



NEATH ARTS FESTIVAL RETURNS!

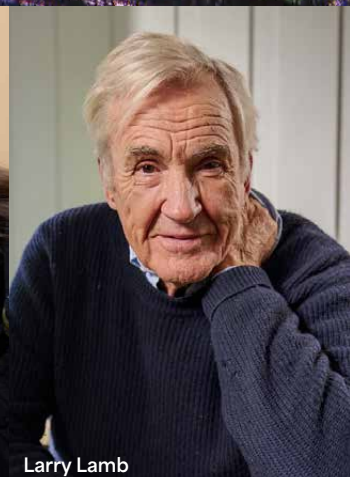
15th - 18th October 2026
neathartsfestival.cymru



Joe Webb



Elizabeth Alker



Larry Lamb

NEATH ARTS FESTIVAL is delighted to present the jazz pianist **Joe Webb** at a very special homecoming show on **Saturday 17th October 2026**.

Joe grew up in Neath before moving away to study music and has since become one of the most successful jazz pianists of his generation. His last album was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize and he's collaborated with musicians such as Jools Holland and Raye. Joe returns to perform at Neath Little Theatre with Will Sach on bass and Sam Jesson on drums. Tickets can be purchased via the Gwyn Hall, though the majority of our events are completely free.

This year's festival showcases music, books, art, drama, and heritage at venues across the town centre.

The books programme includes an appearance by the *Gavin & Stacey* and *EastEnders* actor, **Larry Lamb**, who will read his poetry and talk about his life and career.

The programme also features BBC Radio 3 presenter of *Unclassified* and *Classical Live*, **Elizabeth Alker**, who will

be joined by Huw Stephens from 6 Music and Radio Wales to discuss her book *Everything We Do Is Music*.

Jeffrey Holland, a renowned comedy actor best known for roles in *Hi-de-Hi!* and *You Rang, M'Lord?* will be talking about his biography with collaborator Robert Ross at Neath Town Hall.

The wide-ranging books programme will also include **Jon Doyle** and **Anthony Shapland** in a discussion of their acclaimed new novels, Welsh language writer **Grug Muse** discussing her memoir of cycling across America and **Ben Giles** discussing his book where he describes his life as a crime scene cleaner. Neath Town Hall will also be the location for a series of short talks by the Neath Antiquarian Society about fascinating local histories.

Art exhibitions include art inspired by Ancient Rome at Queen Street Gallery, Neath and District Photographic Society at the Camera Club on Bridge Street and shows by both the Pontardawe and Cadoxton Art Clubs.

One of the most exciting music events will be a performance by Neath Symphony Orchestra at St. David's Church. The orchestra has been dormant for decades but has been reinstated by volunteers.

Neath Little Theatre will be the venue for a play called *Cyn* on Thursday 15th October at 7.30pm. The play explores the change in mining communities over time, centred on the arrival of a lone English hiker seeking assistance at a quiet, local pub in the Valleys.

The festival will also feature free live music at The Arch on Friday evening and throughout Saturday at St David's Church, showcasing a diverse range of talented local musicians.

Neath Arts Festival exists to stage artistic and cultural events in Neath Town Centre. We are grateful to Neath Town Council and all our sponsors for helping us to realise the festival. We encourage you to get in touch should you want to volunteer: shwmae@neathartsfestival.cymru

Neath Arts Festival 2026 is sponsored by

Event genre key:



Art



Literature



Music



Drama



Heritage

ALL WEEKEND

After the Romans: Art Exhibition

Queen Street Gallery, the Canterbury Lofts
3rd-31st Oct | 10:00 - 16:00 | Free entry



An exhibition of new work inspired by the history, art, and design of the Romans. The Roman Empire was renowned for its architecture, sculpture, painting and mosaic work. This exhibition at Queen Street Gallery is a selection of the work submitted following a call out for artwork inspired by the Romans.

After the Romans: Young Artists Postcard Art Exhibition

Queen Street Studios, 40 Queen Street
3rd-31st Oct | 10:00 - 16:00 | Free entry



An exhibition of postcard sized artwork by young artists aged 5 to 16 inspired by the history, art, and design of the Romans. A companion exhibition to the *After the Romans* exhibition at Queen Street Gallery.

Art Exhibition

St Thomas' Church
15th-17th Oct | 10:00 - 16:00 | Free entry



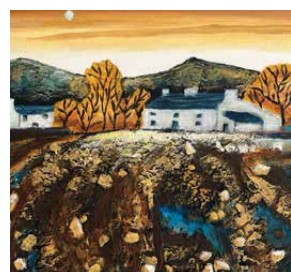
An exhibition of varied artwork developed by the Pontardawe Art Club. A selection of prize-winning artworks submitted by promising young artists from local schools will be on display.

