

# SYP Oxford 2025 Conference

# Off the Beaten Press

Saturday, 8 November 2025  
Oxford Brookes University  
9:30am-5:00pm

 SOCIETY  
OF YOUNG  
PUBLISHERS

# Schedule

## Theatre

## Classroom

**9:00**

Doors Open

**9:30**

Welcome & Keynote Address:  
Mary Cannam

**10:15**

Inspiring Lifelong  
Readers Through  
Children's Literature

Working Ethically with AI  
Workshop

**11:15**

Accessibility in Action

Navigating the UK  
Publishing Industry as an  
International: Q&A

**12:15**

Behind the Algorithm:  
Marketing That  
Connects

Career Speed Dating

**1:00**

Lunch: Served by Exhibition Hall/Theatre

**2:00**

Pathways into  
Publishing

Career Speed Dating

**3:00**

Educational and  
Academic Publishing in  
the International Sphere

Discussing Inclusive Futures  
Workshop

**4:00**

First Chapter Awards/  
Closing Speech

**5:00**

Drinks Reception in Exhibition Hall

# Welcome

On behalf of SYP Oxford, **thank you** all so much for coming to our autumn conference for 2025, **Off the Beaten Press: Publishing for the Next Generation**, in partnership with the **Oxford International Centre for Publishing** at Oxford Brookes University.

We are delighted to be welcoming a line-up of over 30 speakers across informative **panels**, thought-provoking **workshops**, and various **chances to connect** and meet throughout the day. We hope you enjoy engaging with current trends and topics, discussing the industry's present and future whilst gaining essential insight to progress in the industry with confidence.

As always, the SYP are so grateful for your support and we hope you find the day an inspirational look into your own futures.

**Alisha Raggat & Brooke James**

SYP Oxford Co-Chairs

## Meet our Keynote Speaker



**Mary Cannam**

Mary is the Chief Executive Officer of Faber and Faber, and has been at Faber since 2003. Prior roles at Faber include Chief Operating Officer and Finance Director. Before Faber, Mary spent 10 years with Waterstones in a variety of roles, including Branch Manager and roles in the Operations Department, at Head Office. She also worked at HarperCollins for a year. She was a Trustee of New Writing North from 2020 to 2022 and a Trustee of Yale University Press London 2016–2020.

# Inspiring Lifelong Readers Through Children's Literature

What sparks a lifelong love of reading? This panel examines how authors, publishers, and educators can engage young audiences through storytelling, representation, and innovative formats, thereby building the next generation of readers.



## Polly Silk, Chair

Senior Lecturer,  
Oxford Brookes

Polly has over a decade of experience in international rights sales and children's and educational publishing, most recently working as Acting Head of Rights at Oxford University Press. She now runs the Master's in Publishing Media at Oxford Brookes University, where she lectures on the children's sector, international publishing, and licensing across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Polly was Chair of the Oxford SYP 2011-12 and is currently a Mentor for the SYP.



## Martina Borg

Senior Production Controller,  
Hachette Children's Group

Martina is a Senior Production Controller at Hachette Children's Group, and has been at the company for 5 years. She currently works on Novelty and Picture Books, but she has previously also worked in Mono publishing. She completed her MA at Oxford Brookes University in 2016, and loves to discuss books, languages, and general culture.



## Kimberley Sheehan

Campaign Manager,  
The Reading Agency

Kimberley is a Campaign Manager for national reading charity, The Reading Agency. She is the strategic lead for the publisher membership offer, The Reading Agency Connects as well as the Book Club Hub. She works with publisher and prize partners to create and manage accessible and engaging campaigns marketed at librarian, teacher and book club networks to get people fired up about reading and encourage more people to read for pleasure. She was a teacher for six years before completing a Publishing and Creative Writing Masters at Kingston University. Kimberley is also a former Co-Chair and Events Coordinator for the London Society of Young Publishers Committee.



## Michelle McWhinnie

Operations Director,  
Usborne

Michelle is the Operations Director at Usborne Publishing, heading up Usborne Community Partnerships, the direct selling arm of the business. Her role is to support the Independent Usborne Partners to share the business opportunity and Usborne's award-winning books to spark children's curiosity, expand their minds and grow their confidence. With decades of business experience working in leadership roles in the finance and tech industries and a passion for helping other fulfil their ambitions she offers a unique perspective to help shape the growth strategy for the business.

