

Magazine article for October 2020

As life is still a bit challenging at the moment, many of us have taken refuge in books. The great thing about them is that they are relatively cheap, portable around the house, and can come in different formats. Hardbacks and paperbacks can be bought for a variety of prices online or from lots of shops including supermarkets and charity shops, borrowed or discovered lurking in dark corners (or is that just my house?). Ebooks allow font sizes to be increased and can carry a lot of books for those who choose that format. For some audio books can provide an opportunity to “read” even when sight is a problem, but are also a good choice while doing other things (including falling asleep).

Some avid Bookworms have already worked their way through to next February, but I thought some of us may appreciate another look at the list

Monday 12 October Music and Silence by Rose Tremain

Monday 9 November

 A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian by Marina Lewycha

Monday 14 December Santa Klaus Murder by Mavis Doriel Hay

Monday 11 January Excellent Women by Barbara Pym

Monday 8 February Atonement by Ian McEwan

I thought that I would assemble a list of books that would appeal to everyone - those who are avid readers and Bookworm stalwarts, and those just in search of something to read!

Books that have been televised with great success include the wonderful James Herriot tales of life as a Yorkshire vet. They begin with “If Only They Could Talk” (1970) as the young James arrives to begin work.

For those who love Yorkshire and amusing books, Jack Sheffield has written a series of books set in primary schools, beginning with “Teacher, Teacher!” (2004) - there are thirteen in the series!

Those who read “Old Baggage” by Lissa Evans may well enjoy the books “Crooked Heart” and the new (and therefore expensive!) “V for Victory” which feature some characters throughout all three books. Set in the Second World War, there is a certain element of black humour.

While going outside and meeting people has been difficult, I have been rediscovering some twentieth century classics. These include the Regency novels of Georgette Heyer, an acquired taste admittedly, but very funny and distracting. “These Old Shades” (1926) is an interesting starting place. Some classic thrillers which I enjoyed with female leads are written by Mary Stewart - a good one to begin with is “Madam, Will You Talk?” (1955) which has just been dramatised on Radio 4.

Gerald Durrell’s recently televised books begin with “My Family and Other Animals” (1956) which we did in Book Group - and there are several others which are very funny!

Finally, for those up for a challenge “A Suitable Boy” (1993) is a book to live with for several months. I did read it, and really enjoyed it. For those who watched the television version it will be easier to visualise; I found it an amazing experience. Another series which I loved was Paul Scott’s “The Raj Quartet” which begins with “The Jewel in the Crown” (1966), set in the last days of Empire - and is available in separate books which is less daunting. (Also available on DVD)

I hope the above has given you some ideas of books to read. I also feature new books on www.northernreader.wordpress.com - but some of those are expensive and can be tricky to find. All of the above should be in print, and I hope will give you some ideas. As things stand I have no idea when Bookworms can meet again, but there are many books out there in the meantime!

Happy Reading!

Julie Barham