

Independent Bookshop Week (Saturday 15 June – Saturday 22 June 2024)

About Independent Bookshop Week

Independent Bookshop Week is a celebration of independent bookshops across the UK and Ireland. It aims to highlight the vital role independent bookshops play in their communities, and to encourage consumers to shop for their summer reads with their local independent bookshop. The campaign was launched in 2006.

Independent Bookshop Week takes place annually, mid-June (the first weekend of the campaign usually overlaps with Fathers' Day). [Hachette UK](#) is our headline sponsor, with support from [Gardners](#) and [Nielsen BookData](#). Midas look after media outreach. The campaign hashtag is #IndieBookshopWeek

More than 700 independent bookshops are registered to participate. All of the registered members receive point of sale kits mid-May, and dedicated newsletters (from January through to the campaign end).

Publishers are invited to support the campaign by offering members signed stock, indie exclusive editions, early releases, added value items, author signings and events.

Books Are My Bag works with a number of partners to deliver six strands of Independent Bookshop Week activity:

- National Book Tokens launched their High Five for Bookshops initiative during the 2020 campaign and it has quickly become an integral part of Independent Bookshop Week. All participating bookshops receive flyers to pass onto their customers, enabling them to download a £5/€5 National Book Tokens e-Gift card to spend back in the bookshop that gave it to them.
- Each year we invite a well-known poet to write a bespoke poem for us, in celebration of independent bookshops. We then film the poet reading the poem in their local bookshop and share the video across social media during the campaign. Brian Bilston wrote our inaugural poem in 2021, with Hollie McNish and Dean Atta writing subsequent poems.
- Working with Hachette UK, our headline sponsor, we line up three authors each year to act as media spokespeople for the campaign, and to do bookshop events across the country during the week .
- Indie Twinning involves independent publishers and independent bookshops teaming up to develop bespoke programmes of activity throughout the campaign. This activity helps to drive local media coverage, footfall and social media content, as well as forging relationships within the independent sector.
- Publishers, consumers, authors and anyone who values bookshops, is encouraged to go on a bookshop crawl at any point during the campaign week. Use our [bookshop search](#) to plan your route
- Authors are encouraged to try their hand at a spot of guest bookselling. Whether it be for an hour, a morning or afternoon, or a full day, this is a great way to generate social media content, a photo opportunity, and a chance for authors to sign some copies of their books in-store.

The Booksellers Association is the membership organization for booksellers in the UK & Ireland, and represents over 95% of booksellers. The number of independent bookshops in BA membership at the end of 2022 grew to 1072, up from 867 in 2016. This marks the highest number of bookshops in Booksellers Association membership for 10 years.

2024 Campaign Dates

- Friday 10 May, 9am: Indie Book Awards shortlist announced on @booksaremybag channels
- Saturday 15 June: First day of Independent Bookshop Week
- Wednesday 19 June, 6pm: video of campaign poem shared across @booksaremybag channels
- Thursday 20 June, 10:30am: Indie Book Awards winners announced exclusively on Scala Radio, the official media partner of the Indie Book Awards, by Penny Smith. Please keep an eye on the @booksaremybag channels before sharing the winners.
- Saturday 22 June: final day of Independent Bookshop Week

Key Dates Around Independent Bookshop Week

- Sunday 16th June: Father's Day
- Saturday 22nd June: Windrush Day
- Saturday 22nd June: Holly & Co's Shop Independent Day
- June: Pride month

How Publishers and Their Authors Can Get Involved

Newsletters

The Books Are My Bag team sends Independent Bookshop Week Newsletters out to participating bookshops on Tuesdays every fortnight from January through to the campaign end. Please send details of any Independent Bookshop Week offers you would like us to include in the newsletter to emma.bradshaw@booksellers.org.uk There is no charge for inclusion in these newsletters, but offers must relate directly to Independent Bookshop Week i.e. titles published during June, author events during the campaign dates, special offers created specifically for the campaign. Ideally, copy should be no more than 300 words. Hyperlinks to resources, rather than attachments, are preferable. Low res images can be included.

