



ROMANTIC
NOVELISTS'
ASSOCIATION.®

CONFERENCE 2023

PROGRAMME

11th August-13th August
Imperial College
London

LEARN

NETWORK

PITCH

*this programme may be subject to change

A Message from our Chair Jean Fullerton

“ It’s my 20th anniversary this year. My 20th RNA anniversary that is, as I joined this wonderful organisation in May 2003. I’ve been to almost every conference since and in my experience the watch words we’ve chosen for this year’s conference **community**, **empowerment** and **professionalism**, sums up perfectly what the Romantic Novelist Association is all about.

We pride ourselves in offering a welcoming community to all writers, no matter their background or where they are on their writing journey. We create our characters and stories in isolation so we understand the importance of making real connections with other professional writers who understand how hard but also rewarding it can be. That openness and friendliness is at the heart of what we do.

However, in an ever-changing publishing landscape we are passionate about empowering authors too. Through our exciting selection of workshops to the unique and invaluable opportunities to network with professionals from the publishing industry, we want you, the delegates at our 2023 conference to leave with the skills, confidence and some of the contacts necessary to help you climb the next rung of the tough publishing ladder and to maximise your author earnings.

We are a professional organisation for professional writers and this conference will be testament to that. It will be both an investment in your future and a thoroughly entertaining and inspiring weekend. I look forward to seeing you there.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean Fullerton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'J' and 'F'.

How to book your place

You can book from a selection of 3 packages via our website at <https://romanticnovelistsassociation.org/event/romantic-novelists-association-conference-2023/edate/2023-08-11/>

Conference Packages & Prices

OPTION 1

RESIDENTIAL FRI-SUN

Includes:

- Single ensuite accommodation
- Breakfast Sat & Sun
- Lunch Friday & Saturday
- Dinner Friday
- Full conference programme
- Gala Party buffet & fizz Saturday
- Designated Refreshments

£650 RNA MEMBERS
£750 NON MEMBERS

OPTION 2

NON-RESIDENTIAL FRI-SUN

Includes:

- Lunch Friday & Saturday
- Full conference programme
- Gala Party buffet & fizz Saturday
- Designated refreshments

£400 RNA MEMBERS
£500 NON MEMBERS

OPTION 3

SATURDAY ONLY DAY PASS

Includes:

- Lunch Saturday
- Full Saturday Programme
- Gala Party buffet & fizz Saturday
- Designated refreshments

£250 RNA MEMBERS
£300 NON MEMBERS

PRICES & BOOKINGS FOR ADDITIONAL THURSDAY ACCOMMODATION OR FOR ACCESSIBLE ROOMS, DOUBLE OR TWIN ROOMS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST AND SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.

Email all enquiries to rnaconference@romanticwriters.co.uk

The Timetable at a Glance

THE TIMETABLE STREAMS EXPLAINED:










Stream 1- most suitable for newbies & aspiring writers

Stream 2- most suitable for those who are more experienced/on the publishing ladder and looking to improve themselves



Stream 3- most suitable for old dogs wanting to learn new tricks.

NB: Streams are for guidance only and anyone can attend any session




FRIDAY CONFERENCE SESSIONS

	Friday Stream 1 	Friday Stream 2 	Friday Stream 3 
8am to 11.55am	Set up and Check In Welcome Refreshments served at 11.45am		
12.00 to 12.15pm	Welcome to the Conference		
Session 1 12.00 to 1.00	Romance State of the Union Panel <i>Join a panel of movers and shakers from the publishing industry to find out, first hand, what's hot and what's not. What's selling and what the next big thing will be.</i>		
1.00 to 2.00	Lunch		
Session 2 2.00 to 3.30	Scrivener for Beginners Vicki Beeby <i>Bring your laptop and learn how to create a project to write your novel.</i>	How to be a Happy and Successful Writer Dream Author Coaching Session Sophie Hannah <i>Learn how to think differently, and behave differently, to create incredible results.</i>	Advanced Canva Pro Animated Graphics Jeevani Charika <i>Use its most complicated features to make your graphics sing and dance.</i>
3.30 to 4.00	Refreshments		
Session 3 4.00 to 5.00 NB some sessions will run to 5.30pm	Attention Seekers: First Lines, Hooks, Titles & Pitches Simon & Schuster <i>An interactive workshop with Clare Hey, Molly Crawford and Sara-Jade Virtue on book titles, first lines, hooks and pitches.</i>	From Keyboard to Keeper Shelf HarperCollins Clare Gordon <i>The editorial director for HQ lifts the petticoats of publishing.</i>	Create a Connection Katie Sadler <i>Practical and actionable advice to build a direct connection with your reader via your newsletter.</i>
6.00 to 7.00	Dinner in the Refectory for Residential Delegates  		
7.00 to 9.30pm		Hopeless Romantics Quiz in the East Side Bar Join us for a fun evening of quizzing, laughter and prizes at the RNA's inaugural Hopeless Romantics Quiz	