# Working Ethically with AI

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In conversation with Wendy Law, explore the uses of AI in the publishing industry, and discover some of its possibilities and limits as a productivity tool and generative aid. In this discussion, you will talk about the real-life implementation of AI in publishing workflows and delve into some of the can-vs.-should questions around AI usage in the rapidly changing AI environment.



## Wendy Law

Product Manager,  
Pearson


Wendy is a Product Manager at Pearson, where she currently leads in assessment on the Modern Foreign Languages team. She also sits as a member of Pearson's UK Schools Generative AI Workshop team, which explores the practical implementation of AI into real-life workflows and customer-facing products.



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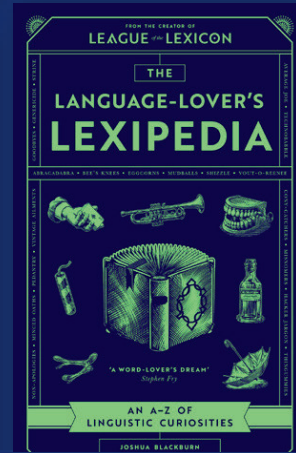
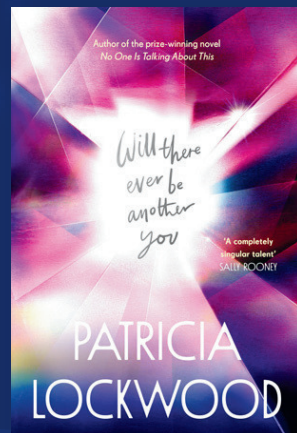
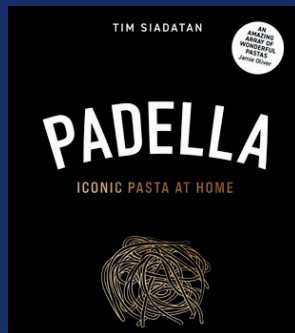
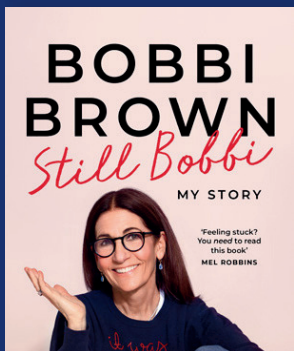
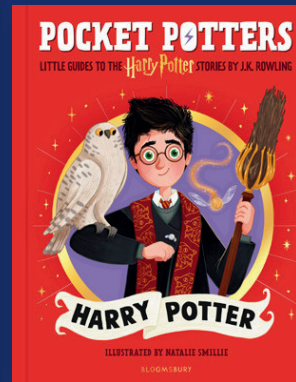
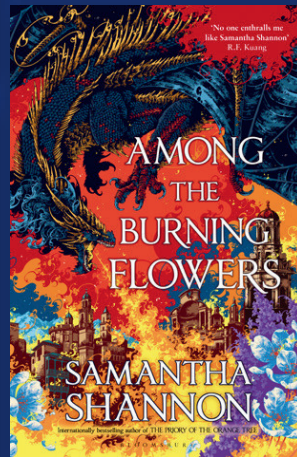
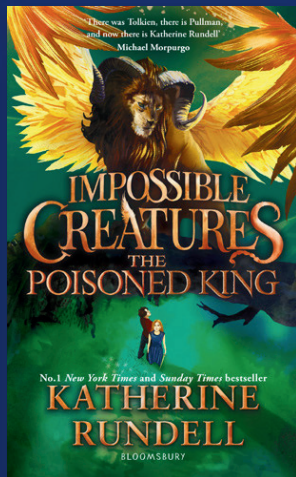
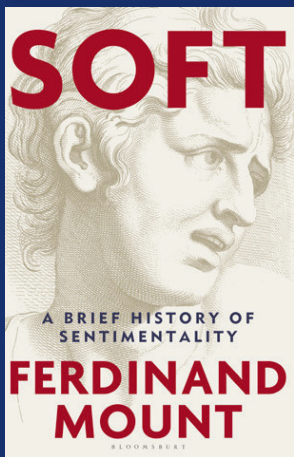
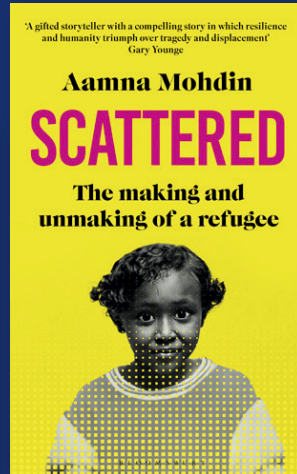
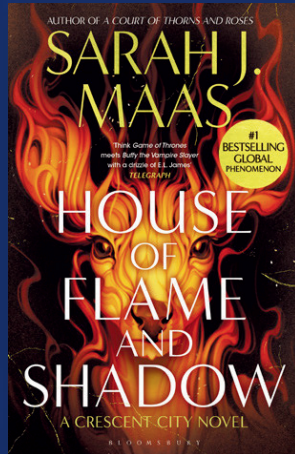
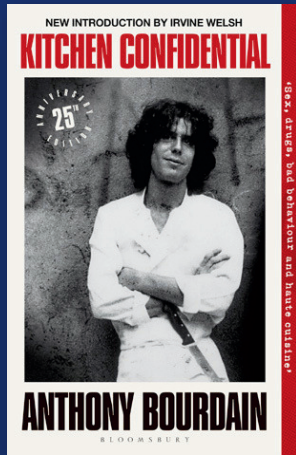
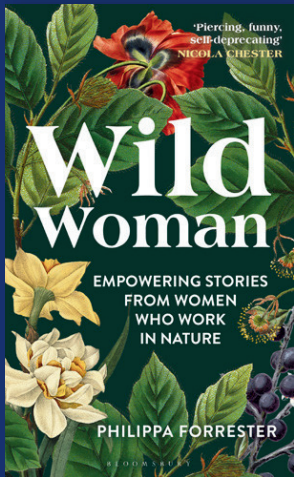


