

# Slightly Foxed Ltd

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# Slightly Foxed

READERS' CATALOGUE • AUTUMN 2022



‘The great joy of *Slightly Foxed* is that it’s a reader’s journal, not a place of summaries or of-the-minute reviews. It glows with depth, wit and passion.’ Bart van Es

‘It’s always a red-letter day when the post includes *Slightly Foxed* – gorgeous new cover, choice list of contents. I always find one title I plan to read – or an old favourite I’d forgotten about.’ Penelope Lively

## OUR IMPRINTS

### SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITIONS (FORMAT: 170 X 110MM)

These classic memoirs, each published in a limited and hand-numbered hardback pocket edition of 2,000 copies, are perfectly designed to curl up with – neat, sturdy little books, just the right size to hold in the hand. More important still, they're wonderful reads – hitherto forgotten memoirs that bring alive a particular moment, that allow you into someone else's world and make you feel you have actually known the writer. Elegantly bound in cloth, with coloured endpapers, silk head- and tailband and ribbon marker, these charming volumes are compulsively readable and irresistibly collectable.

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### OFFERS

Buy any four Slightly Foxed Editions and save £1 per book

Buy any four Plain Foxed Editions and save £1 per book

Buy any two SF Paperbacks and save £4 per book



## THE READERS' CATALOGUE

Welcome to the Readers' Catalogue. Here you'll find listings for our cloth-bound limited-edition hardbacks, back issues of *Slightly Foxed* together with handsome slipcases in which to keep them, Plain Editions, our Foxed Cubs series of classic children's fiction, a small collection of literary goods and our pick of titles from other publishers. We do hope you enjoy receiving it.

Everything listed in this catalogue or on our website can be sent to you, or directly to a recipient, in good time for a date of your choice. *SF* subscribers can use their usual discount on all items, whether they are to be sent to you or to someone else. Non-subscribers may purchase all items at the undiscounted rates as usual. The office is well-stocked with smart gift cards, reams of brown paper, foxed ribbon and handsome gift boxes in anticipation.

Please note that we can also order many other books so if there's a new or second-hand title you're looking for that isn't listed here or on our website (where you'll also find hundreds of books recommended in past catalogues, back issues of the quarterly magazine and on our podcast) do get in touch with Jess in the office and she will do her best to rootle it out for you.

With best wishes from Gail, Hazel and all of us here at Slightly Foxed

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NEW THIS AUTUMN

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 60

## NELLA LAST'S WAR

*The Second World War Diaries of Housewife, 49*

Edited by RICHARD BROAD and SUZIE FLEMING

**'I rose early, since I had to kill and dress a cockerel. He was so big and strong, and was eating too much valuable mash. Mrs Diss called, and we arranged about the reporter for the shop opening, and about taking the Mayoress to the canteen for tea. I tidied up and made celery soup and a steamed gooseberry jam sponge pudding. After lunch was over and the dishes washed, I got changed and was down at the shop for 1.30 . . .'**

It's Wednesday, 26 August 1942, and Nella Last is recording the beginning of a fairly typical day in her diary, which she is keeping as part of the Mass Observation project, launched in 1937 to record the lives of ordinary people in Britain. It's amazing, really, that Nella found time to keep a diary, considering how many things she packed in to every day. This fascinating document, published in 1981 under the title *Nella Last's War*, describes in minute detail the daily life of a middle-aged housewife living in wartime in Barrow-in-Furness, with occasional visits from her two adored grown-up sons, one of whom is a trainee tax-inspector, the other away in the army.

On the face of it Nella might seem a rather unremarkable person, but in fact she's a complicated mass of aspirations, ambitions, passions and frustrations, all held firmly in check by her suburban surroundings and her home life with the somewhat gloomily conventional character always referred to simply as 'my husband'. But then comes the war and for Nella, as for many other women, it's a liberation. Suddenly she's out of the house and in her



element, providing hot meals and comforts for the troops at the Women's Voluntary Service centre, meeting new people, raising funds for the Red Cross, and running a mobile canteen. There are no more of the 'dreadful sobbing fits' her husband remembers, at a time when she was clearly suffering from depression. Now she's able to write of having 'such a happy worthwhile day'.

Like all good diarists Nella is a people-watcher. When she's not busy conjuring up meals from the most frugal and unpromising of ingredients or creating new mattresses out of old for the Sailors' Home, she's painting vivid little pen portraits of the people around her, like bossy Mrs Lord at the WVS Centre, who 'swept in like an Act of God'. Meanwhile in the background the war rumbles on, until it all becomes horribly immediate with the bombing of the Barrow shipyards and steelworks, direct hits on local homes and businesses, and the deaths of young local men and women Nella had known as children.

Generous, energetic, forthright and essentially liberal in her opinions, with a vigorous and engaging writing style, Nella is a phenomenon, for this published diary contains only a selection of the many millions of words she wrote each week. It's hard to say goodbye to her as war ends and all the activities that have given meaning to her life gradually disappear. Nella herself wrote that 'Next to being a mother I would have loved to write books.' She may not have entirely realized that ambition, but she left us an unrivalled account of life in wartime Britain that is a piece of social history, the story of a marriage and the portrait of a woman you feel could have run the country, given half a chance.

PUBLISHED SEPT 2022 • CLOTH-BOUND HARDBACK

LIMITED EDITION OF 2,000 • 170 X 110 MM • FROM £18 • 392 PAGES

\*NEW\* PLAIN FOXED EDITION

## Graham Greene A SORT OF LIFE

**Graham Greene once said that writing this memoir of his early years 'was in the nature of a psychoanalysis. I made a long journey through time and I was one of my characters.' Certainly the younger self that emerges is as complex and intriguing as any of those he created in his novels.**

Greene grew up in Berkhamsted among a large colony of Greenes, and attended Berkhamsted School, where his father was headmaster. As it turned out, the conflicting loyalties this produced, combined with the secrecy and subterfuge encouraged by the school's puritanical regime, were the perfect grounding for the spy – and the novelist – he was to become. But the price was high. By the time he was out of his teens he had had what would now be called a nervous breakdown,

undergone psychoanalysis – unusual for the 1920s – and become addicted to playing Russian roulette with his brother's revolver.

*A Sort of Life* takes him through Oxford, the early years of marriage and his conversion to Catholicism, to the point where he recklessly gives up his first Fleet Street job as a sub-editor on *The Times* in order to write full-time. But what marked Greene out above all else was his utter determination to pursue his craft. There can be no more fascinating or illuminating account of what it takes to become a writer. **PUBLISHED 1 SEPT 2022 • FROM £18 • 224 PAGES**



**\* FORTHCOMING \* SF EDITION NO. 61**

## Colin Clark, *THE PRINCE, THE SHOWGIRL & ME*

During the 1950s an unusual event took place at Pinewood Studios: the filming of *The Prince and the Showgirl*, a light comedy starring Sir Laurence Olivier and Marilyn Monroe as the two leads. This unlikely combination proved to be a disaster – Marilyn failed to turn up on time and could barely act or remember her lines, while Sir Laurence was completely out of his depth with her and her very un-British entourage. The film appeared and sank without trace, but fortunately Colin Clark, a cheeky young man working on set as a general dogsbody, was there to record the agonies of its making in this sharp and hilarious diary.

**PUBLISHED 1 DEC 2022 • 240 PAGES • FROM £18**

**\* FORTHCOMING \* PLAIN FOXED EDITION**



## Edward Ardizzone, *THE YOUNG ARDIZZONE*

The creator of the ever-popular *Little Tim* and *Lucy* books begins his story in 1905 when he was 5 and his mother brought him and his two sisters home to England from Haiphong where his father was a telegraph engineer. Left in Suffolk in the care of their grandmother, the three grew up with a full complement of young bachelor uncles, great-aunts and eccentric family friends – a comfortable Edwardian world which is beautifully captured in Ardizzone's deceptively simple prose and delicately humorous drawings. **PUBLISHED 1 DEC 2022**

**208 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18**

## ALSO AVAILABLE

**In hard times, both literal and metaphorical, there's nothing like a good book to give a sense of comfort and relaxation. Our editions are designed to do just that – a collection of classic but momentarily forgotten memoirs that light up the recent past in a way no history book can, and put our own troubled times into perspective.**

In the following pages you'll find listings for all other available titles from the original SF Edition series grouped together with others on a loosely similar theme that we have published as one-off special releases or reissued as Plain Foxed Editions or SF Paperbacks. To follow there's our Foxed Cubs list of classic historical, adventure and nature novels for younger readers, after which you'll discover a couple of pages dedicated to books featured in the new issue of the quarterly and our latest pick of good reading from other publishers' shelves. So, whether you're in need of a few good books for yourself or as presents for someone you're fond of this season, we hope you'll find our suggestions helpful.

## RECOMMENDED AUTUMN READS

### Diana Petre, *The Secret Orchard of Roger Ackerley*

**SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 33 • 272 PAGES • FROM £18**

'For God's sake someone take that child out of the room. I can't stand the way she watches me,' Diana Petre's mother Muriel is reported as saying. Diana was indeed watching, and it was this watchfulness, this ability to stand back and observe, that produced *The Secret Orchard of Roger Ackerley*, an utterly unselfpitying and often very funny account of what must be one of the oddest childhoods on record.

Diana and her older twin sisters grew up in Barnes, South London, in the care of an elderly housekeeper, their mother having abandoned them shortly after Diana's birth in 1912. She didn't reappear again until 1922, with disastrous results for all concerned. She called herself Mrs Muriel Perry, but her true name and identity were mysterious. Her birth was never registered and she had carefully removed the relevant information from her passport.

For the girls, one of the highlights of their isolated lives were visits from a kindly man they knew as 'Uncle Bodger'. In fact, as Diana's mother finally revealed in characteristically brutal fashion, he was their father, Roger Ackerley, a director of the fruit-importing company Elders & Fyffes and popularly known as 'the Banana King'. Down the road in Richmond, unbeknownst to the girls, he lived with a retired actress who called herself 'Mrs Ackerley' and his three further children.



One of them, Joe, born in 1896, has also given his account of this strange upbringing in his famous memoir *My Father and Myself*, published in 1968.

Diana tells the story from another perspective. Such a situation might be thought strange today, but at the time illegitimacy was a serious social stigma, and something to be hidden at all costs. One of the things that makes *The Secret Orchard* so gripping is that it is constructed like a detective story, in which Diana asks questions, follows clues and pores over documents in an attempt to unravel the truth.

As she herself was at pains to emphasize, this book is, among many other things, a love story. Muriel may have been a difficult, unstable character and a disastrous mother, but she was always loyal to Roger. It seems greatly to Diana's credit that she was able as an adult to appreciate the poignancy of their relationship and bring their extraordinary story so vividly to life on the page.