SATURDAY AFTERNOON CONFERENCE SESSIONS

	Saturday Stream 1 	Saturday Stream 2 	Saturday Stream 3 
Session 4 1.30 to 3.00	Not Just Talk Rachel Hore <i>Why is what your characters say and how they say it so important? This interactive masterclass from a Sunday Times bestseller will help you write excellent dialogue in your fiction to make your stories sizzle.</i>	Explore Your Author Brand Anna Caig <i>Explore your author brand on social media in a way which feels authentic, enjoyable and avoids the 'cringe factor.' A practical and interactive session with communications specialist Anna Caig.</i>	Advanced Scrivener Vicki Beeby <i>An interactive workshop that explores the advanced functionality that will help you write your novel: using keywords to organise edits; modifying a compile format to simplify the compile process; word-count targets and much more.</i>
Session 5 3.00 to 4.00	Book Builder Idea Kate Harrison <i>7 Steps to planning an irresistible novel Writing your blurb is usually the painful bit that you leave till the end. But what if you flipped it?</i>	Collabor-writing Sarah Ferguson and Marguerite Kaye <i>How do two people write one book? What are the pros and potential cons with working with a 'celebrity'.</i>	Build your Author Brand through Podcasting Julia Boggio of Two Lit Chicks <i>Learn how to reach an engaged and listening worldwide audience.</i>
4.00 to 4.30	Refreshments in the foyer		
Session 6 4.30 to 5.30	The Voice Liz Fenwick and Brigid Coady <i>An irreverent view of author voice and how to find your own.</i>	Researching Romance Amy Burge, Associate Professor in Popular Fiction at Birmingham University explores academics and researchers do with romantic fiction? And why might it matter to authors.	Playing, Writing & Selling Romantic Games Kiley Dunbar and Helen Gaskill <i>Have you ever considered writing for games publishers in the growing romantic games industry?</i>
7.00 to 11.00 pm	Gala Party Get your party sparkle on! ALL DELEGATES can toast the winners of the Joan Hessayon Award and the Elizabeth Goudge Trophy with some fizz, stuff your face with the buffet and then boogie to the disco or chat with friends on the terrace till bedtime.  		

SATURDAY MORNING CONFERENCE SESSIONS

	Saturday Stream 1 	Saturday Stream 2 	Saturday Stream 3 
8am to 9am	Check in and welcome refreshments for day delegates / Breakfast for residential delegates		
Session 1 9.00 to 10.00	<p>Introduction to Canva Jeevani Charika</p> <p><i>For complete beginners who wish to be introduced to the dark art of alluring graphic making.</i></p>	<p>Magical Spells & Creative Wells Laura James</p> <p><i>When a writer peers down the creative well and finds nothing but a puddle, what magic is conjured to ensure the well is refilled?</i></p>	<p>Self Publishing for Romantic Novelists Debbie Young</p> <p><i>Is the indie route right for you? Debbie Young answers the important questions.</i></p>
Session 2 10.00 to 11.00	<p>NWS Meeting</p> <p>A special session hosted by Sarah Rodi exclusively for members of the RNA's New Writers' Scheme.</p>	<p>Romantic Novelists' Association Annual General Meeting NB: For RNA members only.</p>	
11.00 to 11.30	Refreshments in the foyer		
Session 3 11.30 to 12.30	<p>Synopsis Secrets One More Chapter Charlotte Ledger</p> <p><i>How do you structure a synopsis? What should it include and what shouldn't it? How long does it need to be? This workshop spills all the beans from a publisher's perspective.</i></p>	<p>So You Want to Write a Saga Boldwood Books Emily Ruston</p> <p><i>What's the difference between a saga and a historical romance? With sagas now more popular than they have been since the 1970s, what does yours need to make it fly off the shelves?</i></p>	<p>DIY Clever Marketing Carrie Elks</p> <p><i>From failure to fortune – Hybrid author Carrie Elks explains how she earns six figures a year through self-publishing by using marketing systems that work for her.</i></p>
12.30 to 1.30	Lunch		

SUNDAY CONFERENCE SESSIONS

	Sunday Stream 1 	Sunday Stream 2 	Sunday Stream 3 
8.00 to 10.00 am	Breakfast for residential delegates		
Session 1 10.00 to 11.00 am	<p>The 2023 Hero Mills & Boon</p> <p>Hannah Rossiter, Bobbi-Lee Wright, Soraya Bouazzaoui and Awo Ibrahim</p> <p><i>What do readers expect from the perfect 2023 hero? He's changed a lot in the last five years!</i></p>	<p>Balancing Research in Your Writing Ruth Long & Karina Coldrick</p> <p><i>Modern access to information puts a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips but how do we avoid getting lost down the rabbit hole of research to find the key historical facts that bring the past to life?</i></p>	<p>Writing Against the Odds Catherine Miller</p> <p><i>Have you ever found yourself struggling to write? Catherine talks about how she's managed to continue writing despite ill-health and being a mum to twins. She'll talk about pacing, avoiding writers' block, support networks and ensuring editors want to work with you again.</i></p>
Session 2 11.00 to 12.00	<p>The Long & Winding Road to Publishing Success Jessica Redland</p> <p><i>To inspire you to keep believing and to help you get through those bumps in the road because the destination you seek might be just around the next bend.</i></p>	<p>Writing Dual Timelines Kath McGurl</p> <p><i>Learn all the essential elements of a dual timeline story and have a go at planning your own.</i></p>	<p>The Four Pillars of Productivity Liam Livings</p> <p><i>Is it really possible to write 19K words in a weekend? A session that teaches you how to maximise your productivity.</i></p>
12.00 to 12.30	Refreshments in the foyer		
Session 3 12.30 to 1.30	<p>Time Management Catherine Tinley</p> <p><i>Double Romantic Novel of the Year Award winner, Rita and Holt Medallion winner, busy NHS Maternity & Neonatal Service Manager and RNA Board member teaches you how to organise your time.</i></p>	<p>Brainstorming Your Book Fiona Lucas</p> <p><i>Does the idea of creating an outline for your book give you the heebie-jeebies? Do you get stuck partway through your book with no idea of where to go next?</i></p>	<p>The B Word-Back-ups Lynne Connolly</p> <p><i>Ever lost a file? Learn where and how to backup your work so you never lose your precious words again!</i></p>
1.30 to 2.00	Thank-you speeches and Close		

Your Speakers & Tutors A-Z

SCRIVENER

Vicki Beeby

Scrivener for Beginners - Interested in using Scrivener but don't know where to start? Or perhaps you've tried but were left bewildered. This beginners course will take you through the basics of using Scrivener to write your novel. By the end of the workshop you will have created a project on your laptop and tried out the features that will help you to draft, edit and compile your novel to its final file format. You will need access to a Mac or Windows laptop with Scrivener already installed for this workshop.