There will be a talk and display of stained-glass fine art created by Sonia Hawking with special reference to the stained glass in St. Thomas's Church. Sonia is a professional stained-glass artist who is based in her studio workshop found in the centre of Neath. A selection of her work will be for sale as part of her exhibition.

Members of the church will perform a selection of live music in order to enhance the display of visual arts.

Art Exhibition from Cadoxton Art

Neath Guides' Hall
15th-17th Oct | 10:00 - 16:00 | Free entry



Cadoxton Art is a small local art club that meets weekly at the Community Centre. We have artists with a range of talents who use media from watercolour to acrylic and from collage to pen and ink.

Photography Exhibition

Neath and District Photographic Society
16th-18th Oct | 10:00 - 16:00 | Free entry



An exhibition by members of Neath and District Photographic Society. Formed in 1934, Neath & District Photographic Society has an outstanding track record of success at local, national and international levels. Members are photographers with a wide range of abilities, from those new to photography to the more seasoned members.

Beyond the Frame

Orchard Street Community Centre
16th-18th Oct | 10:00 - 16:00 | Free entry



Celebrating the creative journeys of NPTC Group alumni and staff, this exhibition showcases artists who continue to shape, challenge and inspire through photography and visual arts. Their work reflects evolving perspectives, personal expression, and the enduring impact of creative practice beyond the frame.

THURSDAY 15th OCTOBER

Neath Literary Walk

Starts at Victoria Gardens' Bandstand
15th Oct | 15:00 | £6



A Library of Wales literary walking tour of Neath with writer and publisher Richard Davies, historian and writer Daryl Leeworthy, poet Rhys Owain Williams, and troubadour Mark Waldron. Delve into some of our town's less well-known literary heritage.
Approximate time: 1 hour.

Dogs In A Storm: Book Launch

Margot's, Orchard Street
15th Oct | 16:30 | Free entry



The launch of a new collection of short stories by one of Wales's most exciting new fiction writers. Ranging from South Wales to the American West, the stories in *Dogs in a Storm* are full of people pushing the limits of their own lives. Join us to hear Brenig discuss his new book and read extracts from the stories. *Sponsored by Parthian.*

Menna Gallie

Neath Little Theatre
15th Oct | 18:00 | Free entry



Discover the wit, warmth and Welsh spirit of Menna Gallie – novelist, short story writer and broadcaster. Angela John and David Michael will lead an engaging look at Gallie's life (1900-1990), work and lasting voice. The evening will also feature extracts from a play by Diana Griffiths, inspired by Gallie's novel, *Strike for a Kingdom*.

Codi'r Llais

Orchard Place Chapel
15th Oct | 18:30 | £10



Tŷ Cerdd | Music Wales
Music in Wales, Music of Wales.
Cerddoriaeth yng Nghymru, Cerddoriaeth o Gymru.

Cyngor Celfyddydau Cymru
Arts Council of Wales

ARIENNIR GAN
Y LOTERI
LOTTERY FUNDED



A very special concert featuring acclaimed musician and poet Casi Wyn, Neath Male Voice Choir and learners from Ysgol Gymraeg Castell-nedd and Alderman Davies Church in Wales School. This concert is the culmination of workshops led by Casi Wyn with local schoolchildren, who worked to interpret and rehearse songs they will perform with Casi and her band. The evening will also include contributions from Neath Male Voice Choir in a celebration of Welsh song. This project, commissioned by Neath Arts Festival, has been made possible by lottery funding awarded by Tŷ Cerdd - Wales Music Centre.



Cyn

Neath Little Theatre
15th Oct | 19:30 | £10



Supported by live music and the songs of Max Boyce, this bittersweet drama looks back at the miners' strike and asks the question: where did the heart go? *Age Guidance: 14+ strong language/swearing.*



FRIDAY 16th OCTOBER

Phillip Grant - Rees Stephens: Like Father Like Son

Neath Town Hall
16th Oct | 15:00 | Free entry



Philip Grant discusses his book, *Rees Stephens: Like Father Like Son*. This is the story of two of the Welsh All Blacks' most famous sons: the legendary Tonmawr, Neath, Wales and British Lions forward Rees Stephens and his father Glyn. They remain the only father and son to captain the Welsh rugby team.

