



FOOD & FEASTING IN ANTIQUITY

EXPERIENCE CLASSICS LIKE NEVER BEFORE

THURSDAY 14 - SATURDAY 16 MAY 2026



WELCOME TO CLASSICSFEST 2026

ClassicsFest has been made possible by the generous support of The Community Foundation North East – Newcastle Culture Investment Fund; The David Family Foundation; The Leche Trust; Classics For All North; The Institute of Classical Studies; The Gillian Dickinson Trust; The Roman Society; The Classical Association; The Hellenic Society; Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust; The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Newcastle University and The Department of Classics and Ancient History at Durham University.

Special thanks to Prof. Athanassios Vergados, Andrew Parkin, David Whetstone, Ed Cole, Laura E Hope, Alphabetti Theatre, New Writing North, the Tyneside Cinema, Blackfriars Cookery School, The Seven Bridges Café, the staff, board, and volunteers at the Lit & Phil.

We are delighted to welcome you to **ClassicsFest**, a growing annual cultural festival in North East England. Founded by producer and director Cinzia Hardy, the festival is a collaboration between the Lit & Phil and Newcastle University's School of History, Classics, and Archaeology.

ClassicsFest brings the ancient Greek and Roman worlds to life through the eyes of artists, thinkers, and academics of today.

This year, our theme is food, wine, and domestic life in the ancient Greek and Roman world. Enjoy a variety of events: cooking demonstrations, a wine tasting, performances, lectures, and discussions. There's something for everyone—whether you know a lot about the classics or nothing at all.

Festival Team

Producer and Director: **Cinzia Hardy**

Lit & Phil Head Librarian: **Kay Easson**

Festival Liaison: **Carole Wears**

Festival Assistants: **Fiona Henderson & Fiona Ellis**

Marketing & Communications: **Claire Cockcroft, Also Creative**

Graphic Design: **Shima Banks**

Photography and videography: **Jason Thompson, Sound Ideas Media**

Staging, Lights and Sound: **Three-16.co.uk**

Independent Bookseller James Routledge of **Opt Indie Books** will have a book stall at some events

HOW TO BOOK

bit.ly/ClassicsFest2026
www.litandphil.org.uk

All events can be booked online.

Telephone and in person bookings for events taking place at the Lit & Phil can be made by calling 0191 232 0192

All events must be booked in advance

Most events are free, unless otherwise stated

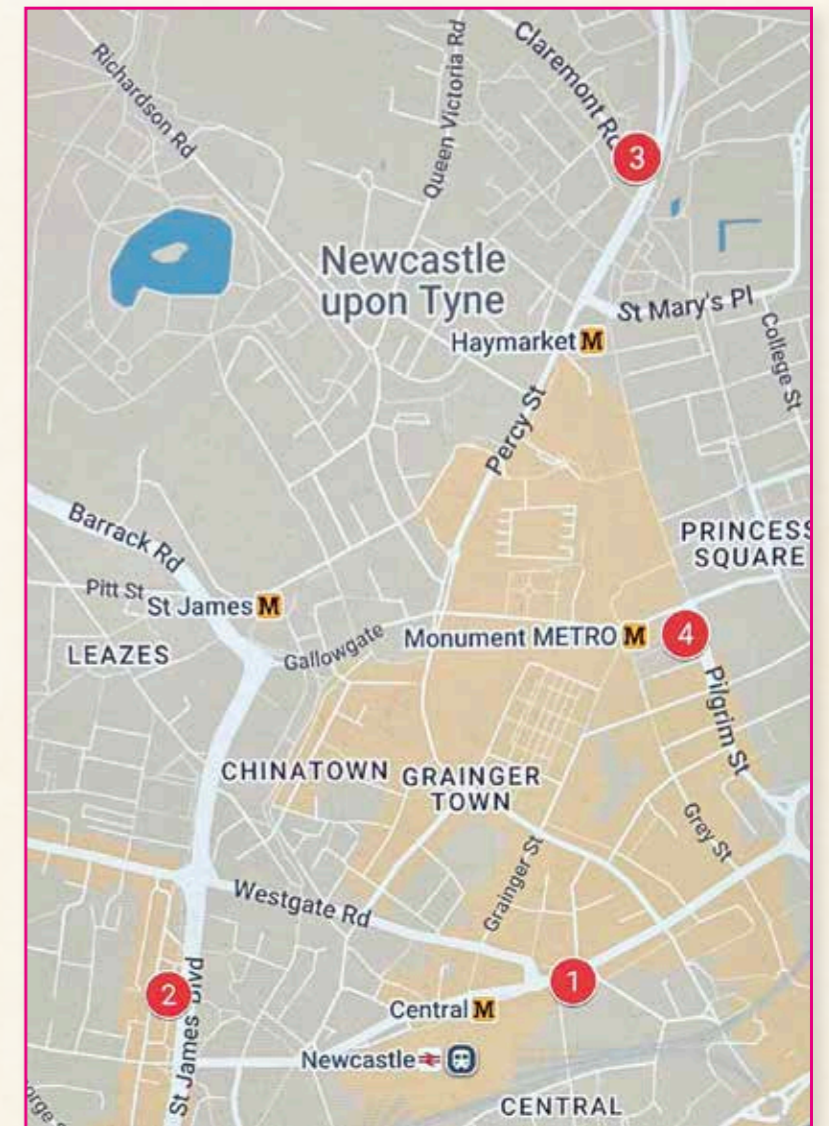
Ticketed events may have concessions for students and unemployed attendees

