

NFOP magazine

No winter lasts
forever, no spring
skips its turn

Hal Borland

In the shadow of Brexit

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**10 things you didn't know about
ovarian cancer**

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**The 21st century diet that could
save the planet**

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Editor's Note

Welcome to the March edition of The NFOP Magazine. Like me, I'm sure that many of you will be pleased to see that the days are starting to lengthen and by the time you are reading this February will be out of the way and Spring will be on the horizon. This is a time of year that I always look forward to – the end of the cold, dank and dreary winter and the promise of longer and warmer days to come.

I hope by now that our politicians will have sorted out once and for all the issue that has dominated our lives for what seems an interminable time now, and that is Brexit, but I don't hold my breath. However, I do take great comfort from that great barometer of the strength of our country and our economy, the Stock Market, and are optimistic that things will, in the end, turn out alright! After the losses seen in the markets in December, not just the UK stock market but those around the world have bounced back from the losses they sustained. A strong performing market tends to indicate a strong underlying economy and if this, at least, is anything to go by, then the

markets don't appear to be fearing what will happen to the UK economy post Brexit.

We again talk about loneliness in this issue, something that is, quite frankly, an embarrassment to a society like ours. You are all members of the NFOP and as such have a ready made family around you to talk to, to meet with and to socialise with. The eagle eyed of you will have seen that over recent issues of The Magazine we have introduced our "Worth a Look" feature (usually on pages 50 & 51). It is hoped that this will encourage you to be more active and to go and visit some of the magnificent cultural events that are available around the country. Many of the exhibitions that we are focusing on offer discounts or other concessions for group visits – hopefully this might persuade some of you to arrange a trip for your Branch – if you do then please do let me know – I'd love to hear about it from you.

Finally, we have another packed issue for you and I hope, as always, that you enjoy it. Whatever your views and thoughts, please do write to me - your letters and emails are always welcome.

Until next time.

Ed.

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Out and About looks at the nation's network of steam trains



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Full steam ahead!

By Andrew Silk

Be thankful for all those people that share a passion, that have a love of trains, that want to preserve the history of our railways.

I think it's fair to say that most people love a train, I know that I certainly do!

It's perhaps the romanticism of the golden age of steam for some of us, or perhaps it's those fond, but now fading memories of early holidays as a child when getting the train was a big adventure for many. It might be that your family had some connection to the railways themselves, perhaps a parent or relative worked on them, or maybe just seeing those old posters on railway stations giving glimpses of places never before visited and aspiring to do just that one day. Whatever it is, I think it's fair to say that trains have a special place in many people's hearts.

Trains and the railways have changed a lot over recent years, just like most things in society, after all progress and advancement is inevitable if we are to continue to grow and prosper. But progress isn't always what we want to see in everything we do and in this respect when it comes to trains many of us yearn for the days of yore!

So let's be thankful for all those people that share a passion, that have a love of trains, that want to preserve the history of our railways and that give, more often than not their time voluntarily to do so. And that's all those people, all across the country that are involved in what we would call today "Heritage Railways."

A national network

Did you know that there are over 180 of them in the UK and Ireland, spread far and wide from Helston deep in the south west of Cornwall, to the Keith and Dufftown Railway high in the Highlands of Scotland. From the Giants Causeway & Bushmills Railway in Northern Ireland to the Waterford & Suir Valley Railway deep down in County Waterford in Southern Ireland. Between them they look after over 3,200 steam, diesel and electric locomotives all of which are preserved and maintained with a passion for this and future generations to enjoy.

So no matter where you are in the country there's bound to be a heritage railway close to you so why not go and see for yourself and re-live the "golden days." The good thing about these railways is that they are always so welcoming, run as they are by passionate volunteers for whom the railways really are in their blood and it can be a fantastic day out. Not only do you get to see the trains, you can talk to the people that operate the locomotives and you can also get up close and really see the trains themselves. Many will allow you into the cabs or onto the footplates, and many of the journeys that you can take are through wonderful countryside to boot.

