

Altenberg, Karin

Island of wings

Longlisted for the Orange Prize 2012. 1830. Neil and Lizzie MacKenzie, a newly married young couple, arrive at the remotest part of the British Isles: St Kilda. He is a minister determined to save the souls of the pagan inhabitants; his pregnant wife speaks no Gaelic and, when her husband is away, has only the waves and the cry of gulls for company. As both find themselves tested to the limit in this harsh new environment, Lizzie soon discovers that marriage is as treacherous a country as the land that surrounds her.

Scottish Element – Scottish life.

Angels' Share (DVD)

A bitter sweet comedy caper which proves that sometimes all you need in life is a little spirit. Escaping a prison sentence by the skin of his teeth, the wayward and disillusioned Robbie is given one last chance to turn his life around. Along with three friends, he embarks on an adventure and discovers that turning to drink might just change their lives – not cheap fortified wine, but the best malt whiskies in the world.

Scottish Element – Scottish subject.

Atkinson, Kate

Life after life

What if you had the chance to live your life again and again, until you finally got it right? During a snowstorm in England in 1910, a baby is born and dies before she can take her first breath. During a snowstorm in England in 1910, the same baby is born and lives to tell the tale. What if there were second chances? And third chances? In fact, an infinite number of chances to live your life? Would you eventually be able to save the world from its own inevitable destiny? And would you even want to? Life After Life follows Ursula Todd as she lives through the turbulent events of the last century again and again. With wit and compassion, Kate Atkinson finds warmth even in life's bleakest moments, and shows an extraordinary ability to evoke the past. Here she is at her most profound and inventive, in a novel that celebrates the best and worst of ourselves.

Best, Samuel

Shop front

Out of university and out of luck, Ben Hamilton moves back in with his parents to stack shelves at the local supermarket. There he meets a group of friends and quickly finds himself dragged into secrecy, heavy drinking, and a violent feud. Trouble flares as the boys test the limits of their own behaviour, small-town mentalities and childhood dreams, before a startling climax as some innocent flirting leads to something much darker. Shop Front is more than the story of an unlucky graduate struggling to find his way: it is a story of violence, working life, friendship and A&E.

Bryson, Bill

A walk in the woods (NF)

The longest continuous footpath in the world, the Appalachian Trail stretches along the East Coast of the United States, from Georgia to Maine, through some of the most arresting and celebrated landscapes in America. In the company of his friend Stephen Katz (last seen in the bestselling Neither Here Nor There), Bill Bryson set off to hike through the vast tangled woods which have been frightening sensible people for three hundred years. Ahead lay almost 2,200 miles of remote mountain wilderness filled with bears, moose, bobcats, rattlesnakes, poisonous plants, disease-bearing ticks, the occasional chuckling murder and – perhaps most alarming of all – people whose favourite pastime is discussing the relative merits of the external-frame backpack.

Facing savage weather, merciless insects, unreliable maps and a fickle companion whose profoundest wish was to go to a motel and watch The X-Files, Bryson gamely struggled through the wilderness to achieve a lifetime's ambition – not to die outdoors.

Butler, Alison

The hanging of Margaret Dickson.

In an age when women are expected to know their place, be submissive, dutiful and chaste, Maggie Dickson, a Musselburgh fishwife, is often in trouble. She's outspoken, promiscuous and vituperative. While her husband's at sea, she sells her fish, sleeps with men for pleasure or money and looks after her two children. In time, her husband abandons her. Maggie quits Musselburgh and heads for Newcastle to stay with relatives. During the winter of 1723, a fisherman finds the dead, naked body of a baby boy. Fingers are soon pointing in the direction of a stranger working in a local tavern, a woman recently estranged from her mariner husband. It is rumoured that she's been having a passionate affair with the innkeeper's young son, William Bell, and that he is the father of the dead child. Maggie is arrested and taken to Edinburgh tollbooth to await trial, is found guilty and is sentenced to death. The news spreads like wildfire and, as Maggie languishes in jail, the whole city speculates whether or not she killed her child. Will she take her secret to her grave?

'The Hanging of Maggie Dickson' is a heartrending tale of obsession and unrequited love.

Scottish Element – story of a Musselburgh Fishwife.