### Roger Hudson, *An Englishman's Commonplace Book*

SLIGHTLY FOXED OCCASIONAL BOOKS • HB • 112 PAGES • FROM £12.50

'Variety, the unexpected, a bit of vulgarity and the ridiculous mixed in with the elevated,' has been Roger Hudson's recipe in compiling this commonplace book from material he's gathered over the past 40 years. And that is what we are given in this wide-ranging collection by a well-read man with a sharp eye, an ironic – indeed very English – sense of humour and a devotion to history. Ranging over the centuries, it contains a rich mix of often arresting facts, vivid descriptions, absurd observations and wise words. Sir Christopher Wren rubs shoulders with Eddie Izzard, Princess Margaret with Elizabeth I. And all organized under subject headings to help find that appropriate quote.

Above all it gives us a perspective on our own history via the voices of those who were living it, reminding us that the past was not a rehearsal for the present, that there is no substitute for the horse's mouth. Altogether a book for the times and a perfect present for a thoughtful and humorous friend. It may even inspire you to start a commonplace book of your own.

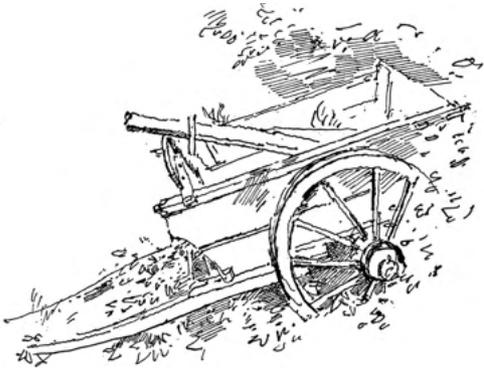
## AN OLD RURAL ORDER

### Laurie Lee, *Cider with Rosie*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 53 • 272 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

Laurie Lee was born in Stroud in 1914 and in 1917 the family moved to a damp and crumbling cottage in the remote Cotswold village of Slad.

When the First World War was over Laurie's father abandoned his wife and children and life was hard, but for Laurie his warm higger-mugger home and the village with its familiar characters and unchanging round were full of wonder. He writes ecstatically of going blackberrying in summer, and skating and carol singing in icy Christmas weather when it hurt to breathe and the air was 'like



needles'. Yet he acknowledges that village life could be brutal too. *Cider with Rosie* is not just a rosy picture of a rural past, but a magical evocation of growing up in a lost world that still rings emotionally true. Buy with *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*, see p. 15

### Flora Thompson, *Lark Rise*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 58 • 328PP • FROM £18

### Flora Thompson, *Over to Candleford & Candleford Green*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 59 • 400PP • FROM £18

Flora Thompson wrote the much-loved trilogy that came to be known as *Lark Rise to Candleford* in the grim days before and during the Second World War, and perhaps it was this that made the memories of her country childhood shine so brightly. She grew up as the daughter of a builder's labourer in a poor Oxfordshire hamlet in the last years of the nineteenth century, yet she instinctively knew how to write, and these three books are a unique record of a rural world that would soon disappear for ever.

The first book sees Flora – or Laura as she called her childhood self – growing up in the hamlet of Juniper Hill, the 'Lark Rise' of the title. From the annual killing of the pig to the flowers in the cottage gardens, and the memories of the older residents, the life of the hamlet is recalled in magical detail, a close-up, child's-eye view of a small, self-sufficient world

In *Over to Candleford* life begins to open out for Flora when she goes to visit her father's relations in the local market town where she makes particular friends with her uncle Tom, a liberal thinker and respected craftsman, who shares with her his love of books and his talent for attracting interesting and often eccentric people.

Back at home and now in her teens, Laura is restless and undecided about her future, until news comes of a vacancy for an assistant at the Post Office in a nearby village. *Candleford Green* is an enchanting picture of Flora's new life in this colourful community and of Dorcas Lane, her redoubtable – and unforgettable – employer.

'You are going to be loved by people you've never seen and never will see,' a gypsy tells Flora. It was a prophecy that turned out to be true. Her beautiful memoir has never gone out of fashion and is as consoling today as it was in the dark times in which it was written.

### Adrian Bell, *A Countryman's Winter Notebook*

SLIGHTLY FOXED OCCASIONAL BOOKS • HB • 256 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

For all those who have loved Adrian Bell's trilogy describing his life between the wars on a Suffolk farm, there is now an additional treat. From 1950 to 1980 Bell wrote a popular column for his local paper, the *Eastern Daily Press*, 1,600 atmospheric little essays which vividly catch the fleeting moments that made up his life in the rural Suffolk he loved and knew so well. Surprisingly, very few have since been reprinted, but now they can be enjoyed again in this seasonal selection by Richard Hawking, with an introduction by Bell's son Martin and charming illustrations by Beth Knight. This is the first of four little seasonal books of Bell's writings.

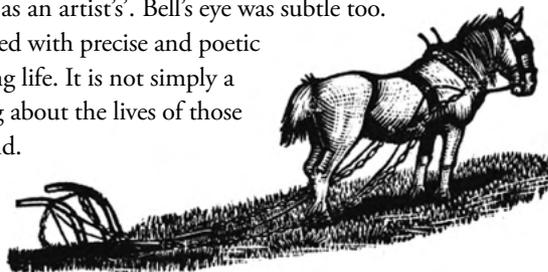


## Adrian Bell, *Corduroy*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 288 PAGES • FROM £18

Adrian Bell was a rather frail young man of 20 when, in 1920, he left London to learn agriculture on a Suffolk farm. He arrived one autumn day on an old motorbike feeling all wrong for the part. Like many townies, he assumed at first that the locals were somewhat simple, but soon his own ignorance and initial inability to do the most basic physical tasks taught him a new respect. A farmer, he discovered, stored away in his head thousands of facts about animals, crops and fodder, while his eye for a pig was 'as subtle as an artist's'. Bell's eye was subtle too.

He grew to love the land, and *Corduroy* is filled with precise and poetic descriptions of the countryside and of farming life. It is not simply a period piece – it captures what is unchanging about the lives of those who live from, rather than simply on, the land.



## Adrian Bell, *The Cherry Tree*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 38

256 PAGES • FROM £18

In *The Cherry Tree* Bell makes a happy marriage and settles down with his wife Nora on their own small farm. The picture of their young married life is a cheerful one as they share the work of the farm, explore the countryside in their pony and trap, and furnish the house with bits and pieces picked up in the Stambury junk shops. But *The Cherry Tree* also records in poignant detail the dying days of an old order before mechanization took over completely, and the growing agricultural depression which would change for ever the face of the countryside and the lives of their country neighbours. In this final book of his famous trilogy Bell's poetic eye and farmer's knowledge come together once more to complete a timeless record of life on the land which still resonates today.

### Special Offer: The Adrian Bell Collection

*Corduroy*, *The Cherry Tree* and *A Countryman's Winter Notebook*

SF Subscribers: UK & Ireland £51; overseas £57 \*SAVE £9

Non-Subscribers: UK & Ireland £57; overseas £63 \*SAVE £3

## John Moore's Brensham Trilogy

'I have written a book which gives me much pleasure. It is a kind of full-length portrait of a small country town – this small town – between the wars. The sort of life that will never come back.' So John Moore wrote to T. H. White in the summer of 1945.

That book was *Portrait of Elmbury*, the first volume in the trilogy based on his home town that Moore wrote shortly after the Second World War, following it in 1946 with *Brensham Village*

and in 1948 with *The Blue Field*. Together the three books paint a picture of a lost rural world which is powerfully nostalgic yet unsentimental.

Born in 1907, Moore grew up in Tewkesbury at a time when such small English market towns had a sturdy and independent life of their own. Mass travel, mass media and the changes brought about by two world wars would gradually destroy this self-contained society, but in *Portrait of Elmbury* Moore caught and preserved it and its inhabitants in captivating detail, from the wild and drunken inhabitants of the slums in Double Alley to Miss Benedict, the disapproving barmaid at the Shakespeare (the town had 28 pubs and a population of 5,000).

*Brensham Village* moves the story onward to the 1930s and from Elmbury to a small village nearby. Now there is unemployment, and change is creeping in, with mannerless weekenders arriving from the city, a shady 'Syndicate' of developers, an ugly petrol station and a local cinema. But there is still cricket on the village green, and fishing, ferreting and bird's-nesting for Moore and his friends.

The final volume, *The Blue Field*, set in 1948, focuses on a single farm and the life of its owner, the wild and intractable William Hart, master wagon-maker and defender of individual liberties against increasing interference from the State. He is the man responsible for the field of blue linseed, grown in defiance of the War Agricultural Executive Committee, which flowers one summer morning on Brensham Hill.

Though Moore wrote many more books and spent time in London, he always returned to Tewkesbury – for him a place where somehow 'emotion seemed larger, pleasures were keener, sorrows sharper, the tragedy more profound and the comedy more riotous' – and it is for his wonderful Brensham trilogy that he is best known.



All three books are now available again,  
*Portrait of Elmbury* in a Plain Foxed Edition and  
*Brensham Village* and *The Blue Field* as Slightly Foxed Editions

### Special Offer: The Brensham Trilogy

SF Subscribers: UK & Ireland £51; overseas £57 \*SAVE £9

Non-Subscribers: UK & Ireland £57; overseas £63 \*SAVE £3

# A WORLD AT WAR

## Christabel Bielenberg, *The Past Is Myself*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 384 PAGES • FROM £18

In 1934, shortly after Hitler's rise to power, Christabel Burton, a beautiful woman from an influential Anglo-Irish family, married a liberal young German lawyer, Peter Bielenberg, and they settled in Berlin. When Allied bombing made the city too dangerous she fled with their children to a small village in the Black Forest, where she experienced a very different society from the Nazi-dominated one she had left behind. *The Past Is Myself* is her surprising account of life in that 'other Germany', and of her own nail-biting encounter with the Nazi regime.

## Eric Newby, *Love and War in the Apennines*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 47 • 360 PAGES • FROM £18

'That night something happened to me on the mountain . . . It was not physical; it was simply that part of my spirit went out of me, and in the whole of my life since that night it has never been the same again.' It was the winter of 1943 and young Eric Newby, later to become known for his jaunty accounts of his adventurous travels, was facing probably the hardest test of his life. Captured by the Germans in 1942 while on a secret mission to bomb a German airfield in Sicily and incarcerated in Northern Italy, he had escaped during the chaos of Italy's surrender to the Allies. During those long months on the run in the mountains he was fed and sheltered by poor peasant farmers who hated the Italian Fascist militia as much as he did and risked torture and execution to help him. As well as being a spine-tingling escape story it is a fascinating picture of life in these remote mountain communities which at that time had changed little since the Middle Ages. Buy with *Something Wholesale*, see p. 16



## Richard Hillary, *The Last Enemy*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 39 • 224 PAGES • FROM £18

Richard Hillary was a charming, good-looking and rather arrogant young man, fresh from public school and Oxford, when, like many of his friends, he abandoned university to train as a pilot on the outbreak of war. At the training school, meeting men who hadn't enjoyed the same gilded youth as he had, Hillary's view of the world, and of himself, began to change. In 1940, during the Battle of Britain, he shot down five German aircraft and was finally shot down in flames himself, sustaining terrible burns. With its raw honesty, lack of self-pity and gripping and terrifying accounts of aerial combat and the psychological aftermath, *The Last Enemy* is a wartime classic, the harrowing story of a carefree young man who, like many others, was suddenly and cruelly forced to grow up.

