

# A capital offering

A forthcoming novel about Paris by Edward Rutherfurd captivates the panel this month

» PATRICK NEALE



Co-owner, Jaffé & Neale Bookshop & Café

Fans of Arthur Conan Doyle and George MacDonald Fraser need look no further. Nick Renison has written an authentic, fast-paced and devilishly entertaining Victorian thriller. **Carver's Quest** is a wonderfully researched, deftly written tale of derring-do. Adam Carver is the perfect amateur detective, but it is his cockney sidekick, Quint, who gets the best lines. I hope this is the first of many Carver and Quint adventures, and I imagine actors will be queuing up to play these appealing characters. The potential for this series is limitless. Forget Robert Downey Jr, my money is on Martin Freeman for the lead role.

Caroline Sandon has written a compelling 18th-century drama. Set among the ruins of **Burnt Norton**, made so famous by Eliot's Four Quartets, this is the story of a love that ruins a family. Two men vie for Molly Johnson, a publican's daughter. Set against the backdrop of the financially crippling gargantuan building project of Burnt Norton, Sandon's tale is one of power, passion and persecution.

Based on a real Cotswold family saga, this is a glorious page-turner. Philip Hoare swims in the sea

every day of his life. This may be what makes him a great writer, as a great writer he is. **The Sea Inside** is part memoir, part natural history and part love-letter to the sea. From Southampton to Sri Lanka, Hoare takes the reader on a wonderful poetic journey.

**Last Friends** is the third in Jane Gardam's Old Filth Trilogy, and what gives it bite is that this is the story of Filth's arch-rival in law and love, Terence Veneering. This is a beautiful finale for the characters who have become good friends to the reader. A wonderful reflection on old age and colourful lives.

HOT BOOK OUT NOW

A Book for the Time Being **Ruth Ozeki**

» SARAH CLARKE



Co-owner, The Torbay Bookshop

Not having read any of Jane Gardam's previous novels, particularly the prize-winning **Old Filth**, did not have any impact in my enjoyment of **Last Friends**. Filth's old sparring partner Terence Veneering's humble beginnings and climb to the bar are explored with great feeling and blended with tales of life, love and relationships, and memories both poignant and uplifting.

Edward Rutherfurd's **Paris** continues his unique take on the epic historical novel, in-

terweaving lives and history, which translates well into both hardback and paperback sales. At nearly 700 pages, he weaves the engrossing sagas of four connected families through the centuries into the story of the city, using their personal stories and details of everyday events to bring the passion and the drama of Paris to life.

**Mouse and the Cossacks** by Paul Wilson is a book to be recommended to those seeking a thought-provoking read. Mouse de Bruin does not speak, completely silent since a terrible event occurred when she was eight. Moving with her mother to a lonely farmhouse, she becomes obsessed with the previous occupant, an old man whose belongings fill the empty rooms. Little by little, Mouse unearths his secrets, and his heartbreaking account of time

spent in the camp of the Russian White Army in the Second World War. In doing so she unlocks some secrets of her own, leading her to recover some normality.

Few people would choose to be homeless, so Charlie Carroll's decision to travel as a tramp (with minimal possessions) from Cornwall to London would be surprising to most. In **No Fixed Abode** he recounts his adventure, with experiences both good and bad, bringing new insights into some of the fellow homeless people he meets on the way.

HOT BOOK OUT NOW

The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry **Rachel Joyce**

» SUE SCHOLES



Fiction buyer, WHSmith

Edward Rutherfurd is renowned for his epic historical novels—his first book **Sarum** was a huge bestseller. Since then he has covered London, New York, Russia and Ireland—all in wonderful historical detail and vast sweeping scope. In his latest novel, he turns his attention to **Paris**, city of lights. Spanning hundreds of years, the novel illuminates the history of the city through the stories of four different families. Rutherfurd has a loyal fanbase who will be waiting for this book, and the review coverage will make it unmissable.

The unstoppable Rick Stein returns with **Rick Stein's India**. Published to tie in to a six-part BBC2 series, this showcases the nation's favourite food—curry. Stein's books always combine a great sense of place with accessible and appealing recipes. You know this will be authentic Indian food made to seem easy and clever at the same time. A great Father's Day present for curry-loving dads!

Peter James is a giant of the crime world. He is a bestseller in both hardback and paperback, and D S Roy Grace stands with Morse and Rebus as one of the best loved characters in detective fiction. In **Dead Man's Time**, Grace is back—this time in a murder hunt that takes in the antiques world of Brighton and the New York waterfront gangs of the 1920s.