Andrew Green

Neath Town Hall
16th Oct | 16:00 | Free entry

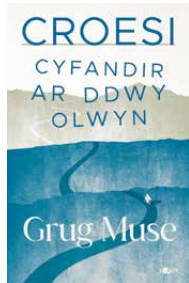


Cader Idris has always held a strong attraction to visual artists. Yet, *Cader Idris and the Artists* is the first book to discuss the artistic depiction of the mountain, from the 1760s to the present day.

Croesi Cyfandir ar Ddwy Olwyn

Neath Town Hall

16th Oct | 17:00 | Free entry



Grug Muse cycled from Cape Cod to Portland, Oregon. This is the story of that incredible 4,000 mile journey. Come and hear Grug discuss the challenges and adventures documented in her wonderful book. *This event will take place in Welsh with simultaneous translation for those who don't understand Welsh and Welsh learners.*

A Room Above A Shop

Neath Town Hall

16th Oct | 18:00 | Free entry



Anthony Shapland won the Wales Book of the Year award in 2026 for his novel *A Room Above A Shop*. In this unique conversation, Anthony will discuss his critically acclaimed book and will discuss the Welsh language adaptation called *Lan Stâr* with collaborator Esyllt Angharad Lewis.

This will be a bilingual event with some contributions being made in Welsh. Simultaneous translation will be available for those who do not understand Welsh.

Neath Symphony Orchestra

St David's Church

16th Oct | 19:30 | £10



The Neath Symphony Orchestra performs for the first time in fifty years. Paul Lewis, former student of the orchestra's founding director, will lead a group of

highly accomplished amateur players, talented students, and original members through a selection of timeless classics and favourites from stage and screen. The orchestra will pay homage to its past as it looks to provide regular classical music concerts for the Neath Port Talbot community for many years to come. *Sponsored by Friends of the Gwyn Hall.*



King Goon

The Arch

16th Oct | 20:00 | Free entry



King Goon is a six-piece punk rock band with a bad ska habit. Known for their incendiary, unpredictable and whipcrack-tight live shows, they've survived

recessions, plagues and seven prime ministers to emerge as one of the most exciting and unique acts on the Welsh music scene today.

The Roves

The Arch

16th Oct | 21:00 | Free entry

Fresh off the back of a European Tour, 4th album and numerous shows around the UK, The Roves bring it all the way back home to Neath Arts Festival with their coming-from-behind rock and roll show.



Mantis

The Arch

16th Oct | 22:00 | Free entry

Mantis is based in Cardiff, bringing bilingual lyrics, spoken word, Spaghetti Western and native Folk to their hypnotic rock sound. Mantis' dynamic, cinematic debut album *The Amber Sun Saloon* brings words and sounds informed by both imagination and experience. "An album that embraces their heritage while creating a complete world of their own."

SATURDAY 17th OCTOBER

Alex Wharton

Neath Town Hall

17th Oct | 10:00 | Free entry



Join award-winning poet and former Children's Laureate Alex Wharton for a fun-packed poetry and rap workshop full of fun, rhythm and creativity.

Lara Omidvar

St David's Church

17th Oct | 10:30 | Free entry



Lara Omidvar is a distinguished multi-instrumentalist and accompanist. A flautist, violinist, pianist and singer, she studies at the Royal Academy of Music Junior Conservatoire.

History Short Talks with Neath Antiquarian Society

Neath Town Hall

17th Oct | 11:00 | Free entry



Three short talks in an hour, all delivered against the clock. Mary Walker highlights the *Female Gangsters of Neath Abbey*, discussing its

excavation in the 1920s. Paul Richards will then lead us to the Eaglesbush Valley in his talk, *History Hidden in Plain Sight*. The session ends with Keith Tucker, a regular speaker in the Society's programme, who will present photographs from the society's photographic archive.

Tonna Male Voice Choir

St David's Church

17th Oct | 11:00 | Free entry

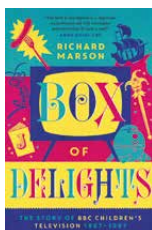


Initiated from a weekly sing-along at the Railway Tavern, Aberdulais, Tonna Male Voice Choir was born in 1968, rapidly gained members and became a much admired choir in Tonna and South Wales.

Box of Delights

Neath Town Hall

17th Oct | 12:00 | Free entry



Richard Marson discusses his book, *Box of Delights*, a fascinating journey through the golden age of BBC Children's Television. Revealing the creativity, personalities and behind-the-scenes stories from beloved shows that inspired generations, including *Play School*, *Grange Hill*, *Rentaghost*, *Record Breakers* and many more.

