

Non Fiction Summaries

NF90u The Day the World Ended at Little Bighorn by Joseph Marshall

A gripping account of the legendary battle, told from the Lakota perspective

The 1876 Battle of the Little Bighorn has become known as the quintessential clash of cultures between the Lakota and white settlers. The men who led the battle— Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and Colonel George A. Custer—have become legends.

Here award-winning Lakota historian Joseph Marshall reveals the nuanced complexities that led up to and followed the battle. Until now, this account has been available only within the Lakota oral tradition. *The Day the World Ended at Little Bighorn* is required reading for anyone enthralled by the tale of the tragic fight that changed the scope of both America and the American landscape.

NF99u Paradise Lost – Smyrna 1922 by Giles Milton

On Saturday, September 9, 1922, the victorious Turkish cavalry rode into Smyrna, the richest and most cosmopolitan city in the Ottoman Empire. The city's vast wealth created centuries earlier by powerful Levantine dynasties, its factories teemed with Greeks, Armenians, Turks, and Jews. Together, they had created a majority Christian city that was unique in the Islamic world. But to the Turkish nationalists, Smyrna was a city of infidels. InFI8364

Based on eyewitness accounts and the memories of survivors, many interviewed for the first time, *Paradise Lost* offers a vivid narrative account of one of the most vicious military catastrophes of the modern age.

NF137u The Radium Girls by Kate Moore

The Curies' newly discovered element of radium makes gleaming headlines across the nation as the fresh face of beauty, and wonder drug of the medical community. From body lotion to tonic water, the popular new element shines bright in the otherwise dark years of the First World War.

Meanwhile, hundreds of girls toil amidst the glowing dust of the radium-dial factories. The glittering chemical covers their bodies from head to toe; they light up the night like industrious fireflies. With such a coveted job, these "shining girls" are the luckiest alive — until they begin to fall mysteriously ill.

But the factories that once offered golden opportunities are now ignoring all claims of the gruesome side effects, and the women's cries of corruption. And as the fatal poison of the radium takes hold, the brave shining girls find themselves embroiled in one of the biggest scandals of America's early 20th century, and in a ground-breaking battle for workers' rights that will echo for centuries to come.

NF138u Our Zoo by June Mottershead

Until I brought friends back from school I didn't realise that most people didn't have baby lions in their bedrooms when they were sick, or bring parrots into the house so they wouldn't catch cold.'

Chester Zoo is counted among the top 10 zoos in the world and, with over 11,000 animals and 400 species, it is the most visited wildlife attraction in Britain. Unlike other zoos that owe their existence to philanthropists, explorers or big game hunters, Chester Zoo was the brainchild of one working-class man with a dream he had nurtured since he was a boy: to build a zoo without bars.

June Mottershead was four years old when her father, George, moved his family to Upton, two miles out Chester, to begin the process of turning his dream into a reality. June's friends became the animals. Her closest companion was an orphaned chimpanzee which her sister had she hand reared, and for six years the two were inseparable. June soon became the poster girl for Chester Zoo and photographs of her cuddling lion cubs, head-butting a goat or opening the beak of a pelican soon graced the front pages of British newspapers. She was 13 when war was declared on 1939 and, with the backbone of the staff headed for the front; it fell to June to take over as head keeper. Keeping the zoo running while the war waged was no easy task. Despite rationing the animals had to be fed and all of them - penguins, elephants, leopards, tigers, lions, kangaroos and polar bears - needed to be moved into secure locked quarters inside as soon as the air raid siren sounded.

NF116u After the Quake by Haruki Murakami

The six stories in Haruki Murakami's mesmerizing collection are set at the time of the catastrophic 1995 Kobe earthquake, when Japan became brutally aware of the fragility of its daily existence. But the upheavals that afflict Murakami's characters are even deeper and more mysterious, emanating from a place where the human meets the inhuman.

NF110u Burmese Days by George Orwell

Set in the days of the Empire, with the British ruling in Burma, this book describes corruption and imperial bigotry. Flory, a white timber merchant, befriends Dr Veraswami, a black enthusiast for the Empire, whose downfall can only be prevented by membership at an all-white club.

NF92u The Incredible Human Journey by Alice Roberts

Alice Roberts has been travelling the world in order to understand the challenges that early humans faced as they tried to settle continents.