## George Clare, *Last Waltz in Vienna*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 56 • 408 PAGES • FROM £18

In February 1938, the grand Konzerthaus in Vienna was in full, glorious swing; bands were playing, there was dancing and singing and plenty of beer. It was the first ball ever attended by the 17-year-old Georg Klaar, and he stayed until the very last waltz. But on 11 March, lorries began thundering into the streets, filled with uniformed men waving swastikas and shouting 'Death to Jews'. Austria was now betrayed and had been annexed by the German Third Reich. Barely four years later, Georg Klaar had become George Clare and was serving in the British army, and his parents had been rounded up and taken to Auschwitz. Only with hindsight can George discern the complex reasons for his family's destruction, and for the whole appalling waste of war. This is a profoundly moving, honest and compassionate memoir, remarkably devoid of self-pity, though not of anger.

## Anthony Rhodes, *Sword of Bone*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 320 PAGES • FROM £18

It's hard to imagine that anyone who took part in the disaster of Dunkirk could write an amusing book about it. But that is what Anthony Rhodes has done in *Sword of Bone*, his wry account of the events leading up to the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force in May 1940 – a 'strategic withdrawal according to plan' as the chaos was officially described. Being observant and cool-headed, with an ironic sense of humour, he manages to capture the absurdity as well as the tragedy of what took place.

## John Hackett, *I Was a Stranger*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 320 PAGES • FROM £18

In September 1944 John Hackett, commander of the 4th Parachute Brigade, was severely wounded and captured during the Battle of Arnhem. After being taken to a hospital in enemy hands and given emergency surgery, he was spirited away by the Dutch Resistance and hidden in a house owned by three middle-aged sisters, who risked their lives to nurse him back to health and help him escape down the canals of occupied Holland to the British lines. *I Was a Stranger* is less a war memoir than a story of friendship, a tribute by a very unusual soldier to a group of outstandingly brave, unassuming and resourceful people.

## Roald Dahl, *Going Solo*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 49

236 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

This sequel to *Boy* finds Dahl a representative of Shell, travelling the dirt roads of Tanganyika in an old station wagon visiting distant and often eccentric customers, the people who quite literally kept the machinery of Empire running. It was a free and adventurous life, but nothing like as hair-raising as what happened when war was declared and Dahl joined the RAF.



Flying solo in 1941 to join his new squadron, he crashed in the Western Desert and suffered horrendous injuries, but five months later he was up and off again to join the tiny British force attempting to defend Greece. He was clearly a brilliant pilot, and *Going Solo* is a story of extraordinary courage as well as a haunting evocation of the unspoiled beauty of East Africa in the 1930s and its now extinct breed of expatriates, 'the craziest bunch of humans I shall ever meet'. Buy with *Boy*, see below

## ROGUES & REBELS

### Roald Dahl, *Boy*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 48 • 184 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

It's easy to see from this childhood memoir where the ogres who people Dahl's fiction come from: the vengeful and filthy-fingernailed sweetshop owner Mrs Pratchett, the school doctor who lances little Ellis's boil in such a heartless manner, the creepy headmaster of Repton who wields the cane with unacceptable relish. But there's another, far more cheerful side to the story in the person of Dahl's adored mother Sofie who, widowed at 35 with six children to care for, nevertheless managed to leave them with idyllic childhood memories.

Like many individualists, Dahl never fitted in at school and was ecstatic when he finally escaped to work for Shell, setting off for East Africa with the same infectious bounce and enthusiasm that permeate this irresistible little book. Buy with *Going Solo*, see p. 13

### Jessica Mitford, *Hons and Rebels*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 52

320 PAGES • FROM £18

In this funny and perceptive memoir Jessica Mitford describes growing up as the fifth of the six notoriously headstrong Mitford sisters. An isolated childhood in the hideous Cotswold house built by their father Lord Redesdale, where life centred round the church and the Conservative Party, turned 'Decca' as she was known into a lifelong socialist. At 18 she made her escape, eloping spectacularly with her charismatic left-wing cousin Esmond Romilly, moving to the East End of London and then running a bar in Miami. It's a story of sheer bravado brilliantly told by one of the most eccentric members of an eccentric family.



### Christopher Robbins, *The Empress of Ireland*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 51 • 384 PAGES • FROM £18

The subtitle to this delicious book is 'A Chronicle of an Unusual Friendship', and it would indeed be difficult to imagine two more unlikely companions than its author and his subject, the 80-year-old gay Irish film-maker Brian Desmond Hurst. Christopher Robbins was young

and broke when he was first introduced to Hurst as a possible scriptwriter for a forthcoming film: a great religious epic covering 'the events leading up to the birth of Christ'. As he struggled to get his head round this fantastic commission for which he knew he was spectacularly ill-suited, Robbins began to realize that he had indeed entered a fantasy world. The film was never made of course, Robbins was never paid and the script was never finished. But in *The Empress of Ireland* he produced a comic masterpiece, a picture of a wickedly unapologetic old rogue it's impossible not to like.

### V. S. Pritchett, *A Cab at the Door*

SF PAPERBACK • 296 PAGES • FROM £11

The writer V. S. Pritchett's mother was an irrepressible cockney, his father a reckless, over-optimistic peacock of a man, always embarking on new business ventures which inevitably crashed – hence the 'cab at the door' waiting to bear the family quietly away from yet another set of creditors. In this vigorous and original memoir Pritchett captures unforgettably the smells, sounds and voices of London in the first decades of the 20th century, and the cast of Dickensian characters among whom he grew up.

### Hermione, Countess of Ranfurly, *To War with Whitaker*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 50 • 416 PAGES • FROM £18

Hermione, Countess of Ranfurly and her husband Dan had been married for less than a year when he was called up in September 1939. Their characterful cook-butler Whitaker volunteered to go with him, but Yeomanry rules decreed that though officers could take their servants to war they could not take their wives. Undeterred, however, Hermione immediately set off for Egypt in pursuit. Between snatched reunions with Dan, who was eventually taken prisoner, she worked for SOE in Cairo and as personal assistant to General 'Jumbo' Wilson in Jerusalem, entertaining everyone who was anyone from King Farouk to Evelyn Waugh. This sparkling diary is both a passionate love story and a unique behind-the-scenes picture of the war in the Middle East and Europe as seen by a very unconventional aristocrat.

### Laurie Lee, *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 54 • 240 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

When Laurie Lee set out on foot from his home in the Gloucestershire village of Slad one midsummer morning in 1935 he was 19 and off to see the world with only his violin for company. So began a year of wandering that eventually took him from the north to the south of Spain, a country in which life had barely changed since the Middle Ages but which was now on the brink of a bitter civil war. The adventure that began as a romantic dream ended somewhat ignominiously, but it inspired Lee to produce this brilliant and darkly haunting account of a vanished Spain, and return to fight on the Republican side not long after. Buy with *Cider with Rosie*, see p. 8



## QUIETLY HILARIOUS

Diana Holman-Hunt, *My Grandmothers and I*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 288 PAGES • FROM £18

Diana Holman-Hunt spent her Edwardian childhood shuttling between two wildly contrasting grandparents. Her paternal grandmother, the eccentric widow of the Pre-Raphaelite painter



Holman Hunt, lived entirely in the past in her big gaunt house in Kensington, while her mother's mother, in her comfortable and well-ordered home on the edge of the Sussex marshes, lived entirely in the present. Both competed for Diana's affection while being spectacularly blind to her needs. *My Grandmothers and I* is Diana's touching and darkly funny memoir of that time – a small comic masterpiece of pitch-perfect dialogue and deadpan observation.

Eric Newby, *Something Wholesale*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 41 • 256 PAGES • FROM £18

Who would have thought that the adventurous traveller and decorated wartime hero Eric Newby had started his working life in the rag trade? But that is the story he tells in this characteristically jaunty and very funny book. Lane & Newby, 'Mantle Makers and Wholesale Costumiers', occupied a warren of offices in Great Marlborough Street. Here young Eric was put to work in the Mantle Department and forced to accompany Mr Wilkins, the head salesman, on his twice yearly excursions to drum up orders in the great industrial towns of the North. As Eric blundered his way through the various departments, things were beginning to go wrong. Eric's father, an Edwardian patriarch with a light-hearted attitude to accounting, had been running up debts, and during the Fifties Lane & Newby finally collapsed. By this time, however, Eric was laying plans for an excursion to the Hindu Kush – and the rest is travel history. **Buy with Love and War in the Apennines**, see p. 12

Ysenda Maxtone Graham,

*Terms & Conditions: Life in Girls' Boarding-Schools, 1939–1979*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 272 PAGES • FROM £18

'When I asked some girls who had been at Hatherop Castle in the 1960s whether the school had had a lab in those days they gave me a blank look. "A laboratory?" I expanded, hoping to jog their memories. "Oh that kind of lab!" one of them said. "I thought you meant a Labrador.'" As we discover from this quietly hilarious history of life in British girls' boarding-schools, this was a not untypical reaction. Harsh matrons, freezing dormitories and appalling food predominated, but occasionally these eccentric establishments imbued in their pupils a lifetime

love of the arts and a thirst for self-education. In *Terms & Conditions* Ysenda speaks to members of a lost tribe – the Boarding-school Women, who look back on their experiences with a mixture of horror and humour.

Ysenda Maxtone Graham, *Mr Tibbits's Catholic School*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 200 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

Like many of the best books, this unusual history of an unusual school – St Philip's prep-school in Kensington, founded in 1934 by Catholic convert Richard Tibbits and still going strong today – is hard to classify. 'As you live through its story,' the author promises her readers, 'you'll be taken on a meander through the 20th century. War, rationing, smog, mini-skirts, strikes, Thatcherism, the first computer . . .' Enough to say that for anyone who has enjoyed *Decline and Fall* or *St Trinian's*, anyone who loves to laugh yet feels the poignancy of the passage of time, this book will be a treat.

Frances Wood, *Hand-grenade Practice in Peking*

SF PAPERBACK • 240 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £11

China in 1975 was a strange, undiscovered country, still half-mad from Mao's Cultural Revolution, when young Frances Wood boarded a plane in London to study for a year in Peking. Virtually closed to outsiders for the preceding decade, China was just beginning to make tentative moves towards the outside world when Frances and her fellow students were driven through the dark silent countryside to their new quarters at the Foreign Languages Institute. Throughout the following year in an extraordinary Alice-in-Wonderland world where 'education' consisted of shovelling rubble, hand-grenade practice and crippling tedious ideological lectures, Frances never lost her sense of humour. Based on the letters she wrote home, *Hand-grenade Practice in Peking* is both affecting and hilarious.



## WRITING LIFE

Anne Fadiman, *The Wine Lover's Daughter*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 57 • 204 PAGES • FROM £18

*The Wine Loving Father* might be a more apt title for this affectionate but clear-eyed memoir in which the American writer Anne Fadiman remembers her convivial and amusing father Clifton Fadiman, successful author, critic, columnist, publisher and MC of the popular NBC radio quiz show *Information Please*. A complicated self-made Jew from Brooklyn with a passion for

wine, Clifton moved in the best literary circles and was heaped with honours by the time he died in 1998, but he never felt he was quite good enough. This is not just a book for wine buffs, but one that evokes the atmosphere of a whole era in American life.

