

# In the path of an

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**Porter Anderson** introduces the aims of the inaugural Author Day, which takes place on Monday 30th November in London

**T**RUTH BE TOLD, the conference we are calling Author Day might be subtitled “Snowmakers in Time of Avalanche”. Publishing’s output has far exceeded a figure we can accurately gauge, but the readership has not. If everyone who wants to write a book is to have a hope of being read, we absolutely must cultivate more readers. And since almost everyone wants to write a book—and

**I** everyone can now publish one, too—the time has come for the people of publishing to stop, sit together, and begin to understand what’s happening to the creative corps.

That is why we need Author Day. That is why it’s not a typical conference. That is also why it’s not just for authors. The publishing industry will not find its way, ultimately, through this avalanche of contemporary

content if it cannot create for authors the best possible conditions for success.

That is what Author Day is about. It is for all authors—trade, indie, hybrid, winged, ambidextrous and the garden-variety—and it is for all who work in publishing with and around them. If you care about authors today, consider coming.

Our day is divided into two parts . . .

## Morning: The State of the Author

We will hear from the leadership of the two great organisations of authors today, the Alliance of Independent Authors (Orna Ross) and the Society of Authors (Nicola Solomon); from authors (Kamila Shamsie, Jane Steen, Dave Morris); educators (Faber Academy’s Ian K Ellard, Bath Spa University’s Kate Pullinger); a crowdfunding publisher (Unbound’s Dan Kieran with John-Paul Flintoff); an author-survey veteran (Harry Bingham); a publishing technologist (Emma Barnes); and literary agents (Sheil Land’s Piers Blofeld, Curtis Brown’s Sheila Crowley, Lownie Agency’s Andrew Lownie)—all by way of putting together not a definitive idea of the state of “the” author, but to get as many angles on pertinent issues as possible.

You will notice that the speakers are not all authors. This is essential. Authors, particularly in the digital age, talk with each other all the time. They, and we, need to hear from others, as well. There is no contest here about who is “right” and who is “wrong”. There is a need to get a range of viewpoints.

## Afternoon: What We Can Do

**n**In a couple of important discussions—entitled “What Authors Can Do: Allied Interests” and “What Publishing Can Do: Industry Interests”—we will look for some of the contexts in which authors are working today, from issues of diversity and fairness to dilemmas of marketing support and audience.

In “Allied Interests”, we will hear from illustrator and author Sarah McIntyre, author Jonathan Emmett, author and editor Nikesh Shukla, translator Louise Rogers Lalaurie, and *The Bookseller’s* Cathy Rentzenbrink. In “Industry Interests” we will hear from Pan Macmillan’s Sara Lloyd and Naomi Bacon, Canelo’s Nick Barreto, consultant Katie Roden, Midas PR’s Daniel Freeman and Unbound’s Dan Kieran.

**C** I feel compelled to warn you that even among all these articulate voices, none of us will feel that every important point was made. There is too much for us to handle in a week, let alone in a day. But that is where another key component comes in to help . . .

## Comment Capture

Throughout the day, delegates will be asked to send us—via an email address and/or Twitter handle, as well as even on paper (yes, you can pass notes)—their brainstorming, proposals, dumb thoughts, bright ideas, observations, criticisms, hallelujahs and concerns. (Charge up your

mobile!) With the kind support of TheWritingPlatform.com, those messages will be captured so that at the end of the day, we can know about them, see them, discuss them.

My colleagues at *The Bookseller* will be listening, as I will, for the trends, throughlines and contours of this big debate. And from that, we will work

towards a statement to be delivered at FutureBook, Europe’s largest publishing industry conference, when it convenes on Friday 4th December.

What is this statement going to say? You will tell us. That’s the fun of it. I ask you to come prepared to participate. We need active thinking, heavy use of our capture desk, perhaps a willingness to stand and speak if you feel inclined to do so. Bring a sense of humour. Bring

all the patience you can muster on a Monday. We will ask you to listen to things you disagree with—but we will also ask your opinion. We want your best thoughts and your sportsmanship and your commitment to moving past rancour and mistrust towards dialogue and camaraderie.

It’s time to put aside the animosities, the hype and the drama. It’s time for Authors to have their Day. **e**

Author Day takes place on Monday 30th November at 30 Euston Square, London.

For more information and tickets, visit [TheBookseller.com/AuthorDay](http://TheBookseller.com/AuthorDay)