On her travels she has witnessed some of the daunting and brutal challenges our ancestors had to face: mountains, deserts, oceans, changing climates, terrifying giant beasts and volcanoes. But she discovers that perhaps the most serious threat of all came from other humans. When our ancestors set out from Africa there were already two other species of human on the planet: Neanderthal in Europe and Homo erectus in Asia. Both were intelligent, adept at making tools and weapons and were long adapted to their environments. So, Alice asks, why did only Homo sapiens survive? Part detective story, part travelogue, and drawing on the latest genetic and archaeological discoveries, Alice examines how our ancestors evolved physically in response to these challenges, finding out how our colour, shape, size, diet, disease resistance and even athletic ability have been shaped by the range of environments that our ancestors had to survive. She also relates how astonishingly closely related we all are.

NF100u Basilica by R.A. Scotti

In this dramatic journey through religious and artistic history, R. A. Scotti traces the defining event of a glorious epoch: the building of St. Peter's Basilica. Begun by the ferociously ambitious Pope Julius II in 1506, the endeavour would span two tumultuous centuries, challenge the greatest Renaissance masters - Michelangelo; Raphael and Bramante? And enrage Martin Luther. By the time it was completed, Shakespeare had written all of his plays, the "Mayflower" had reached Plymouth? And Rome had risen with its astounding basilica to become Europe's holy metropolis.

NF104u National service by Colin Shindler

Permission to speak, Sah!

In the aftermath of the Second World War, over two million men were conscripted to serve in Britain's armed services. Some were sent abroad and watched their friends die in combat. Others remained in barracks and painted coal white. But despite delivering such varied experiences, National Service helped to shape the outlook of an entire generation of young British males.

Historian Dr Colin Shindler has interviewed a wide range of ex-conscripts, from all backgrounds, across all ranks, and spanning the entire fourteen years that peacetime conscription lasted, and captured their memories in this engrossing book. From them, we experience the tension of a post-war Berlin surrounded by Russians, the exotic heat and colour of Tripoli in 1948, the brief but intense flashpoint of the Suez Crisis, and the fear of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya. But we also hear about the other end of the scale, the conscripts who didn't make it outside the confines of their barracks, or in one case, beyond his home town

NF65u Hero of the Fleet by William Stone

William Frederick "Bill" Stone (23 September 1900 – 10 January 2009) was one of the last surviving five First World War veterans who served in the United Kingdom's armed forces and one of the last surviving two seamen worldwide, along with Claude Choules. They were also the last two to have also served in the Second World War, although Stone saw action only in the Second World War as he was still in training when the First World War ended.

Stone was born in Ledstone, Kingsbridge in Devon and enlisted in the Royal Navy on his 18th birthday. He served on board HMS Tiger shortly after the end of the First World War, before serving on a number of ships including HMS Hood. At the beginning of the Second World War Stone was serving on the minesweeper HMS Salamander before moving onto the light cruiser HMS Newfoundland in 1941. After the war, he ran his own barber's shop. In his later years Stone was present at many memorial services including the 90th anniversary commemorations at the Cenotaph in London. He died on 10 January 2009, aged 108.

NF98u Sisters in arms by Nicola Tyrer

The amazing experiences of the Queen Alexandra nurses during World War II form one of the greatest adventure stories of modern times, yet until now they've remained largely untold. Thousands of middle-class girls, barely out of school, were plucked from sheltered backgrounds, subjected to unimaginably tough training regimes, and sent out to experience the harshest conditions of the fighting services. They saw it all: the beaches of Dunkirk, Singapore, and D-Day. Dozens won medals for gallantry. Hundreds of nurses died: torpedoed in hospital ships, bombed in field hospitals, or murdered in Japanese prison camps.

NF111u Chickenfeed by Minette Walters

The subject is a true story: in 1920s East Sussex, the corpse of Elsie Cameron is discovered in a chicken run. The man found guilty of the crime, her fiancé Norman Thorne, was sentenced to death and hanged. At the time of his death, doubts were cast on the verdict, and it is very much Walters' concern to address those doubts here. We're given a fascinating and detailed study of two blighted lives: Norman, living under cramped conditions, is struggling against heavy odds to make a living as a chicken farmer. The unprepossessing Elsie, prickly and self-obsessed, finds it difficult to get on with her family or her workmates, and is fired from a succession of jobs. Marriage to Norman is the one thing--she comes to believe--that will change her wretched life, but although she does her damndest to get the reluctant Norman to marry her, she withholds sex, allowing Norman to undress her and touch her naked body, but forbidding any other sexual contact. Things grow worse, as Elsie's family (keen to rid themselves of her) join their daughter in pressing marriage on the increasingly reluctant Norman. Then he meets someone else... and Elsie disappears.