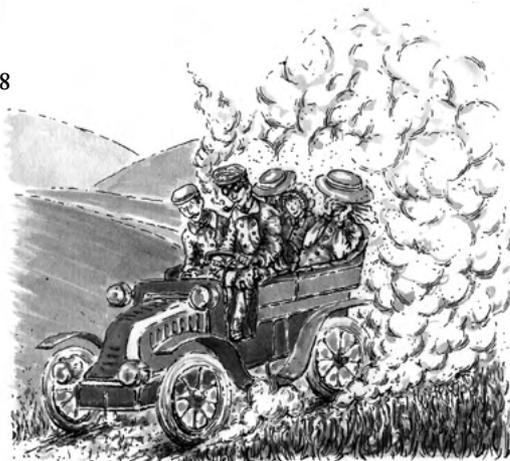
### **Dodie Smith, *Look Back with Love***

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 272 PAGES • FROM £18

Best known for her first novel *I Capture the Castle*, for the evergreen *The Hundred and One Dalmatians*, and for *Dear Octopus*, her 1938 play set at a family reunion, Dodie did not publish this account of her early life until 1974 when she was 78.

Brought up among her mother's family since her father had died when she was a baby, Dodie spent her childhood surrounded by doting adults. It was the jolliest environment imaginable – the Furbers adored seaside trips, motorcar outings, fairgrounds, circuses, jokes, charades and musical soirées. Above all they loved the theatre, and it was through her bachelor uncles' involvement in amateur dramatics that she conceived her passion for the stage.

Her memoir gives a wonderful picture of this large extended family and of life at that time in the 'basking Sunday afternoon charm' of Manchester's Victorian suburbs. And of the funny, complicated, creative little girl who would later say of herself, 'I think I'm an oddity really, but I do my very, very best to write well' – which in *Look Back with Love* she certainly did.



### **Michael Holroyd, *Basil Street Blues***

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 29 • 368 PAGES • FROM £18

Well-known for his frank biographies of such controversial figures as Augustus John and Lytton Strachey, Holroyd teases out the story of his own distinctly problematic family in this delightful and original book. His volatile father, always busy with his own enterprises, and his glamorous Swedish mother with her succession of exotic husbands, had only walk-on parts in his life. It was only after both parents died that he was overcome by a desire to find the 'connecting story' which his fragmented childhood had so lacked. The result is a very personal detective story, subtle, funny and poignant.

### **Richard Cobb, *Still Life***

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 55 • 224 PAGES • FROM £18

The historian Richard Cobb, famous for his brilliant books on France and the French Revolution, is inspirational teaching and his unconventional behaviour, grew up in the 1920s and '30s in the quiet and deeply conventional town of Tunbridge Wells. Yet Cobb loved that small world with its middle-class confidence and soothing predictability – it was, he writes, 'a

society in which a rather frightened child could feel secure'. In this unusual memoir he recreates it in entrancing detail as he experienced it between the ages of 4 and 13. Arriving at the Central Station, with its wooden staircase advertising 'Carter's Little Liver Pills', he leads us through the town and into the lives of the characters among whom he grew up, each minutely observed and remembered, from the mysterious Black Widow, seen always in deep yet unexplained mourning, to Baroness Olga, the town's only victim of the Russian Revolution, with her tight-fitting cloche hat and jade earrings. At home his mother entertains her tweed-and-Jaeger-clad Bridge-playing friends while down the road in their large, dank Victorian mansion his extraordinary cousins the Limbury-Buses live their lives according to an unchanging regime of walks, rests and meals which are timed to the minute. 'Strange and wonderful,' wrote Hilary Spurling in the *Observer* when the book was first published. And indeed it is.

### **Helene Hanff, *84, Charing Cross Road***

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 240 PAGES • FROM £18

In the drab and traumatized post-war London of 1949, Marks & Co., second-hand and antiquarian booksellers at 84, Charing Cross Road, received an enquiry from 'a poor writer with an antiquarian taste in books', a Miss Helene Hanff of New York City. It was not the kind of letter they were accustomed to receiving, but it was one that would make history.

After a while, letters between the feisty, eccentric New York writer and the staff of the bookshop began to encompass much more than books. Soon the whole office was joining in, slipping in notes about their families, describing life in London, and thanking her for the food parcels she sent from New York. It was a correspondence that would last for twenty years. Helene never made her fortune as a scriptwriter, but when she finally had the idea of making the letters into a book, it became a bestseller. It's a gloriously heart-warming read, the account of a friendship – almost a love story – conducted through books.

### **Jennie Erdal, *Ghosting***

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 43 • 304 PAGES • FROM £18

'A large sapphire on the lapel of a bold striped suit, a vivid silk tie so bright that it dazzles . . . on his fingers a collection of jewels . . .' – this is the man Jennie Erdal calls 'Tiger', the flamboyant figure at the centre of *Ghosting*, the strange and gripping story of the 20 years in which she became his ghost writer. Erdal created a whole literary oeuvre in his name, and even turned his ludicrous plot ideas and sexual fantasies into novels that were seriously and admirably reviewed. *Ghosting* is a wickedly funny book, but it is also a thoughtful look at deception and self-deception, and the masks that most of us wear.

### **Jan Morris, *Conundrum***

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 46 • 200 PAGES • FROM £18

'I was three or perhaps four years old when I realized I had been born into the wrong body and should really be a girl. I remember the moment well, and it is the earliest memory of my life.' In 1972 James Morris booked a return ticket to Casablanca and underwent what would now be called gender reassignment surgery. Soon afterwards Jan Morris wrote a book about what it

had felt like to live – or try to live – for forty odd years with the absolute conviction that she was a woman trapped in a man's body, and how this agony had finally been resolved. Although she was not the first person to undergo this operation, she was probably the best known and apparently the least likely. After Oxford, and service in Intelligence during the Second World War, James Morris became a daring foreign reporter who scooped news of the first ascent of Everest in 1953. During the 1950s and '60s he also produced a succession of brilliant travel books. And he was married with four children – a partnership of complete trust and openness which survived to the end. How James finally became Jan is an extraordinary story, and her memoir *Conundrum* is a gripping and thought-provoking read which casts fascinating light on the fevered debates of today.

### Gavin Maxwell, *The House of Elrig*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 31 • 256 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

The writer and naturalist Gavin Maxwell is best known for *Ring of Bright Water*, his moving account of raising otters on the remote west coast of Scotland. In his childhood memoir *The House of Elrig* he describes, with the same lyrical power that made that earlier book a classic, how it all began. In loving detail he evokes the wild moors around his Scottish home and the creatures that inhabited them. As was then the custom, he was ripped away from this paradise to go to a series of brutalizing schools. But always in his imagination he was at Elrig. It was his refuge and his escape.



### Rosemary Sutcliff, *Blue Remembered Hills*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 208 PAGES • FROM £18

Rosemary Sutcliff is one of Britain's most distinguished children's writers. Born in 1920, the only child of a naval father and a pretty, manic-depressive mother, as a child Rosemary suffered from juvenile arthritis, which burned its way through her, leaving her permanently disabled. Yet *Blue Remembered Hills* is the very opposite of a misery memoir, full of poetry, humour, affection, and joy in people and the natural world.

In some ways, hers was an enchanted childhood, lived among the vivid sights and sounds of the dockyards, which would later feed into her books. When her father retired from the sea the family moved to North Devon, and at 14 Rosemary went to Bideford Art School, becoming a skilled miniaturist. In time, though, feeling cramped by the small canvas of her paintings, isolated in the country and wounded in love, she turned to writing. Her novels would bring the past vividly to life for generations of children. *Blue Remembered Hills* is the unforgettable record of the making of a writer.

### James Lees-Milne, *Another Self*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 256 PAGES • FROM £18

A deeply religious child, Lees-Milne spent much of his childhood wandering dreamily in the grounds of his parents' medieval manor house, Wickhamford Manor in Worcestershire. It gave him a nostalgia for the past and a love of historic buildings which would lead to his later distinguished career with the National Trust. Droll, shy and sexually ambivalent, Lees-Milne wrote that he 'always felt an outsider in every circle'. It was this, combined with his eye for detail and highly developed sense of the ridiculous, that made him such a wonderful comic writer. John Betjeman compared the impact of *Another Self* to that of Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall*.

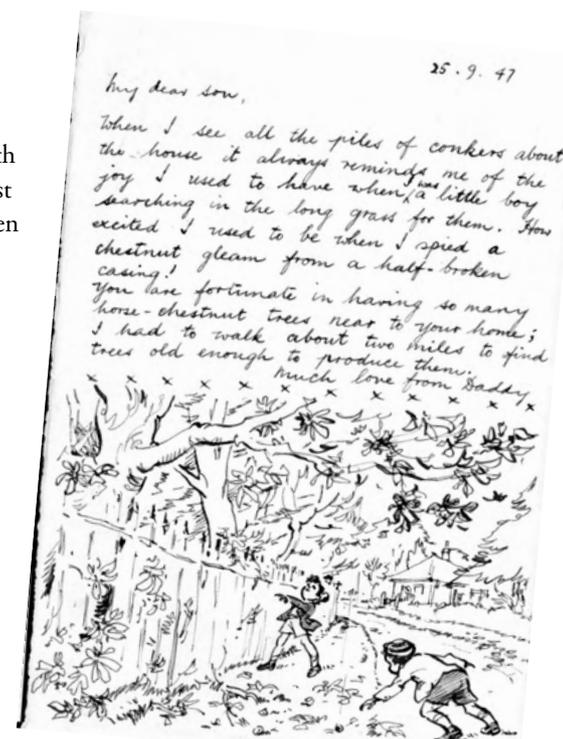
## DRAWN FROM LIFE

### Charles Phillipson, *Letters to Michael*

SLIGHTLY FOXED OCCASIONAL BOOKS • HB • 324 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £20

Between the spring of 1945 and the autumn of 1947 Charles Phillipson wrote a series of 150 illustrated letters to his young son Michael, who had just started school. These delightful, quirky letters, designed to whet Michael's appetite for reading, were done when Charles – a considerable artist who illustrated a number of children's books – had already been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, but they are full of the lightness and humour he still found in everyday situations, and full of encouragement for Michael's own efforts. Preserved by his wife and son after his death in 1974, these *Letters to Michael* give a most touching picture of the relationship between a father and his young son.

'These sweetly simple records of an ordinary suburban life render everything about it miraculous. The sheer quality of a devoted father shines from every detailed line, written and drawn . . . I keep returning to this magical collection, each time with renewed wonder that the letters survived — but also with a strange sadness that these days there is so little inclination to write any letters at all, let alone ones as happy and touching as these.' Bel Mooney, *Daily Mail*



## Gwen Raverat, *Period Piece*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 320 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

Gwen Raverat is best-known for her glorious wood engravings, but in her childhood memoir *Period Piece* she created a perfect small masterpiece of another kind – a deliciously funny, affectionate and atmospheric picture of life in the small world of 19th-century academic Cambridge among the eccentric Darwin clan. Illustrated with Gwen's own delightful drawings, it not only brilliantly captures a moment in time but also shows us the making of the artist Gwen was to become. As Rose Macaulay wrote when it was first published, it is 'funny, witty, beautifully written, more than beautifully illustrated, everything such a book can be'.