Advanced Scrivener - Familiar with Scrivener but know you're not making the most of its features? In this hands-on workshop we'll explore some of the more advanced functionality that will help you write your novel: using keywords and collections to organise your structural edits; modifying a compile format to simplify the compile process; word-count targets and much more. You will need access to a Mac or Windows laptop with Scrivener already installed for this workshop.



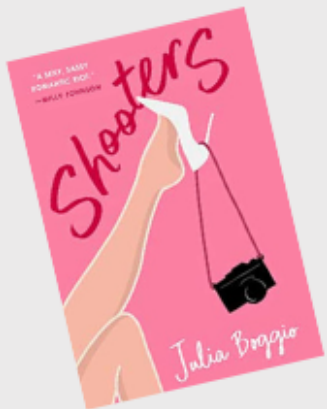
VICKI BEEBY is a saga author who writes about the friendships and loves of service women brought together by the Second World War. Her first job was as a civil engineer on a sewage treatment project, so things could only improve from there. Since then, she has worked as a maths teacher, an education consultant and finally spent seven years on the Scrivener support team. She is published by Canelo and represented by Lina Langlee of The North Literary Agency. She was a finalist for the RNA's Romantic Saga award in 2021 and won it in 2023.

BUILD YOUR AUTHOR BRAND THROUGH PODCASTING

Learn how to reach an engaged and listening worldwide audience

Julia Boggio

*In 2018, there were only 500k podcasts in the world. Now there are over 4 million. Why? It's a relatively low-cost way to build a platform for your brand from the comfort of your own home, while reaching an engaged, worldwide audience. People are listening in higher numbers than ever before. In the UK alone, 50% of adults have listened to a podcast. The big question is: how do you get started? And how do you catch the attention of podcasters as a potential guest? Join **Julia Boggio**, one half of the popular book podcast *Two Lit Chicks*, to learn everything you need to know about podcasting.*



Originally from New Jersey, **JULIA BOGGIO** moved to London in her early twenties. She worked as an advertising copywriter until discovering her love of photography on a 6-month trip around South America. She started a wedding photography business which received some great PR when her own Dirty Dancing-themed wedding dance went viral on YouTube. After 15 years as a photographer, she returned to her first love: writing. Julia writes strong female characters with real, complicated lives, delivered with humour and feel-good factor.

EXPLORE YOUR AUTHOR BRAND

Anna Caig

*Your author brand is the solid foundation on which to build an effective book marketing strategy. But for many, the idea of branding feels awkward or unnatural. It doesn't have to be this way, though. A good author brand is authentic - a version of you that you're comfortable sharing with the public - and it will reflect your interests, as well as the inspirations and motivations behind your writing. This will not only attract readers, but also help you choose marketing activity you'll enjoy. Social media provide great ways to convey your author brand so in this session, communications specialist **Anna Caig** will first support you to explore branding, then how to express this in the content you share online to find and connect with people who'll love your books. Social media, more than any other element of book marketing, often feels like a minefield for authors. How do algorithms actually work, how can you choose which platforms will work for you, and what content should you share? This session will cover all this and more as we explore how to market your books in a way that won't drain all your time as part of your book promotion.*



ANNA CAIG trains writers to do their own marketing, working with The Romantic Novelists' Association, The Society of Authors, Jericho Writers, as well as one-to-one with many authors. She has worked in communications for 20 years, specialising in media relations and strategic marketing campaigns. Anna also writes historical and crime fiction, and her debut novel was shortlisted for the CWA Debut Dagger prize. She reviews books for The Sheffield Telegraph and on her blog. The former Head of Communications at Sheffield City Council and tutor on The University of Sheffield MA Journalism course, Anna began her training business to support writers to build their brand and reach more readers. She now works with traditionally, indie and self-published writers, as well as helping creatives in any discipline find a wider audience.

BALANCING RESEARCH IN YOUR WRITING

Karina Coldrick & Ruth Long

Modern access to information puts a wealth of knowledge at our fingertips but how do we avoid getting lost down the rabbit hole of research to find the key historical facts that bring the past to life? How do we integrate our findings into our tales without the infamous infodump? What is the Tiffany problem and where should writers draw the line on reader expectations?

Karina Coldrick & Ruth Long discuss the heady world of library archives, digital resources, how to handle rare materials, conduct Boolean searches, and give their tips for weaving the treasures you find into your writing in a natural and compelling way.



RUTH LONG is the Librarian of a specialist library of rare and unusual books, handling materials from the dawn of printing to the modern day. She writes award winning, best selling fantasy romance as Ruth Frances Long and Jessica Thorne. She has even written for Tomorrowland, the annual electronic dance music festival.

