cats.



## Small Cats, Big Big Journeys -

**Young readers' session**  
**Stacy Gregg presentation**

**1pm-2pm, Sunday 20 July**  
**Marlborough Library at Te Kahu o Waipuna, Free**

Stacy talks about how you can create and gestate your own stories out of real-life events - oh and CATS! A session for young readers, recommended 8-13-year-olds. Please reserve your seat through the ASB Theatre ticketing website.



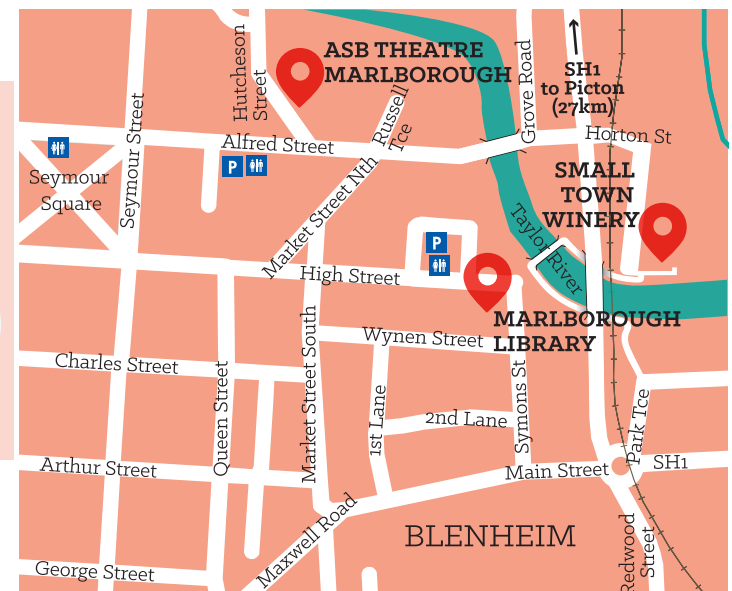
**Then and Now - Fresh Perspectives on History Telling**

**Monty Soutar, Peter Meihana, Richard Shaw with Liz Ward**  
**9.30am-10.30am, Sunday 20 July**  
**ASB Theatre Marlborough, \$25**

Whether it's a knack for making the academic accessible or a talent for weaving real events through fiction, these writers are telling Aotearoa New Zealand history in fresh, engaging ways. Panel facilitator Marlborough Heritage Manager Liz Ward asks the writers about telling history in ways that resonate with today's reader.



## the venues



For more session information and author biographies visit: [www.marlboroughbookfest.co.nz](http://www.marlboroughbookfest.co.nz)

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Photo: Neil Mackenzie