NF84u Steam, a Life on the Railway by Pete Waterman

Pete Waterman introduces this collection of stories told by the last generation of men to work on the British steam railway.

Before cars and planes, railways and steam engines were the main form of transport. And in the early days the engine driver was the fastest man on earth, travelling at 60 mph (and much faster than a car). No wonder it was every schoolboy's dream to become the driver of a locomotive, even though it was dirty and dangerous work. Some boys went straight from the classroom to work on the railways. It took some adjusting, especially as the trains' wheels were usually taller than they were, some even had to be taken to interviews by their mums.

This collection includes reminiscences from the men who fulfilled their ambition and rode on the footplate. And they relate some colourful adventures, including steaming through pea-supers and the difficulty with working with men much older than themselves.

NF117u Lancaster & York by Alison Weir

Lancaster and York. For much of the fifteenth century, these two families were locked in battle for control of the English throne. Kings were murdered and deposed. Armies marched on London. Old noble names were ruined while rising dynasties seized power and lands. The war between the royal houses of Lancaster and York, the most complex in English history, profoundly altered the course of the monarchy. Alison Weir, one of the foremost authorities on British history, brings brilliantly to life both the war itself and the larger-than-life figures who fought it on the great stage of England. The Wars of the Roses is history at its very best—swift and compelling, rich in character, pageantry, and drama, and vivid in its re-creation of an astonishing period of history.

NF139u Bridges of Spies by Giles Whittell

Bridge of Spies is the true story of three extraordinary characters – William Fisher, alias Rudolf Abel, a British born KGB agent arrested by the FBI in New York City and jailed as a Soviet superspy for trying to steal America's most precious nuclear secrets; Gary Powers, the American U-2 pilot who was captured when his plane was shot down while flying a reconnaissance mission over the closed cities of central Russia; and Frederic Pryor, a young American graduate student in Berlin mistakenly identified as a spy, arrested and held without charge by the Stasi, East Germany's secret police.

NF143u SAS Rogue Heroes by Ben MacIntyre

Britain's Special Air Service or SAS was the brainchild of David Stirling, a young, gadabout aristocrat whose aimlessness in early life belied a remarkable strategic mind. Where most of his colleagues looked at a battlefield map of World War II's African theater and saw a protracted struggle with Rommel's desert forces, Stirling saw an opportunity: given a small number of elite, well-trained men, he could parachute behind enemy lines and sabotage their airplanes and war material.

Paired with his constitutional opposite, the disciplined martinet Jock Lewes, Stirling assembled a revolutionary fighting force that would upend not just the balance of the war, but the nature of combat itself. He faced no little resistance from those who found his tactics ungentlemanly or beyond the pale, but in the SAS's remarkable exploits facing the Nazis in Africa and then on the Continent can be found the seeds of nearly all special forces units that would follow.

NF141u Fascinating Footnotes from History by Giles Milton

"Fascinating Footnotes From History" details one hundred of the quirkiest historical nuggets; eye-stretching stories that read like fiction but are one hundred per cent fact.

Did you know that Hitler took cocaine? That Stalin robbed a bank? That Charlie Chaplin's corpse was filched and held to ransom?

There is Hiroo Onoda, the lone Japanese soldier still fighting the Second World War in 1974; Agatha Christie, who mysteriously disappeared for eleven days in 1926; and Werner Franz, a cabin boy on the "Hindenburg" who lived to tell the tale when it was engulfed in flames in 1937.

"Fascinating Footnotes from History" also answers who ate the last dodo? Who "really" killed Rasputin? and why Sergeant Stubby had four legs.

NF144u The Death of King Arthur by Peter Ackroyd

An immortal story of love, adventure, chivalry, treachery and death brought to new life for our times. The legend of King Arthur has retained its appeal and popularity through the ages - Mordred's treason, the knightly exploits of Tristan, Lancelot's fatally divided loyalties and his love for Guinevere, the quest for the Holy Grail.

NF115u The Vikings by David Angus

Between the 8th and 11th centuries, Vikings stormed out of their Scandinavian homelands to raid and loot along the coasts of Europe. In old Norse, to "go viking" meant to take to sea in a long ship for an adventure. Sometimes this was a trading trip, sometimes a piratical raid. Often it was both. Explorers and traders, warriors and poets, they ranged between Byzantium in the south and ventured as far as Iceland and even North America. Their fame lives on.