KARINA COLDRICK's previous work as a business consultant required rapid, deep research to prepare industry analyses at a commercial pace. Today, as Marketing Manager of an archaeological company, she promotes her colleagues' finds and expertise to the world. She writes historical and fantasy romance as Kat Chant and contemporary romance as Katrina Coll.



CANVA

Jeevani Charika



Introduction to Canva - Do you need to make promo images for your book? You can, with Canva. Learn how to use Canva with a hands-on workshop. You will learn how to turn your 'flat' book cover image into a book shaped packshot; and make a simple promo image of your book cover with a review quote. You will need: a Canva free account; your book cover image file; and device to work on (a laptop, tablet or your smartphone) so that you can follow along. This session is for beginners.

Advanced Canva Pro Animated Graphics - In this hands-on workshop, you will use Canva to make a short animated ad for your book. If there is time, I will show you how to make a video book trailer. You will need: A Canva account (a Canva pro account would give you more options, but it's not essential); your book cover packshot image; and a device to work on (a laptop, tablet or your smartphone). This session is for people who are already familiar with Canva.



JEEVANI CHARIKA writes award nominated romcoms and women's fiction that feature strong heroines and nice guy heroes. She also writes as Rhoda Baxter. She taught herself graphic design and now spends far too much time playing with Canva when she should be writing.

THE VOICE

An irreverent view of author voice and how to find your own

Brigid Coady & Liz Fenwick

*How to get all four chairs to turn: Much like the music industry finding your own authorial voice is key to getting discovered by agents, editors, booksellers, and, most importantly, readers. But what does 'voice' actually mean. Using a combination of music, Dickens and winners of the Bad Sex Scene in fiction, **Brigid Coady** and **Liz Fenwick** will take you on a journey to uncover what is voice, why it is important and ways to uncover your own.*



BRIGID COADY is the author of a number of romantic comedies, including Emma Ever After, Persuading Austen, and the Joan Hessayon award winning, No One Wants to be Miss Havisham. Brigid has been the Head of Storytelling for an integrated marketing and communications agency, she has also been a voiceover artist and radio presenter. She will happily discuss fan fiction and all things One Direction, but be warned once started she won't stop.

Called 'the queen of the contemporary Cornish novel' by the Guardian, award winning author **LIZ FENWICK** has written nine books set in her beloved Cornwall, including the latest The Secret Shore. She lives with her husband and two mad cats near the Helford River in Cornwall. When not writing Liz is reading, painting, knitting, plot walking, and procrastinating on social media.

THE B-WORD - BACK UPS

Lynne Connolly

Lynne Connolly is a big believer in the KISS rule. Having lost the first six chapters of her second book, she's also a big believer in effective backups. So she's devised a backup strategy which should work for everybody, taking in the rules the experts recommend - backup to at least 3 places, using different methods. She uses Windows, but this method should also work for Mac users. Once it's set up it just runs itself. And it's not hard to do.



LYNNE CONNOLLY has been writing all her life, but only published for the last 20 years. She's been published in erotic romance, paranormal romance, contemporary romance and historical romance. Keeping it fresh!

PLAYING, WRITING AND SELLING

ROMANTIC GAMES

Kiley Dunbar & Helen Gaskell

Have you ever considered writing for games publishers in the growing romantic games industry? **Kiley** and **Helen** will discuss writing and selling: role playing games, card and table top games, game books, and mobile games, with input on the big screen from researchers from Manchester Metropolitan University's 'Games Centre'. Helen will share her personal experience in the mobile phone game industry writing the worldwide bestselling hit Lily's Garden. She'll talk about creating a new game from scratch, including how she personally pitched and created a new game concept, what it's like writing romances as a nine to five office job, how she got a job by sending a fan letter, and what happens after the Happy Ever After when you have to keep making the game, and the ways in which this might be different from writing a romance novel series. The panel will clearly list the varied publishers buying romantic games today and what they look for in a product, giving the audience a handle on game industry terms to increase confidence when pitching their own games. The team from Man Met Uni will share step-by-step how they wrote, branded and pitched their own romantic TTRPG (table top role play game) over the last six months and Helen and Kiley will demonstrate Kiley's first TTRPG game 'Always on My Mind'



Dr Kirsty Bunting is a senior lecturer in English and creative writing at Manchester Metropolitan University's Manchester Writing School. As **KILEY DUNBAR** she has published eight novels including the popular Borrow a Bookshop series with Canelo imprint, Hera Books. Her One Winter's Night was shortlisted for the RNA 'Romantic Comedy Novel' award, 2021. Kirsty is also a reader on (and proud graduate of) the New Writers' Scheme. She joined the Manchester Metropolitan Game Centre (a research cluster at Man Met Uni) and began writing a romantic role playing game hoping to use her understanding of romance novels to develop a ludic mechanism for a game of romantic storytelling between players. It's been a sharp learning curve, she outlines her findings in her segment of the panel. **HELEN GASKELL** is a writer, producer, and journalist. In 2021 she wrote a popular season of Lily's Garden, a top-grossing romance played daily by millions. She was the first person to write a same-sex romance for a mobile phone game. More recently, she invented and pitched a new romantic game which is still being developed. By day, Helen is the lead content writer for BBC News, Sport and Weather. She is a member of the RNA and has just written her debut novel - a historical romance.