Chevallier, Gabriel **Clochemerle (Novel)**

Trouble is brewing in the small wine-growing village of Clochemerle. The mayor wants to leave an original testament to his administration's achievements. In the interests of public health and morals he decides to build a urinal next to the parish church. Unfortunately, the manners of Clochemerle's libidinous villagers are not so easily improved and the commotion caused by the monument ends up inspiring much unseemly behaviour. Set in provincial France in 1922, this is a classic humorous novel bursting at the seams with colourful characters and scandalous intrigue

Chevallier, Gabriel **Clochemerle (DVD)**

Based on the classic comic French novel, adapted for television by the acclaimed comedy writing team of Ray Galton and Alan Simpson (Hancock/Steptoe & Son); welcome to the small French village of Clochemerle. Nestled in the Beaujolais region of France, this happy little enclave has avoided all hints of modernity, producing fine wine in an atmosphere of timeless calm and culture..until now. Now, in the autumn of 1922, the mayor wants to build a new public edifice, something that will draw a crowd – and he will, and it does, but none of it will happen in the way that he planned.

A small village with a powerful church, a republican government, several beautiful wives, one handsome lver, a staunch catholic spinster and many more headstrong personalities are about to class in a way that will bring pain to some, mirth to others and even the army to fail to keep the peace in the small French village called Clochemerle. Told by Peter Ustinov. Starring Cyril Cusack, Roy Dotrice, Wendy Hiller, Kenneth Griffith, Catherine Rouvel, Cyd Hayman etc

Cleave, Chris **Gold**

Kate and Zoe are friends but also ardent rivals – athletes at the top of their game, fighting to compete in the world's greatest sporting contest. Each scarred by tragedy, and each with a great deal to lose, they must choose between family and glory and ask themselves: what will I sacrifice?

Cleaves, Ann **The crow trap**

Three very different women come together at isolated Baikie's Cottage on the North Pennines, to complete an environmental survey. Three women who each know the meaning of betrayal. Rachael, the team leader, is still reeling after a double betrayal by her lover and boss, Peter Kemp. Anne, a botanist, sees the survey as a chance to indulge in a little deception of her own. And then there is Grace, a strange, uncommunicative young woman, hiding plenty of her own secrets. Rachael is the first to arrive at the cottage, where she discovers the body of her friend, Bella Furness. Bella, it appears, has committed suicide – a verdict Rachael refuses to accept. When another death occurs, a fourth woman enters the picture – the unconventional Detective Inspector Vera Stanhope . . .

Cooper, Artemis

Patrick Leigh Fermor: an adventure (NF)

Patrick Leigh Fermor's life took off when, at the age of eighteen, he decided to walk across Europe. On the outbreak of war he returned to England from Rumania, fought in Greece and Crete, and his most celebrated exploit came in 1944 with the abduction of a German general. A journey to the Caribbean, monasteries and explorations all over Greece provided the subjects for his early work. It was only when he moved to the southern Peloponnese, in the 1960s, that he embarked on recreating the epic walk that inspired his best-loved books, *A Time of Gifts* and *Between the Woods and the Water*. Artemis Cooper's biography portrays a man of extraordinary talent: no one wore their learning so playfully, nor inspired such passionate friendship.

Dolan, Chris

Redlegs

Elspeth Bailie, a young Scottish actress, is chosen by enigmatic impresario Lord Coak for an acting career on the Island of Barbados. At first feted by the colonial gentry, her life in the Caribbean does not go according to plan. Elspeth is obliged to take on a temporary and ambiguous role in the closed world of Coak's remote sugar plantation.

Dolan's plot is full of unexpected twists as Elspeth becomes ever more the prisoner of a venture whose founding principle is white supremacy. Captain Shaw, the factor, sets about building a New Caledonia whose reality for Elspeth and her new compatriots is a sense of timelessness and loss. Nature, ideology and the drive to maximise profit conspire to endanger the invented community. Elspeth is left trying to make sense of her own life and youthful ambitions among a shipwrecked people dreaming of home.

Scottish Element – Subject is Scottish.

Eng, Tan Twan

The garden of evening mists

In the highlands of Malaya, a woman sets out to build a memorial to her sister, killed at the hands of the Japanese during the brutal Occupation of their country. Yun Ling's quest leads her to The Garden of Evening Mists, and to Aritomo, a man of extraordinary skill and reputation, once the gardener of the Emperor of Japan. When she accepts his offer to become his apprentice, she begins a journey into her past, inextricably linked with the secrets of her troubled country's history.