The Session

St David's Church

17th Oct | 12:00 | Free entry

An hour of free live music performed by local musicians.

Book Sale

Neath Mechanics' Institute at Church Place

17th Oct | 12:30 - 15:00



Neath Antiquarian Society will hold a book sale at Neath Mechanics' Institute at Church Place, selling a wide variety of books on all aspects of Neath history. Cash only.

Caws a Bara

St David's Church

17th Oct | 13:00 | Free entry



Caws a Bara are Tracy Hales, Geraint Roberts and Ian 'Titch' Thomas, who all live in Swansea or the Tawe Valley. They play traditional Welsh tunes, and songs in Welsh (occasionally in English) on a variety of acoustic instruments.

Jeffrey Holland

Neath Town Hall

17th Oct | 13:30 | £6



Join beloved comedy legend Jeffrey Holland in a joyful and nostalgic conversation about his autobiography *The First Rule of Comedy*. Best known as Spike Dixon in *Hi-de-Hi!* and James Twelvetimes in *You Rang, M'Lord?*, expect hilarious backstage stories, touching

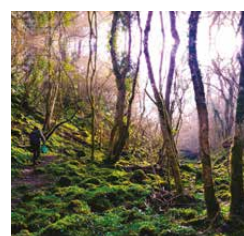


memories and reflections on variety theatre, classic sitcoms and working with some of Britain's best-loved performers. Jeffrey will be talking to comedy historian Robert Ross.

Derw ab Dôn

St David's Church

17th Oct | 14:00 | Free entry

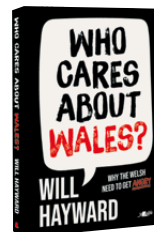


Derw ab Dôn is an experimental, funk-folk musician and producer. Heavily inspired by mythology, nature, science and the concept of "the children of Dôn" (the primordial earth goddess), their music blends lo-fi acoustic elements with digital synth soundscapes, creating a bridge between nature and modernity.

Will Hayward

Neath Town Hall

17th Oct | 15:00 | Free entry



Will Hayward is a multi-award winning investigative journalist and respected expert on Welsh politics, social/public affairs, and Welsh independence. Will joins us to discuss his book *Who Cares About Wales?* An easy-to-read but forensic investigation of how Wales has been short-changed by both Westminster and its own government - a rallying cry to the people who call Cymru home.

SATURDAY 17th OCTOBER

Iona

St David's Church
17th Oct | 15:00 | Free entry

Iona is an alternative Welsh folk artist from South Wales, making her debut performance ahead of the release of her album *Lleisiau'r Menywod Nas Canmolwyd*. This album tells the stories of multiple different Welsh female characters and historical figures, weaving storytelling into modern soundscapes. She blends the organic warmth of folk music with ethereal electronic textures, creating something that feels both timeless and new. With support from Arianwen Brinn-Hetherington.

Future Blood Acoustic

St David's Church
17th Oct | 16:00 | Free entry



Future Blood is a youth music development project based at Pontardawe Arts that has run for over ten years. Led by Rich Thair, with weekly support from Steve Balsamo, it provides a safe, creative space for young people to write original music and develop their live performance skills. This acoustic session features singer-songwriters Scott Hayes, Manon, Angharad and Chantella.

Jon Doyle: Communion

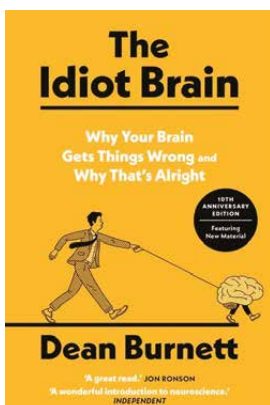
Neath Town Hall
17th Oct | 16:30 | Free entry



Jon Doyle discusses his debut novel, *Communion*. Set in Port Talbot, *Communion* explores working class identity and community in a town shaped by the decline of the steel industry. Jon is a writer based in Port Talbot and won the Working-Class Writers' Prize 2023. *Communion* was selected as one of *The Observer's* Best Debut Novels of 2026.

The Idiot Brain

Neath Town Hall
17th Oct | 18:00 | Free entry



Ten years ago, a Welsh neuroscientist wrote a witty exploration of the human brain. It has since gone on to be an international best seller, selling over a million copies and encouraging many to question the failings of their own brain. Why do we make terrible decisions, forget things and overthink everything?

Join author and neuroscientist, Dean Burnett, in conversation for a humorous and invigorating discussion on *The Idiot Brain*.