NF96u Elsie and Mairi go to War by Diane Atkinson

When they met at a motorcycle club in 1912, Elsie Knocker was a thirty year-old motorcycling divorcee dressed in bottle-green Dunhill leathers, and Mairi Chisholm was a brilliant eighteen-year old mechanic, living at home borrowing tools from her brother. Little did they know, theirs was to become one of the most extraordinary stories of the First World War.

NF68u The Early Years Collection by David Attenborough

In *Zoo Quest for a Dragon*, Attenborough tells of the crew's hazardous boat trip with a gun-smuggling captain and the terror of erupting volcanoes. He also depicts for the listener some of the incredible sights he and his team witnessed – breath-taking butterflies, taking tea with Charlie the orang-utan and the voyage to the little-known island of Komodo to capture the elusive Komodo Dragon.

Quest in Paradise describes his next animal collecting and filming trip to New Guinea, home of the exotic Birds of Paradise. David tells of his adventures during the trip: being an onlooker at a formal lovemaking ceremony, seeing the skills of ritual axe making, trying to master pidgin English and witnessing a 'sing sing' at which hundreds of tribesmen came together from all parts of the country.

In *Quest under Capricorn*, David Attenborough ventured to the Northern Territory of Australia. In his first expedition to the other side of the world, he meets Aborigines, goes walkabout in the bush, and learns the craft of the artists of Arnhem Land.

Also included are a collection of interviews taken from the BBC radio and TV archives.

NF85u Life Stories by David Attenborough

One of the nation's most popular presenters examines twenty marvels of the natural world from his extraordinary and pioneering experiences. What was Sir David's first pet? Which animal would he most like to be? What creature lays 'the biggest egg in the world'? How do you communicate with an ancient nomadic community in Fiji? And what did Sir David do when confronted by a ten-foot-long reptile?

His enthusiasm is as infectious as ever, and conveys a unique fascination on topics as diverse as the Sloth, Monstrous Flowers, the Platypus, Giant Birds, Dragons, the Fire Salamander, Faking Fossils, the Coelacanth, the Dodo, Bird's-nest Soup and the Large Blue Butterfly. So listen to these stories to find out the real reason why animals sing, the story behind a 150-million-year-old feather and what it is about snakes that really unnerves Sir David?

NF83u A Guide to British Coastal Birds by BBC Radio

Join Brett Westwood and Stephen Moss in this fascinating guide to the sounds of our most popular coastal birds, as heard on BBC Radio 4.

In the fourth of our series of bird guides, Brett Westwood is joined by keen birdwatcher Stephen Moss on the north coast of Devon, and with the help of wildlife sound records Chris Watson they offer a practical and entertaining guide to identifying many of the birds you're likely to see and hear around Britain's coastline.

Each programme focuses on a different habitat, starting with estuaries and birds such as Redshank, Dunlin, Curlew and Knot, then sandy shores and birds including Common and Sandwich Tern; rocky shores (Rock Pipit, Turnstone), sea cliffs (Fulmar, Guillemot, Razorbill), and offshore islands (Puffin, Manx Shearwater and Arctic Tern). Listen to advice on how to recognise birds visually and how to identify them from their calls and songs. After all, often you're more likely to hear a bird than see it!

NF86u World War Two The Home Front by BBC War Reports

In this remarkable collection of BBC recordings, we hear what the people of the Home Front listened to as they lived, loved, laughed and worked through the dark days of World War Two; from the stirring speeches and air-raid sirens, to the humour and music that helped to keep them smiling through.

But we also hear their story in a unique oral history of ordinary lives turned upside down: wedding nights spent in the Underground, couples falling in love who scarcely noticed the bombing and positively welcomed the blackout, and mums coping with wayward evacuees.

Listen and be taken back to a world in which housewives became riveters and bank clerks turned into firefighters - but where no-one could turn on a light or ever find a banana!

NF107u Great Tales from English History Vol 1 by Robert Lacey

With insight, humour and fascinating detail, Lacey brings brilliantly to life the stories that made England--from Ethelred the Unready to Richard the Lionheart, the Venerable Bede to Piers the Ploughman.

NF108u Great Tales from English History Vol 2 by Robert Lacey

Unforgettable stories from the England of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and beyond--the rich second volume of great tales by a master of British popular history.

NF 105u Great Tales from English History Vol 3 by Robert Lacey

From Ethelred the Unready to Richard the Lionheart, the Venerable Bede to Piers the Ploughman, this is, quite simply, history as history should be told.