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# Accessibility in Action

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This panel dives into how publishers can ensure the accessibility of their content for readers with print disabilities such as dyslexia. Discussing printed formats to educate the new generation of publishers on the different accessibility considerations necessary during the production of the book to publish with equity.



## Mathilde de Jaham, Chair

Administrative Secretary,  
Ersilia Literary Agency

Mathilde holds a Bachelor's degree in English with Creative Writing from Loughborough University. She has recently completed a Master's degree in Publishing Media at Oxford Brookes University where she researched accessibility in printed trade fiction in the UK for her dissertation. This year she is a Conference Officer at the Society of Young Publishers in Oxford. Mathilde joined Ersilia Literary Agency in July 2025 as an administrative intern and regularly updates her bookstagram (@readinginoxford) where she casually shares her latest reads.



## Laura Dolan

Account Director, CPI Group UK  
and Board Member at UKAAF

Laura has enjoyed nine years in book manufacturing, and is passionate about large print and accessible publishing, dedicated to making content inclusive for all readers. Outside of work, Laura enjoys walking and is an advocate for Kidney Care UK, inspired by her experience as a living donor.



## Alistair Sims

Publisher & Founder,  
BOTH Press

Alistair is a Visiting Enterprise Fellow at Bath Spa University, Bookseller/Publisher at Books on the Hill Clevedon, and founder of BOTH Press the first Dyslexic Friendly only Publisher for adults in the UK. Alistair is an Independent Scholar and Dyslexia Advocate and Recipient of the cross party Prime-Minster's 'Point of Light' Award on World Book Day 2023. Winner of Heart of Gold' Award at 2025 Small Awards. Regional Finalist at Best Small Press Award 2023 & 2025. Winner of Innovation Award, the Community Shining Star Award at the 'Dyslexia Awards 2023.



## Elizabeth Kellingley

Accessibility Manager,  
Bloomsbury

Elizabeth has worked in publishing for four years, after starting at Bloomsbury in their Production department in 2020. She became Accessibility Manager in September 2024, after making an impact as Chair of the Accessibility network and launching Bloomsbury's first adult dyslexic friendly books. Her remit spans making Bloomsbury's books more accessible and striving to make the company more accessible for its employees and authors.