A grand day out

They are also a great place to take the grandkids for a day out. Children especially are enthralled by trains, more so if it's a real treat such as a steam locomotive, something they have probably never seen before in their lives. Imagine the smile on their faces and the excitement if you get them on the footplate – and I bet if you ask nicely enough the engine driver will let you borrow his cap for a photo – now what a memento that would be for them to take back to proud parents and what better way for you to spend quality time with them?

So make an effort and before long you could be steaming through the Devon countryside or enjoying a scenic journey through Snowdonia, two of my favourites. If you want to look at what is available then visit www.heritage-railways.com/ where you will find further details.



March at the movies

Cinema



JOYCE GLASSER
LOOKS AT THE
MONTH AHEAD

This image released by Sony Pictures Classics shows Itay Exroad in a scene from "Foxtro." (Giora Bejach/Sony Pictures Classics via AP)

Foxtro (opening March 1st) Cert 15, 113 mins.

Now 56, at the age of 20 Samuel Maoz was a gunner in one of the first Israeli tanks to enter Lebanon in the 1982 Lebanon War. It took Maoz two decades to recover sufficiently to make his feature film debut, *Lebanon* (shot almost entirely inside of a tank) and eight more years for *Foxtro*, a devastating experience that is like nothing you have seen before. At once a searing indictment of the cover-up of a military mishap that killed four young Arabs and a moving portrait of an Israeli's family's grief, here, the war is waged in the memory and in the hearts of the living.

Structurally and stylistically, *Foxtro* is a triptych (for all of that term's religious connotations, the Feldmans are atheists). Part one is a neo-realist, nearly monochrome drama in which Michael Feldman (Lior Ashkenazi), a handsome, successful Tel Aviv architect, and his wife Dafna (Sarah Adler) are informed that their only son Jonathan has been killed in the line of duty. The methodical, businesslike way in which the death notification officer (Danny Isserles) takes over the grieving process borders on satire. Dafna is immediately injected with a sedative while the funeral arrangements are recited in meticulous detail to a stunned, silent Michael. Michael will be texted every hour as a reminder to drink water. 'We do not expect you to eat, but you must drink,' he is told. When Michael's request to see the body is denied, he starts to suspect a conspiracy extending to his drugged, complicit wife. And then comes a twist that will leave you, like the Feldmans, reeling.

The second tableau is as surreal as a Salvador Dali painting with patches of bright colours set against a bleak, muddy desert landscape. The soldiers sleep in a derelict van (with a smiling bleached blond painted on the side) that appears as in a dreamscape. Occasionally a lone camel walks through the check point.

Jonathan Feldman (Yonatan Shiray) and his young fellow soldiers are manning an isolated check point (codename, Foxtro) on an isolated road. One of the soldiers informs his mate that the Foxtro is actually a dance and stands up to demonstrate. Suddenly, we are enveloped by great music and a professional dancer performs a dance routine with his rifle. In the boredom of the long nights, Jonathan, an artist, tells his mates the long story of a bible salvaged from the Holocaust, a family heirloom that was traded for a racy comic. A dressed up mature couple of modest means are forced to stand in the rain, while they are cleared. And then comes a car with two young Arab couples on a night out and presumably, the explosion that kills Jonathan.

The third tableau is a heart-wrenching melodrama, again situated in the Feldman's apartment, which is less spacious, more confined. And again they are dealing with grief. On the verge of separating, Michael and Dafna come together after finding Jonathan's last drawing – the telltale image of a bulldozer lifting a car to bury it – and sharing some of his weed. Michael tells Dafna, 'you know, there's a dance like this' and he demonstrates a kind of Foxtro on the kitchen floor. 'No matter where you go you end up in the same starting point.'

Maiden (8th) Cert 12A, 97 mins.