## Ernest Shepard, *Drawn from Memory & Drawn from Life*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NOS. 44 & 45

192 & 224 PAGES • ILLUS.

PAIR FROM £36

The much-loved artist Ernest Shepard, whose delicate and humorous illustrations will forever define the characters of Winnie-the-Pooh, and Mole, Ratty and Toad in *The Wind in the Willows*, grew up in London as the 19th century faded into the 20th.

In *Drawn from Memory*, he tells, in words and enchanting pictures, the story of his happy middle-class childhood, beginning in 1887, the year of the Golden Jubilee when Ernest was 8 and already determined to be an artist like his father.

*Drawn from Life* opens with the tragic death of his mother when he was 10 and describes the family's brave recovery,

Ernest's time at the Royal Academy Schools, and his happy marriage to a fellow artist. Together these two volumes form a vivid canvas filled with the vision of a gentler, more leisurely world.

## Erich Kästner, *When I Was a Little Boy*

SLIGHTLY FOXED EDITION NO. 40 • 216 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

Erich Kästner, author of the immortal children's book *Emil and the Detectives*, was born at the end of the 19th century in Dresden – that 'wonderful city full of art and history' which was



razed to the ground by the Allies in 1945. Erich's gentle father Emil, a master saddler, and his mother Ida, an intelligent woman who set up as a hairdresser, had come to Dresden from small-town Saxony. Times were tough, and Erich grew up in a tenement flat at the shabby end of a long street called the Königsbrücker Strasse. Yet the book shines with the everyday happiness of life in a close-knit, hardworking family, set against the backdrop of the ancient city with its baroque buildings, its parades before the Kaiser, its trams and glittering shops. *When I Was a Little Boy* is an affecting picture of both Erich's childhood and the city he never ceased to mourn.

## Richard Kennedy, *A Boy at the Hogarth Press & A Parcel of Time*

PLAIN FOXED EDITION • 208 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

In 1926, at the age of 16, Richard Kennedy left school without a single qualification and went to work at the Hogarth Press. The Woolfs clearly developed a fondness for their apprentice, but when he left several years later, Leonard pronounced him 'the most frightful idiot he [had] ever had the privilege of meeting in a long career of suffering fools'. But Kennedy, who became a successful artist and children's book illustrator, was taking everything in, and 50 years later he produced a minor classic in *A Boy at the Hogarth Press*, accompanied by his own wonderfully alive illustrations. Later still, he wrote his touching childhood memoir, *A Parcel of Time*. Now published together in a single edition, the two are a sheer delight.

'I am greatly enjoying my Slightly Foxed Editions. The books are just gorgeous – I love everything about them: the cloth binding, the paper, the ribbon marker, the typeface and line spacing . . . I am so glad you exist in this increasingly surreal world of digitized virtuality.' **J. Magill, South Australia**

'I want to let you know how much I enjoyed the last two books of yours I read: *Brendon Chase* – just magical, and now set aside for when my grandson comes to visit – and Adrian Bell's *A Countryman's Winter Notebook*. I can't wait for the *Spring Notebook*.' **P. Beaton, London**

'It is always a delight to have one of your publications in one's hands, just the right size, weight and feel. Thank you.' **T. Masuda, Tokyo**

'The standard of Slightly Foxed book choices is truly amazing – I can't think of anyone else who offers the same consistent quality. I love the quiet books especially as I would never come across them if SF didn't raise them to my attention.' **The Captive Reader**

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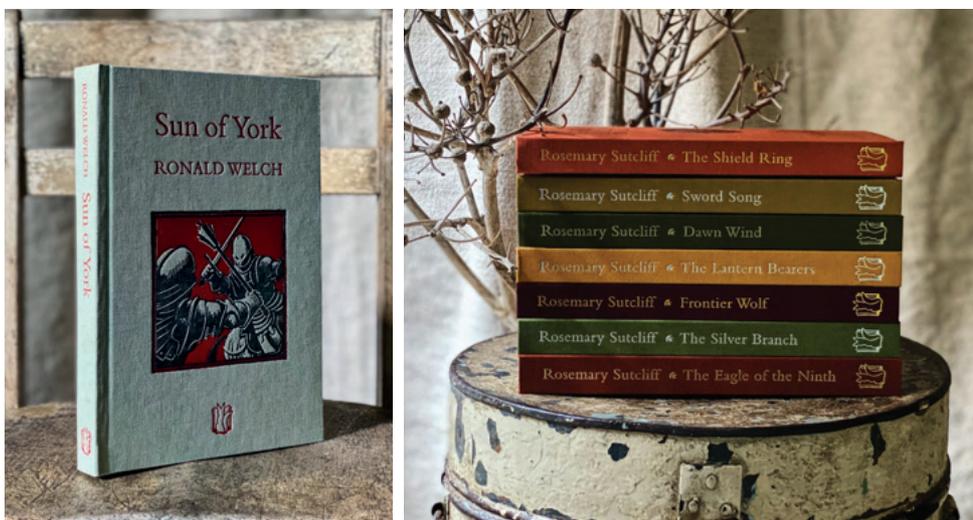


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## SLIGHTLY FOXED CUBS

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## ROSEMARY SUTCLIFF

Rosemary Sutcliff (1920–92) wrote three of her four great historical novels for children set during the last years of the Roman occupation of Britain – *The Eagle of the Ninth*, *The Silver Branch* and *The Lantern Bearer* (winner of the Carnegie Medal) – between 1954 and 1959, and the fourth, *Frontier Wolf*, which comes third in the chronological story, in 1980. The four books are only loosely interconnected, but together they give a vivid picture of the ebbing away of imperial power from Britain as Rome's values were undermined and her defences gradually weakened by Saxon invasions. The three final novels that follow in this brilliant sequence – *Dawn Wind*, *Sword Song* and *The Shield Ring* – continue the story, forming a vivid panorama of the mysterious years from the departure of the Roman Legions, through the Dark Ages to the first decades of Norman rule.

Sutcliff was writing primarily for children, but she never talks down to her readers, and adults too find these novels impossible to put down. All of them are based on historical fact but it's Sutcliff's imaginative brilliance that makes you smell the burning cherry log warming old Uncle Aquila's cosy study, feel the tension in the air at the Saturnalia Games, and shiver in



the icy winds howling round the bleak frontier forts along Hadrian's Wall. Her protagonists are no cardboard cut-outs but flesh-and-blood people with understandable weaknesses and beset by recognizable human dilemmas, and it's they who drive the plots.

As well as being brilliant reads, together these novels make sense of a far-off period that left its mark on almost every aspect of British life.

They have been difficult to find for some time and we're delighted to be reissuing all seven of the Roman and post-Roman novels, with their original illustrations, in a limited, numbered edition.

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## THE EAGLE OF THE NINTH

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As Marcus the young centurion arrives in Britain to take up his first command, he is haunted by the memory of his father and the 6,000 men of the Ninth Hispana Legion, who twelve years earlier had marched north of Hadrian's Wall to quell an uprising and were never seen again. Seriously wounded soon after in an attack by hostile tribesmen, invalided out of the Roman Army and wondering what to do with his life, Marcus determines to make the hazardous journey north in a bid to discover the fate of the Ninth Legion, and in particular of the Roman eagle, the Legion's standard and a possible rallying point for the northern tribes

in their war against Rome. Sutcliff's most famous book is a gripping adventure and a touching coming-of-age story, based on the real disappearance of the Ninth Legion around the year AD 117.

## THE SILVER BRANCH

**SLIGHTLY FOXED CUB • 216 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18**

Roman influence in Britain is waning. The Empire is increasingly threatened by hostile tribes along its borders, and divided by political struggles at home. Two distant cousins who have met by chance in Britain – Justin, a shy, newly qualified army surgeon and Flavius, a young centurion – are caught up in the power struggles between Carausius, the charismatic Emperor of Britain, his cruel and ruthless treasurer, and the Emperor in Rome. Disgraced after their attempt to warn Carausius about a plot against him fails, the two go underground, rallying support for the legitimate Emperor and finally taking refuge at the home of their formidable great-aunt Honoria. Here they make an astonishing discovery which affects their future and links directly back to their ancestor Marcus and the disappearance of the Ninth Legion.

## FRONTIER WOLF

**SLIGHTLY FOXED CUB • 224 PAGES • FROM £18**

After a disastrous misjudgement which cost the lives of half his men, Alexios, another young centurion and member of the Aquila family, is sent to take charge of a bleak Roman outpost on Hadrian's Wall and the savage bunch of men who defend it, the Frontier Wolves of the title. Dealing with this notorious legion is literally a matter of life and death for Alexios, for a commander who alienates them is unlikely to survive. *Frontier Wolf* tells the story of how this flawed but likeable hero grows in stature, gradually gaining his legion's respect and the co-operation of the surrounding tribes, and defending Rome as the threat from the North grows.

## THE LANTERN BEARERS

**SLIGHTLY FOXED CUB • 264 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18**

The shadow of the approaching Dark Ages hangs over this last of the Roman novels. Rome's legacy is finally decaying, the regular legions have been withdrawn, and Saxon raiding parties are invading the British countryside. As commander of a cavalry troop, young Aquila has been ordered to leave, but he has grown to love Britain and stays on, only to see his father's farm torched by the Saxons, his father and the household servants murdered and his sister Flavia abducted. Aquila himself is captured and spends years as slave to a Saxon clan, but as the darkness gathers over Britain, it only strengthens his determination to avenge his family and keep Roman values alive.



## DAWN WIND

**SLIGHTLY FOXED CUB • 248 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18**

Owain, the book's teenage hero who has both Roman and British blood in his veins, is the sole survivor of a terrible battle with the Saxons. Wounded and hungry, and with only a great fighting dog for company, he makes for the old Roman city of Viroconium where, among the ruins, he meets another survivor, Regina, a young and terrified orphaned girl and together they set off for the coast, planning to leave Britain for a British settlement in Gaul. On the journey Regina falls desperately ill and Owain buys her safety with his own freedom, becoming a thrall in a Saxon household. But in the years that follow he never forgets Regina, and when he regains his freedom the two meet again.



## SWORD SONG

**SLIGHTLY FOXED CUB • 228 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18**

Sixteen-year-old Bjarni Sigurdson, a young Norwegian living in the Viking settlement of Rafnglas, is exiled for five years by the chief, Rafn Cedricson, for the hot-tempered murder of a priest, so breaking an oath Cedricson had sworn to his foster-brother to protect Christians within his lands. Bjarni joins a merchant ship sailing for Dublin from where, robbed of his possessions but with a new companion, a stray hound he calls Hugin, he embarks on a career as a mercenary in the wars between the clan chiefs in Ireland, Wales and the Scottish Isles. On Mull, he falls under the influence of the chief's devoutly Christian mother Lady Aud, and after a chance meeting on a journey with her to the monastery on Iona, he is able to return and receive absolution from Rafn Cedricson for the breaking of his vow.

