



PRESS RELEASE

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More Names for the Literary Festival as the Event Becomes More Accessible

The 5th Gibunco Gibraltar International Literary Festival continues to attract attention as more names are announced including more returning to enthral audiences.

Colonel John Blashford-Snell is one of the world's most renowned and respected explorers, organizing and leading over seventy expeditions including an exploration of the infamous Blue Nile, making the first vehicle crossing of the Darien Gap, and navigating all 2700 miles of the Zaire River, the last two having environmental, medical and scientific objectives.

Ultimately a much larger global youth programme was organised when, in 1984, Operation Raleigh was formed which by 1992 had enabled 10,000 young people from 50 countries, including Gibraltar, to take part in challenges and expeditions around the world. And if all this were not enough to more than fill a lifetime, John Blashford-Snell has written 15 books and is a broadcaster and lecturer and today leads expeditions worldwide with the Scientific Exploration Society. He recently returned from delivering an ambulance boat to a remote tribe on the Amazon.

Philip Mansel

Philip Mansel is a historian of France and the Middle East. He has lived in Paris, Istanbul and Beirut, and currently lives in London. He writes on courts and cities. His books include *Constantinople: City of the World's Desire* (1995); a history of Paris in the early nineteenth century, *Paris between Empires* (2001); *Levant, Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (2010), a history of Smyrna, Alexandria and Beirut; and *Aleppo, the Rise and Fall of Syria's Great Merchant City* (2016). He has also written *Lives of Louis XVIII* (1981) and *the Prince de Ligne* (2003) and is currently completing a life of Louis XIV. His books have been translated into Turkish, Greek, Arabic, Italian and French. He is a founder of the Society for Court Studies and the Levantine Heritage Foundation. He writes for *The Art Newspaper*, *The Spectator*, and *the Literary Review*, and in 2012 won the London Library Life in Literature award.

Lady Carnarvon



Fiona, 8th Countess of Carnarvon, is the wife of Geordie, 8th Earl of Carnarvon. She created her own clothes brand in the 1990s and is also author of the bestselling *Lady Almina* and *the Real Downton Abbey: The Lost Legacy of Highclere* and *Lady Catherine and the Real Downton Abbey*. The Carnarvons manage a range of businesses at Highclere.

Lady Fiona Carnarvon looks back at 300 years of family archives to tell the story of entertaining at Highclere Castle – the setting for the hugely popular television series *Downton Abbey* – and reveals what it is like entertaining at the ancestral home today.

Highclere has welcomed royalty, statesmen, Egyptologists and pioneers of technology. Carnarvon tells the real story of four weekends between 1866 and 1936, the etiquette of the invitation, placement at dinners, organisation of entertainment and domestic management, what should be served for dinner and the hot topics of gossip and conversation. And she includes some of the recipes that can be cooked in kitchens today.

Lady Carnarvon talks to BBC news presenter and journalist Gwenan Edwards, whose credits include the BBC Proms, *Wales at Six* on ITV, and *Newsroom South East* and *Watchdog* on BBC1.

Bestselling novelist Patrick Gale talks about his life and work and its place in events to mark 50 years since the partial decriminalising of gay sex in the UK, fully decriminalised years later.

Gale is author of 16 successful novels. He has also written a new drama as part of the BBC's 50th anniversary *Gay Britannia* series, *Man in an Orange Shirt*. Gale says gay lives and loves are at the heart of his work but what really fascinates him is how they mesh with the whole mess of family life. Many of his novels are based on events in his own life.

Making a welcome return is ROBERT DAWS. Robert trained at RADA.

His many television credits include: Dr Gordon Ormerod in eight series of *The Royal*, Sam Mountjoy in three series of *John Sullivan's Roger Roger* and Tuppy Glossop in four series of *Jeeves and Wooster*. He also plays the town curmudgeon, Dr. Thomas Choake in the BBC's hugely successful *Poldark* – currently filming series four - and has recently completed filming *Father Brown*, *Death In Paradise*, a return to *Midsomer Murders* and the films *An Unkind Word* and *Swimming With Men*. He also plays 'Shank' Sankovitz in Sky's new comedy series, *Sick Note*. He has just completed a run in Sir Alan Ayckbourn's hit comedy, *'How The Other Half Loves'*, playing Frank Foster.

His first crime novella, *The Rock*, was published in 2012 and made the top of the Amazon Bestseller list five times.

His second Sullivan and Broderick murder mystery, *The Poisoned Rock*, was published in Sept 2016. His third in the series, *Killing Rock*, will be available in early 2018. His ghost story, *'Tunnel Vision'* – also set in Gibraltar, is available on Amazon.

Robert has three children, Ben, Betsy and May and is married to the actress Amy Robbins.



Some innovative aspects are being introduced at the Festival. There will be no printed guide this year as the Festival strives to be one of the first to go as digital as possible. This will have environmental advantages too. Another important aspect is that the festival will become more accessible for everyone in that there will only be an electronic version of the brochure that can be produced in different formats, allowing this to be viewed in a bigger font if required. However, there will be a printed 'at a glance' guide available with regular updates.

Much is being done to make the Festival more accessible with the use of induction loops in every venue. A British sign language interpreter will be available for some of the talks and where speakers have scripted texts these will be displayed simultaneously on screens. Sound bite recordings featuring all the festival participants are also available on the website.

The organisers of the Festival have had great support and advice from the Ministry of Equality on the accessibility requirements.

Minister for Tourism Gilbert Licudi QC said, 'The latest additions to the festival continue to show the wide range of subjects that audiences will be able to enjoy and to learn more about. It is important that the Festival presents and discusses themes of every nature. I'm particularly pleased that the festival will become more digital and naturally more accessible. The work being done by my colleague Samantha Sacramento, as Minister for Equality and her team has been vital in making this happen. We look forward to announcing even more names soon.'