NF114u Witches by Tracy Borman

In Belvoir Castle, the heir of one of England's great noble families falls suddenly and dangerously ill. His body is 'tormented' with violent convulsions. Within a few short weeks he will suffer an excruciating death. Soon the whole family will be stricken with the same terrifying symptoms. The second son, the last male of the line, will not survive.

It is said witches are to blame. And so the Earl of Rutland's sons will not be the last to die.

Witches traces the dramatic events which unfolded at one of England's oldest and most spectacular castles four hundred years ago. The case is among those which constitute the European witch craze of the 15th-18th centuries, when suspected witches were burned, hanged, or tortured by the thousand. Like those other cases, it is a tale of superstition, the darkest limits of the human imagination and, ultimately, injustice – a reminder of how paranoia and hysteria can create an environment in which nonconformist spells death. But as Tracy Borman reveals here, it is not quite typical. The most powerful and Machiavellian figure of the Jacobean court had a vested interest in events at Belvoir. He would mastermind a conspiracy that has remained hidden for centuries.

NF64u A Dog's Life by Martin Clunes

Martin Clunes is happy to admit that with Mary, it was love at first sight; her soft, brown eyes, her perfect figure and that unstoppable wagging tail. As cocker spaniels go, she was perfect. Mary was soon joined in the Clunes' household by Tina, another cocker, and Arthur, a black Labrador. Reminiscent of *Marley & Me*, the dynamics between the three dogs makes hilarious reading—puppy classes, Scruffs, and the competition for top dog status (and even Martin has to fight for this), which leads to visits from a dog psychologist. His passion for dogs inspired Martin to embark on a journey of discovery about their ancestors, both wild—the painted dogs of Tanzania—and extremely tame—the members of the Beverley Hills Mutt Club. With his trademark warmth and humour, Martin describes meeting a worldwide cast of doggie characters, and how humans have shaped the dog world as we know it today. One thing is certain—he will never see Mary, Tina, and Arthur in quite the same way again.

NF113u The Gunpowder Plot by Antonia Fraser

Antonia Fraser, a popular historian, has delved into archives across Europe to unravel the true story of the plot by fanatical Roman Catholics to blow up the Houses of Parliament and King James I at the opening of Parliament in 1605.

NF135 Whispering Hope by Nancy Costello

On 19 February 2013 the Irish Taoiseach Enda Kenny apologized to the women who had been incarcerated in Ireland's Magdalene laundries. In the audience sat Steven O'Riordan, a documentary filmmaker and founder of the Magdalene Survivors Together group. And by his side, waiting patiently for the words they'd been fighting to hear, were some of the women he had helped.

For Nancy, Kathleen, Diane, Marie and Marina were confined in Magdalene laundries throughout Ireland during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The harrowing physical and psychological abuse they endured in the institutions, run on behalf of the State, led to a lifetime of shame and secrecy.

Now these women tell their stories for the first time. Their fight for justice and forged friendships has enabled them to move forward and have their voices heard, their individual accounts weaving together in an immensely powerful narrative that shines a light on a dark chapter in Ireland's history.

NF101u Behind the Scenes at the Museum of Baked Beans by Hunter Davies

Driven by his own passion for collecting Hunter Davies has packed his notepad and set off in search of Britain's maddest museums. As he explores these hidden gems he soon discovers that they are everywhere and that they celebrate just about everything, from lawnmowers in Southport to pencils in Keswick.

But as Hunter travels up and down the country he comes to realise that it isn't only the collections that are fascinating, it's also the people who have put them together. Whether they're a man who loves his Heinz so much he's changed his name to Captain Beany or a kleptomaniac Vintage Radio buff, these eccentric collectors are Britain's finest and could live in no other country in the world.

Once you discover these museums and get to know their curators, Great Britain won't look quite the same again

NF145u The Biscuit Girls by Hunter Davies

Ivy, Dulcie, Barbara, Ann, Dorothy and Jean all had different reasons for applying to work at Carr's biscuits, but once they had put on their overalls and walked through the factory gates they discovered a community full of life, laughter and friendship.

To those who didn't know, the biscuit factory that towered over Carlisle might look like just another slice of the industrial North, a noisy and chaotic place with workers trooping in and out at all hours. For the biscuit girls it was a place where they worked hard, but also where they gossiped, got into scrapes and made lifelong friends. Outside the factory walls there might be difficult husbands or demanding kids, and sometimes even heartbreak and tragedy, but they knew there would always be an escape from their troubles at Carr's.

