



PRESS RELEASE

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The 5th Gibunco Gibraltar International Literary Festival

Ann Widdecombe is one of the first participants to be confirmed for this year's Gibunco Gibraltar International Literary Festival and will be a part the excellent line up expected for this year's event.

From 1987 to 2010 Ann was Member of Parliament for Maidstone, which became Maidstone and The Weald in 1997. She was Minister of State at the Department of Employment in 1994 before going on to become Minister of State at the Home Office in 1995, where she was responsible for prisons and immigration.

During William Hague's leadership of the Conservative Party she was Shadow Health Secretary in 1998 and Shadow Home Secretary in 1999.

Her first novel, *The Clematis Tree*, a Sunday Times bestseller, was published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in 2000. *An Act of Treachery*, *Father Figure* and *An Act of Peace* followed over the next five years. Her bestselling autobiography, *Strictly Ann*, was published by Phoenix paperbacks in June 2014. *The Dancing Detective*, her first detective novel, was published by Amazon in 2014.

Ann has made a number of television documentaries as well as appearing in the 2010 series of *Strictly Come Dancing*. She is a Privy Counsellor and writes a regular column for the Daily Express.

Ian Beesley will deliver the Governor's Lecture this year. Mr Beesley will be a guest of His Excellency and Mrs Davis for the event. His Excellency has once again very kindly given permission for The Convent to be use as a venue for the Festival.

After reading Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford, Beesley joined the Cabinet Office, and subsequently worked in H.M. Treasury and in 10 Downing Street where he was Head of the Prime Minister's Efficiency Unit under Margaret Thatcher. He was then invited to join Price Waterhouse as their first direct entry Partner in their consulting practice to specialise in public



sector reform. He stayed there until 2003 when he embarked on a PhD at Queen Mary University of London, receiving the degree in 2014.

Along the way the then Cabinet Secretary, Sir Gus O'Donnell, recommended to the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair, that Beesley's PhD work should be expanded into an Official History of the Cabinet Secretaries since the Second World War and up to 2002. With unfettered access to government files it was the start of nine years of research and writing, culminating in a 350,000-word book and 4,000 footnotes!

Jem Poster and Sarah Burton

Jem Poster worked as an archaeologist, surveying and excavating a range of sites on behalf of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, before taking up an administrative post with Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education in 1987. From 1993 to 2003 he was University Lecturer in Literature with Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education and a fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford. From 2003 to 2012 he was Professor of Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University, and is now Emeritus Professor. He is the author of two novels, *Courting Shadows* (2002) and *Rifling Paradise* (2006), as well as a collection of poetry, *Brought to Light* (2001), and has recently completed volume 3 of the six-volume Oxford University Press *Edward Thomas: Prose Writings*.

He has won prizes in major poetry competitions, including first prize in both the Cardiff International Poetry Competition in 1995 and the Peterloo Poets Open Poetry Competition in 2001.

Sarah Burton is currently Course Director of the Creative Writing MSt at Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education. She teaches fiction, non-fiction, writing for performance and writing for children, and also writes in all these genres. Sarah's publications are diverse, including two critically-acclaimed biographies, published by Penguin; *Impostors: Six Kinds of Liar* (2000; translated into Korean, Japanese, Czech and Spanish) and *A Double Life: a Biography of Charles and Mary Lamb* (2003; shortlisted for the Mind Book of the Year award). Other publications include a children's book, *The Miracle in Bethlehem: A Storyteller's Tale* (2008); a page-to-stage guide, *How to Put on a Community Play* (2011); and the humorous *Complete and Utter History of the World By Samuel Stewart, Aged 9* (2013). She was Writer in Residence for the Hosking Houses Trust in 2009. The publication of her historical novel, *H*, is currently being negotiated with Hodder. *H* was shortlisted for the Lucy Cavendish Fiction Prize in 2013. Sarah has also written and produced seven community plays.

Jem & Sarah will be running Only Connect, a one-day writing workshop, during the festival.

Laurence Rees will be delivering the Gibraltar Lecture. His latest book, *The Holocaust - A New History* was published in the UK in January 2017 to critical acclaim. A former Head of BBC TV History Programmes, Rees has written six previous books on the Nazis and the Second World War, including *The Nazis: A Warning from History*, *World War Two: Behind Closed Doors* and *The Dark*



Charisma of Adolf Hitler, as well as writing, producing and directing the accompanying documentary TV series. Rees is also the author of the award-winning *Auschwitz: The Nazis, and the 'Final Solution'* - the world's bestselling book on the history of the camp.

Also participating in the Festival will be Professor **Steve Westaby**. Professor Westaby is a world famous heart surgeon who is renowned for being the first surgeon in history to fit a patient with a new type of artificial heart, claiming a place in medical history. During his 35 year career as a surgeon he worked at several of the UK's top hospitals and performed over 11,000 heart operations. He won the Ray C. Fish Award for Scientific Achievement (2004). In 2004 Steve Westaby was featured in the BBC documentary *Your Life in Their Hands*, alongside Henry Marsh - a long running series on the subject of surgery. He has recently retired from the paediatric cardiac unit at John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

Professor Westaby talks about his new book *Fragile Lives* and his 35-year career as one of the world's top heart surgeons.

Violinist **Min Kym** will talk about her musical life that began as a child prodigy and was devastatingly interrupted when her rare 1696 Stradivarius was stolen from a railway station café. She performs some of the works that have played a key part in her story, accompanied by her pianist Ian Brown.

Kym was born in Korea and raised in the UK. At age 7 she was the youngest ever pupil at the Purcell School of Music and at 16 the youngest ever foundation scholar at the Royal College of Music. At 21 she found the perfect violin for her build and temperament, a 1696 Stradivarius. Her career took off, she recorded a Brahms concerto and a world tour was planned. Then, in 2010, the violin was stolen. Kym explains the intense loss and betrayal she felt and the bond a musician has with her instrument. She tells of the devastating impact the theft had on her music and how she eventually recovered and found meaning again.

Here she 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.

Presenter of BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* **Dame Jenni Murray** will be a welcome addition to the festival. Dame Jenni is a journalist and broadcaster who has presented BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* since 1987. She is the author of several books, including *Memoirs of a Not So Dutiful Daughter*. Dame Jenni will be interviewed by Gwenan Edwards.

Minister for Tourism, the Hon Gilbert Licudi, said: "The first eight names to be announced for this year's Festival clearly give an indication of the quality and variety we are to expect once again. This is now the 5th edition of the Festival and there is no doubt that the Government's pledge to develop event-led tourism has produced an outstanding yearly feast of culture and education. We look forward to announcing more names in the next few months as we head towards another thrilling experience in November."