



The 'These Islands: Our Past, Present, and Future' conference will take place in Newcastle upon Tyne next week.

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Exploring the stories of our United Kingdom

Academics, comedians, journalists and politicians, including a former Prime Minister, will arrive in Newcastle next week for a major conference exploring the need for cooperation between the countries of the United Kingdom.

These Islands: Our Past, Present, and Future will explore the different narratives created as part of the ongoing debate about the UK's constitutional future, particularly in the wake of the 2014 Scottish independence and 2016 Brexit referendums.

Taking place over two days, the conference will feature speakers such as former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, author and historian Tom Holland, and comedian Simon Evans, as well as academics specialising in the different aspects of UK identity and devolution.

Among them is Northumbria University's Katy Shaw, Professor of Contemporary Writings within Northumbria's Department of Humanities.

Professor Shaw is part of a panel which will discuss the 'ethics and unions' of the UK, speaking in particular about her research into the under representation of northern and working-class writers within the UK publishing industry.

This is not the first time her research has been used to shape policy on the issue of UK identity. Over the last year she has contributed to a number of debates, including speaking at the Institute for Public Policy Research State of the North conference, the Edinburgh International Book Festival and the Performers' Alliance All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) inquiry, *Breaking the Class Ceiling in the Arts: an inquiry into social mobility in the creative sector*.

Commenting on her appearance at the *These Islands: Our Past, Present, and Future* conference, Professor Shaw said: "Narrative is the key to unlocking the multiple points of cultural, economic and social connection between constituent kingdoms that have recently appeared increasingly disparate.

"These Islands will stage timely discussions about the future of the union and the United Kingdom today, and for the future.

"Across two days of panels and talks, attendees have a fantastic opportunity to engage key thinkers and leaders in conversations about the state of the union, past and present. We are delighted to host the event here in Newcastle."

The conference takes place on Friday 21 and Saturday 22 February at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne.

The theme for the first day will be 'The United Kingdom; The Case for Cooperation', while the second day will focus on 'British Identity and Multiculturalism'.

Tickets cost £5.98 for one day or £11.37 for both days. Find out more and book at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/these-islands-our-past-present-and-future-tickets-90932614899

Find out more about Northumbria University's [Department of Humanities](#).

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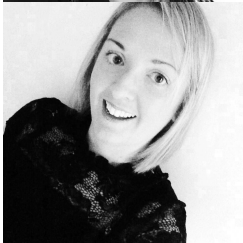


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