

Julie Ratcliffe – J.A. Ratcliffe

Julie provides talks and attends events and is always happy to meet readers and chat.

Talks

'My talks are written with the audience in mind. Talks can be to children, adults or a mix of both. I talk about my books, my writing, smuggling, social history – 18th century life.'

Below is a list of typical talks, all talks include readings from the books and often include props and artefacts.

Writing, history - me and my books

In this talk I discuss why I write, what I write and how I research the past and create a sense of place. I take the audience back in time with a short exercise they can all do. And what is my mystery object?

Undertaken at: Wimborne Literary Festival, Verwood Library, Highcliffe Castle

Time: approx. 45 minutes, plus Q&A

Suitable for: All

Inspirations

What inspired the Smugglers' Town Mysteries? It includes details of Christchurch and surrounds, places and objects and the places in the books people can still visit. I talk about sources for finding out about life at the time all illustrated through readings from the books.

Undertaken at: The Children's Boscars, Bournemouth Library; Jewell Academy, World Book Day

Time: approx. 30 minutes, plus Q&A

Suitable for: All

How Smelly was the 18th Century?

Using the books, readings and artefacts – including my mystery object – this talk is about life at the time of the Smugglers' Town Mysteries. I talk about smells - good, bad and in between and the audience decides at the end how smelly they think life might have been. I also include tips for creating a sense of place in writing with a short exercise.

Undertaken at: Oakdale Library

Time: approx. 45 minutes, plus Q&A

Suitable for: All

Tales from a Smugglers Town

This talk is about smuggling in Christchurch and surrounds, some of the people and key events in the town's smuggling past and why Christchurch was such an epicentre for smuggling including how the 'business' of smuggling worked. We visit Hengistbury Head (in imagination) to illustrate why Christchurch and the surrounding area was perfect for smuggling activity. I cover how my research informs and inspires the books and illustrate this with short readings.

Undertaken at: Friends of the Red House Museum, Friends of Christchurch Library, Burton Women's Fellowship.

Time: approx. 45 minutes, plus Q&A

Suitable for: Adults / older children

A Smuggler's Child

Written for the Christchurch Heritage Festival, this talk is about smuggling in Christchurch and life at the time. Each child / family chooses their family's occupation and at the end of the talk decide if their family would have been involved in smuggling. We visit Hengistbury Head (in imagination) to illustrate why Christchurch and the surrounding area was perfect for smuggling activity.

This talk was first undertaken at St Michael's loft in Christchurch Priory, where it is recorded that the schoolboys who once studied there would watch the smugglers on Hengistbury Head.

This talk also has a 'guess the smell' activity.

Undertaken at: Christchurch Priory, Christchurch Heritage Festival

Time: approx. 45 minutes, plus Q&A

Suitable for: All, especially families

Christchurch's naughty past

This talk is suitable for younger children and covers why I set my books in Christchurch, about the town, places we know, why people smuggled and how I found out about life at the time. The talk includes readings.

Undertaken at: Priory School, Burton School, Christchurch Library Chatterbooks Group

Time: 45 minutes, plus Q&A

Suitable for: Children 7 and above

Talks can be created to suit individual needs. If you would like Julie to undertake a talk or an event with your group, school, library or location, please contact her at: enquiries@julieratcliffe.co.uk