## THE SHIELD RING

**SLIGHTLY FOXED CUB • 216 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18**

England is now under Norman rule, but hidden high among the Cumbrian fells is one last



Viking stronghold. Into it comes the five-year-old Saxon girl Frytha, saved by her father's shepherd Grim after her family farm has been torched and her family murdered by the Normans. Here she meets another orphan, Bjorn, and over the years the two become inseparable. When William the Conqueror's son William II marches north through Lakeland to confront the Scots, the Norsemen send a peace envoy, who is cruelly tortured and murdered by the Normans. It's clear William is determined

to take this final tactical outpost, but Bjorn, disguised as a travelling harper and secretly accompanied by Frytha, enters the enemy camp and after a terrifying ordeal brings back vital information which gives the advantage to the Norsemen.



‘BB’

Denys Watkins-Pitchford (1905–90), who wrote under the pseudonym ‘BB’, was the author of more than sixty books for adults and children, but *The Little Grey Men*, which won the 1942 Carnegie Medal, its sequel *Down the Bright Stream* (1948), and the classic adventure story *Brendon Chase* (1944) are his masterpieces.

BB was both a writer and an illustrator, and his charming original illustrations decorate these books. But above all he was a countryman, whose intimate and unsentimental knowledge of animals, birds and plants, as well as his gifts as a storyteller, make these books unique.

Growing up in a rural Northamptonshire rectory and thought too delicate to go to school, BB roamed the countryside alone. His nostalgic evocation of the unwrecked England of his childhood, inhabited by the last survivors of an ancient and characterful tribe of small people who live in total harmony with their surroundings, is magical.

## THE LITTLE GREY MEN & DOWN THE BRIGHT STREAM

SLIGHTLY FOXED CUBS • 224 & 200 PAGES • ILLUS. • PAIR FROM £36

The last gnomes in England – Dodder, Baldmoney, Sneezewort and Cloudberry – are living contentedly in Warwickshire, in a burrow beneath the roots of an aged oak tree on the banks of the Folly Brook. Contentedly, that is, until Cloudberry becomes obsessed with the idea of exploring the world beyond the riverbank and sets off alone, ignoring his brothers’ fears and warnings. Two years later he has not returned and Baldmoney and Sneezewort decide they must look for him. But Dodder at first refuses to go with them, and so with heavy hearts

the two gnomes set off upstream in their boat the *Dragonfly*, leaving him behind. So begins a heroic quest to find their missing brother. Before the four gnomes are finally reunited they confront shipwreck, starvation and their worst enemy – Man – in the form of the terrifying gamekeeper Giant Grum, with his ‘stick that roars’ and his horrifying gibbet on which hang the corpses of some of their animal friends.

In *Down the Bright Stream*, Dodder, Baldmoney, Sneezewort and Cloudberry are woken from a long winter sleep in their snug burrow beneath the roots of an ancient oak tree, to find their world collapsing. The brook beside which they have lived for five hundred years, and on which they and their animal friends depend, is being diverted to supply water for a new reservoir and is drying up. Human civilization is beginning to destroy the idyllic English countryside.

Now the gnomes must set out once again on the Folly in search of a new home, sailing downstream towards the big river and the sea. It’s a perilous journey as they move from one temporary base to another, taking refuge in a disused mill and in a friendly badger’s sett. Before their journey is done their boat will have been sunk and one of them will have come to a nasty end. Will the remaining little grey men finally find an unspoilt home?



## BRENDON CHASE

SLIGHTLY FOXED CUB

288 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18

Faced with the end of the holidays and the prospect of school, who hasn’t dreamt of running away to the woods to live wild as a badger, to hunt and forage like a woodsman, to tread as softly and cautiously as a fox through the undergrowth? In *Brendon Chase* this is precisely what three boys do. At the end of the Easter holidays, Robin, John and Harold Hensman escape their aunt’s house and go to live in an eleven-thousand-acre forest. It’s a marvellous idea. *Brendon Chase* was first published in 1944 but is set roughly thirty years earlier. There’s a wonderful cast of pre-war English village characters: a fussy maiden aunt, a butterfly-collecting vicar and a rather hapless policeman and his bicycle, among others. None of the grown-ups believe the boys will make it past teatime,



or nightfall, or the end of the week. Needless to say, the brothers outwit them all. With remarkable resourcefulness, they last till just after Christmas, living in a hollow oak tree and spending their days hunting for their supper, swimming in the Blind Pool and playing tricks on all who come searching for them.

The book is also full of finely observed detail from the natural world, beautifully captured in BB's illustrations. We discover which trees the rare Purple Emperor butterfly prefers, and how it is quite impossible to kill a hedgehog, even for a hungry teenage boy: 'they looked so comical when they ran along and their little eyes were full of intelligence'. BB captures the freedom and simplicity of childhood without idealizing it – the brothers squabble and worry, and they crave the sweet things of Aunt Ellen's kitchen.

*Brendon Chase* is one of the great children's books, a bewitching blend of adventure and natural history, high jinks and skilled bushcraft – just the thing for anyone who has caught themselves eyeing up a patch of woodland and wondering what fun might lie there.

Set of three BB books: UK & Eire from £51; Rest of the World from £57 \*save <£9



## RONALD WELCH THE CAREY NOVELS

Ronald Welch's Carey novels, written between 1954 and 1972, follow the fortunes of the same family from their involvement in the Crusades to their service in the First World War. Grippingly plotted and scrupulously researched, together they join up the dots of English history in a remarkably vivid and human way.

Welch was a historian who served as a Tank Corps officer in the Second World War and in 1947 became Headmaster of Okehampton Grammar School in Devon. He was, by all accounts, an inspiring teacher, and he certainly knew how to bring history alive for younger readers. You can't finish a Welch book without having grasped such precise details as the construction of a

crusader's armour and why it was so designed, or why the longbow was crucial to the English victory at the Battle of Crécy.

Most importantly they are brilliant reads – fast-paced, colourful and imaginative, with entirely believable central characters. The Careys are a distinguished Welsh land-owning family and they are involved in all the great events of their times, from the plots against Elizabeth I and the Civil War to the Peninsular War, the Crimea and the Indian Mutiny.

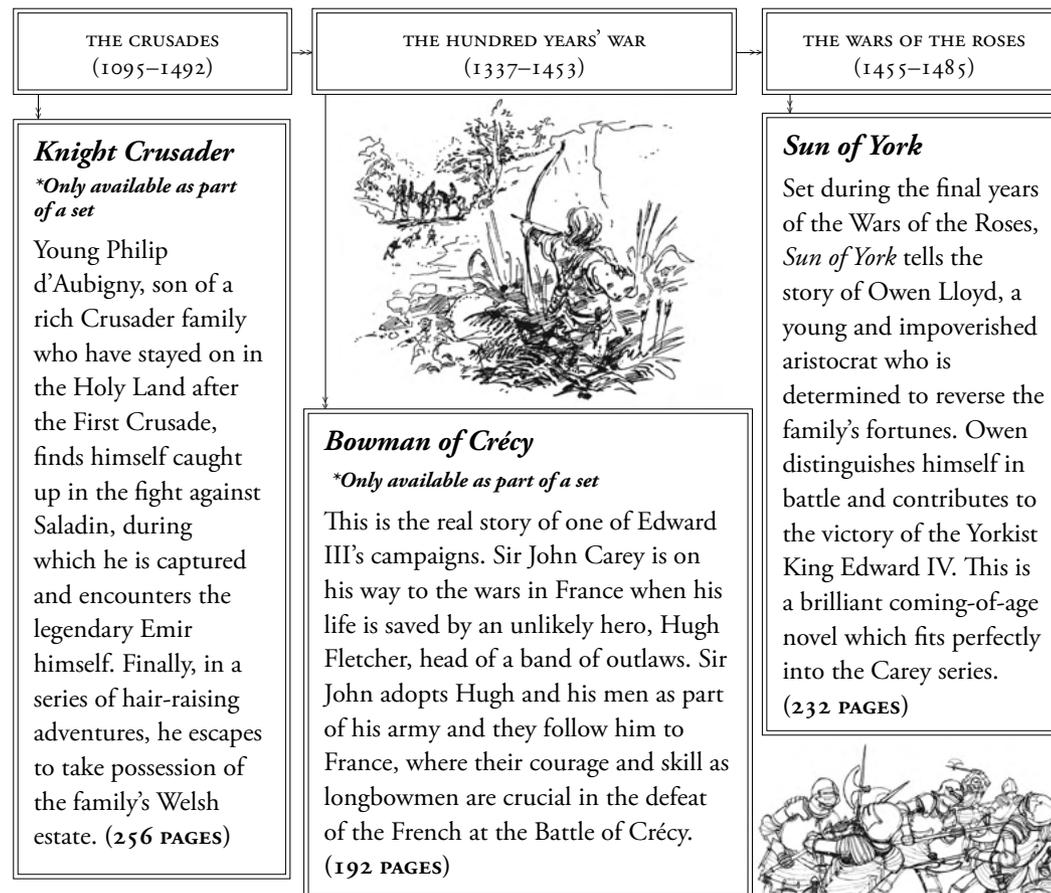
The original editions, published by Oxford University Press and illustrated by some of the best book illustrators of their day, are now almost impossible to find and fetch prohibitive prices. We're delighted to make these wonderful books available again, with their original illustrations, in an elegantly designed and highly collectable series.