You might ask why a 38-year-old sporting feat is being celebrated now in producer/director Alex Holmes' (*The Ice King*) inspirational new documentary, *Maiden*. There is no answer, but this sports-biopic of Tracy Edwards, the skipper of the first all-female crew in the 1989/90 Whitbread Round the World Race, feels as topical and thrilling as it did on 28 May 1990. On that day she sailed into Portsmouth Harbour with a flotilla of cheering supporters and was presented with the Yachtsman of The Year trophy - the first and only female winner in the trophy's 34 year history.

Limited by archival and intermittent amateur video material of the actual race, Holmes has filled the gaps with compelling interviews with some of the participants, now 38 years older, but still able to summon up their feelings as though the race were last week. The main narrator is Edwards, whose post race career in public service is as impressive as her determination (inherited from her father) to succeed.

Edwards' idyllic childhood in Berkshire ended abruptly at



age 10 when her beloved entrepreneur father died and her mother, pushed out of her husband's business for being a woman, remarried an abusive alcoholic who moved the family to Wales. After being expelled from school she ran away to Greece, landing the job of stewardess on a yacht. This was Edwards' first time sailing, and she loved it. But the only way she could find a job to participate in racing, was as the cook. Edwards hated being a servant to yacht owners, but during a stopover in the USA, she met King Hussein I of Jordan to whom Edwards turned for sponsorship when no one else would fund her Whitbread bid.

The film covers the recruitment of the 12-woman crew (Edwards was not an easy person to get on with); the financing of the enterprise (Edwards remortgaged her house to purchase and rebuild a small, 58 foot (18 m) aluminium yacht in 1987). Holmes is particularly good on illustrating the open discrimination the women endured, not only from male crews, but from female interviewers ("Do you wear waterproof mascara?") and in particular, male sports journalists. They have to eat humble pie when *Maiden* wins the longest and most arduous "leg" of the race in its class (Punta del Este to Freemantle through the deadly Southern Ocean).

The film is at its best when we are sharing the crews' highs and lows and sensing their increasing confidence and camaraderie. Tracy, who was not only skipper, but navigator, spent sleepless nights alone in the hull working on the charts, but she was an eloquent, vibrant spokeswoman on land. The thrilling footage in the Southern Ocean shot by Dutch sail maker Tanja Visser and Welsh Cook, Jo Gooding makes you wish the entire event could have been filmed by a dedicated photographer. But no one even expected *Maiden* to make it to Punta del Este, let alone to finish the race second in its class, and with the best finish for a British boat in 17 years.

The White Crow (22nd)

Following on the Morris siblings disappointing cradle-to-grave documentary entitled, *Nureyev*, director Ralph Fiennes (*Coriolanus*, *The Invisible Woman*) tackles a cradle to escape-to-freedom feature film of the iconic Tatar ballet dancer, based on a screenplay by David Hare. Fiennes, who speaks Russian and plays Nureyev's ballet master in the film, has found a

credible, if nowhere near as charismatic, surrogate in Russian soloist Oleg Ivanko, and, wisely, Fiennes lets him dance. The main problem lies with David Hare's clunky and directionless script that never gets inside Nureyev's mind or captures his flamboyant passion. When Fiennes focuses on key dramatic set pieces, the film reveals its potential.

Shot like archival footage against a Siberian landscape we witness the birth of little Rudolf in a crowded train on March 17, 1938. We jump to May 1961 and Le Bourget Airport where a reporter asks, "This is the first time since the war the Mariinsky (Kirov) Ballet has been in the West. Do you think it will have an effect on Cold War relations?" This is the first, but sadly, not the last, expository lines that plagues the script.

Symbolically passing by La Place de la République, the arrogant Kirov soloist is looking for a shop selling – yes, you guessed it, toy trains. At the Palais Garnier Nureyev notices his name is not on the list of those dancing: punishment for fraternising with foreigners. To a sympathetic fellow dancer, he says, 'What difference does it make? Soon everyone will know who I am.' Twenty-two years later, he would be Artistic Director of the Royal Ballet in the Palais Garnier.