Age recommendation for all events is 12 years+



Scan here for more information

If the event you have booked for is cancelled or changes location, you are entitled to a refund. You are not entitled to a refund if you can no longer attend an event.



1. The Lit & Phil
2. Alphabetti Theatre
3. The Great North Museum: Hancock
4. The Tyneside Cinema



THE

Lit & Phil  Newcastle University





CLASSICSFEST SATELLITE LECTURES AT THE LIT & PHIL

FOOD AND FEASTING IN CLASSICAL ART

Dr Gail-Nina Anderson, Cultural Historian

Wednesday 6 May | 6pm | FREE

Booking essential | 1hr

An illustrated talk, setting aside the politics, philosophy and military history of the classical world to look instead at the pictorial history of food, eating and feasts. Several texts survive to tell us how Greek and Roman meals were conducted, to which visual depictions add a fresh immediacy. A chance to explore the distance between the reality and the fantasy and perhaps demolish a few lingering myths.

FOOD AND DRINK ON HADRIAN'S WALL

Alexandra Croom FSA,

Senior Keeper of Archaeology and Curator of
Arbeia Roman Fort

Tuesday 12 May | 6pm | FREE

Booking essential | 1hr

Have you ever wondered what the soldiers on Hadrian's Wall ate or drank? This talk will look at the range of food and drink available to them over the centuries, using the evidence we have as to where it came from and the vessels used to store, cook and serve it.

FOOD, MEDICINE AND AROMATICS

Dr Chiara Blanco, Lecturer in Classics

Wednesday 13 May | 6pm | FREE

Booking essential | 1hr

Learn how the ancient Greeks and Romans used food and aromatics for health and wellbeing and taste the aromas that shaped their daily lives.



THURSDAY 14 MAY

EATING, NOT CHEATING: THE MORAL ECONOMICS OF FOOD IN ANCIENT ROME

With **Dr Marta Garcia Morcillo**,
Lecturer in Ancient History, Newcastle University

3pm | FREE | Lit & Phil | 1hr

Food, famine, speculation and profit were familiar elements in Roman society. But how did the Romans actually control supply of the 'bread' in bread and circuses? Could food riots really overthrow emperors? Who did the populace blame for shortages? And how does such history resonate today? The lecture will explore the priorities and failures of the imperial political economics of food, and its impact on perceptions of fairness, social inequality and moral decline.

COOKS, COOKBOOKS AND RECIPES IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME

With **Dr Christopher Grocock**,
Head of Classics at Bedales School (2014 - 2022)

4.30pm | FREE | Lit & Phil | 1hr

Dr Grocock specialises in Medieval Latin and Roman Britain and has edited and translated a number of Latin texts, including the collection of recipes called Apicius together with Sally Grainger. The lecture offers an overview of the roles and status of cooks in Ancient Greece and Rome from the evidence they have left behind.

ROMAN RECIPES FOR MODERN COOKS

With **Sally Grainger**, Chef, Historian and Experimental Archaeologist; **Karen Phillips**, Cookery Course Leader at Linnels Farm, Northumberland; and **Dr Kathryn Tempest**, Lecturer in Roman History at Leicester University

6.30pm | £10 inc. food samples | Lit & Phil | 1.5hrs

Sally Grainger brings ancient recipes to life from her new book *Roman Recipes for Modern Cooks* in conversation with Karen Phillips and Dr Kathryn Tempest. There is also a chance to taste recreated dishes.



Illustration: Joana Avillez



FRIDAY 15 MAY

GREEK WINE VESSELS & ARTEFACTS GUIDED TOURS

With **Andrew Parkin**,
Keeper of Archaeology, Great North Museum: Hancock

**2.30pm and 4pm | £5 + booking fee
Great North Museum: Hancock | 1hr**

Join an expert-led tour of Greek artefacts used for storing, mixing, and drinking wine, with opportunities for hands-on handling.