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## THE CRUSADES – THE FIRST WORLD WAR



ELIZABETH I  
(1558–1603)

THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR  
(1642–1651)

THE BATTLE OF  
BLENHEIM (1704)

THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR  
(1756–1763)

REVOLUTIONARY FRANCE  
(1789–1799)

NAPOLEONIC WARS  
(1803–1815)

### *The Hawk*

*\*Only available as part of a set*

Harry is a naval officer aboard one of his father, the Earl of Aubigny's merchant ships running between London and Santander during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Relations with Spain are tense and Harry finds himself called on to save the ship from seizure by the Spanish, and to help scupper a plot to assassinate the Queen. (224 PAGES)



### *The Galleon*

*\*Only available as part of a set*

After killing a man in a duel, penniless Carey cousin Robert Penderyn escapes reprisal by joining his uncle's merchant ship sailing for Santander. England and Spain are engaged in a trade war, and the English never know when they will fall foul of the port authorities or the Inquisition. Returning after months in a Spanish prison Robert becomes involved in foiling a Catholic plot to put Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne. (192 PAGES)

### *For the King*

*\*Only available as part of a set*

It's 1642 and the country is riven by civil war. Home-loving Neil Carey reluctantly sets out from the family's Welsh estate to fight on the Royalist side in the regiment his father has raised. Sensitive and small in stature, Neil has always lived in his older brother's shadow, but he acquits himself courageously in battle, and when he is captured by the Roundheads at Marston Moor, his life is saved by his own honesty. (224 PAGES)

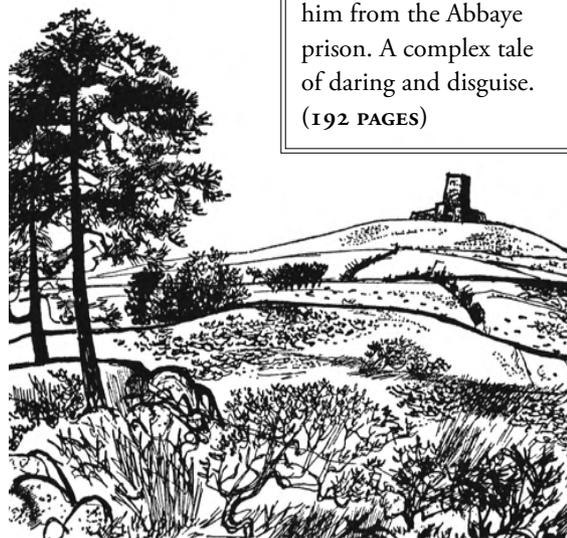
### *Captain of Dragoons*

Charles Carey is a Captain in the Duke of Marlborough's army – a moody, quick-tempered and charismatic figure who is also a brilliant swordsman. Having discovered that there is a traitor in the camp, Charles is sent to spy in France on a mission that ends with his imprisonment in the Bastille. But he escapes in time to take part in Marlborough's decisive victory at Blenheim. (224 PAGES)



### *Mohawk Valley*

In 1755 Alan Carey is sent to the colony of New York by his father the Earl to look into his estates in Mohawk Valley. It's a life-changing experience. Alan grows in moral stature as he deals with a dishonest bailiff, learns the ways of the forest, overcomes hostile Indians and renders invaluable service to General Wolfe during the capture of Quebec. (224 PAGES)



### *Escape from France*

With news of the revolution in France, the Careys are anxious about the fate of their relatives, the aristocratic d'Assailly family. Young Richard Carey, still a Cambridge student but already an outstanding swordsman, is sent secretly by his father Lord Aubigny on a mercy mission to bring them back to England. When he arrives at their chateau in Normandy Richard finds that the Marquis has already been arrested and he and his cousin Armand set out for Paris with a bold plan to spring him from the Abbaye prison. A complex tale of daring and disguise. (192 PAGES)

### *Captain of Foot*

*\*Only available as part of a set*

Young Christopher Carey is serving as a Lieutenant in the 43rd Light Infantry – part of the famous Light Brigade – under Wellington. Chris takes part in the retreat to Corunna, fights in the major battles of Vimiero and Busaco, is captured by the French, escapes and falls in with Spanish guerrillas, and ends up as a Captain, having been noticed by Wellington himself. (224 PAGES)



### *The Road to Waterloo*

The manuscript of *The Road to Waterloo* lay unread among Ronald Welch's papers for more than 30 years after his death and has now been published, with specially commissioned illustrations, for the first time. It's a thrilling picture of the build-up to Wellington's victory at Waterloo and of a great army preparing for battle, and it has all the inimitable Welch ingredients – a young hero who grows up during the course of the book, entirely believable characters and a fast-paced plot brought alive by vivid historical detail. (88 PAGES)



THE CRIMEAN WAR  
1853-1856

THE INDIAN MUTINY  
1853-1857

THE FIRST WORLD WAR  
1914-1918

### Nicholas Carey

On holiday in Italy, Captain Nicholas Carey is persuaded by his impulsive cousin to help three Italian revolutionaries avoid capture and escape the Papal States. After returning to England, Nicholas runs his cousin to earth in Paris, where he is still involved with the revolutionaries, and the two foil an assassination attempt on Napoleon III. Nicholas then rejoins his regiment and is sent to fight the Russians with Lord Raglan's army, where he distinguishes himself in the Battles of Sebastopol and The Redan. (224 PAGES)

### Ensign Carey

In the seedy and dangerous mid-nineteenth century London underworld, William Carey has a frightening encounter with George Hampton, a violent and unprincipled young man on the make. Banished from Cambridge as a result, in 1856 William travels to India, where his father has obtained a commission for him in the 84th Bengal Native Infantry, and his path again crosses that of Hampton. William is no saint, but when the Indian Mutiny breaks out among the native troops, he acts with generosity and courage. (200 PAGES)



### Tank Commander

In the summer of 1914 the Germans enter Belgium and Britain mobilizes for war. Second Lieutenant John Carey, with his regiment the West Glamorgans, exchanges his comfortable quarters at Tidworth for the mud and bloodshed of the trenches. As the death toll mounts, John is called on to take responsibility far beyond his rank and experience in what often seems a hopeless situation. But with the introduction of a revolutionary new weapon – the tank – the tide begins to turn. (232 PAGES)



THE REAL READER'S QUARTERLY

# Slightly Foxed

## BOOKS FEATURED IN ISSUE 75

*NB This list only contains in-print books featured in this issue. For a full bibliography, please visit the website. For second-hand books, please contact the office.*

### R. C. Sherriff, *The Fortnight in September*

PERSEPHONE • PB • 336 PAGES • FROM £16

As R. C. Sherriff described this novel in his memoir *No Leading Lady*, 'The story was a simple one: a small suburban family on their annual fortnight's holiday at Bognor: man and wife, a grown-up daughter working for a dressmaker, a son just started in a London office, and a younger boy still at school. It was a day-by-day account of their holiday from their last evening at home until the day they packed their bags for their return; how they came out of their shabby boarding house every morning and went down to the sea; how the father found hope for the future in his brief freedom from his humdrum work; how the children found romance and adventure; how the mother, scared of the sea, tried to make the others think she was enjoying it.'



### Michael Cox, *The Meaning of Night*

JOHN MURRAY • PB • 608 PAGES • FROM £12.99

On a cold October night in 1854, an innocent man is stabbed to death. So begins the extraordinary story of Edward Glyver, scholar and murderer. Glyver's path leads him from the depths of Victorian London, with its foggy streets, brothels and opium dens, to Evenwood, one of England's most enchanting country houses. His is a tale of betrayal and treachery, of death and delusion, of ruthless obsession and ambition. And at every turn, driving Glyver irresistibly onwards, is his deadly rival – the poet-criminal Phoebus Rainsford Daunt.

**Alastair Fitter, *Trees***

**COLLINS GEM • PB • 240 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £7.99**

The perfect pocket guide for nature enthusiasts keen to identify the most commonly seen trees. Authoritative text, beautiful photographs and detailed illustrations show not only the overall shape of the tree but also details of leaf shape, flowers, fruits and bark. It also features information on the origin of each species, its height, preferred habitat and growing conditions.

**Thomas Pakenham, *Meetings with Remarkable Trees***

**WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON • HB • 192 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £32**

Sixty trees are grouped according to their personalities: Natives, Travellers, Shrines, Fantasies and Survivors. This book is beautifully illustrated with colour photographs, engravings and maps.

**Peter Wohlleben, *The Hidden Life of Trees***

**COLLINS • PB • 288 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £11.99**

Peter Wohlleben makes the case that the forest is a social network. He draws on groundbreaking scientific discoveries to describe how trees are like human families: tree parents live together with their children, communicate with them, support them as they grow, share nutrients with those who are sick or struggling, and warn each other of impending dangers.

**Martin Crawford, *Creating a Forest***

**GARDEN GREEN BOOKS • PB • 385 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £26.99**

Forest gardening (or agroforestry) is a way of growing edible crops with nature doing most of the work. *Creating a Forest Garden* includes a detailed directory of over 500 trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, annuals, root crops and climbers, and tells you everything you need to know to create your own forest garden.

**Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope against Hope***

**HARVILL • PB • 448 PAGES • FROM £18.99**

In 1933 the poet Osip Mandelstam – friend to Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova – wrote a spirited satire denouncing Josef Stalin. It proved to be a sixteen-line death sentence. For his one act of defiance he was arrested by the secret police, interrogated, exiled and later rearrested. He died en route to one of Stalin's labour camps. His wife Nadezhda, who witnessed both his arrests, accompanied him into exile in the Urals. *Hope against Hope*, her first volume of memoirs, is a vivid and disturbing account of her last four years with her husband, the efforts she made to secure his release and rescue his manuscripts from oblivion, and later, tragically, to discover the truth about his mysterious death.

**Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Hope Abandoned***

**HARVILL • PB • 704 PAGES • FROM £27**

*Hope Abandoned* complements Nadezhda Mandelstam's earlier memoir, and in it she describes her life with Osip from 1919, and her own after his death in 1938. She also sets out his system

of values and beliefs and provides striking portraits of many of their contemporaries including Boris Pasternak and their champion till his own downfall, Nikolai Bukharin, as well as an astonishingly candid picture of Anna Akhmatova.

**Rose Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness***

**VIRAGO • PB • 356 PAGES • FROM £10.99**

It is 1946 and the people of France and England are facing the aftermath of the war. Banished by her indolent mother to England, Barbary Deniston is thrown into the care of her distinguished father and conventional stepmother. Having grown up in the sunshine of Provence, allowed to run wild with the Maquis, Barbary finds it hard to adjust to the drab austerity of post-war London life. Confused and unhappy, she discovers one day the flowering wastes around St Paul's. Here, in the bombed heart of London, she finds an echo of the wilderness of Provence. With an introduction by Penelope Fitzgerald.

**Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie***

**PENGUIN • PB • 144 PAGES • FROM £10.99**

'Give me a girl at an impressionable age, and she is mine for life . . .' Passionate, free-thinking and unconventional, Miss Brodie is a teacher who exerts a powerful influence over her group of 'special girls' at Marcia Blaine School. They are the Brodie set, the crème de la crème, each famous for something – Monica for mathematics, Eunice for swimming, Rose for sex – who are initiated into a world of adult games and extracurricular activities they will never forget. But the price they pay is their undivided loyalty.

**H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds***

**PENGUIN • PB • 240 PAGES • FROM £8.99**

*The War of the Worlds* shows the whole of human civilization under threat, as terrifying, tentacled Martians land in England, build gigantic killing machines, destroy all in their path with black gas and burning rays, and feast on the warm blood of trapped, still-living human prey. But the forces of Earth will fight back.

**John Masefield, *The Box of Delights***

**FARSHORE • PB • 400 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £10.99**

When Kay Harker meets a mysterious Punch and Judy man on his way home for Christmas, he little realizes that he is about to be plunged into adventure. The old man entrusts Kay with a strange puzzle box – the Box of Delights – before suddenly disappearing. Kay soon discovers two things: the box can transport him through time and space, and there is a plot to steal it. He must battle heroically against terrifying forces of evil to win the day. In this edition Quentin Blake's illustrations bring the characters vividly to life.