A "six years earlier" caption takes us to Nureyev's formation in 1950s Leningrad where his ballet master at the Vaganova Academy of Russian Ballet, Alexander Pushkin (Fiennes) has spotted his talent, and is trying to help the 17-year-old make up for his late start. Pushkin's wife also takes a personal interest in the handsome lad with the gorgeous body. Then the film collapses into a series of scenes designed to inform us of Nureyev's wilfulness and non-conformity, which earned him the nickname White Crow (an outsider); to show us his arduous ballet practice; his bi-sexual love life; and to remind us again of his childhood poverty and raw talent.

Back in 1961 Paris, he meets and hangs out with the Clara Saint (Adèle Exarchopoulos), the pretty 19-year-old Chilean ex-pat mourning the sudden death of her fiancé, the son of the famous author and culture minister Andre Malraux. While the scenes with Clara are tedious, her purpose in the film is revealed in the extended defection scene which is worth the price of admission. This long sequence provides the cohesion, tension, drama and excitement lacking from the film as a whole.

Maiden is the inspirational story of how Tracy Edwards, a 24-year-old cook on charter boats, became the skipper of the first ever all-female crew to enter the Whitbread Round the World Race in 1989.

“No one even expected *Maiden* to make it to Punta del Este, let alone to finish the race second in its class.”



Buckle Down:

YVONNE THOMAS FASTENS ON TO ANOTHER DELECTABLE COLLECTABLE

**Bobby Shafto went to sea,
Silver buckles on his knee,
He'll come back and marry me ...**

“Her estimate of the value of all these silver buckles that people don't wear any more made onlookers gasp.”

Only he didn't. He found another lover who was an heiress and the rotter married her instead, and it was said that his original love, poor Bridget who'd waited for him to come back from sea died of a broken heart within a fortnight.

Bobby (it was the mid-1700s) became an MP and lived comfortably in Duncombe Park, Yorkshire inherited by his wife Anne Duncombe and he probably carried on wearing silver buckles on his knee and on his shoes and to hold up his pants like other men of his station. Buckles were men's jewellery. They were to show off. No wonder they are collectible today.

Secured a fortune

At a recent BBC *Antiques Roadshow* a woman brought along a few cases of Georgian silver shoe buckles that her late husband had collected over 50 years. Judith Miller, one of the *Roadshow's* experts examined them. Her estimate of the value of all these silver buckles that people don't wear any more made onlookers gasp: £200,000.

The collector's widow was as surprised as anyone. So is she going to sell off the buckles, or at least some of them, and go off on a luxury cruise? No. She is going to keep them, and clean them and look after them and show them to friends, just as her husband had done.

Seeing all this, some *Antiques Roadshow* fans may have remembered a buckle or two they had or might still have in some drawer or other. I recall seeing a single narrow little shoe buckle with shiny stones around it in my mother's button box a lifetime ago, presumably lost now. But there is the Mary Quant belt and buckle. It hasn't been worn for years now, not since the dizzying sixties when my boyfriend complained that my skirts were too short. The metal buckle is Quant's famous extra-big, six-petal daisy, twice as wide as the belt which is brown leather. There must have been hundreds of them and if it had cost more than a tenner I wouldn't have bought it.

But there's a catch...

The Victoria and Albert Museum are doing a retro exhibition of Quant's 'sixties fashions and I wanted to give them the long-unused belt and buckle, but first, from curiosity, went to a vintage shop and asked what it would be worth today. The lady in the shop was interested.

'About nine hundred pounds', she said.

'What?' Knock me down with a feather.

'But', she added, 'there are these two holes in the strap' - (yes, I'd made a couple of extra holes because in those days I had a thinner waist) 'and the Quant name is missing,' (it had rubbed off) 'so it's only worth a few pounds now.'

Well that sounded more believable. Collecting, I tell myself, should be more about interest than the money and buckles have a really long history going back at least two thousand years. (Buttons were only invented in the 1200s and were considered indecent.)