NF91u The Secret History of the War on Cancer by Devra Davis

The War on Cancer set out to find, treat, and cure a disease. Left untouched were many of the things known to cause cancer, including tobacco, the workplace, radiation, or the global environment. Proof of how the world in which we live and work affects whether we get cancer was either overlooked or suppressed. This has been no accident. The War on Cancer was run by leaders of industries that made cancer-causing products, and sometimes also profited from drugs and technologies for finding and treating the disease. Filled with compelling personalities and never-before-revealed information, *The Secret History of the War on Cancer* shows how we began fighting the wrong war, with the wrong weapons, against the wrong enemies—a legacy that persists to this day.

NF123u Judi Dench and Furthermore by Judi Dench

From the moment Judi Dench appeared as a teenager in the York Mystery Plays it was clear that acting would be her career. Trained at London's Central School of Speech and Drama it was her performance in her twenties as Juliet in Franco Zeffirelli's memorable Old Vic production that turned her into a star. In the theatre since she has played every classic role from Titania (three times, most recently in 2010) to Cleopatra. She first became a household name via television, thanks initially to a sit-com, *A Fine Romance*, in which she played alongside the actor Michael Williams, whom she married in 1971. She has since made nine series of another sit-com, *As Time Goes By* (with Geoffrey Palmer), as well as plays and classic serials such as *Cranford*. In the cinema her films have ranged from *Ladies in Lavender* (opposite Maggie Smith) through *Notes on a Scandal* with Cate Blanchett to *Shakespeare in Love*, in which she played Queen Elizabeth, a role which gained her a Hollywood Oscar. But it is her role as 'M' in six James Bond films beginning with *Goldeneye* in 1995 that has gained her worldwide recognition.

NF95u Making Rounds with Oscar by David Dosa

A remarkable ca; A special gift; A life-changing journey. They thought he was just a cat. When Oscar arrived at the Steere House Nursing and Rehabilitation Centre in Rhode Island he was a cute little guy with attitude. He loved to stretch out in a puddle of sunlight and chase his tail until he was dizzy. Occasionally he consented to a scratch behind the ears, but only when it suited him. In other words, he was a typical cat. Or so it seemed.

It wasn't long before Oscar had created something of a stir. Apparently, this ordinary cat possesses an extraordinary gift: he knows instinctively when the end of life is near. Oscar is a welcome distraction for the residents of Steere House, many of whom are living with Alzheimer's. But he never spends much time with them—until they are in their last hours. Then, as if this were his job, Oscar strides purposely into a patient's room, curls up on the bed, and begins his vigil. Oscar provides comfort and companionship when people need him most. And his presence lets caregivers and loved ones know that it's time to say good-bye. Oscar's gift is a tender mercy.

NF103u While Flocks Last by Charlie Elder

The worthy set-up of this "wildlife" quest book gives it the potential to be dull: amateur birdwatcher Charlie Elder travels the British Isles with the hope of spotting the 40 species that are on the UK's Red List and in serious decline, thereby highlighting their plight. The result is anything but. While never quite side-splitting, Charles Elder has a jovial and always enthusiastic tone, sneakily engaging non-birders, while giving us an insight into a "twitching" culture in which he's always an outsider ("L-plate" binoculars spare him "conversation about superciliary stripes and sexual dimorphism"). While Flocks Last is one of those rare books where, though you may not care about the subject at the first page, you will by the last.

NF106u Fabergé's Eggs by Toby Faber

Between 1885 and 1916, Carl Faberge made fifty fabulous jewelled eggs - Easter presents from Russia's last two emperors to their wives. They have become the most famous surviving symbols of the Romanov Empire: supreme examples of the jeweller's art, but, to some, the vulgar playthings of a decadent court on the brink of revolution. Every one of these masterpieces is a slice of history, with each telling its own remarkable story." "Commissioned to produce a different egg every year, Faberge began a relentless search for novelty. It would see him exploiting, and extending, almost every jewellery technique and style available, creating eggs which reflected the lives and characters of the empresses who would receive them. Lavishly extravagant eggs commemorate public events that now seem little more than staging posts on the march to revolution.

NF124u Coco and Igor by Chris Greenhalgh

In 1913, at the premiere of Igor Stravinsky's Rite of Spring, the young couturiere Coco Chanel witnesses the birth of a musical revolution- one that, like her designs, rips down the artifice of the old regime and ushers in something profoundly modern. Seven years later, she invites Stravinsky and his family, now exiled from their Russian homeland, for a summer at her villa, and the powerful charge between them ignites into a deep love affair. As Stravinsky enjoys a new burst of creativity and Chanel brings forth her own revolutionary creation-the perfume Chanel No. 5-their love threatens to overtake work, family and life.