Buy with

**John Masfield, *The Midnight Folk***

FARSHORE • PB • 304 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £10.99

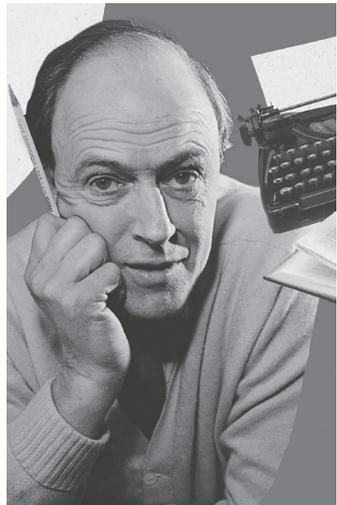
'First published in 1927, *The Midnight Folk* is still in print; but it is less well known than its sequel, *The Box of Delights*. Its premise is the staple of much children's literature: a lonely young child, in this case a boy named Kay Harker, has lost his parents and is being brought up by an indifferent guardian and a cruel governess. His great-grandfather, Captain Harker, in whose house Kay lives, lost some treasure – 'church ornaments, images, lamps, candlesticks, reliquaries, chalices and crosses of gold, silver and precious stones' – entrusted to his care by the archbishop of a South American port during the revolutions and uprisings of 1811. Now others more avaricious than Kay are on the treasure's trail. Can he find it before they do? Masfield takes this scenario and stuffs it with every imaginable device of children's literature – talking animals, pirates, hidden passages, invisibility potions, mermaids, King Arthur and more.' Mathew Lyons, *SF* no. 73

## OTHER AUTUMM READING

**Isabel Colegate, *The Blackmailer***

BLOOMSBURY • PB • 160 PAGES • FROM £10.99

Judith Lane is the young widow of the war hero Anthony Lane, and an editor at the successful if rather rakish publisher Hanesco Lane & Co. Ltd. The harmonious routine of Judith's life is interrupted when she receives a visit from Baldwin Reeves, who reveals that Anthony's wartime adventures were not quite as glorious as the newspaper reports would have her believe. To protect Anthony's family from scandal, Judith reluctantly acquiesces to the repellent but attractive Reeves's demands – but both blackmailer and blackmailee soon find themselves out of their depth in ways they could not have anticipated. *The Blackmailer* is a savage and sinister comic classic.



**Matthew Dennison,**

***Roald Dahl: Tales of the Unexpected***

APOLLO • HB • 272 PAGES • FROM £22

Roald Dahl was one of the world's greatest storytellers, crafting tales that were exotic in scenario, frequently invested with a moral, and filled with vibrant characters that endure in the imagination. In this new biography, Matthew Dennison re-evaluates the received narrative surrounding Dahl – that of school sporting hero, daredevil pilot and wartime spy-turned-author – and examines surviving primary resources as well as Dahl's extensive literary output to tell the story of a man who identified as a rule-breaker, an iconoclast and a romantic, both insider and outsider, hero and child's friend.

Buy with *Boy & Going Solo*, see pp. 13 & 14

**Natalie Haynes, *Stone Blind: Medusa's Story***

MANTLE • HB • 384 PAGES • FROM £20.99

Medusa is the sole mortal in a family of gods. Growing up with her Gorgon sisters, she begins to realize that she is the only one who experiences change, the only one who can be hurt. When the sea god Poseidon commits an unforgivable act in the temple of Athene, the goddess takes her revenge where she can, and Medusa is changed forever. Writhing snakes replace her hair, and her gaze now turns any living creature to stone. The power cannot be controlled: Medusa can look at nothing without destroying it. She is condemned to a life of shadows and darkness, until Perseus embarks upon a quest to fetch the head of a Gorgon . . .

**Alethea Hayter, *A Sultry Month: Scenes of London Literary Life in 1846***

FABER • PB • 288 PAGES • FROM £14.99

As London swelters in a heatwave in 1846, a glamorous coterie of writers and artists spend their summer wining, dining and opining. Elizabeth Barrett is courted by her secret fiancé, the poet Robert Browning, who plots their elopement to Italy; Keats roams Hampstead Heath; Wordsworth visits the zoo; Dickens is intrigued by Tom Thumb; the Carlyles host parties for a visiting German novelist and suffer a marital crisis. But when the visionary painter Benjamin Robert Haydon dies by suicide, they find their entwined lives spiralling around the tragedy. First published in 1965, Alethea Hayter's portrait of Victorian London's literati remains vivid, witty and enticing.



**Rebecca May Johnson, *Small Fires: An Epic in the Kitchen***

PUSHKIN PRESS • HB • 192 PAGES • FROM £16.99

The spatter of sauce in a pan, a cook's subtle deviation from a recipe, the careful labour of cooking for loved ones: these are not often the subjects of critical enquiry. Cooking, we are told, has nothing to do with serious thought. In this innovative memoir, Rebecca May Johnson rewrites the kitchen as a vital source of knowledge and revelation. In exploring the radical openness of the recipe text, the liberating constraint of apron strings and the intimacies of shared meals, Johnson awakens us to the richness of cooking as a means of experiencing the self and the world.

**Ben Macintyre, *Colditz: Prisoners of the Castle***

VIKING • HB • 384 PAGES • FROM £27

In a Gothic castle on a hilltop in the heart of Nazi Germany, an unlikely band of British officers spent the Second World War plotting daring escapes from their German captors. Or so the

story of Colditz has gone, unchallenged for 70 years. The inside story is a tale of the indomitable human spirit, but also one of class conflict, homosexuality, espionage, insanity and farce. Ben Macintyre reveals a remarkable cast of characters, taking in prisoners and captors who were living cheek-by-jowl in a game of cat and mouse. From the elitist members of the Colditz Bullingdon Club to America's oldest paratrooper and least successful secret agent, the soldier-prisoners were courageous and resilient as well as vulnerable and fearful – and astonishingly imaginative in their desperate escape attempts.

### Ian McEwan, *Lessons*

JONATHAN CAPE • HB • 496 PAGES • FROM £22

When the world is counting the cost of the Second World War and the Iron Curtain has descended, young Roland Baines's life is turned upside down. Stranded at boarding school, his vulnerability attracts his piano teacher Miriam Cornell, leaving scars as well as a memory of love that will never fade. Twenty-five years later Roland's wife mysteriously vanishes, leaving him alone with their baby son. He begins a search for answers that looks deep into his family history and will last for the rest of his life. From the Suez and Cuban Missile crises, the fall of the Berlin Wall to the Covid pandemic and climate change, Roland sometimes rides with the tide of history but more often struggles against it. He seeks solace through every possible means – literature, travel, friendship, drugs, sex and politics. A profound love is cut tragically short. Then, in his final years, he finds love again in another form.



### Polly Morland, *A Fortunate Woman: A Country Doctor's Story*

PICADOR • HB • 256 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £18.99

Polly Morland was clearing her late mother's house when she found a battered paperback. Opening it, she was astonished to see an old photograph of the remote, wooded valley in which she lives. The book was *A Fortunate Man*, John Berger's classic account of a country doctor working in the same valley more than half a century earlier. This discovery led Morland to the doctor who serves that valley community today, a woman whose own medical vocation was inspired by reading the very same book as a teenager. Interweaving the doctor's story with those of her patients, reflecting on the relationship between landscape and community, and upon the wider role of medicine in society, a unique portrait of a twenty-first century family doctor emerges. Illustrated throughout with photographs by Richard Baker.

Buy with:

### John Berger, *A Fortunate Man: The Story of a Country Doctor*

CANONGATE • PB • 176 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £11.99

'We're in Gloucestershire, in the Forest of Dean in the 1960s, and John Berger has spent three months shadowing his remarkable friend the local GP night and day, to paint a portrait of his life. He has also recruited the Swiss documentary photographer Jean Mohr to take photographs

to accompany the text. The grainy black-and-white images start by capturing the landscape against which the human drama is set, or behind which it hides. As the book progresses, they focus in – the doctor in his tweed jacket, with tie and pipe, or shirt sleeves rolled up to perform some minor surgery; his patients, sometimes looking him in the eye and hanging on his words, sometimes sitting alongside him as they spill their woes. And the community – debating, dancing, drinking.' Rose Baring, *SF* no. 67

### Jackie Morris, *Feather, Leaf, Bark & Stone*

UNBOUND • HB • 160 PAGES • ILLUS. • FROM £22

Jackie Morris typed more than a hundred short texts on to small squares of gold leaf, then photographed them. These pieces are arranged in a sequence which culminates in a section made up of texts typed directly on to leaves, bark and feathers. Jackie started to write the pieces shortly after her father died when, for the first time ever, she found herself unable to paint. These objects emerged to fill the space her paintings had left behind. This book is full of the light and wind that fills the Pembrokeshire coast where it was crafted, each page anchored to the landscape by the mechanical rhythm of Jackie's antique typewriters. The result is a collection of artworks to be both looked at and read.

### Maggie O'Farrell, *The Marriage Portrait*

TINDER PRESS • HB • 448 PAGES • FROM £27

In the winter of 1561, Lucrezia, Duchess of Ferrara, is taken on an unexpected visit to a country villa by her husband, Alfonso. As they sit down to dinner it occurs to Lucrezia that Alfonso has a sinister purpose in bringing her here. He intends to kill her. Lucrezia is 16 years old and has led a sheltered life locked away inside Florence's grandest palazzo. Here, in this remote villa, she is entirely at the mercy of her increasingly erratic husband. What chance does she have against Alfonso, ruler of a province, and a trained soldier? Maggie O'Farrell reimagines the life of a young woman whose proximity to power places her in mortal danger.

### Olivia Potts, *Butter: A Celebration*

HEADLINE • HB • 368 PAGES • FROM £28

Swirled into hot sugar to create a silken, smoky caramel, or browned until nutty and speckled before being folded through cake batter or buttercream. Dotted on to vegetables before roasting or braising, stirred through rice after cooking. Butter won't just transform your individual dishes, it will transform your way of cooking. Olivia Potts takes us on a grand tour of butter and its many varied applications. Full of history, anecdotes and delicious dishes resplendent with butter, this is a book to be savoured for its wonderful writing as well as for its irresistible recipes.

### Emeric Pressberger, *The Glass Pearls*

FABER • PB • 288 PAGES • FROM £10.99

This tale of an ex-Nazi surgeon hiding in plain sight in 1960s London by the celebrated filmmaker is a lost noir gem. Karl Braun, hatless, with a bowtie and greying hair, slight in

build, arrives as a lodger in Pimlico. His new neighbours are intrigued by this cultured German gentleman who works as a piano tuner; many are fellow émigrés who assume that he, like them, came to England to flee Hitler. That summer, Braun courts a woman, attends classical concerts, dances the twist. But as the newspapers fill with reports of the hunt for Nazi war criminals, his nightmares begin.

### Rosemary Tonks, *The Bloater*

VINTAGE • PB • 176 PAGES • FROM £10.99

Min works at the BBC as an audio engineer, where she is struggling to replicate the sound of a heartbeat. At home, other matters of the heart are making a mockery of life as Min knows it. She has found herself the object of her lodger's affection. He is an internationally renowned opera singer and she's nicknamed him 'The Bloater', and she's disgusted and attracted to him in equal measure. But with a husband so invisible that she accidentally turns the lights off when he's still in the room, she can't quite bring herself to silence The Bloater's overtures. Materialistic yet surprisingly tender, *The Bloater* is a sparkling comedy of manners. With an introduction by Stewart Lee.

### Anne Weber, *Epic Annette: A Heroine's Tale*

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