Special Offers

The kind of offers booksellers are looking for include:

- Signed stock
- Extra discount
- Early releases
- Indie exclusive editions (sprayed edges, extra content etc.)
- Added value incentives to purchase (notebooks, prints, mugs, tote bags etc.)
- Window sponsorship (publishers may wish to fund individual bookshops to create bespoke window displays)
- Authors who are available for events (please note: bookshops do not have budgets to pay for author events, so please only suggest authors who are touring as part of their publishing contract. Please do not suggest authors who require payment)
- Character costumes for events
- Authors available for stock signings
- Illustrators available to create bespoke window displays

Please note: based on feedback from previous campaigns, booksellers would like to see more offers relating to non-fiction, some offers suited to specialist bookshops e.g. spirituality, self-help, Christian books, Welsh language etc. and more authors available for events outside the M25.

Indie Twinning

One of the exciting strands of Independent Bookshop Week activity we created in 2020 was the Indie Twinning initiative. Independent publishers and independent bookshops teamed up to develop bespoke programmes of activity throughout the campaign. It is now firmly established as one of the regular component parts of the campaign.

Benefits

Booksellers and publishers who have participated in Indie Twinning identified the following benefits:

- Reaching new readers and connecting with new people
- Building social media followers and engagement
- Driving sales, online and in-store
- Creating media opportunities
- Reminding consumers of the importance of small/independent businesses
- An opportunity to emphasise the positive impact and benefits of shopping locally
- Most reported that they very much saw this as the start of a longer-term partnership

Endorsements

“Independents - booksellers & publishers - need to stick together now more than ever! Plus we are total suckers for a collaboration - especially if there’s a playlist & some dancing! Nina at Rough Trade Books was a peach to work with ... and dammit we had fun!” – Helen Stanton, Forum Books

“Nick and Mel were a dream to work with and, even though we’ve been in the same room previously it was nice to meet and have a good conversation. We’re certainly hoping to continue working in partnership with The Rabbit Hole - we love the indie twinning concept - and exploring other partnerships that materialised as a result of Independent Bookshop Week. So we’d be happy to be involved in all and any future iterations.” – Dave Windass, Wrecking Ball Press

“The Saraband twinning worked brilliantly. It was a chance to experiment, collaborate and strengthen our online activity as two independents. We both benefited from each other’s creative input and put together a simple and effective campaign.” – Will Smith, Sam Read Bookseller

Ideas for Your Indie Twinning Partnership

- Bespoke branding for your partnership, possibly combining the publisher and bookshop logos
- Branded social media assets
- Schedule of integrated social media posts, each partner tagging the other, perhaps highlighting a particular title a day. Link to bookshop website to drive sales
- Select a title, or a number of titles, yet to be published to focus on and drive pre-orders
- Reciprocal digital content – e.g. a piece from the bookseller to sit on the publisher website or blog and vice versa
- A themed playlist for sharing on social media and, for those shops with a license, for playing in-store
- Twitter chats, Facebook Lives, Instagram takeovers etc.
- In-store events and signings
- Bespoke signed bookplates
- Signed stock
- In-store book groups using the partner publisher’s titles
- Dedicated window and / or table displays

If you would like to get involved, feel free to make your own arrangements, or we can help with matching up publishers and bookshops. Find your nearest bookshop using the [Books Are My Bag -](#)

[Bookshopsearch](#), or contact emma.bradshaw@booksellers.org.uk if you would like help contacting a bookshop.

Whatever you end up doing, please email emma.bradshaw@booksellers.org.uk to let us know your plans so that we can assist with securing media coverage and spreading the word on social media. Make sure you tag us @booksaremybag and use #IndieBookshopWeek in your posts.