NF122u Aim High by Tanni Grey-Thompson

Aim High is an inspirational book written by the UK's leading wheelchair athlete, Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson. She has won 16 medals, eleven of which are gold, countless European titles, six London Marathons and over 30 world records have catapulted this Welsh wheelchair athlete so firmly into the public consciousness. Aim High reveals what has motivated her through her best and worst times.

NF102u The Other Queen by Philippa Gregory

This is the untold story of Mary, Queen of Scots, imprisoned as the "guest" of George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, and his indomitable wife, Bess of Hardwick.

The newly married couple had welcomed the doomed queen into their home certain that serving as her hosts and jailers will bring them an advantage in the cutthroat world of the Elizabethan court. To their horror, they find that the task will bankrupt them, and as their home becomes the epicentre of intrigue and rebellion against Elizabeth, their loyalty to each other and to their sovereign comes into question. If Mary succeeds in seducing the earl into her own web of treachery and treason, or if the great spymaster William Cecil links them to the growing conspiracy to free Mary from her illegal imprisonment, they will all face the headsman.

NF66a Marley and Me by John Grogan

After their wedding, newspaper writers John and Jennifer Grogan move to Florida. In an attempt to stall Jennifer's "biological clock", John gives her a puppy. While the puppy Marley grows into a 100 pound dog, he loses none of his puppy energy or rambunctiousness. Meanwhile, Marley gains no self-discipline. Marley's antics give John rich material for his newspaper column. As the Grogans mature and have children of their own, Marley continues to test everyone's patience by acting like the world's most impulsive dog.

NF67u Marley a Dog like No Other by John Grogan

Meet Marley, a yellow fur ball of a puppy who quickly grows into a large, rowdy Labrador retriever. Marley is always getting into trouble, whether he is stealing underwear or crashing through doors. But those who know and love Marley accept him as a dog like no other. He brings joy to his family and teaches them what really matters in life.

NF136u Marriages are made in Bond Street by Penrose Halson

In the spring of 1939, with the Second World War looming, two determined twenty-four-year-olds, Heather Jenner and Mary Oliver, decided to open a marriage bureau. They found a tiny office on London's Bond Street and set about the delicate business of match-making. Drawing on the bureau's extensive archives, Penrose Halson - who many years later found herself the proprietor of the bureau - tells their story, and those of their clients. We meet a remarkable cross-section of British society in the 1940s: gents with a 'merry twinkle', potential fifth-columnists, nervous spinsters, isolated farmers seeking 'a nice quiet affectionate girl' and girls looking 'exactly' like Greta Garbo and Vivien Leigh, all desperately longing to find 'The One'. And thanks to Heather and Mary, they almost always did just that.

NF94u Mountains of the Pharaohs by Zahi Hawass

Nearly five thousand years ago, the 4th Dynasty of Egypt's Old Kingdom reigned over a highly advanced civilization. Believed to be gods, the royal family lived amid colossal palaces and temples built to honour them and their deified ancestors. Hawass brings these extraordinary historical figures to life, spinning a soap opera-like saga complete with murder, incest, and the triumphant ascension to the throne of one of only four queens ever to rule Egypt.

The magnificent pyramids attest not only to the dynasty's supreme power, but also to the engineering expertise and architectural sophistication that flourished under their rule. Hawass argues that the pyramids—including the Great Pyramid of Khufu, the only one of the Seven Wonders of the World still standing—were built by skilled craftsmen who took great pride in their work.

NF109u In the Shadow of the Sword by Tom Holland

No less significant than the collapse of the Roman Republic or the Persian invasion of Greece, the evolution of the Arab empire is one of the supreme narratives of ancient history, a story dazzlingly rich in drama, character, and achievement. Just like the Romans, the Arabs came from nowhere to carve out a stupefyingly vast dominion—except that they achieved their conquests not over the course of centuries as the Romans did but in a matter of decades. Just like the Greeks during the Persian wars, they overcame seemingly insuperable odds to emerge triumphant against the greatest empire of the day—not by standing on the defensive, however, but by hurling themselves against all who lay in their path.

NF142u A Fish Supper and a Chippy Smile by Hilda & Cathryn Kemp

In 1950s and 60s Bermondsey, the fish-and-chip shop was at the centre of the community. And at the heart of the chippy was 'Hooray' Hilda Kemp, a spirited matriarch who dispensed fish suppers and an abundance of sympathy to a now-vanished world of East Enders for 'Hooray' Hilda knew all too well what it was like to feel real, aching hunger. Growing up in the slums of 1920s south-east London, the daughter of a violent alcoholic who drank away his wages rather than put food on the table, she could spot when a customer was in need and would sneak them an extra big portion of chips, on the house.