TRIMALCHIO'S DINNER PARTY

With **Kirsten Luckins**, **Dr Kathryn Tempest** and professional actors.
3-5pm | Free | Tyneside Cinema

A special performance for **Classics for All Schools only**. The project is supported by Classics for All North, The Classical Association and The Gillian Dickinson Trust. Participation of state schools is supported by The Roman Society's School Fund.

WINE FROM ANTIQUITY TO NOW

Chaired by **Prof Athanassios Vergados**, Professor of Greek, Newcastle University

6pm | £20 inc. wine tasting | Lit & Phil | 2hrs

Taste and explore wine from Roman times to today. Experts reveal production methods, additives, and health impacts, followed by a tasting of ancient-inspired wines.

Panellists include **Dr Emlyn Dodd**, Lecturer in Classical Studies at Adelaide University, Australia and Associate Fellow at the Institute of Classical Studies; **Dr Eva Falaschi**, Humboldt Fellow at the University of Tübingen, Germany, **Professor Barry Smith**, Director of the Institute of Philosophy, University of London, and **Dr David Harker** from Newcastle Wine School.

GREAT GRANDA APICIUS

A new play by **Abby Walker**, winner of the ClassicsFest 2026 playwriting competition, directed by **Ed Cole**, Artistic Director of Alphabetti Theatre

7.30pm | Pay What You Feel | Alphabetti Theatre | 1.5hrs

Supported by the Leche Trust

Inspired by Apicius, the famous Roman Cookbook written nearly 2,000 years ago. The performance is preceded by a brief introduction to Apicius and followed by a Q&A with the creative team.



Timings are approximate



SATURDAY 16 MAY

GARUM AT THE ROMAN TABLE

With **Sally Grainger**, Chef, Historian & Experimental Archaeologist

11am | £10 inc. food samples | Lit & Phil | 1.5hrs

Discover the history of ancient fish sauce and taste recreated recipes in this lecture and live demonstration.

TRIMALCHIO'S DINNER PARTY

With **Kirsten Luckins**, **Dr Kathryn Tempest** and professional actors.

12.30pm | £37.50 inc. afternoon tea (1 hr 15 mins)

and screening (2 hours) | Tyneside Cinema

Concessions available

Step into a reimagining of *Trimalchio's Dinner Party* from Gaius Petronius's work known as *The Satyricon*. Writer Kirsten Luckins brings the story to life with contributions from local 6th form students. Performed by professional actors, the piece will unfold around you as you enjoy afternoon tea.

Dr Kathryn Tempest will introduce the original text, and the afternoon will conclude with a screening of the 1969 film *Satyricon*, written and directed by Federico Fellini. Suitable for 18+.

Find further information about the film on www.tynesidecinema.co.uk

A GOURMET JOURNEY THROUGH THE ODYSSEY

With **Laura Coffey**, Author & Journalist

1pm | FREE | Lit & Phil | 1hr

A delicious deep dive into Homer's world, from Helen of Troy's mind-altering wine to month-long banquets with the guardian of the winds. A lively, sensory exploration of ancient hospitality, good food, bad choices, and the echoes of these rituals in how we eat and gather today.

Laura is a travel journalist and writer - her debut memoir *Enchanted Islands*, traces the real-life Mediterranean locations that inspired *The Odyssey* described by Stephen Fry as 'magical and captivating'. She regularly writes for the *FT*, *The Guardian*, *Conde Nast Traveller* and more.

REIMAGINING EURIPIDES' BACCHAE

With **Prof Athanassios Vergados**, Professor of Greek, Newcastle University, **Dr George Gazis**, Associate Professor, Durham University & New Writing North Young Writers

3pm | FREE | Lit & Phil | 1.5hrs

Explore Euripides' ancient Greek tragedy *The Bacchae*, where Dionysus, the god of wine and drama, stirs chaos and questions power. The afternoon begins with a presentation by Prof Vergados and Dr Gazis, who will introduce the play's central themes and share selected readings.



Illustration: Joana Avillez



Chef Archie Smith (Seven Bridges Café) has been working with The Migration Menu producers, artists and members of the West End Refugee Service, to explore our contemporary understanding of xenia. Supported by the Institute of Classical Studies - Henry Brown Trust

This is followed by a creative response from young writers in New Writing North's Young Writers' Programme. Working with writer **Kirsten Luckins**, they have created a new piece, *Making New Gods*, designed to unleash maximum havoc.

Supported by The Institute of Classical Studies Engagement Fund and The Hellenic Society

FOOD & HOSPITALITY FROM ANTIQUITY TO TODAY

With **Prof Athanassios Vergados**, Professor of Greek, Newcastle University; **Chef Archie Smith** from the Seven Bridges Café; **Professors James Staples & Luke Heslop**, Co-Producers of the Migration Menu; and **Laura Coffey**, author and journalist.