Extence, Gavin

The universe versus Alex Woods

Richard and Judy summer bookclub read 2013, Amazon Rising star, and shortlisted for the Desmond Elliott Prize, this is a funny and touching story of an unlikely friendship and an improbable journey. Alex Woods knows that he hasn't had the most conventional start in life. He knows that growing up with a clairvoyant single mother won't endear him to the local bullies. He also knows that even the most improbable events can happen - he's got the scars to prove it. What he doesn't know yet is that when he meets ill-tempered, reclusive widower Mr Peterson, he'll make an unlikely friend. Someone who tells him that you only get one shot at life. That you have to make the best possible choices. So when, aged seventeen, Alex is stopped at Dover customs with 113 grams of marijuana, an urn full of ashes on the passenger seat, and an entire nation in uproar, he's fairly sure he's done the right thing. A tale of an unexpected friendship, an unlikely hero and an improbable journey, Alex's story treads the fine line between light and dark, laughter and tears. And it might just strike you as one of the funniest, most heartbreaking novels you've ever read.

Fermor, Patrick Leigh

A time of gifts (NF)

In 1933, at the age of 18, Patrick Leigh Fermor set out on an extraordinary journey by foot - from the Hook of Holland to Constantinople. *A Time of Gifts* is the first volume in a trilogy recounting the trip, and takes the reader with him as far as Hungary. It is a book of compelling glimpses - not only of the events which were curdling Europe at that time, but also of its resplendent domes and monasteries, its great rivers, the sun on the Bavarian snow, the storks and frogs, the hospitable burgomasters who welcomed him, and that world's

grandeurs and courtesies. His powers of recollection have astonishing sweep and verve, and the scope is majestic.

Fitzgerald, F Scott

The great Gatsby (Novel)

Generally considered to be F Scott Fitzgerald's finest novel. The Great Gatsby is a consummate summary of the "roaring twenties" and a devastating expose of the "Jazz Age". Through the narration of Nick Carraway, the reader is taken into the superficially glittering world of the mansions which lined the Long Island shore of the American seaboard in the 1920s, to encounter Nick's cousin Daisy, Jay Gatsby and the dark mystery which surrounds him. The Great Gatsby is an undisputed classic of American literature from the period following the First World War and is one of the great novels of the twentieth century.

Fitzgerald, F Scott

The great Gatsby (DVD)

The 20s never roared louder than in this sumptuously romantic retelling of F. Scott Fitzgerald's Jazz Age classic. Robert Redford stars as Jay Gatsby, who had once loved beautiful, spoiled Daisy Buchanan (Mia Farrow), then lost her to a rich boy. But now Gatsby is mysteriously wealthy and ready to risk everything to woo Daisy back. A winner of two Academy Awards, The Great Gatsby features a fine supporting cast and an elegant script by Francis Ford Coppola. And at its centre is the opulent evocation of an era of hot jazz and cold champagne, of women as exotic and demanding as hothouse flowers, and of lives made soft by too much, too soon. Starring Robert Redford, Mia Farrow, Karen Black, Scott Wilson, Sam Waterston, Lois Chiles and Brice Darn.

Francis, Gavin

Empire Antarctica (NF)

Gavin Francis fulfilled a lifetime's ambition when he spent fourteen months as the base-camp doctor at Halley, a profoundly isolated British research station of the Caird Coast of Antarctica. So remote, it is said to be easier to evacuate a casualty from the International Space Station than it is to bring someone out of Halley in winter. Antarctica offered a year of unparalleled silence and solitude, with few distractions and very little human history, but also a rare opportunity to live among emperor penguins, the only species truly at home in the Antarctic. Following the penguins throughout the year – from a summer of perpetual sunshine to months of winter darkness – Gavin Francis explores a world of great beauty conjured from the simplest of elements, the hardship of living at 50°C below zero and the unexpected comfort that the penguin community brings.

Scottish Element – Scottish Book of the year 2013.

Graves, Robert

Goodbye to all that (NF)

In 1929, Robert Graves went to live abroad permanently, vowing "never to make England my home again". This is his superb account of his life until that "bitter leave-taking": from his childhood and desperately unhappy school days at Charterhouse, to his time serving as a young officer in the First World War that was to haunt him throughout his life.