# Navigating the UK Publishing Industry as an International

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Being an international in the UK provides a range of challenges, from Visa regulations to unfamiliar application processes. This panel will discuss how you can turn your international status into an advantage by highlighting your unique set of skills and global perspective.



## Francesca Bartoli, Chair

Sales Enablement Specialist,  
Oxford University Press

Originally from Italy, Francesca holds a BSc in Economics from the University of Tuscia and an MSc in Management from Oxford Brookes University, which brought her to the UK. She now works in Sales Enablement at Oxford University Press, gaining experience in international education and sales strategy development. With a background in international account management, Francesca is passionate about publishing and focused on building a long-term career in the industry.



## Divjot Kaur

Assistant Editor,  
Berghahn Books

Divjot is Assistant Editor, Social Sciences at Berghahn Books and a recipient of the Printing Charity's 2025 Rising Star Award. Her UK publishing journey started in 2021 with the Master's in Publishing Media at Oxford Brookes. Since then, she has gained work experience across editorial and marketing, now focusing on academic publishing, Open Access, and ethical AI initiatives. Outside of work, she runs a City Girl Network book club in Oxford.

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## Srishti Kadu

POD Manager at Bloomsbury and  
Founder of ReTyped (she/her)

Srishti is currently POD (Print-on-Demand) Manager at Bloomsbury Publishing. She works closely with printers and internal colleagues to review and set the global POD production strategy for Bloomsbury. She moved to the UK from Mumbai, India to study at Lancaster University. After graduating she worked at Carnegie Publishing as a Book Design and Publishing Assistant and in 2019 was a winner of the Print Futures Award, run by the Printing Charity. She has also won the London Book Fair's (LBF) Trailblazer Award in 2022, and was shortlisted for the Bookseller's Future Leader of the Year 2023. She is currently also an Associate Lecturer in Publishing at Oxford Brookes, and is a publishing mentor with the Society of Young Publishers (SYP) and with Lancaster University.

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# Behind the Algorithm: Marketing That Connects

Social media is transforming book discovery, but effective marketing goes deeper than trends. This panel unites influencers, marketers, and publishers to explore how authentic, inclusive strategies can reach new audiences and build lasting reader relationships, on and off the algorithm.



## Miriam Johnson, Chair

Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Co-Founder,  
Dudley Editions

Miriam is a researcher, writer, and founder working at the intersection of digital storytelling, publishing, and new technology. She holds PhDs in Creative Writing and Publishing, and is currently a Senior Lecturer, where she also leads the Creative Industries Research and Innovation Network. Her academic work explores authorship, branding, and social media in the cultural industries, with recent books including *The Digital Pen* (Palgrave, 2024) and *The Power of Brand Ownership* (Cambridge University Press, 2025). Her work spans publishing, social media, marketing, and digital product development. She has collaborated with The Bridge Awards, Scottish PEN, UNESCO City of Literature, and speaks and runs workshops on storytelling, writing with impact, social media marketing, and digital authorship.

Miriam is also the co-founder of Dudley Editions, a tech start-up focused on personalised, audio-based storytelling that enables people to better connect with each other, while driving new forms of digital storytelling.



## Grace Edwards

Social Media Influencer

Grace is a Social Media Influencer (@bookswithgray) on TikTok and Instagram who shares book and lifestyle-dedicated content to a total audience of 300,000+ followers. Grace is also a Marketing & PR Assistant at One More Chapter, HarperCollins UK. She has been working in this role for a year, marking her first position in the publishing industry.



## Sophie Shepherd

Marketing Manager,  
Oxford University Press

Sophie has seven years of experience in publishing, specialising in marketing non-fiction titles. She is currently a Marketing Manager in the International team at Oxford University Press, where she leads global product marketing for IB and Cambridge resources. Sophie began her career at Crimson Publishing in Bath as a Sales and Marketing Coordinator, working across travel, education, and parenting titles. She later joined OUP's Academic Division, progressing from Marketing Executive to Associate Marketing Manager before transitioning to the Education division in 2024. In 2023, Sophie served as Co-Chair of the Society of Young Publishers (SYP) Oxford, supporting early-career professionals in the industry and she continues to contribute as a mentor in the SYP mentorship scheme. This year, she also received a 2025 Rising Star Award from The Printing Charity.



