

Alan Bennett

Writer

Alan Bennett has been one of our leading dramatists since the success of "Beyond the Fringe" in the 1960s. His television series "Talking Heads" has become a modern-day classic, as have many of his works for the stage, including "Forty Years On", "The Lady In The Van", "A Question of Attribution", "The Madness of George III" (together with the Oscar-nominated screenplay "The Madness of King George") and an adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's "The Wind in the Willows". At the National Theatre, "The History Boys" won Evening Standard, Critics' Circle and Olivier awards, and the South Bank Award.

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Publications

Non-Fiction

Publication Details	Notes
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ENOUGH SAID 2026 Profile Books	
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HOUSE ARREST: PANDEMIC DIARIES 2022 Profile Books	<p>THE SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLER AND WATERSTONES BEST BOOK OF 2022</p> <p>'Sparklingly sardonic...There really is no one like Bennett' - Independent</p> <p>'Filled with elegiac memories and literary gossip...a major National Treasure' - Lynn Barber</p> <p>4 March. HMQ pictured in the paper at an investiture wearing gloves, presumably as a precaution against Coronavirus. But not just gloves; these are almost gauntlets. I hope they're not the thin end of a precautionary wedge lest Her Majesty end up swathed in protective get-up such as is worn at the average crime scene.</p> <p>20 March. With Rupert now working from home my life is much easier, as I get regular cups of tea and a lovely hot lunch.</p> <p>A year in and out of lockdown as experienced by Alan Bennett.</p> <p>The diary takes us from the filming of Talking Heads to thoughts on Boris Johnson, from his father's short-lived craze for family fishing trips, to stair lifts, junk shops of old, having a haircut, and encounters on the local park bench. A lyrical afterword describes the journey home to Yorkshire from King's Cross station via fish and chips on Quebec Street, past childhood landmarks of Leeds, through Coniston Cold, over the infant River Aire, and on.</p>
THE LADY IN THE VAN 2015 Profile Books	<p>In 1974, the homeless Miss Shepherd moved her broken down van into Alan Bennett's garden. Deeply eccentric and stubborn to her bones, Miss Shepherd was not an easy tenant. And Bennett, despite inviting her in the first place, was a reluctant landlord. And yet she lived there for fifteen years. This account of those years was first published in 1989 in the London Review of Books. The play premiered in 1999, directed by Nicholas Hytner and starring Dame Maggie Smith, who reprise their roles in this new film adaptation. Shot on location at Bennett's house, Alex Jennings plays the author, alongside household names including Frances de la Tour, Jim Broadbent and Dominic Cooper.</p>
SIX POETS: FROM HARDY TO LARKIN 2014 Faber and Faber	<p>Writers like to elude their public, lead them a bit of a dance. They take them down untrodden paths, land them in unknown country where they have to ask for directions.</p> <p>In this personal anthology, Alan Bennett has chosen over seventy poems by six well-loved poets, discussing the writers and their verse in his customary conversational style through anecdote, shrewd appraisal and spare but telling biographical detail. Ranging from hidden treasures to famous poems, this is a collection for the beginner and the expert alike. Speaking with candour about his own reactions to the work, Alan Bennett creates profound and witty portraits of Thomas Hardy, A. E. Housman, John Betjeman, W. H. Auden, Louis MacNeice and Philip Larkin, all the more enjoyable for being in his own particular voice.</p> <p>Anybody writing poetry in the thirties had somehow to come to terms with Auden. Auden, you see, had got a head start on the other poets. He'd got into the thirties first, like someone taking over the digs.</p>
A LIFE LIKE OTHER PEOPLE'S 2009 Faber & Faber	<p>Taken from Untold Stories</p> <p>'A beautiful little book, full of love regret and the dignity of unremarkable lives.' -- Daily Mail</p> <p>'This poignant memoir is Bennett at his superlative best.' --Val Hennessy</p>

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UNTOLD STORIES 2005 Faber & Faber	<p>The very best of Alan Bennett`s non-fiction writing from the last nine years including significant unpublished work: memoirs, essays, reviews and more. The title piece is a poignant memoir of his family and of growing up in Leeds. Also included are his celebrated diaries for the years 1996-2004. "I have never read a book of this length where I have turned the last page with such regret. It is intelligent, educated, engaging, humane, self-aware, cantankerous and irresistibly funny. You want it to go on forever." (The Sunday Times) "Throughout this autobiography runs a belief in good sense, tolerance and clemency, along with a real depth of sentiment, clothed in the language of brilliant and witty perspeuity which gives these 658 pages an enduring claim to respect." (Cal McCrystal, The Independent on Sunday) "This thick book is so full of good things they could sell it for twice the price." (Sam Leith, The Daily Telegraph) * "The Week" magazine Book of the Year based on coverage in the national broadsheets, the TLS, The Mail on Sunday, The Spectator and The New Statesman.</p>
WRITING HOME 2004 Faber & Faber	<p>This is a collection of diaries, recollections and book reviews - including several old favourites - which work as a whole to create a portrait of the writer.</p> <p>"Throughout this autobiography runs a belief in good sense, tolerance and clemency, along with a real depth of sentiment, clothed in the language of brilliant and witty perspeuity which gives these 658 pages an enduring claim to respect." (Cal McCrystal, The Independent on Sunday)</p> <p>"This thick book is so full of good things they could sell it for twice the price." (Sam Leith, The Daily Telegraph)</p> <p>* "The Week" magazine Book of the Year based on coverage in the national broadsheets, the TLS, The Mail on Sunday, The Spectator and The New Statesman.</p>
TELLING TALES 2000 BBC Books	<p>A set of ten autobiographical tales from Bennett, dealing with his childhood and upbringing in Leeds during the 1940s.</p>