It also contains memorable encounters with fellow writers and poets, including Siegfried Sassoon and Thomas Hardy, and covers his increasingly unhappy marriage Nancy Nicholson. Goodbye to All That, with its vivid, harrowing descriptions of the Western Front, is a classic war document, and also has immense value as one of the most candid self-portraits of an artist ever written.

Grimwood, Ken

Replay

In 1988, Jeff has a fatal heart attack and wakes up in 1963 as his younger self, an eighteen year old college student. After his initial shock wears off, he realizes that he remembers what the future holds. Using that knowledge, he goes about trying to improve his life the second time around, only to die again at forty-three and have to replay his life, over and over. Along the way, Jeff tries to correct his mistakes in judgment and develops a new perspective on life. He also discovers that he is not alone in terms of the ability to replay one's life and finds a soul mate who shares a similar fate. Jeff ultimately discovers true love, romance, adventure, and a deep appreciation of life itself.

Haig, Matt

The Humans

One wet Friday evening, Professor Andrew Martin of Cambridge University solves the world's greatest mathematical riddle. Then he disappears. The Humans in his story.

Hoy, Chris

Chris Hoy: the autobiography of Britain's most successful ever Olympian (NF)

At London 2012, Sir Chris Hoy claimed two gold medals to overtake Sir Steve Redgrave's record of five and become Britain's most successful ever Olympian.

It was a moment that capped an extraordinary career, and with Hoy insisting that London would be his last Games, was probably the final act in a remarkable Olympic story.

In over 15 years at the top of world cycling, Hoy established himself not only as Britain's greatest ever sprint cyclist, but arguably the greatest the world has ever seen.

Now, in his autobiography, updated to include all the drama of the 2012 Olympics, Hoy re-lives his journey to that summit and the challenges he overcame on the way. It is a searing and candid account of the pursuit of greatness and his personal race to overcome injuries, setbacks and disappointments to fulfil his destiny at the home Games.

Scottish Element – author is Scottish.

Laurain, Antoine

The President's hat

Dining alone in an elegant Parisian brasserie, accountant Daniel Mercier can hardly believe his eyes when President Francois Mitterrand sits down to eat at the table next to him. Daniel's thrill at being in such close proximity to the most powerful man in the land persists even after the presidential party has gone, which is when he discovers that Mitterrand's black fat hat has been left behind. After a few moments' soul searching, Daniel decides to keep the hat as a souvenir of an extraordinary evening. It's a perfect fit, and as he leaves the restaurant Daniel begins to feel somehow different.

Lewis, Jason

Dark waters – Expedition trilogy Bk 1 (NF)

He survived a terrifying crocodile attack off Australia's Queensland coast, blood poisoning in the middle of the Pacific, malaria in Indonesia and China, and acute mountain sickness in the Himalayas. He was hit by a car and left for dead with two broken legs in Colorado, and incarcerated for espionage on the Sudan-Egypt border. The first in a thrilling adventure trilogy, *Dark Waters* charts one of the longest, most gruelling, yet uplifting and at times irreverently funny journeys in history, circling the world using just the power of the human body, hailed by the London *Sunday Times* as "The last great first for circumnavigation." But it was more than just a physical challenge. Prompted by what scientists have dubbed the "perfect storm" as the global population soars to 8.3 billion by 2030, adventurer Jason Lewis used the expedition to reach out to thousands of schoolchildren, calling attention to our interconnectedness and shared responsibility of an inhabitable Earth for future generations.

Lomax, Eric

The railway man (NF)

During the Second World War Eric Lomax was forced to work on the notorious Burma-Siam Railway and was tortured by the Japanese for making a crude radio. Left emotionally scarred and unable to form normal relationships, Lomax suffered for years until, with the help of his wife, Patti Lomax, and of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, he came to terms with what happened. Fifty years after the terrible events, he was able to meet one of his tormentors. *The Railway Man* is a story of innocence betrayed, and of survival and courage in the face of horror.

Love letters of the Great War (NF)

From the private papers of Winston Churchill to the tender notes of an unknown Tommy in the trenches, *Love Letters of the Great War* brings together some of the most romantic correspondence ever written. Many of the letters collected here are eloquent declarations of love and longing; others contain wrenching accounts of fear, jealousy and betrayal; and a number share sweet dreams of home. But in all the correspondence - whether from British, American, French, German, Russian, Australian and Canadian troops in the height of battle, or from the heartbroken wives and sweethearts left behind - there lies a truly human portrait of love and war. A century on from the start of the First World War, these letters offer an intimate glimpse into the hearts of men and women separated by conflict, and show how love can transcend even the bleakest and most devastating of realities.

