

Morges Literary Festival: Le livre sur les quais

Tasja Dorkofikis

“So many great voices float in off the clear, cool water at Morges,” noted writer Colum McCann, an IMPAC Award winner, about last year’s literary festival in Morges. This year, more than 300 writers will descend on this medieval town overlooking Lake Geneva for the weekend of 5–7 September. *Le livre sur les quais* has grown from a small local event to one of Europe’s main book festivals attracting over 40,000 visitors.

The festival offers events in French and in English. The organizers are keen to expand the global side of the festival. This year’s English programme is strong and far bigger than before.

Its schools and children’s section is also growing. Authors have always visited local schools, but this year the festival started working with Lake

Geneva’s international establishments, such as GEMS Academy. The school’s new World Library and World Language Learning Centre will be inaugurated on 4 September with a series of literary events. Best-selling author Douglas Kennedy is giving the opening speech, with Caroline Lawrence of *The Roman Mysteries* fame talking about ancient times.

So what’s on offer for English speakers this year? The programme covers literary fiction, non-fiction, crime and thrillers. Among the 30 writers from the UK and the US are Nathan Filer, 2013 winner of the Costa award, on family dynamics and mental illness; Philipp Meyer, 2013 Pulitzer Prize finalist, on *The Great American Novel*; and Martin Sixsmith on his film *Philomena*. Louise Doughty, the current Richard and Judy Book Club finalist, will give

tips on writing and will talk about her new psychological thriller; Val McDermid, the queen of Scottish crime writing and multiple winner of the Gold Dagger award, will discuss Jane Austen and her crime writing. And the local Geneva Writers’ Group will run a series of creative writing workshops.



As John Boyne, author of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, sees it: “The beauty of the surroundings is only matched by the quality of the writers and the enthusiasm of the readers.”