

## **From Decoding Dickens to live poetry readings in Ukraine - nationwide 10-day festival examines the very essence of Being Human**

**3 October 2022**

### **For immediate use**

What does it mean to be human? That's the question being asked at over 200 free events at 43 locations nationwide in November at this year's ninth annual Being Human Festival.

The purpose of the festival, which is being led by the School of Advanced Study at the University of London, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and the British Academy, is to celebrate the humanities and demonstrate their relevance by bringing both research and researchers out of the universities and into the high streets and towns across the country.

This year's theme is Breakthroughs. Whether that means spiritual, scientific, artistic or physical, each of the 225 events taking place across the UK will in some way connect to this over-arching theme.

In Wolverhampton, [local writers will form a literary "bridge" with poets live in Ukraine](#), reading their work from bomb shelters and streets – encouraging new understandings between people in the UK and Ukraine.

In Newcastle, ["From You to Me"](#) creates another kind of bridge, between the past and present, as local writers share stories of post-war Tyneside from those who were there; the street games, dance halls, and Christmas stockings, but also the hunger and harsh discipline.

In Scotland, the [Quinepedia project](#), aims to raise public awareness, and 'break through' the silence around women's contributions to the culture, history and heritage of North-East Scotland (quines is a Doric word in ancient Greek dialect meaning 'woman').

In Bradford, [a series of events](#) will mark the BBC centenary, and will focus on engaging individuals and communities with research that celebrates the contemporary relevance of the BBC, looking to the past, present and future of broadcasting and journalism.

Festival Director and Chair in Public Understanding of the Humanities at the University of London, Professor Sarah Churchwell said:

"This year's festival looks set to be more exciting, eclectic and energising than ever. Whether you want to write about birds, interact with Ukrainian poets, or build Hadrian's Wall out of Lego, you will find something that stimulates your senses – and sensibilities.

"The humanities are the very essence of what it is to be human: story-telling, myth-making, swapping ideas and immersing ourselves in languages. Without the humanities there would be no creativity, no culture, no joy. I would encourage everyone to get involved, find an event that suits them, and celebrate that most remarkable thing: Being Human."

ENDS

### **Notes to editors**

The 2022 Being Human Festival runs from 10-19 November in 43 towns and cities across the UK. More details: <https://www.beinghumanfestival.org/events>

The Festival is led by the School of Advanced Study, University of London, with generous support from Research England, in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and The

British Academy. In 2022, the partnership has awarded 30 grants to researchers at 29 universities and research organisations, enabling these free activities to take place, as well as supporting events from a further 35 universities and organisations nationwide. Festival Hubs, made up of programmes of events led by one university, are being led by Bangor University, Robert Gordon University, Northumbria University, the University of Bradford, the University of Dundee and the University of Wolverhampton.

1. The [School of Advanced Study \(SAS\)](https://www.sas.ac.uk), University of London, is the UK's national centre for the promotion and support of research in the humanities. SAS and its member institutes offer unparalleled resources, facilities and academic opportunities across a wide range of subject areas for the benefit of the national and international scholarly community. Last year SAS welcomed 996 research fellows and associates, held 1,500 events highlighting the latest research in the humanities, received 31.6 million online visits to its research resources and platforms, and hosted 100,119 visits to its specialist libraries and collections. The School also leads Being Human, the UK's only nationwide festival of the humanities. Find out more at [www.sas.ac.uk](https://www.sas.ac.uk) or follow SAS on Twitter at [@SASNews](https://twitter.com/SASNews).

2. The [Arts and Humanities Research Council](https://www.ahrc.ukri.org) is part of UK Research and Innovation. We're the UK's largest funder of arts and humanities research and training, investing over £100 million every year. We fund independent researchers in a wide range of subjects, including history, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, languages, design, heritage, area studies, the creative and performing arts, and many more. The research we fund provides social and cultural benefits that contribute to the economic success of the UK, as well as to the culture and welfare of societies around the world. Find out more about us at [ahrc.ukri.org](https://www.ahrc.ukri.org), or on Twitter at [@ahrcpress](https://twitter.com/ahrcpress).

3. The [British Academy](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk) is the UK's national academy for the humanities and social sciences. We mobilise these disciplines to understand the world and shape a brighter future. We invest in researchers and projects across the UK and overseas, engage the public with fresh thinking and debates, and bring together scholars, government, business and civil society to influence policy for the benefit of everyone. [www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk](https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk) [@BritishAcademy](https://twitter.com/BritishAcademy). For further information please contact Joe Christmas at the British Academy Press Office on [j.christmas@thebritishacademy.ac.uk](mailto:j.christmas@thebritishacademy.ac.uk) or +44 (0)20 7969 5248.

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