MacFarlane, Robert

Mountains of the mind (NF)

If you have ever wondered why people climb mountains, then here is your answer. Like an unusually well-informed expedition guide, Macfarlane embarks on a jaunty trip through 300 years of science, literature, philosophy and sheer eccentricity which is a joy to read. Of all the books published to mark the 50th anniversary of climbing Mount Everest, this book stands out as by far the most intelligent and interesting. Robert MacFarlane is on a different intellectual peak when it comes to exploring man's fixation with dizzy heights. This story provides a gripping history of man's irresistible and sometimes fatal attraction to big hills.

Maitland, Sara

Gossip from the forest

In this exquisite, groundbreaking book Maitland journeys through forests in different seasons, illuminating the mysterious secrets and silences, gifts and perils of our most ancient landscapes, and untangling the forest's role as the source of one of our earliest and most vital cultural forms, the fairytale.

McKenna, Christina

The misremembered man

It's the summer of 1974 and Jamie McCloone, a County Derry farmer, is looking for a wife. Poor Jamie: he knows so very little about the fairer sex. But help is at hand. His amiable neighbour, Rose, has spotted a Lonely Hearts advert in the local paper, and urges him to respond to it.

The result is a meeting of absolute opposites. Farmer Jamie with his cavalier attitude to personal hygiene. Lydia Devine, rector's daughter and prim schoolteacher, for whom everything must be folded neatly and laid in its proper place - including her spouse. This vivid portrayal of the universal search for love brings with it a darker tale - for Jamie's quest is, in essence, a search for a lost innocence, and for the childhood that was so brutally stolen from him.

Moggach, Lottie

Kiss me first

On the internet, we can be anyone we choose. No one knows who we really are. Sheltered and obsessive, Leila spends more time online than out in the real world. So she seems the ideal person to take over the virtual identity of the vivacious and fragile Tess, who wants to disappear. But even with all the facts at her fingertips, there are things that Leila can't possibly know about Tess - or herself - until it is too late.

Moriarty, Liane

The husband's secret

Mother of three and wife of John-Paul, Cecilia discovers an old envelope in the attic. Written in her husband's hand, it says: to be opened only in the event of my death. Curious, she opens it - and time stops. John-Paul's letter confesses to a terrible mistake which if revealed, would wreck their family as well as the lives of others. Cecilia wants to do the right thing, but right for who? If she protects her family by saying silent, the truth will worm through her heart. But if she reveals her husband's secret, she will hurt those she loves most.

Morrison, Toni

Beloved

It is the mid 1800s. At Sweet Home in Kentucky, an era is ending as slavery comes under attack from the abolitionists. The worlds of Halle and Paul D are to be destroyed in a cataclysm of torment and agony. The world of Sethe, however, is to turn from one of love to one of violence and death – the death of Sethe’s baby daughter, Beloved, who name is the single word on the tombstone who died at her mother’s hands, and who will return to claim retribution.

Morrison, Toni

Beloved (DVD)

Oprah Winfrey and Danny Glover play the unforgettable lead roles in this powerful, widely acclaimed cinematic triumph from Oscar-winning director Jonathan Demme. On a journey to find freedom, Sethe (Winfrey) is constantly confronted by the secrets that have haunted her for years. Then, an old friend from her past (Glover) unexpectedly re-enters her life. With his help, Sethe may finally be able to rediscover who she is and regain her lost sense of hope. Also featuring outstanding performances from Thandie Newton and Lisa Gay Hamilton, *Beloved* is a landmark adaptation of Toni Morrison's Nobel Prize-winning novel.

Ozeki, Ruth

A tale for the time being

Within the pages of this book lies the diary of a girl called Nao. Riding the waves of a tsunami, it is making its way across the ocean. It will change the life of the person who finds it. It might just change yours too.

Palacio, R J

Wonder

My name is August. I won't describe what I look like. Whatever you're thinking, it's probably worse. Auggie wants to be an ordinary ten-year-old. He does ordinary things - eating ice cream, playing on his Xbox. He *feels* ordinary - inside. But ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. Ordinary kids aren't stared at wherever they go. Born with a terrible facial abnormality, Auggie has been home-schooled by his parents his whole life. Now, for the first time, he's being sent to a real school - and he's dreading it. All he wants is to be accepted - but can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, underneath it all?