A fourth century Roman buckle was unearthed in Warwick. It is in the shape of two peacocks, one each side of the clasp, the birds pecking berries or seeds (the seeds of life, a Christian reference).

Buckles were decorative as well as practical. They may have been made of bronze and iron and hammered out by blacksmiths but they were status, though rarely in silver before 1790.

Men only

Early buckles, always a fashion item as well as practical, were for men, swash-buckling men ('swash' goes the sword against the buckler, the knob in the middle of the shield). Military men needed them to buckle on armour and a few centuries later with low-waisted trousers and jeans, for holding up a fellow's pants. Naturally they became part of fashion and status. They were men's ornaments and still are.

Liberty & Co waist clasp belt buckle - classic Oliver Baker design made by E H Haseler & Co of Birmingham



A pair of Georgian shoe buckles

Georgian buckles for shoes and knees – to draw attention to a well-turned leg – are particularly popular with collectors. They were meant to be noticed. Artists and designers took an interest, among them Rene Lalique who is best known for his glass work.

Nursing an heirloom

A former hospital nurse showed an antiques expert the belt-buckle she had worn on her uniform for many years. It was in the form of a woman's face framed with a swirl of gold and silver hair and a blue enamel hairband. Worth £9,000 because it was an unusual work by Rene Lalique, the expert said. It sold for twice as much. That was an exception but nurses' silver buckles that clip together are themselves the subject of collections and often inherited through families.

A friend who was a sister at one of the big London hospitals said nurses earned their right to wear a belt and buckle when they became sisters. They took pride in finding or inheriting the buckles which were usually filigree silver and collectible and today often found them in antiques shops. Her's was inherited from her grandmother. As for the nurses belt, 'Well at least it gave you a waistline', she said.



René Jules Lalique, about 1897

Collectors playing cards

Playing cards have been around for more than a thousand years. One theory is that they were invented by concubines in the "inner chamber" of the Chinese emperor (he had lots of concubines) because they got so bored of having nothing to do day after day. It was at least 500 years before they (the playing cards) got to Europe, then Britain.

Today there is a thriving English Playing Cards Society and a European one. Mr Barney Townshend, honorary secretary of it says some people just collect single cards, others, packs, "then you discover which you like most and if you are a millionaire and had lots of rooms and drawers you could buy 20 packs of different cards a week and still more."

'Early cards from the 1600s are horribly expensive – in auctions many thousands of pounds – and just a single one can cost a thousand' he said. 'The very early ones, before books were published, were made when paper was quite rare and valuable, so the cards were made of very thin paper.' This meant that 300 years ago they were extremely delicate and small and cards from that period hardly exist for collectors today.

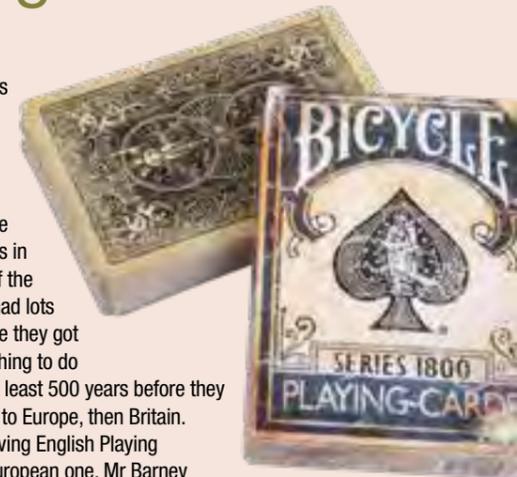
Later playing cards were more like today's but they had square corners. These could easily become bent or scuffed which would make them recognisable from the back, so corners were later rounded. And the backs of cards used to be white, easily marked but this changed when artists designed patterns for the backs.