FROM FAILURE TO FORTUNE

DIY CLEVER MARKETING

Carrie Elks

*Does the word 'marketing' send a shiver down your spine? It doesn't have to! In this session contemporary romance author **Carrie Elks** will share the marketing secrets that helped her sell more than half a million books, create an author brand readers respond to, and build the business of her dreams that earns 6 figures.*



CARRIE ELKS is the author of twenty-nine contemporary romance books (and counting). Since 2014, she has been both traditionally and self-published, and her stories have been translated into over ten different languages. She lives in Essex with her husband, two children and a pug called Plato, and when she isn't reading, writing, or loafing about, she enjoys long walks at the beach, listening to the crashing of the waves and pretending she lives in the cute small towns she writes about.

COLLABOR-WRITING

Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York & Marguerite Kaye

From a marriage of convenience to a match made in heaven, Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, and Marguerite Kaye share their own unique process of writing two Sunday Times best-sellers together. When Mills & Boon played marriage broker, and introduced Sarah to Marguerite to discuss working together on Her Heart for a Compass, both were agreed on one thing: they had to get on. They did, like a house on fire, but how did that spark turn into a writing partnership? How do these very unlikely but firm friends work together? Who does what, and how, from research to plotting, writing, editing and revisions? Join them for a fun, frank and interactive conversation about how they collaborwrite, and why their approach has been so successful.

author photo copyright @debbieharephotography



SARAH FERGUSON, the Duchess of York is a global humanitarian, businesswoman, best selling author, producer and wellness advocate. The Duchess has published over 55 books including two autobiographies and titles dealing with health, empowerment, history and art as well as fiction for children and now sweeping historical romance.

MARGUERITE KAYE is a prolific historical romance author hailing from the west coast of Argyll in Scotland. She has written almost sixty books and novellas, and co-authored two books with Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York. She is a voracious reader, a keen sewist and a cook who loves to eat.

FROM KEYBOARD TO KEEPER SHELF

Clare Gordon  HarperCollins Publishers

*A book takes many, many months to write—but that is just the start of its long journey. What happens to your manuscript once you send it to your publisher? Editorial Director at HQ **Clare Gordon** lifts the petticoats of publishing and takes us on a fascinating behind the scenes tour to show us all the different desks it passes and many stages it goes through before a reader takes it home from the bookshop.*

photo copyright James Eckersley



CLARE GORDON is editorial director at HQ, a division of HarperCollins UK. She previously worked at Head of Zeus and Virago Press, and now edits every kind of commercial fiction for HQ. When not working she can be found playing with her dog Max, lifting heavy weights or – naturally – lost in a good book.

BOOK BUILDER IDEA

7 steps to planning an irresistible novel

Kate Harrison

Writing your book's pitch or blurb is often the painful task that you leave till the end. But what if you flipped it, and started by capturing your first idea in the most compelling way possible? Welcome to the Book Idea Builder! **Kate Harrison** – aka Eva Carter and Kate Helm – led a team developing BBC programme ideas before writing bestselling romantic and crime fiction. She's developed and used the BIB method for all 22 of her novels and non-fiction books. Discover the seven stages that take you from your initial spark to understanding your hook, your reader's emotional journey and the qualities that'll help sell your finished novel.



KATE HARRISON is the bestselling author of more than 20 novels and non-fiction books, under her own name and the pseudonyms Kate Helm and Eva Carter. Her most recent novels are How to Save a Life and Owner of a Lonely Heart as Eva Carter. Her books include romantic comedies (The Secret Shopper's Revenge), psychological thrillers (The House Share, Soul Beach), and diet/recipe books (The 5:2 Diet Book). Kate previously worked as a TV reporter and led a team creating new programmes for the BBC. She put that knowledge into Pitch Power, an author's guide to developing and selling ideas. She also writes scripts for the award-winning Short History of... podcast.

HOW TO BE A HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL WRITER

Sophie Hannah

*Most writers have dreams — things we want to achieve; things that would make us proud if we managed to make them a reality. That's great, right? Well, not always. For many writers, those same dreams become a source of stress, guilt, frustration and even shame. We feel stuck and tell ourselves we'll never succeed in the way we once hoped we would. When your writing dreams bring you more anxiety than joy, it affects your resolve and your productivity, and you end up not taking the action you need to take in order to propel your dreams in the right direction so that they can stand a strong chance of coming true. In this Dream Author Coaching session with **Sophie Hannah**, you will learn how to think differently, and behave differently, to create incredible results.*



SOPHIE HANNAH is an internationally bestselling crime fiction writer whose books have sold millions of copies worldwide. She is published in 51 countries, and has written five new Hercule Poirot mysteries at the request of Agatha Christie's family and estate. In 2013, Sophie won the Crime Thriller of the Year Award at the UK's National Book Awards for her novel *The Carrier*. She is the founder of the Dream Author Coaching Programme for writers, and her murder mystery musical movie, *The Mystery of Mr. E*, will be released in December.

NOT JUST TALK

Rachel Hore

Great dialogue is vital to successful fiction. It brings vitality and drama to the writing, can be used to progress narrative or to hint at secret undercurrents. It can succinctly convey character and background information. But how does it differ from real-life speech and how can you make it work for your stories? In our session we will examine some examples of sparkling fictional dialogue and identify how they work then try some simple exercises to hone our skills. There should also be time for questions.

author photo copyright Charlotte Murphy



RACHEL HORE worked as a commissioning editor for fiction for many years before writing her first novel, **THE DREAM HOUSE**. She is the author of thirteen novels, many of them Sunday Times bestsellers. **A PLACE OF SECRETS**, **LAST LETTER HOME** and **A BEAUTIFUL SPY** were all Richard & Judy Bookclub selections. **THE GLASS PAINTER'S DAUGHTER** was shortlisted for the RNA's Romantic Novel of the Year in 2010, and **A GATHERING STORM** for Historical Novel of the Year in 2012. **THE HIDDEN YEARS** is to be published in September 2023. Until recently a lecturer in Publishing and Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia, she currently lives in Norwich with her writer husband and an equally adorable fox-red Labrador.