Penguin book of First World War poetry (NF)

Reflecting the voices of poets, soldiers, the families they left behind and their comrades who would never return, *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, previously published as *In Flanders Fields*, is edited with an introduction by George Walter in Penguin Classics. Unrivalled for its range and intensity, the poetry of the First World War continues to have a powerful effect on readers. This anthology reflects the diverse experience of those who lived through the war - bringing together the words of poets, soldiers and civilians affected by the conflict. Including famous verses from Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen; pieces by less well-known writers such as Gilbert Frankau and Osbert Sitwell; works by women describing the emotions of those at home; and the anonymous lyrics of soldiers' songs, *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry* offers a blend of voices that is both unique and profoundly moving. This collection has been arranged thematically, moving through the war's different stages from conscription through to its aftermath, to offer the reader a variety of perspectives on the same common experiences. George Walter's introduction discusses the role and scope of First World War poetry anthologies, and how the canon has changed over the years. This edition also contains notes and biographies.

Price, Richard

Small world

Small World tells a story of the changing relationship between a father and his two daughters, one severely disabled, a 'mermaid in a wheelchair', the other discovering the difference of her elder sister, the 'moon' to her 'earth'. Each succeeding poem gathers further telling detail as the father listens and observes with affection and surprise the strange world they inhabit, gradually reflecting on his own contrasting childhood. Finally, the book ends with a shock experience that brings all that has gone before into sharp focus.

Prowse, Amanda

What have I done?

Kathryn Brooker seems the very picture of a fulfilled wife and mother. Anyone who peered through the downstairs window at the four figures sitting around her kitchen table would see a happy family without a care in the world. They would envy Kathryn her perfect life. But they would be wrong. Kathryn is trapped in a nightmare. And she is about to do something to change it. Something only a truly desperate woman would do.

Remarque, Erich Maria

All quiet on the Western Front

One by one the boys begin to fall..

In 1914 a room full of German schoolboys, fresh-faced and idealistic, are goaded by their schoolmaster to troop off to the “glorious war”. With the fire and patriotism of youth they sign up. What follows is the moving story of a young “unknown soldier” experiencing the horror and disillusionment of life in the trenches.

Richell, Hannah

The shadow year

1980. On a hot summer’s day five friends stumble upon an abandoned cottage hidden deep in the English countryside. Isolated and run-down, it offers a retreat, somewhere they can escape from the world. But as the seasons change, tensions begin to rise..

Three decades later, Lila arrives at the remote cottage. Bruised from a tragic accident and with her marriage in crisis, she find renovating the tumbledown house gives her a renewed sense of purpose. But why did the cottage’s previous inhabitants leave their belongings behind? And why can’t she shake the feeling that someone is watching her?

Riddoch, Lesley

Blossom (NF)

Blossom is an account of Scotland at the grassroots through the stories of people I’ve had the good fortune to know – the most stubborn, talented and resilient people on the planet. They’ve had to be. Some have transformed their parts of Scotland. Some have tried and failed. But all have something in common – they know what it takes for Scotland to blossom. We should too. Weeding out our vital components of Scottish identity from decades of political and social tangle is no mean task, but it’s one journalist Lesley Riddoch, has undertaken.

Dispensing with the tired, yo-yoing jousts over fiscal commissions. Devo Something and EU in-or-out, Blossom pinpoints both the buds of growth and the blight that’s holding Scotland back. Drawing from it’s people and history as well as the experience of the Nordic countries, and the author’s own passionate and outspoken perspective, this is a plain speaking but incisive call to restore equality and control to local communities and let Scotland flourish.

Scottish Element – Author lives in Fife, Scottish content.

Riley, Peggy

Amity & Sorrow

Two sisters sit, bound together, wrist to wrist. Amity and Sorrow. Their mother is taking them from their father and the only world they have ever known. But Sorrow will move heaven and earth to get back home.

In the wake of a suspicious fire, Amaranth gathers her barely-teenage daughters and flees from her husband, his rural fundamentalist cult and forty-nine other wives. But even when she finds a temporary refuge, even when they seem to be blossoming in this new world, they are not safe. And what has happened to the other wives, and their children?

