**VAL MCDERMID BIOGRAPHY**

One of the UK’s most accomplished and respected novelists, Val McDermid has sold over 19 million books to date across the globe and her work has been translated into more than 40 languages. She has written five series: cold case detective Karen Pirie was introduced to us in *The Distant Echo* and the 8th book in the series will be published in 2025, with Karen now starring in a major ITV series; clinical psychologist Dr Tony Hill and DCI Carol Jordan lead a gripping eleven book series adapted for television as *Wire in the Blood,* starring Robson Green and Hermione Norris; the Kate Brannigan novels showcase a private detective; journalist Lindsay Gordon is at the heart of another series; and most recently, Val has launched a new series featuring young journalist Allie Burns whose life and experiences we witness at ten year intervals, debuting with *1979*. Val has also published several award-winning standalone novels, books of non-fiction, short story collections and a children’s picture book, *My Granny is a Pirate.* Val returned to Karen Pirie with her 2023 hardback, *Past Lying,* which was published in October of that year. 2024 saw the publication of *Queen Macbeth,* her reimagining of the story of Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth, in May. Her new Karen Pirie novel, *Silent Bones,* publishes in October 2025.

Val is recognised as a remarkably versatile writer for stage, microphone and screen as well as books. In early 2017 Val’s BBC Radio 4 drama series, *Resistance*, aired to great acclaim, and has been adapted as a graphic novel. BBC Radio 4 has also broadcast five series of her comedy crime ‘Dead’ serial, starring Julie Hesmondhalgh. And in the last couple of years, she has returned to writing for the theatre with *Margaret Saves Scotland* as well as creating the TV series *Traces* based on her original idea and starring Molly Windsor and Martin Compston, which completed two series, airing on primetime BBC One slots, in 2021 and 2022.

Val has won many awards internationally, including the CWA Gold Dagger for best crime novel of the year, the CWA Cartier Diamond Dagger, the Grand Prix des Romans D’Aventure, the Lambda Literary Foundation Pioneer Award, the Stonewall Writer of the Year and the LA Times Book of the Year Award. Uniquely, she has been shortlisted in five different categories in the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Awards. In 2016 she received the Outstanding Contribution to Crime Fiction award at the Theakston’s Old Peculiar Harrogate Crime Festival and in 2017 received the DIVA Literary Prize for Crime. She is a Fellow of both the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Val has served as a judge for both the Man Booker Prize and the Women’s Prize for Fiction, and was the Chair of the Wellcome Book Prize in 2017. She co-founded the Theakston’s Old Peculier Crime Writing Festival in Harrogate (now the largest of its kind in Europe) in 2003. She has participated in innumerable festivals on five continents and she plays an active role in Scottish civic society. She is the recipient of seven Honorary Doctorates, is a fellow of both the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, an Honorary Fellow of St Hilda’s College, Oxford and Professor of Scottish Studies and Crime Fiction at the University of Otago in New Zealand. She is Patron of the Scottish Book Trust and founding sponsor of McDermid Ladies football team.

Val is also an experienced broadcaster with regular and hugely popular appearances on TV and radio. Val has guest edited BBC Radio 4’s *Front Row,* fronted features for BBC Two’s *The Culture Show,* written and presented many radio documentaries and appeared on a remarkable range of TV shows from *Question Time* to *Have I Got News For You*. She further added to her broadcasting credentials in late 2016 by captaining the winning *University Challenge* alumnae team, having previously become *Celebrity Mastermind* champion! She has also been a member of winning teams in *Eggheads* and *Only Connect Sport Relief.*

Val was born in Kirkcaldy, a coastal town in the heart of the Scottish mining community. She graduated in English from St Hilda’s College, Oxford - the first student from a Scottish state school to do so - before going on to be an award winning journalist for sixteen years. Val is also lead singer of the Fun Lovin’ Crime Writers, a rock band who have performed at Glastonbury as well as many book festivals. Her civil partner is Professor Jo Sharp, the Geographer Royal for Scotland. Together they edited *Imagine a Country,* a collection of more than 100 short essays with the aim of fostering debate and discussion. They divide their time between Edinburgh and the East Neuk of Fife.

For further information please visit [**www.valmcdermid.com**](http://www.valmcdermid.com/), facebook.com/valmcdermid, @valmcdermid on twitter or contact [**Laura.Sherlock@littlebrown.co.uk**](mailto:Laura.Sherlock@littlebrown.co.uk) | 07919 324882

**DAMIAN BARR BIOGRAPHY**

Damian Barr is an award-winning writer, broadcaster and host. In 2019, Damian brought books back to television with the BBC’s Big Scottish Book Club, now in its sixth series. He has written and presented documentaries and profiles for radio and television with subjects including Sir Walter Scott, The History of Pride and the Writers of Rye.

A regular on Radio 4, he was part of the Front Row presenting team with guests including Dolly Parton and Brad Pitt. He has also written and hosted stand-alone series for Radio 4 including Guide Books and Whose Truth Is It Anyway?

Maggie & Me, Damian’s memoir about coming of age and coming out in Thatcher’s Britain, was a Radio 4 Book of the Week, and won Sunday Times Memoir of the Year and Stonewall Writer of the Year. His debut novel, You Will Be Safe Here, was a Radio 4 Book at Bedtime and Book of the Year in the Observer, Guardian and Mail in 2019.

He’s written columns for The Times, Attitude and Big Issue covering culture, politics and lifestyle. For a decade he was Books Editor of Soho House magazine.

And he’s written several plays for radio.

He started his now-legendary Literary Salon at Shoreditch House in 2008, running it until 2023 in iconic venues including the Savoy, revolutionising the cultural conversation with his trademark wit and warmth. The Guardian named him ‘one of the most connected men in publishing’ and he’s in the Bookseller 150.

Damian holds a PhD in Creative Writing from Lancaster University, is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He is a trustee of Gladstone’s Library and a campaigner for libraries and LGBTQ+ equality.

In Spring 2024, Damian’s memoir Maggie & Me was a major play from the National Theatre of Scotland.

Barr’s next two books will be published by Canongate Books: a novel, The Two Roberts, in 2025, and a memoir scheduled for 2027.

**About the role of a Centenary Champion**

Our Centenary Champions are both beloved Scottish authors who are much-valued supporters and users of the National Library and libraries across the country. Their role is to help spread the word of our Centenary, the role the National Library has played in Scottish national life over the past 100 years, and its plans for the future. Most of all, our Centenary Champions are strong advocates for libraries and the difference they make in people’s lives and society as a whole.