Bookshop Crawls

Gather your colleagues, friends, family, or anyone else you can think of, and take them on a book-buying crawl of your local bookshops this Independent Bookshop Week. You could even plan a day trip around it. [Use the map on the home page of the Books Are My Bag website to plan your route](#)

As you visit each bookshop you might like to ask the booksellers for recommendations and find out what they are doing to celebrate Independent Bookshop Week – they may well have some special offers and exclusive editions available. They may even have a bookshop stamp for you to stamp a notebook with.

Don't forget to big up the bookshops you visit and shout about your purchases on social media. Make sure you take photos and tag the bookshops, @booksaremybag and use #IndieBookshopWeek.

Please email emma.bradshaw@booksellers.org.uk to let us know your plans so that we can assist with securing media coverage and spreading the word on social media.

Guest Bookselling

For authors (and poets and illustrators) who would like to get involved with Independent Bookshop Week, but are either time-poor, or unable to do formal events (or perhaps have always secretly dreamed of running a bookshop) give guest bookselling a try.

Some authors may be keen to find out more about this side of the book trade, or it may be the promotional aspect that is more appealing, either way, guest bookselling can be a relatively quick and easy way for authors to participate in the campaign.

Feel free to make arrangements directly with bookshops, or the Books Are My Bag team can put you in touch. Find your nearest bookshop using the [Books Are My Bag - Bookshopsearch](#), or contact emma.bradshaw@booksellers.org.uk if you would like help contacting a bookshop.

The guest bookselling slot itself could be as brief as 30mins – 1 hour, or for a full morning or afternoon, or even a full day (depending on author and bookshop availability).

The benefits of guest bookselling include:

- Generating some local media coverage
- Generating some social media content (make sure you tag @booksaremybag and use #IndieBookshopWeek)
- Getting some signed stock into a bookshop (if time allows the bookshop can take pre-orders for signed/dedicated copies too)
- Introducing newer authors to booksellers and forging relationships between the two

Please email emma.bradshaw@booksellers.org.uk to let us know your plans so that we can assist with securing media coverage and spreading the word on social media.

Social Media

Follow us

- X/Twitter: [@booksaremybag](#)
- Facebook: [@booksaremybag](#)
- Instagram: [@booksaremybag](#)
- YouTube: [@booksaremybag](#)

Follow Independent Bookshops

Show your support by following bookshops across social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter and TikTok). Make sure your X/Twitter pages are following our [Independent Bookshops list](#)

Link to Independent Bookshops

- Include links to independent bookshops and/or [bookshop.org](#) in your social media posts
- Include independent bookshops and/or [bookshop.org](#) in your pre-order campaigns

Tag Us

Please tag [@booksaremybag](#) across social media and use #IndieBookshopWeek and #IndieBookAwards in your activity. You may also wish to use #ChooseBookshops which is our overall campaign hashtag for bookshops.

Share our Digital Assets

Social media assets and branding will be available from our [website](#).

Encourage your Followers to Save the Date

Post our [Independent Bookshop Week social media assets](#) and invite your followers to save the date: Saturday 15 – Saturday 22 June.

Share our Message

Example posts:

- Happy #IndieBookshopWeek!
We're joining the celebration. Here's how you can too:
 - Find your local bookshop: <https://booksaremybag.com/bookshopsearch>
 - Buy a book
 - Share your purchase on social media (remember to tag the bookshop!)
- Shop local and shop independent this #IndieBookshopWeek (15-22 June)
Find your local bookshop: <https://booksaremybag.com/bookshopsearch>
- This #IndieBookshopWeek (15-22 June), invest in your community; shop local and support your high street.

Find your local bookshop: <https://booksaremybag.com/bookshopsearch>

- Here's you can support bookshops this #IndieBookshopWeek:
 - Follow them on social media
 - Subscribe to their newsletter
 - Write a positive review
 - Buy a subscription
 - Purchase a gift card

- Pre-order a book
- Stock up some new reads for summer
- Spread the word!

Share Your Plans With Us

Whatever you do for Independent Bookshop Week, no matter how big or small, let us know about your plans so that we can support on social media and Midas can help secure press coverage. Please email details to emma.bradshaw@booksellers.org.uk