Imagine a novel as emotionally devastating as Room or the Lovely Bones, but with the pace of a thriller and the setting of Witness or The 19th Wife; a brand-new debut which reads like a modern classic

Rodriguez, Deborah

The little coffee shop of Kabul

In a little coffee shop in one of the most dangerous places on earth, five very different women come together.

SUNNY, the proud proprietor, who needs an ingenious plan - and fast - to keep her café and customers safe.

YAZMINA, a young pregnant woman stolen from her remote village and now abandoned on Kabul's violent streets.

CANDACE, a wealthy American who has finally left her husband for her Afghan lover, the enigmatic Wakil.

ISABEL, a determined journalist with a secret that might keep her from the biggest story of her life.

Sanghera, Sathnam

The boy with the top knot (NF)

The Boy with the Topknot: A Memoir of Love, Secrets and Lies in Wolverhampton is a hilarious and heart-rending reinvention of the modern British memoir. "It's 1979, I'm three years old, and like all breakfast times during my youth it begins with Mum combing my hair, a ritual for which I have to sit down on the second-hand, floral-patterned settee, and lean forward, like I'm presenting myself for execution." For Sathnam Sanghera, growing up in Wolverhampton in the eighties was a confusing business. On the one hand, these were the heady days of George Michael mix-tapes, Dallas on TV and, if he was lucky, the occasional Bounty Bar. On the other, there was his wardrobe of tartan smocks, his 30p-an-hour job at the local sewing factory and the ongoing challenge of how to tie the perfect top-knot. And then there was his family, whose strange and often difficult behaviour he took for granted until, at the age of twenty-four, Sathnam made a discovery that changed everything he ever thought he knew about them. Equipped with breathtaking courage and a glorious sense of humour, he embarks on a journey into their extraordinary past - from his father's harsh life in rural Punjab to the steps of the Wolverhampton Tourist Office - trying to make sense of a life lived among secrets. Praise for The Boy with the Topknot:

Sedgwick, Marcus

Blood red, snow white

Set at the time of the Russian Revolution, the end of a centuries old dynasty, the rise of the Bolsheviks sent shockwaves around the world. This is the story of one man who was there. It's real history - about the riches and excesses, the glory of the Russian nobility, Nicholas and Alexandra, their haemophiliac son, Alexei, notorious Rasputin, Lenin and Trotsky who ruled from palaces where the Czars had once danced till dawn. The man was real too, his name was Arthur Ransome. He was a writer, accused of being a spy, perhaps even a double agent, and he left his wife and beloved daughter and fell in love with Russia and a Russian woman, Evgenia. Fictionalising history and blending it with real life, part i is told as a fairy tale. Wise and foolish kings, princesses, enchantresses (characters more suited to fairy tale than reality), wishes and magic, Russia with its vast cold plains and mighty cities, its riches and poverty, all play a part in the downfall of the Czars and rise of the new order. Part ii is about betrayal - Ransome the spy, bleak and threatening. Part iii is a love story, a fairy tale, ending - of Ransome's love for his daughter, Tabitha, and for Evgenia.

Sheridan, Sara

Brighton Belle

1951. Brighton. With the excitement of the war over and the Nazi's brought to justice at Nuremberg, Mirabelle Bevan, ex-Secret Service, moves to the seaside to put the past behind her. She takes a job as a secretary at a debt collection agency run by the charismatic Big Ben McGuigan, but when confronted by the case of Romana Laszlo, a pregnant Hungarian refugee, Mirabelle discovers that her specialist knowledge is vital. With enthusiastic assistance from the pretty insurance clerk down the corridor, Vesta Churchill, Mirabelle follows a mysterious trail of gold sovereigns, betting scams and bodies to a dark corner of austerity Britain where the forces of evil remain alive and well.

Scottish Element – author lives in Edinburgh.

Shannon, Samantha

The bone season (T)

The year is 2059. Nineteen-year-old Paige Mahoney is working in the criminal underworld of Scion London, based at Seven Dials, employed by a man named Jaxon Hall. Her job: to scout for information by breaking into people's minds. For Paige is a dreamwalker, a clairvoyant – and in her world, the world of Scion, she commits treason simply by breathing.

