

PRESS RELEASE

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EVEN BIGGER GIBUNCO GIBRALTAR INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL THIS YEAR AS THE EVENT GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

DAME ESTHER RANTZEN HEADLINE AUTHOR FOR THE EVENT

The Gibraltar Literary Festival continues to go from strength to strength and will be even bigger this year. This year's event will be headlined by BBC television celebrity and charity champion Dame Esther Rantzen of 'That's Life' fame, who will share her experience of her lifelong involvement in charity work including Childline and The Silver Line that she established.

The Festival will take place from 12-15 November 2015 and will feature distinguished novelists, historians, biographers and public figures. This year there is an extra day; the festival will run for four days and the bookshop at the Garrison Library venue will be open for six days from Wednesday 11th to Monday 16th November. The Schools' Festival takes place on Thursday 12th and Friday 13th and for the first time will include events for the primary schools.

History will be well served at the festival with Professor Ashley Jackson, a renowned expert on Military History, speaking on Gibraltar's role during the great age of imperial travel.

John Goodall, editor of 'Country Life' will talk about the magazine and its history of architectural coverage.

'Spain at the Centre of the World, 1519-1628' will be the theme of a lecture by Professor Robert Goodwin, whose works have been universally acclaimed.

Italian Renaissance painting will be under the exacting lens of Dr Caroline Campbell, a curator at the National Gallery. An expert on Gentile Bellini and Renaissance Florence, her talk is a must for art lovers.

The famous Scottish journalist John Carlin, an international political correspondent for El Pais newspaper, will talk on South African leader Nelson Mandela. His book *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game that Made a Nation*, inspired the 2009 film *Invictus*, directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Morgan Freeman.

British military hero Thomas Edward Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia, will feature in the talk by Anthony Sattin, an expert on the Middle East and author of several highly praised history and travel books.

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The biography of Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia and controversial historical figure, will be presented by his great-nephew Prince Asfa-Wossen Asserate, who knew the emperor well. Interestingly, the Emperor stayed at the Rock Hotel on his way into exile in Britain in 1936.

Famous Michelin-star Lebanese chef Greg Malouf and his wife Lucy will give a presentation on Middle Eastern cuisine. The couple will also be cooking recipes from their latest book for the closing festival dinner, featuring dishes from the Middle East, North Africa and Moorish Spain.

Frank Close, Professor of Physics at the University of Oxford and author of *The Divided Life of Bruno Pontecorvo, Physicist or Spy*, will shed light on this enigmatic genius caught up in the tensions of the Cold War and his pioneering work on atomic energy.

Peace activist Scilla Elworthy will give an insight into her work in support of peacebuilding efforts in diplomatic hot-spots, for which she has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times. She worked on establishing "The Elders" with Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and Jimmy Carter.

Tom Moorhouse, author of 'The River Singers' and its sequel 'The Rising', will feature in the School Event, delighting children with his colourful array of rodent characters.

Author Rachel Billington, the distinguished novelist and daughter of Lord Longford (sister of Lady Antonia Fraser), has published 19 adult novels and 7 children's books since 1969. Her best-selling novel was *A Woman's Age*.

Royalty will also be highlighted in a talk by Ingrid Seward, editor of *Majesty* magazine, the leading monthly journal covering all aspects of British, European and World royalty. Ms Seward has published twenty books on the subject and is a respected commentator having worked for major TV and Radio stations across the world.

The magical allure of Morocco returns to the festival in the words of Samantha Herron, whose first collection of short stories in the tradition of ancient storytelling, *The Djinn in the Skull: Stories from hidden Morocco*, offers an intimate perspective of this exotic land.

For crime novel fans, Felix Francis, son of the famous and prolific crime writer Dick Francis, will provide the notes of mystery. His new work *Front Runner* was published in 2015.

This year the festival service will be conducted by Rabbi Abraham Levy who for 30 years was spiritual head of Britain's Spanish and Portuguese congregation – the Sephardim.

Finally, Professor Andrew Lambert of King's College London will talk about Gibraltar and the Royal Navy in World War II – an address he gave last week at The Gibraltar Lecture at The Blenheim Palace Festival of Literature, Film and Music.

This list is additional to the names announced in August. Further writers will be added to the list of what promises to be a varied festival of the highest calibre.

Minister for Tourism, Samantha Sacramento MP, said she was delighted that the Literary Festival has again secured an impressive programme of world class speakers.

"The Gibraltar International Literary Festival has become an important part of Gibraltar's calendar and has proved a success in opening up the Rock as a major cultural venue to the rest of Europe. We are doing well with this Government's strategy of creating niche events and leading on events-led tourism. This particular event has not only established itself locally but is also growing in popularity abroad and we continue to market it vigorously"

Tickets and a preliminary programme will shortly be available.