There are so many different playing cards that it's like collecting stamps, says Mr Townshend. You start collecting the lot, then decide what you like and narrow the field. One speciality is commercial playing cards. Packs produced in abundance at one period by brewers, grocers, fashion houses – Dior produced some – usually limited editions of just one or two hundred packs which are now very collectable.

Prices vary, £100, £200, perhaps £3,000. Some playing cards are so artistic that they have become very popular today. Among them are "transformation" cards which have the symbols – the "pips" – clubs, diamonds, of the card cleverly embodied as part of the picture, so that for instance, the club could look like part of a child's head.

Political propaganda is another line. One pack, "The Horrid Popish Plot" which appeared in 1678 was a satirical pack of cards that brought in the armada, the gunpowder plot and other imagined papish schemes and it was so popular both sides of the Atlantic that it quickly ran to a second edition. Politics are great for playing-card propaganda.

Soon, maybe after all the Brexit business there will be a political pack showing the main players in the leave-Europe battle. Will it be long before we see them fanned out in a pack of cards?



Book reviews

FROM WITCHCRAFT TO SPYCRAFT - IT'S ALL HERE IN THIS MONTH'S SELECTION
FROM **KATE GOODMAN**

She'll put a spell on you

I'm so glad I wasn't born in the early seventeenth century! It was a tough time for women – born rich and you could expect to be married off to the highest bidder; born poor and daring to show any intelligence and skills, you might well be labelled a witch, at best reviled, at worst hanged from the nearest gibbet before you could say “eye of newt”.

In those unenlightened times midwives were especially suspect – and that's bad news for young, pregnant Mistress Fleetwood Shuttleworth. Her last three pregnancies ended in miscarriage, and now she's discovered a months' old letter from her doctor to her husband, Richard, warning another pregnancy could kill her. Devastated at her husband's betrayal – can he really want her dead? – and with no-one to turn to, she must find someone who can save her and her unborn child. Then, by chance, she crosses paths with midwife Alice Gray and defies her husband and mother to take the young woman into her home.

Enigmatic Alice soon makes herself indispensable, mixing potions to ease Fleetwood's morning sickness and soothing her mistress's

fears. But then she is drawn into the witchcraft accusations that are sweeping the country under the reign of James I, who sees witches around every corner.

With her own life, and the life of her unborn baby, hanging by a thread, Fleetwood must throw all her resources into saving her friend. But she is hampered at every turn by the powerful men around her, including her own husband. Undaunted, Fleetwood continues in her endeavours to save Alice, all too aware that her efforts may put her in danger of being accused of witchcraft, too...

Beautiful prose and a real sense of time and place sweeps you back to the seventeenth century in this suspenseful tale when men worried about the power of witches but foolishly ignored the far greater power of female friendship, loyalty and love. There are no charms or potions needed here, just words, to create a spellbinding read.

The Familiars by Stacey Halls is published by Bantam Zaffre in hardback, RRP £12.99



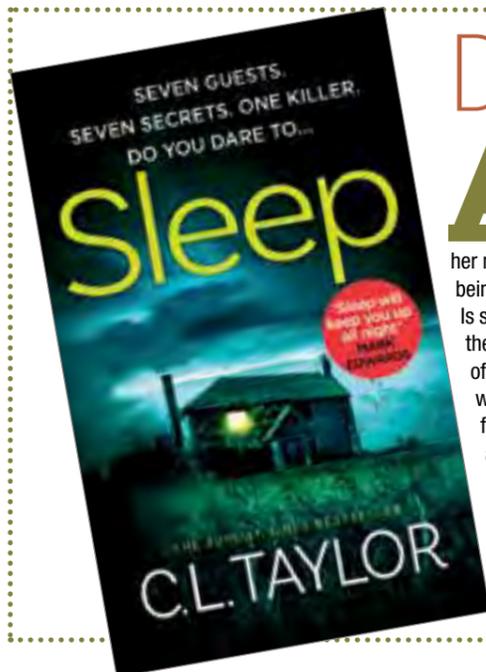
Don't close your eyes...