It is raining the day her life changed forever. Attacked, drugged and kidnapped, Paige is transported to Oxford – a city kept secret for two hundred years and controlled by a powerful, otherworldly race called the Rephaim. Paige is assigned to Warden, a Rephaite with mysterious motives. He is her master. Her trainer. Her natural enemy. But if Paige wants to regain her freedom she must allow herself to be nurtured in this prison where she is meant to die.

Sixsmith, Martin

Philomena (NF)

As a teenager in Ireland in 1952. Philomena Lee fell pregnant and was sent to a convent – a “fallen woman”. For three years after her son was born she cared for him there. Then the Church took him away and sold him, like countless others, for adoption in America. This is the story of Philomena and her search for the son she never stopped loving. It is a tale of lives scarred by hypocrisy and secrecy, a compelling narrative of human love and loss – heartbreaking, yet ultimately redemptive.

Stedman, M L

The light between oceans

A boat washes up on the shore of a remote lighthouse keeper's island. It holds a dead man and a crying baby. The two islanders, Tom and his wife Izzy, are about to make a devastating decision. They break the rules and follow their hearts. What happens next will break yours.

Stegner, Wallace

Crossing to safety

“There it was, there it is, the place where during the best time of our lives friendship had its home and happiness its headquarters”.

When two young couples meet for the first time during the Great Depression, they quickly find they have much in common: Charity Lang and Sally Morgan are both pregnant, while their husbands Sid and Larry both have jobs in the English Department at the University of Wisconsin. Immediately a lifelong friendship is born, which becomes increasingly complex as they share decades of love, loyalty, vulnerability and conflict. Written from the perspective of the aging Larry Morgan, *Crossing to Safety* is a beautiful and deeply moving exploration of the struggle of four people to come to terms with the trials and tragedies of everyday life.

Tessaro, Kathleen

The perfume collector

One letter will turn newly-married Grace Munroe's life upside down.

Our firm is handling the estate of the deceased Mrs Eva d'Orsey and it is our duty to inform you that you are named as the chief beneficiary in her will. We request your presence at our offices at your earliest convenience, so that we may go through the details of your inheritance. There is only one problem – Grace has never heard of Eva d'Orsey.

So begins a journey which takes Grace through the streets of Paris and into the seductive world of perfumers and their muses. An abandoned perfume shop on the Left Bank will lead her to unravel the heartbreaking story of her mysterious benefactor, and extraordinary women who bewitched high society in 1920s New York and Paris.

Wild Muir

22 of John Muir's greatest adventures (NF)

Here, in his own words, is a collection of John Muir's most thrilling experiences. From his famous snow avalanche trip down a side canyon in Yosemite Valley to his dizzying ride in the top of a tree during a fierce

windstorm to a death-defying fall into a frigid stream on an Alaskan glacier, the renowned outdoorsman's exploits are related in passages that are by turns exhilarating, unnerving, dizzying and outrageous. Lee Stetson, has carefully chosen episodes from every stage of Muir's life, prepared short introductions to place each in context, then arranged them chronologically so that the reader can vicariously enjoy one man's life of adventure. The text is nicely complemented with striking black and white scratchboard illustrations in the woodblock style of Fiona King.

Scottish Element – John Muir was Scottish.

Williams, John Stoner

William Stoner enters the University of Missouri at nineteen to study agriculture. Later, he becomes a teacher. He marries the wrong woman. His life is quiet, and after his death his colleagues remember him rarely. Yet with truthfulness, compassion and intense power, this novel uncovers a story of universal value. Stoner tells of the conflicts, defeats and victories of the human race that pass unrecorded by history, and reclaims the significance of an individual life. A reading experience like no other, itself a paean to the power of literature, it is a novel to be savoured.

Young, William Paul The Shack

Mackenzie Allen Philips's youngest daughter, Missy, has been abducted during a family vacation and evidence that she may have been brutally murdered is found in an abandoned shack deep in the Oregon wilderness. Four years later, in the midst of his Great Sadness, Mack receives a suspicious note, apparently from God, inviting him back to that shack for a weekend.

Against his better judgement he arrives at the shack on a wintry afternoon and walks back into his darkest nightmare. What he finds there will change Mack's world forever.

In a world where religion seems to grow increasingly irrelevant *The Shack* wrestles with the timeless question, "Where is God in a world so filled with unspeakable pain?" The answers Mack gets will astound you and perhaps transform you as much as it did him. You'll want everyone you know to read this book.