

The OxIA Short Story Collection 2026

OxIA (Oxford Independent Authors) is organising Wolvercote Literary Festival 2026 on Sunday June 28th, as part of the 2026 Wolvercote and Wytham Mid-Summer Festival.

In this year's Wolvercote Literary Festival we are launching the OxIA Short Story Collection, open to local writers of all ages who would like to see their work in print.

Short stories will be collected and published on-line, on the OxIA web site, around each of OxIA's local literary festivals. Ultimately we hope to bring out internationally available e-books and print-on-demand paperbacks featuring the pick of the crop in each age group from this and subsequent local OxIA literary festivals.

Entries are invited in three age categories:

- 11 or under maximum 500 words
- 12 to 17 maximum 1000 words
- 18 and over maximum 1500 words

Members of Oxford Independent Authors read every entry received.

Theme:

The theme of the 2026 Wolvercote and Wytham Mid-Summer Festival is 'Threads'. Writers may submit short stories related to this theme, and a few example titles are suggested here...

- A Slender Thread
 - Threadbare
 - Threads Between Generations
 - Unravelling Threads
- ... but writers may use any theme and any title they wish.

Closing Date for the 2026 Wolvercote Collection:

The deadline for entries is **6pm on 5th June 2026**. Early submissions welcome.

Judging

- Entries in each age-group will be judged by a panel of experienced writers, editors and teachers with relevant expertise.
- The main criteria will be
 - does the piece hang together as a story?
 - is it a decent read?
- All stories that meet these criteria and are in line with the guidelines below will be included in the collection.

Results:

The 2026 Wolvercote Short Story Collection will be published for all to read and enjoy on the OxIA web site on Sunday 28th June 2026. Each age group's collection will be available as a PDF download, and a limited number of printed copies will be available for browsing on the stage in Wolvercote Village Hall on that date.

The collection will include all the entries that 'hang together as a story', make 'a decent read', and are in line with the entry guidelines below.

At some point we hope to have enough really good quality stories to justify publishing a 'crème de la crème' selection as internationally available e-books and print-on-demand paperbacks. At this point we will contact the authors of selected stories individually to check on permissions etc.

Entry Guidelines - Please Note:

- Entries must be the writer's own original work, and must not be published elsewhere in print or on-line on or before 28th June 2026.

- Entries are invited from writers of any age who live or work in Oxfordshire.
- Entries should be emailed to shortstory@oxia.org.uk by 6th June 2026.
- Entries are free. No more than one entry per person to the Wolvercote Collection.
- Entries that exceed the maximum word count or do not conform to other specified requirements will be disqualified.
- Entries will be assessed using a plagiarism and AI content checker. If in the opinion of the judges there is evidence that such methods have been used in an entry, it will be disqualified.
- Entries should avoid content or language likely to give offence, such as hate speech or obscenity. Any entry that contains anything of that nature will be assessed by the judges as to whether its inclusion is justified in the context of the story, and if in their opinion it is not justified, the entry will be disqualified.
- Adult and 12-17 entrants, and a parent or responsible adult in the case of up to 11 years old entrants, should please proofread and check spelling and grammar before submitting.
- Entrants should ensure that the story is all their own and is not influenced or improved by helpful others (especially parents, in the case of younger entrants). Enthusiasm and originality is essential.
- OxIA reserve the right to edit entries accepted into the collection, in a sensitive manner, for consistency and correct grammar, punctuation, layout, etc., before publication.
- Entries should include a declaration as follows:
 - “This entry to the OxIA Short Story Collection is all my own work, has not been published elsewhere, is not liable to give offence to any potential readers, and contains no material that is copyright, AI-generated, or AI-supported in any way.”

Entry checklist

- Email your story to shortstory@oxia.org.uk by 6th June 2026.
- Include a story header before the start of your story (see below for format of story header).
- If you’re less than 18 years old, please include your age.
- Submit your story as a Word or PDF doc (.docx, .doc or .pdf) using the filename ‘Story Title-Writer’s Name’ (e.g. Threadbare-Frederica Bloggins)
- Formatting: use Times New Roman 12-point in black, with 1.5 line spacing.

Story Header – please edit in your own details and copy in to the start of your story:

Story Title: Threadbare

Writer’s Name: Frederica Bloggins

Email address: fblogg2010@gloop.com

Home address: 987 Woodstock Road Oxford OX2 9ZZ

Word count: 495

Age: 16 [Age is only required for entrants aged 17 or under]

Writer’s declaration: This entry to the OxIA Short Story Collection is all my own work, has not been published elsewhere, is not liable to give offence to any potential readers, and contains no material that is copyright, AI-generated or AI-supported in any way.

About OxIA

Founded by Colin Wade and Steve Lunn in April 2024, Oxford Independent Authors is a not-for-profit group run entirely by volunteers. With twenty-odd members in the county, we support each other in publishing and promoting our work, and generally support the reading and writing world of local children and adults, including through libraries, care homes, independent book-shops, community groups, and Oxfordshire’s Assisted Reading for Children scheme (ARCh). We enable local readers to engage with the writers in their midst and without the remoteness of celebrity and highbrow literary culture. We welcome new members regularly, enriching the range of experience and expertise that all our members can draw on.

More information at www.oxia.org.uk or email shortstory@oxia.org.uk.