MAGICAL SPELLS & CREATIVE WELLS

Laura E James

When a writer peers down the creative well and finds nothing but a puddle, what magic is conjured to ensure the well is refilled? Join Laura, for an hour of mind-bending sorcery and inspirational moments as we share, demonstrate, and celebrate the way we as writers of romantic fiction keep the magic going and the creativity flowing. Do green fingers nurture your novel? Does embroidery help with tying up loose ends? Can singing showtunes bring harmony to your characters? I invite you to spellbind us with your magic. On the day, bring in your crochet, set up your painter's easel; prepare a backing track with which we can sing along. Inspire others with what inspires you. Does a good plot walk get the action moving? Are museums your muse? Does playing the piano set the tone? If you'd like to cast your spells on the screen instead, please send your details, photos and/or videos of your magic in action to laurajames@romanticwriters.co.uk by July 31st 2023. These will be curated and shared during the interactive workshop. If you are sending a video or photograph that is not your original, please obtain permission to use from the owner. Starting with a blank document and creating characters who step off the page, writing a story that makes readers laugh and cry, and taking our readers along paths they've never imagined is, after all, in the words of Queen, a kind of magic. Disclaimer: May involve mentions of Kate Bush, Paloma Faith and musical theatre.



LAURA E JAMES is married with two adult children and lives in the inspirational county of Dorset. A writer with disabilities and chronic health conditions, Laura is a graduate of the New Writers' Scheme, and the RNA's Industry Awards Organiser. *Truth or Dare?*, Laura's debut, was shortlisted for the 2014 Joan Hessayon New Writers' Award and the Festival of Romance Best Ebook award. Her first paperback, *Follow Me Follow You*, was a Lovereading editorial choice. *What Doesn't Kill You*, the third in her Chesil Series, spearheaded Choc Lit's Dark imprint. Laura's short story *Bitter Sweet* appears in the RNA's anthology, *Truly, Madly, Deeply*.

SYNOPSIS SECRETS

Charlotte Ledger



Looking for help on how to write the perfect synopsis to go with your manuscript?

Learn the secrets of a good synopsis and get an insider's knowledge of what publishers are looking for!



CHARLOTTE LEDGER is Publisher of One More Chapter. She started in publishing in 2011 at Mills & Boon before moving across to HarperCollins in 2013. Since then, she has worked across commercial fiction from Sunday Times bestseller Sally Page to Julie Caplin, who has sold over a million copies worldwide. A champion for digital publishing, Charlotte was highly commended at the Futurebook awards and won the Book Marketing Society's Best Shoestring Campaign for her work on the first online romance festival. She was shortlisted for The Bookseller and SYP's Trailblazer of the Year award and has won the Romantic Novelist Association's Publisher of the Year award twice, nominated a third time.

THE FOUR PILLARS OF PRODUCTIVITY

Liam Livings

*In our forever connected world where authors are expected to do so much more than writing the story, and we all juggle writing with family, life, and other responsibilities, how can you make the most of your limited time and re-focus on the most important thing for an author to do – writing? Based on his book, 19,000 Word Weekend, **Liam Livings** will unpack how to improve your focus and productivity on writing. It doesn't guarantee everyone will leave being able to write 19,000 words in a weekend, because your mileage may vary and not all techniques work for all people. However, within the 4 techniques described there should be elements everyone can adapt or adopt and apply to their own writing.*



While working full time, since 2014, **LIAM LIVINGS** has averaged writing 350,000 – 400,000 words of fiction per year. To date, from 2014 to 2021, as full calendar years, he has thirty-one published books. This works out at just under four and a half books published per year. Published by small presses, independently and more recently by Hera, as Charlie Lyndhurst, since 2013, Liam Livings has more than 30 published books and made the RONA shortlist . Liam has a MA in creative writing from Kingston University and has co-taught and co-created numerous writing workshops with Virginia Heath.

BRAINSTORMING YOUR BOOK

Fiona Lucas

*Does the idea of creating an outline for your book give you the heebie-jeebies? Do you get stuck partway through your book with no idea of where to go next? Whether you are a plotter or a pantsier (or somewhere in between) **Fiona Lucas** will give you tips and tricks to help kick-start the creative process and write an exciting book full of twists and turns.*



FIONA LUCAS is an award-winning author of heart-wrenching, heartwarming romance and women's fiction. She started her career penning heartwarming, funny romances for both Mills & Boon and Mira under the pen name of Fiona Harper, and now writes emotional and uplifting love stories for HQ, an imprint of Harper Collins. Fiona is a complete story nerd and loves talking and teaching about writing craft and story structure. Come and find her on TikTok, where she gives writing tips and makes daft videos about life as a writer: [@fionalucasauthor](https://www.tiktok.com/@fionalucasauthor).

WRITING DUAL TIMELINES

Kath McGurl

*In this session **Kath McGurl** explains the difference between timeslip and dual timeline, talks through the elements needed for a successful dual timeline novel and how she goes about writing them, and then invites the audience to have a go at planning one*



KATHLEEN MCGURL is the author of over a dozen dual timeline novels, in which a historical mystery is uncovered and resolved in the present day. She has sold over 600,000 copies of her books and has been a USA Today best selling author. She is published by HQ, lives in Christchurch and spends an awful lot of time touring France and Spain in her motorhome.