## Dr Alison Baverstock MBE

Professor of Publishing,  
Kingston University

Alison is Professor of Publishing at Kingston University, a course she cofounded in 2006. A former publisher, and regular media commentator, she has researched and written widely about the industry, and her many titles include *Is there a book in you?* (Bloomsbury) and *How to Market Books* (Kogan Page, seventh version just delivered to the publishers, Routledge). Her work has been widely translated and is used worldwide, within both universities and industry, and she has played a key part in the development of Publishing Studies as a discipline. She is greatly committed to expanding involvement in reading and is the founder of both The Kingston University Big Read which for ten years promoted transition to higher education through a shared book, and [www.readingforce.org.uk](http://www.readingforce.org.uk), an international charity which encourages shared-reading to promote connectivity within military families.

# Career Speed Dating (Morning)



**Martina Borg**  
Senior Production Controller,  
Hachette Children's Group



**Srishti Kadu**  
POD Manager, Bloomsbury and  
Founder, ReTyped



**Sydney Allen**  
Product Manager for Strategy  
and Success, Glassboxx



**Humaira Kadri Pease**  
Talent Acquisition,  
Springer Nature



**Laura Dolan**  
Account Director, CPI Group UK  
and Board Member, UKAAF



**Ceri Jones**  
Publishing Coordinator,  
Ulverscroft



**Elizabeth Kellingley**  
Accessibility Manager,  
Bloomsbury Publishing

# Notes



# Pathways into publishing

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This Q&A session provides practical guidance for publishing hopefuls and those who want to progress in their careers. With insights from rising stars and recruiters, guests will have the chance to learn how to navigate today's publishing job market.



## Sydney Allen, Chair

Product Manager for Strategy and Success,  
Glassboxx

Sydney Allen is Product Manager for Strategy and Success at Glassboxx and holds an MA in Publishing from UCL. Named a Bookseller Rising Star (2025) and shortlisted for the London Book Fair Trailblazer Award (2024), she is a regular speaker on accessibility and digital innovation at publishing events. Sydney also co-hosts the Uncovering Publishing podcast, which explores career pathways and industry insights for emerging publishing professionals.



## Sarah-Louise Alsop

Assistant International Sales and Marketing  
Manager, Princeton University Press

Sarah-Louise is currently the Assistant International Sales and Marketing Manager at Princeton University Press. She started her transition from teaching to publishing in 2020, achieving a Masters in Publishing at Oxford Brookes part time over 2 years, completing internships at Tandem Collective, and Inkandescent. She was shortlisted for the London Book Fair Trailblazers Awards 2025, and is a 2025 Printing Charity Rising Star. Sarah-Louise also enjoys creating book content on her TikTok @sarahsbooksandstuff



## Humaria Kadri Pease

Talent Attraction Specialist,  
Springer Nature

Humaira is a Talent Attraction Specialist at Springer Nature, a global scientific, academic, and educational publisher. With nearly a decade in publishing and her own journey of breaking into the industry, she's passionate about helping people find their place in publishing and opening doors for those who don't always see themselves represented.

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## Julia Sadler

Career Adviser,  
University of Oxford

Julia worked in publishing for 20 years before becoming a careers adviser at Oxford University Careers Service in 2018, where she has launched the Insight into Publishing programme. She started her publishing career as a sub-editor at legal publishers Lexis Nexis on Chancery Lane – using her law degree – and worked her way up to commissioning manager, launching books and products for the legal market. With a short stint as a publishing manager for the RNIB, she then worked for 16 years for a small careers content publisher in Oxfordshire called TARGETjobs. For much of that time she was an editorial manager, which involved recruiting editors and interns into a busy editorial team. She loves using that experience when advising students who want to go into publishing, creative careers and law among other areas. She is delighted to be involved with the SYP conference having encouraged students to join SYP for the last 7 years!