5pm | £10 inc. food | Lit & Phil | 1.5hrs

Hospitality has always been central to human society. In ancient Greece xenia was a ritualised form of hospitality under the patronage of Zeus. It was considered a sacred duty: showing kindness to strangers honoured both guests and the gods.

Join us as we explore how xenia shapes epic Greek poetry and what it can teach us about welcoming others today. Together, we'll consider the modern meaning of hospitality - how sharing a meal can build connection, bridge differences, and strengthen communities. This event blends historical insight with contemporary practice, drawing on the work of the Seven Bridges Café and the Migration Menu project.

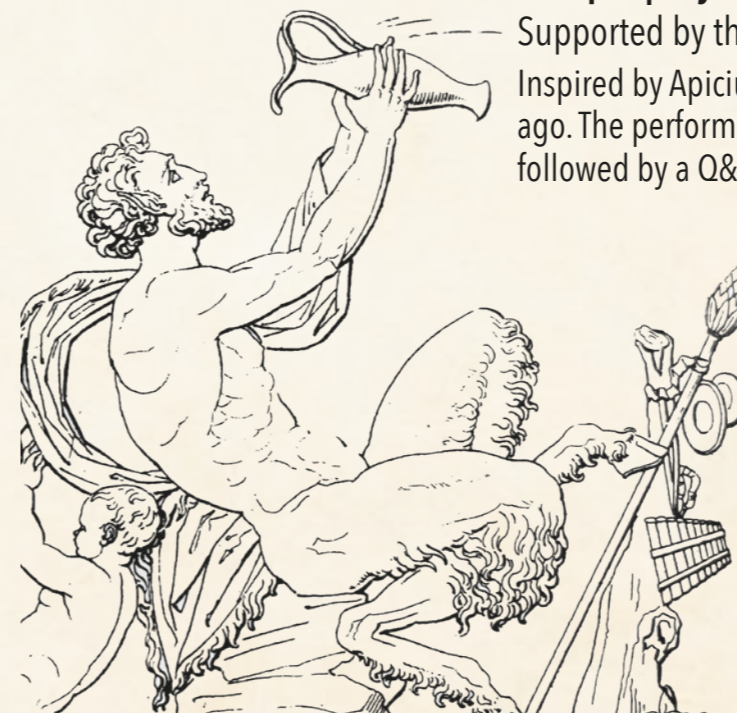
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CLASSICSFEST AT A GLANCE

SATELLITE LECTURES

Wednesday 6 May

Lit & Phil | 6pm | FREE

Food and Feasting in Classical Art
Dr. Gail-Nina Anderson

Tuesday 12 May

Lit & Phil | 6pm | FREE

Food and Drink on Hadrian's Wall
Alexandra Croom FSA

Wednesday 13 May

Lit & Phil | 6pm | FREE

Food, Medicine & Aromatics
Dr Chiara Blanco

MAIN PROGRAMME

Thursday 14 May

Lit & Phil | 3pm | FREE

Eating, Not Cheating: The Moral Economics of Food in Ancient Rome
Dr Marta Garcia Morcillo

Lit & Phil | 4.30pm | FREE

Cooks, Cookbooks and Recipes in Ancient Greece and Rome
Dr. Christopher Grocock

Lit & Phil | 6.30pm | £10

Roman Recipes for Modern Cooks
Sally Grainger, Karen Phillips and Dr. Kathryn Tempest

Friday 15 May

Great North Museum: Hancock

2.30pm and 4pm | £5

Greek Wine Vessels & Artefacts
Guided Tours
Andrew Parkin

Tyneside Cinema | 3-5pm | FREE

Trimalchio's Dinner Party
A special performance for
Classics for All schools only

Lit & Phil | 6pm | £20

Wine from Antiquity to Now
Panel and tastings

Alphabetti Theatre

7.30pm | Pay What You Feel

Great Granda Apicius
A new play by Abby Walker,
directed by Ed Cole

Saturday 16 May

Lit & Phil | 11am | £10

Garum at the Roman Table
Sally Grainger

Tyneside Cinema | 12.30pm | £37.50

Trimalchio's Dinner Party and
screening of *Satyricon*
Performance, afternoon tea, film screening

Lit & Phil | 1pm | FREE

A Gourmet Journey through The Odyssey
Laura Coffey

Lit & Phil | 3pm | FREE

Reimagining Euripides' Bacchae
Prof. Athanassios Vergados, Dr. George Gazis
and New Writing North Writers

Lit & Phil | 5pm | £10

Food & Hospitality from Antiquity to Today
Prof. Athanassios Vergados,
Chef Archie Smith, Professors James Staples
& Luke Heslop, Laura Coffey

Alphabetti Theatre

7.30pm | Pay What You Feel

Great Granda Apicius
A new play by Abby Walker, directed by Ed Cole



CLASSICSFEST SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS



PARTNERS



SUPPORTERS



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