*Secrets of the Tides* was one of my favourite books of last year (not to mention being a bestseller), so I'm really pleased



to see the new novel from Hannah Richell, **The Shadow Year**. When five friends find an isolated and abandoned cottage, they think that they have found an escape from the pressures of the real world. This story of secrets and betrayal, of relationships, jealousy and grief, is a really great read.

HOT BOOK OUT NOW

Instructions for a Heatwave **Maggie O'Farrell**

» EMMA HERDMAN



Assistant fiction buyer, Waterstones

It is hard to believe that such beautiful but controlled writing could come from a debut author, but **The Spinning Heart** is just that. Each chapter is narrated by a unique voice from one member of an Irish community, building by the end of this slim novel a precise and fully formed portrait of the devastation of the financial crash on both a personal, private and public level. It is full of warmth and wit, but is also a haunting and a complex story. There's murder, adultery, scamming and gossiping, alongside love and heartbreak, in this perceptive gem of a novel.

From a debut to a well-established author, the next book I've loved this month is the long-awaited **Paris** by Edward Rutherfurd. Initially I was excited due the setting and opening time period: it's difficult not to be drawn into a story set in the city of lights during the Belle Époque. However, as the story goes on, moving between time periods and stories that interweave, we build up an en-

thrilling picture of the history of the city, upon which hangs an epic story of love and revolution.

Another historical read that I found impossible to put down was **My Notorious Life by Madame X**. In contrast to the romantic streets of Paris, this novel opens in the backstreets of New York in the late 1800s. Telling of the life of Axie Muldoon—later to become Mrs Jones, a.k.a. Madame De-Beausacq—we see her go from orphan, to respected midwife and "female physician", to accused in the docks. It's a fully-fleshed story, emotive without being mawkish and full of historical detail without being stodgy. Inspired by a true story, it will leave you wanting to research everything you've read about.

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Instructions for a Heatwave **Maggie O'Farrell**

» RUTH HUNTER



BookTime editor, Bertrams

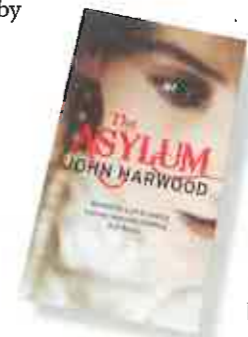
Reminiscent of Wilkie Collins, **The Asylum** by John Harwood is set in the 19th century. A woman wakes in a madhouse to find that no one believes that she is who she knows she is. The doctors are determined to cure her of her "delusions", and another

woman has taken her place in the outside world. With themes of mistaken identity, deceitful villains, madness and murder, this will satisfy any urge you may have for good gothic literature.

**The Execution of Noa P. Singleton** by Elizabeth L. Silver is not so much a whodunit as a whydunit—the eponymous Noa has been on death row for 10 years for shooting Sarah Dixon, but the reasons for the murder are still obscure. When Sarah's mother Marlene decides to try and appeal for clemency, Noa begins to tell her story. The details of the case are mingled with Noa's indifferent attitude to her fate, in a narrative which draws a stark portrait of the American justice system.

Unusually told from several points of view, including police officers Chloe Frohmann and Morris Keene, **The Start of Everything** by Emily Winslow is a sophisticated, satisfying mystery. Set in Cambridge against the background of the bleak fens, the intricate story slowly unfolds, even as the personal lives and problems of Chloe and Morris grow more complicated.

Susan Stairs' **The Story of Before** is a suspenseful tale set in Ireland in the 1970s, as, one New Year's Eve, 11-year-old Ruth Lamb predicts that something bad will happen to her family. The Lambs have recently moved to a bigger estate to accommodate their new baby, but have never quite been at home in the neighbourhood. A tale



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HOT BOOK OUT NOW

Gene Girl **Gillian Flynn**

THE PANEL'S SELECTION

- Burnt Norton **Caroline Sandon**  
(Waterstones, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9781851418000)
- Carver's Quest **Nick Renison**  
(Corgi, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9781851418000)
- Last Friends **Jane Gardam**  
(Vintage, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9780007262630)
- Mouse and the Cossacks **Paul Wilson**  
(Simon & Schuster, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9781851418000)
- My Notorious Life by Madame X **Kate Manning**  
(Waterstones, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9781851418000)
- No Fixed Abode **Charlie Carroll**  
(Corgi, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9781851418000)
- Paris **Edward Rutherfurd**  
(Corgi, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9781851418000)
- The Asylum **John Harwood**  
(Corgi, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9781851418000)
- The Execution of Noa P Singleton **Elizabeth L. Silver**  
(Corgi, 2013, £12.99, ISBN: 9781851418000)
- The Sea Inside **Philip Hoare**  
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- The Spinning Heart **Donal Ryan**  
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- The Start of Everything **Emily Winslow**  
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