WRITING AGAINST THE ODDS

Catherine Miller

Have you ever found yourself struggling to write? Catherine talks about how she's managed to continue writing despite ill-health and being a mum to twins.

She'll talk about pacing, time management, avoiding writers' block, support networks and ensuring editors want to work with you again giving you some of the key ingredients that should help see you through your career.

author photo copyright Laura E James



CATHERINE MILLER is the bestselling author of 10+ novels including *The Day that Changed Everything*. She's guest edited *The Disabled Issue* of *The Bookseller* and balances writing alongside living with chronic illness and being the mother of twins.

THE 2023 HERO

Mills & Boon

In this workshop led by Mills & Boon's series editors, find out how the archetype of the perfect hero has evolved, and what readers are looking for right now. We'll highlight the red and green flags in heroes from past and present, and show how you can craft a nuanced hero that will stay – forever! – in the heart of your reader. We'll also explore how to create a contemporary Alpha Hero and navigate tropes like workplace romances. We will then dive into character games and writing exercises that explore what gives readers the ick, and what makes them fall – hard! – for a hero...



Hannah Rossiter
Editor
Mills & Boon Historical



Bobbi-Lee Wright
Editorial Assistant
Mills & Boon Modern

MILLS & BOON



Soraya Bouazzaoui
Associate Editor
Mills & Boon



Awo Ibrahim
Editorial Assistant
Mills & Boon Historical

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD TO PUBLISHING SUCCESS

Jessica Redland

*Who'd be a published author? It's a journey that can take you through disappointment, confusion and frustration. But it can also take you to places of such beauty that those difficult detours along the way are worth it. As a graduate of the NWS in 2014, **Jessica Redland** thought she had it made when she secured a publishing deal for her debut novel, but things don't always turn out the way you hope or expect and, a few years later, barely selling any books as an indie author, she seriously questioned whether it was worth it. One more submission, she told herself, and then I'm out. This is her personal journey along the long and very winding road to publication success, sharing what she learned with each setback and what she continues to learn. The aim is to inspire you to keep believing and to help you get through those bumps in the road because the destination you seek might be just around the next bend.*



JESSICA REDLAND is a bestselling author of emotional but uplifting stories of love, friendship, family, and community. Her Whitsborough Bay books transport readers to the stunning North Yorkshire Coast, which is where she lives with her husband, daughter and sprocker spaniel. Her Hedgehog Hollow series, set in a hedgehog rescue centre, takes readers into the beautiful rolling countryside of the Yorkshire Wolds and, brand new for summer 2023, she's adding lakes and mountains to her settings repertoire with her 'Escape to the Lakes' series. She's a graduate of the NWS and is published by Boldwood Books.

SO YOU WANT TO WRITE A SAGA ... ?

Boldwood

Emily Ruston

*What's the difference between a saga and a historical romance? With sagas now more popular than they have been since the 1970s, what does yours need to make it fly off the shelves? From the filthy slums of Victorian Yorkshire to the brave women who did their duty during two world wars, Sagas cover a breadth of dramatic, tumultuous and emotional moments in history. But what does it take to bring these stories - and the characters who feature in them - to life? In this talk, Editorial Director **Emily Ruston** will explore what all good Sagas need to be a success and answer any questions about how to make your Saga shine.*



EMILY RUSTON is Editorial Director at Boldwood Books with a list of bestselling authors writing brilliant books across all genres. Before this, Emily worked in a freelance capacity for some of the biggest global publishers and digital ground-breakers and also saw her private clients go on to achieve best-selling independent success and secure dreams of a traditional publishing contract.

CREATE A CONNECTION

Katie Sadler

*Social media platforms go in and out of fashion, but the old-fashioned newsletter is still one of the best ways to build a direct connection with your reader. Join marketing consultant **Katie Sadler** as she talks you through how to create a newsletter programme that works for you, attracts your ideal reader and sells books. Whether you are brand new to email newsletters, or have an email list you feel could be working much harder, this talk will provide practical and actionable advice you can start implementing straight away.*



As well as being a keen romance reader, **KATIE SADLER** is an award-winner book marketer with over 14 years experience within the publishing industry. She first started working on romance when she launched a new digital imprint while at HarperCollins: HarperImpulse, now known at One More Chapter. As part of her work with HarperImpulse, she coordinated the first ever virtual Romance Festival, and was solely responsible for all marketing for the brand and the authors published under its umbrella. **Katie is now a freelance marketing consultant, and helps authors from all genres create marketing plans that feel good and sell books.**

ATTENTION SEEKERS WITH S&S

Clare Hey, Molly Crawford & Sara-Jade Virtue

Join **Clare Hey**, **Molly Crawford** and **Sara-Jade Virtue** for an interactive workshop aimed at new writers to address book titles, first lines, hooks and pitches with a few Case Studies to dissect. We encourage all attendees to participate fully in the discussion, and bring along their own pitches and hooks for live feedback.



Clare Hey heads up the adult fiction team at Simon & Schuster UK and oversees the strategy of the list as a whole. Her career has taken her from Harper Collins to S&S, to Orion and back to S&S. Her passion is finding brilliant authors and bringing their books to as wide an audience as possible. She's drawn to strong storytelling, fresh voices and interesting hooks, and publishes primarily across women's fiction, reading group and historical fiction.

Molly Crawford's list includes the international bestselling author and global phenomenon, Colleen Hoover, as well as Sunday Times bestselling authors Elena Armas and Hannah Grace. She publishes the perennially moodlifting Holly Hepburn, as well as exciting new voices in the romance space: Sonya Singh, Rosa Temple and Rebecca Ryan. She enjoys novels that tackle complex emotions by distilling them through wit and humour, loves stories that transport her, with memorable characters who go on big journeys – whether those be emotional or physical.