## Suzy Astbury

CEO and Owner,  
Inspired Search & Selection

Suzy is CEO and Owner of Inspired Search & Selection. With over 20 years in publishing, she began at The Quarto Group before moving into Foreign Rights at Michael O'Mara. She joined Inspired in 2010, became MD in 2011 and acquired the business in 2013. Under her leadership, Inspired has become the go-to name in publishing recruitment and headhunting. Now celebrating 25 years, they are known for sourcing diverse talent from entry level to boardroom. Suzy and some of her team are here today to answer any questions you might have on how to get a job in publishing.

# Career Speed Dating (Afternoon)



**Ceri Jones**  
Publishing Coordinator,  
Ulverscroft

**Kevin Hiatt**

Head of International Teaching  
and Learning Resources, Pearson



**Polly Silk**  
Senior Lecturer,  
Oxford Brookes University

**Sarah Franklin**

Senior Lecturer,  
Oxford Brookes University



**Sophie Shepard**  
Marketing Manager,  
Oxford University Press

**Giulia Maggiori**

Publisher,  
Oxford University Press



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# Notes



# Educational and Academic Publishing in the International Sphere

This panel will examine the position of UK academic and educational publishing within the global publishing landscape. It will explore how UK publishers contribute unique, high-quality content that meets international demand, with a particular focus on rights management, market access, and content development.



## Angus Phillips, Chair

Professor and Director,  
OICP

Angus is Director of the Oxford International Centre for Publishing at Oxford Brookes University. He is the author of the recently published 7th edition of *Inside Book Publishing*.



## Jonathan Crowe

Head of Content Acquisition and Development,  
UK Higher Education, Oxford University Press

After starting his career as an editorial assistant at the schools publisher, Thomas Nelson, Jonathan Crowe spent the past 25 years at Oxford University Press, where he now manages the editorial team that commissions, develops, and releases higher education focused teaching and learning resources for a range of disciplines, including law and the natural and social sciences. The team curates and develops teaching and learning resources that draw upon learning design and pedagogical principles to optimise both the student experience and their educational outcomes. Jonathan's link with learning and education extends beyond his role at OUP: he is the primary author of the undergraduate textbook, *Chemistry for the Biosciences*; he is also a Visiting Lecturer at City, University of London, where he teaches on their MA Publishing programme; and Guest Lecturer at Bath Spa University, where he runs teaching sessions on science publishing and science communication to undergraduates on both publishing and science degree programmes.



## Kushti Westwood

Associate Publisher for Finance Journals,  
Elsevier

A recent graduate of Oxford University with a PhD in Political Theory, Dr Kushti Westwood has worked in a wide range of fields, from multinational journals to indie not-for-profit organisations. As an Associate Publisher at Elsevier, Kushti investigates issues of academic integrity and is a keen champion of data-driven insights and reporting, all alongside working with a worldwide network of editorial talent. Kushti is excited to extol the virtues of academic publishing, and why it might be a good home for those looking for an interesting challenge.



## Kevin Hiatt

Head of International Teaching and Learning  
Resources, Pearson

Kevin Hiatt is currently the Head of International Teaching and Learning Resources for Pearson. He has worked in education for twenty years, having previously worked in schools as a teacher, subject manager and senior leader, as well as an assessment specialist working with local government in the UK and a reception/foundation stage leader. After leaving teaching, he has worked in various publishing roles, including for a charity leading educational interventions in challenging areas. He is currently leading on the creation of resources supporting learning for Pearson from ages 3-19.



## Sarah Alsop

Assistant International Sales and Marketing  
Manager, Princeton University Press

Sarah-Louise is currently the Assistant International Sales and Marketing Manager at Princeton University Press. She started her transition from teaching to publishing in 2020, achieving a Masters in Publishing at Oxford Brookes part time over 2 years, completing internships at Tandem Collective, and Inkandescent. She was shortlisted for the London Book Fair Trailblazers Awards 2025, and is a 2025 Printing Charity Rising Star. Sarah-Louise also enjoys creating book content on her TikTok @sarahsbooksandstuff.

# Discussing Inclusive Futures Workshop

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Led by Miriam Johnson and Iram Satti, take part in a discussion around the inclusivity challenges the industry faces and reflect on how publishers can develop better practices to hire a more diverse workforce and help them reach senior positions. This session also aims to reflect on how publishers can make junior colleagues feel like valued members of the team.