At home, Hilda's children are latchkey kids, letting themselves in from school and helping themselves to whatever is in the larder until she gets in from her long, hard day at work. Despite tragedy striking her family, Hilda never complained of the loss of her daughter at a tragically young age, nor the tough upbringing she narrowly escaped.

NF119u From a Clear Blue Sky by Timothy Knatchbull

On the August bank holiday weekend in 1979, 14-year-old Timothy Knatchbull went out on a boat trip off the shore of Mullaghmore in County Sligo, Ireland. It was a trip that would cost four lives - and change his own for ever.

The IRA bomb that exploded in their boat killed Knatchbull's Grandfather, Lord Mountbatten, his grandmother Lady Brabourne, his twin brother Nicholas, and local teenager Paul Maxwell. In telling this story for the first time, Knatchbull is not only revisiting the terrible events he and his family lived through, but also writing an intensely personal account of human triumph over tragedy.

For thirty years, Knatchbull has lived with the echoes of that day: the death of the twin from whom he had been inseparable; the loss of his adored grandparents, whose funerals along with his twin's he and his parents were too injured to attend; the recovery from physical wounds; and the emotional legacy that proved harder to endure.

NF140u Cake by Alysa Levene

My sister had three wedding cakes. Rather than spend a lot of money on a traditional cake she asked our grandmother, our mother, and our step-mother to make their signature bakes. My grandmother made the rich fruit cake she always baked at Christmas. My mother made a chocolate sponge which we called Queenie's Chocolate Cake after the great aunt who gave her the recipe; it appeared at almost every one of our birthdays in one guise or another. And finally, my step-mother made chocolate brownies (Nigella Lawson's recipe, if you'd like to know), whose sticky, pleasurable unctuousness is fully explained by the amount of butter they contain.

What does cake mean for different people? How have we come to have such a huge variety of cakes? What had to happen historically for them to appear? And what can they tell us about the family, and women's roles in particular?

What follows is a journey from King Alfred to our modern-day love of cupcakes, via Queen Victoria's patriotic sandwich, the Southern States of America, slavery and the spice trade, to the rise of the celebrity chef . . . and so much more.

NF112u They Saw it Happen; Eye Witness Accounts by Matthew Lewin

Here are more than 60 eyewitness accounts of notable historical events, such as the Battle of Thermopylae, the Black Death of the 1340s, The Great Fire of London in 1666, the 1793 Execution of Louis XVI, The Death of Vice Admiral Nelson during the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, The American Civil War (1861-1865) and the bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. But there are also snapshots of more ordinary life - no less memorable for all that - including working conditions during the Industrial Revolution of the late 1700s and early 1800s, views of slaves and their owners, Pau Gauguin (1848-1903; one of the leading French painters of the Postimpressionist period), who choose a bride on Tahiti, and the 1910 arrest and death of Dr. Crippen. It is a fascinatingly unique and absorbing collection, bringing the past alive as only direct memories like these can do.

NF118u On a Wing and a Prayer by Joshua Levine

Few are aware of the risks that the pioneering airmen of World War I took. This oral history conveys the perils of those early days, the thrills of learning to fly, and the horrors of war in the air at a time when pilots carried little defensive armament and no parachutes. The men who joined the Royal Flying Corps in 1914 were the original heroes of flying, treading into unknown territory and paving the way for later aerial combat. They became icons for the soldiers in the trenches, and a stark contrast to the hundreds on the ground fighting faceless hundreds as men fought aircraft to aircraft and man to man—for the first time the air became a battlefield of its own. These stories are presented to the reader in a frank and open way, revealing the feelings of the men who defended the trenches from above and witnessed the war from a completely different perspective. These first-hand accounts tell the almost totally unknown tale of men who rewrote the rules of military engagement and changed the course of modern history as a result.

NF97u Narrowboat Dreams by Steve Haywood

A voyage of discovery and escape along England's inland waterways Traveling by traditional narrowboat, author Steve Haywood heads north along two newly opened Pennine canals, a trip that takes him from Banbury in deepest Oxfordshire, through the vibrant modernity of Manchester, to the trendy affluence of Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire's answer to London's ciabatta belt. With irrepressible humour he recounts the history of the waterways and stories of his encounters with characters along the way, and attempts to define the magic that makes England's waterways so appealing.

-----19/01/18