Sara-Jade Virtue runs the Books and the City community, manages the #DigitalOriginals and #OneDay open submission publishing programme, helps shape the S&S commercial women's fiction list and develops growth strategies for all S&S brand and emerging authors. She's looking for books that move her, fresh takes on the universal themes of love and life, books that make her laugh and cry (preferably both) and is actively looking to acquire novels that reflect a broad diversity of experience. In 2022 she won the RNA Publisher/Editor of the Year award and is passionate about driving the #RespectRomFic movement she launched in 2022, aiming to shift the dismissive attitude she believes the Romance genre receives, demanding respect for the love stories she loves.

TIME MANAGEMENT

Catherine Tinley

*As an author who fits her writing in around family, a busy day job, and various volunteering roles, **Catherine Tinley** has had to learn how to manage her time effectively. In this interactive session she will cover topics such as distraction, procrastination, and motivation. This session is suitable for writers at all stages of their career.*



CATHERINE TINLEY is a multi-award winning romance writer. She has published ten novels with Mills & Boon and has won a Rita award as well as two RoNAs. She manages a busy maternity hospital in her day job and is also the RNA Vice-Chair and governance lead. In addition she serves on two other boards and volunteers with the GAA sporting organisation. She lives in Ireland with her husband, various pets, and young adult children.

RESEARCHING ROMANCE

Amy Burge & Katie Deane



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

What do academics and researchers do with romantic fiction? How is it studied? And why might it matter to authors? Lifting the lid on fifty years of popular romance scholarship in this deep dive into the ever-changing world of romance reading and writing.



DR AMY BURGE is Senior Lecturer in Popular Fiction at the University of Birmingham. She has been researching popular romance for 15 years, and has published academic work on sheikh romance, Mills & Boon historical romance, twentieth-century Scottish romantic fiction, and migration in popular romance novels. She is managing editor of the open access Journal of Popular Romance Studies.



KATIE DEANE is an M4C Collaborative Doctoral Award PhD student at the University of Birmingham. Her research, conducted in partnership with Mills & Boon, focuses on romance readership and publishing, with a particular focus on diversity.

SELF-PUBLISHING FOR ROMANTIC NOVELISTS

Important Questions Answered

Debbie Young

*Is the indie route right for you and your books? Whether you are an NWS member, debut novelist or established author with a substantial back catalogue, **Debbie Young**'s talk will enable you to make an informed decision about the place of self-publishing in your writing career. It will summarise the nuts and bolts of how to do it successfully while avoiding sharks and charlatans along the way.*



Guest speaker **DEBBIE YOUNG** is a successful hybrid author, proudly self-published for ten years, and with a 13-book contract with Boldwood Books. She is course tutor of Jericho Writers' Simply Self-publish course; a UK Ambassador for the Alliance of Independent Authors; former editor of ALLi's Self-publishing Advice blog; twice shortlisted for The Selfies Award for the best independently-published fiction for adults in the UK; and author of two series of articles on self-publishing for Romance Matters and Mslexia. Take advantage of her decade of self-publishing experience in this packed 90-minute session, which will include plenty of opportunity to ask your own questions.



ROMANTIC
NOVELISTS'
ASSOCIATION®

CONFERENCE 2023

Opportunities to Pitch Your Story

Whether you are an unpublished writer looking for your first break or a published writer looking to climb the next rung of the publishing ladder, find an agent or change genres, we have an extensive selection of Industry Professionals attending who will be taking pitches by APPOINTMENT ONLY.

All RNA members attending the conference can pitch to up to 5 IPs as part of their conference package & are guaranteed at least 1 appointment

All other attendees who are not RNA members can pitch to up to 4 IPs for a non-refundable £50 admin fee & are guaranteed at least 1 appointment

A free online blurb writing workshop will be available in early May to all conference attendees and the link to the recording will be emailed to you along with all the instructions of how to pitch for appointments.

Pitch applications will open on 15th May 2023
See the separate 1-2-1 brochure for details

How to book your place

You can book from a selection of 3 packages via our website at <https://romanticnovelistsassociation.org/event/romantic-novelists-association-conference-2023/edate/2023-08-11/>

Conference Packages & Prices

OPTION 1

RESIDENTIAL FRI-SUN

Includes:

- Single ensuite accommodation
- Breakfast Sat & Sun
- Lunch Friday & Saturday
- Dinner Friday
- Full conference programme
- Gala Party buffet & fizz Saturday
- Designated Refreshments

£650 RNA MEMBERS

£750 NON MEMBERS

OPTION 2

NON-RESIDENTIAL FRI-SUN

Includes:

- Lunch Friday & Saturday
- Full conference programme
- Gala Party buffet & fizz Saturday
- Designated refreshments

£400 RNA MEMBERS

£500 NON MEMBERS

OPTION 3

SATURDAY ONLY DAY PASS

Includes:

- Lunch Saturday
- Full Saturday Programme
- Gala Party buffet & fizz Saturday
- Designated refreshments

£250 RNA MEMBERS

£300 NON MEMBERS

PRICES & BOOKINGS FOR ADDITIONAL THURSDAY ACCOMMODATION OR FOR ACCESSIBLE ROOMS, DOUBLE OR TWIN ROOMS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST AND SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.

Email all booking enquiries to rnaconference@romanticwriters.co.uk