## Miriam Johnson

Senior Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University & Co-founder of Dudley Editions

Miriam is a researcher, writer, and founder working at the intersection of digital storytelling, publishing, and new technology. She holds PhDs in Creative Writing and Publishing, and is currently a Senior Lecturer, where she also leads the Creative Industries Research and Innovation Network. Her academic work explores authorship, branding, and social media in the cultural industries. She has collaborated with The Bridge Awards, Scottish PEN, UNESCO City of Literature, and speaks and runs workshops on storytelling, writing with impact, social media marketing, and digital authorship.

Miriam is also the co-founder of Dudley Editions, a tech start-up focused on personalised, audio-based storytelling that enables people to better connect with each other, while driving new forms of digital storytelling.



## Iram Satti

Global Belonging and Inclusion Manager, Bloomsbury

Iram joined Bloomsbury in 2023 as a commissioning editor for Professional Law. Iram volunteered with the Society of Young Publishers in 2020/2021 as their Inclusivity Lead and Mentorship lead, respectively.

She is Global Belonging and Inclusion Manager at Bloomsbury where she works across the business on internal and external projects, working closely with colleagues at all levels in the UK, US, India and Australia.

Iram launched "[Iram the Little Publisher](#)" in 2023 as a way of providing impartial advice to budding authors who are underrepresented in the current publishing climate.



**FIRST  
CHAPTER  
AWARD**

**AN AWARD RUN BY**



**SOCIETY  
OF YOUNG  
PUBLISHERS**



The First Chapter Awards recognise early-stage professionals, volunteers and hopefuls within the book community. This award aims to celebrate those in the very early years in the industry – those in the first five years in the industry – and crucially seeks to involve those from different roles within the book ecosystem, from librarians to content creators, aspiring publishers to booksellers.

The award is run by SYP in collaboration with The Publishing Post, two volunteer-run organisations that work to improve the accessibility of the industry.

The First Chapter Awards celebrates those early in their career who show a determination to sup their team and a passion for the industry.

Chairing this panel will be the SYP UK Co-Chairs



**Ellie Gorton**  
Marketing Officer,  
Circle Health Group

**Hamilton Brown**  
Production Editor,  
Oxford University Press



## Our **2025** Winners



**Emma Conally-Barklem**  
Hopeful and Freelancer

**Lela Burbridge**  
Author/Publisher,  
THE LELA INITIATIVE



**Rita Hynes**  
Bookshop owner,  
bookseller, freelancer,  
Cailleach Books



**Brooke Smith**  
Bookseller,  
House of Books and  
Friends

**Muminah Koleoso**  
Freelancer, influencer and  
volunteer,  
Sister Station Podcast



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**email:** [oxford@thesyp.org.uk](mailto:oxford@thesyp.org.uk)

# SYP Oxford Team



**Alisha Raggat**

Co- Chair

**Brooke James**

Co- Chair



**Victoria Drew**

Membership Officer

**Becca Binnie**

Mentorships Officer



**Margy Schueler**

Newsletter Officer

**Molly Frisch**

Podcast Officer



**Scarlett Wager Leigh**

Social Media Officer

**Katy White**

Events Officer



**Kathryn Alley**

Social Media Officer

**Lucy Riddell**

Events Officer



**Liberty George-Jones**

Inclusivity Officer

**Amber Alexander**

Student Outreach Officer



# SYP Oxford Conference Team



**Jodie Coyte**  
Conference Captain



**Francesca Bartoli**  
Conference Captain



**Mathilde de Jaham**  
Conference Officer



**Lara Luyts**  
Conference Officer



**Eeshita**  
Conference Marketing and Media Officer



**Aoibheann O'Flynn**  
Conference Marketing and Media Officer





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# Notes



# Notes



# Notes



# Notes



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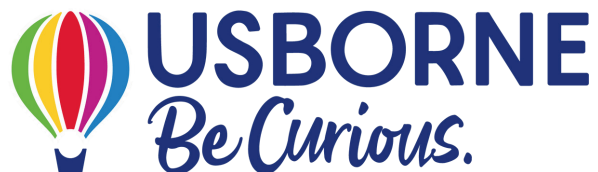
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