Fiction

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**THE
UNCOMMON
READER**
2007
Faber & Faber

Had the dogs not taken exception to the strange van parked in the royal grounds, the Queen might never have learnt of the Westminster travelling library's weekly visits to the palace. But finding herself at its steps, she goes up to apologise for all the yapping and ends up taking out a novel by Ivy Compton-Burnett, last borrowed in 1989. Duff read though it proves to be, upbringing demands she finish it and, so as not to appear rude, she withdraws another. This second, more fortunate choice of book awakens in Her Majesty a passion for reading so great that her public duties begin to suffer.

And so, as she devours work by everyone from Hardy to Brookner to Proust to Samuel Beckett, her equerries conspire to bring the Queen's literary odyssey to a close.

Subversive and highly enjoyable, The Uncommon Reader offers the perfect argument for reading, written by one of its great champions, Alan Bennett.

"A masterpiece of comic brevity" Robert McCrum, The Observer)

"An exquisitely produced jewel of a book...[but] beneath the tasteful gilt-and-beige cover seethes a savagely Swiftian indignation against stupidity, Philistinism and arrogance in public places, and a passionate argument for the civilising power of art." (Jane Shilling, The Times)

"In recounting this story of a ruler who becomes a reader, a monarch who'd rather write than reign, Mr. Bennett has written a captivating fairy tale ... a tale that showcases its author's customary élan and keen but humane wit." (Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times)

Other

Publication Details	Notes
THE HISTORY BOYS: Screenplay 2006 FABER AND FABER	The script, Alan Bennett`s diary of the shoot and stills from the feature film, with an introduction by director Nick Hytner.
THE LAYING ON OF HANDS 2001 PROFILE BOOKS	Clive had died young and in Peru and the circumstances make some of his distinguished friends uneasy.
FATHER FATHER BURNING BRIGHT 2000 PROFILE BOOKS	A bittersweet comedy of manners based on the humdrum existence of Denis Midgley, an ineffectual schoolteacher who is abruptly pulled from a parent's evening to be told that his father is dying.
THE LADY IN THE VAN (PLAY) 1999 FABER AND FABER	
TALKING HEADS 2 1998 BBC BOOKS	Characterized by the author's understatement, observation and knowing irony, these six Alan Bennett monologues were written for the second BBC1 series of "Talking Heads".

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THE CLOTHES THEY STOOD UP IN 1998 FABER & FABER	Maurice and Rosemary Ransome, a typically dissatisfied, middle-aged couple, return from a performance of Cosi fanTutte to find that everything has disappeared. There is a limit to what burglars can take: they seldom take easy chairs, for example, and even more seldom settees. These burglars did. They took everything.....
A CREAM CRACKER UNDER THE SETTEE (PLAY) 1998 SAMUEL FRENCH	
SAY SOMETHING HAPPENED (PLAY) 1996 SAMUEL FRENCH	
BED AMONG THE LENTILS (PLAY) 1996 SAMUEL FRENCH	
THE MADNESS OF KING GEORGE III 1995 FABER & FABER	The screenplay for the film of the same name
SOLDIERING ON (PLAY) 1995 SAMUEL FRENCH	
SINGLE SPIES (PLAY) 1991 FABER & FABER	
KAFKA'S DICK (PLAY) 1990 SAMUEL FRENCH	
THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS (PLAY) 1990 FABER & FABER	
INTENSIVE CARE 1989 PEARSON	

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**OBJECTS OF
AFFECTION**

1988
BBC BOOKS

TALKING HEADS

1988
BBC BOOKS

Six monologues written for television, each in its own way reflecting Alan Bennett's observant view of the British way of life.

**FORTY YEARS ON
(PLAY)**

1989
SAMUEL FRENCH

**HER BIG CHANCE
(PLAY)**

1988
SAMUEL FRENCH

**PRICK UP YOUR
EARS (PLAY)**

1987
FABER & FABER

**TWO KAFKA PLAYS
(PLAY)**

1987
FABER & FABER

**THE OLD COUNTRY
(PLAY)**

1977
SAMUEL FRENCH

GETTING ON (PLAY)

1970
SAMUEL FRENCH

**102 BOULEVARD
HAUSMANN**

BBC BOOKS

**HABEAS CORPUS
(PLAY)**

1976
SAMUEL FRENCH