Joe Webb Trio

Neath Little Theatre
17th Oct | 19:30 | £15



Joe Webb is one of Neath's great success stories. He's a Mercury Music Prize nominated musician who's shared a stage with Jools Holland, and written songs for Raye. Since leaving Neath to pursue a career in music, Joe has garnered a reputation as one of the world's most formidable jazz pianists, and Neath Arts Festival is delighted to be staging his homecoming show!

In what promises to be an unmissable event, Joe Webb will be joined by bassist Will Sach and drummer Sam Jesson to perform songs from Joe's latest album *Neath Beat*. The sound draws on the velocity and harmonic imagination of Art Tatum, channelled through a modern, British sensibility shaped by the melodic directness and confidence of Oasis.
Sponsored by Yamaha.



SUNDAY 18TH OCTOBER

History Short Talks with Neath Antiquarian Society

Neath Town Hall
18th Oct | 10:30 | Free entry

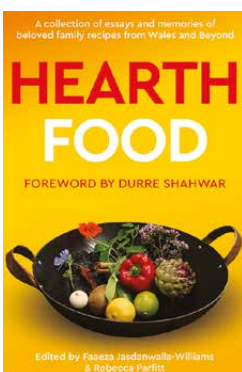


Three varied short talks in an hour, all delivered against the clock. David Michael looks at the failure of the General Strike of 1926 in his talk, "Let's Have Some Coal" the Victoria Gardens Coal Raid of 1926. Ray Collier speaks about the Anti-German violence in Neath during May 1915.

The session ends with Sue Ware exploring the cost of living in 1926, and its parallels to today.

Hearth Food edited by Faeza Jasdanwalla-Williams & Rebecca Parfitt

Neath Town Hall
18th Oct | 11:30 | Free entry



As an anthology of essays and personal recipes, the book invites the question: what does food mean to you? From displacement, to relocation, fleeing, or arriving at leisure, these essays explore what it means to be able to cook and enjoy the food of your home. Ranging from Tarten Llus, Staffordshire oatcakes, to Zimbabwean lamb chops with a Welsh twist, this is a round-the-world recipe book with bite.

Francesca Rhydderch & Odette Debono in conversation with Sioned Williams MS

Neath Town Hall
18th Oct | 12:30 | Free entry



Odette Debono discusses her debut novel, *White Sheep* - a candid memoir of a turbulent mixed-heritage docklands' childhood. It is a story that glitters with humour and vibrancy.



Francesca Rhydderch discusses *It Might Not Be True*, a memoir of life whilst trying to determine the cause of a mysterious illness.

Francesca and Odette will discuss their books with Sioned Williams MS, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Minister for Social Justice and Equality. *Sponsored by Parthian.*

Elizabeth Alker in conversation with Huw Stephens

Neath Town Hall
18th Oct | 13:30 | Free entry

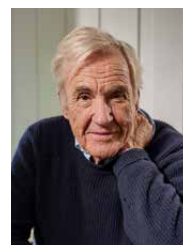


BBC Radio 3 presenter of *Unclassified* and *Classical Live*, Elizabeth Alker is joined by Huw Stephens from 6 Music and Radio Wales to discuss her book *Everything We Do Is Music*.

The book explores the rich, and unexpected, connections between classical and pop music.

Larry Lamb

Gwyn Hall
18th Oct | 15:00 | £10



Larry Lamb brings warmth and wit with his intimate performance of poetry and reflection.

From his role as Mick Shipman in the much-loved comedy *Gavin & Stacey*, to his portrayal of Archie Mitchell in *EastEnders*, Larry has become a beloved face to audiences across the UK.

Sharing personal verse, Larry will take you on an emotional and captivating journey in celebration of his life and remarkable career on stage and screen.
Sponsored by Hutchinson Thomas.



Ben Giles

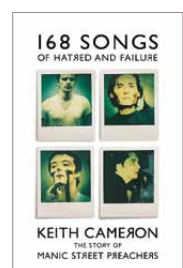
Neath Town Hall
18th Oct | 17:15 | Free entry



Ben Giles offers a gripping insight into the world of crime scene cleaning, where the macabre meets the mundane. With over 25 years of experience, Giles shares his harrowing and fascinating tales from the frontlines of 'biohazard remediation'.

168 Songs of Hatred and Failure: A History of Manic Street Preachers

Neath Town Hall
18th Oct | 18:30 | Free entry



Charting the story of Manic Street Preachers, from the band's working-class roots to the top of the charts, the author Keith Cameron discusses his investigation into the radiant, restless creativity of one of the 1990s most iconic British bands.