All Anna wants is to be able to sleep. But a devastating car crash that saw two of her colleagues killed has left her with crushing guilt that haunts her night and day. And increasingly she feels she is being haunted by something – or someone else. Is someone stalking her, bent on revenge? Or are the inexplicable happenings around her products of her guilty imagination? Unable to return to work and with her relationship in tatters, Anna flees to the remote Scottish isle of Rum, to take a job as a receptionist at a wee hotel run by curmudgeonly David. Their small band of guests arrive, a storm sets in and soon the small group is cut off not only from the mainland but from the rest of the island.

Of course things quickly fall apart, especially after David drops dead of an apparent heart attack. Each guest is behaving oddly, and a series of near fatal accidents convince Anna that one of them is her stalker. She is in deadly danger, but how can she protect herself when there is no-one she can trust? Even if she could sleep, it would have to be with one eye open!

This super psychological thriller is reminiscent of Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None*, with potential victims and killers in every hotel bedroom. It will keep you guessing until the last pages – where the denouement comes with a final killer twist that is as satisfying as it is unexpected.

Sleep by C.L. Taylor is published by HarperCollins on April 04 in hardback, RRP £12.99



The spy who enthralled me...

They need danger, excitement and skilful plots – but the best-told spy stories need something else, too, if they are to engage the reader in any meaningful way. The key is a sympathetic main character. Enter Orphan X.

As a boy Evan Smoak, aka Orphan X, was taken from his foster home and inducted into a top secret Cold War programme. Trained to become a lethal weapon, his first job at just 19 was an overseas assassination, ordered by none other than Jonathan Bennett, now president of the USA.

Now, years later, Evan is planning another assassination – no less a person than Bennett himself, who in an attempt to cover his tracks, has been picking off Evan's fellow orphans and has Evan in his sights. Evan needs to kill him before he kills Evan – but given the level of security around the president, it's going to be no easy task, especially as Evan is an assassin with a conscience, who prefers to avoid collateral damage.

Plus, it's not the only job he has on the go. As “the nowhere man”, Evan acts as a civilian vigilante. When intellectually-challenged Trevon inadvertently crosses a drugs baron and sees his entire family brutally murdered, he turns to Evan for help and protection.

Evan criss-crosses the country, gathering intelligence information to help him in both tasks, facing down thugs, criminals, and old and new enemies in breath-takingly dangerous situations that even James Bond might balk at, with weapons Bond might envy!

Will he get at the president? A lot depends on him and his IT whizz fellow orphan hacking into computers to expose vulnerability in the White House security system – tech buffs will love all the details here, but I prefer the action-packed rooftop chases, the face-to-face confrontations between Evan and his enemies and the quieter interludes where Evan returns home to “Vera”, his aloe vera plant, his one trusted confidante in the dangerous world he inhabits.

If you haven't met Orphan X in previous books, you're in for a treat with this stand-alone thriller that sees Evan Smoak grow in integrity and humanity as he continues to set the world's wrongs to right.

Out Of The Dark by Gregg Hurwitz is published by Penguin Random House, in hardback, RRP £12.99



Her dreams are in tatters...

It's difficult for a debut author to break into the crowded saga market, but thankfully publishers saw the potential in Glenda Young's story which brings us the tale of sixteen-year-old Meg, living in poverty with her mother and younger brother Tommy in Ryhope, a north-east mining village, in 1921. While Tommy goes to work in the mines, Meg follows in her late father's footsteps, carrying on the family rag 'n' bone business. It's enough to make a living – but then their cruel landlord decides to call in their debts, with tragic results for the whole family. And when Meg allows herself to be seduced by fickle ne'er-do-well Clarky, things get even more bumpy...

Fortunately, Meg and Tommy are surrounded by friends and neighbours who

are willing to support them through thick and thin. Young miner Adam stands by Meg through all her misfortunes, while market trader Florrie Smith acts more like a mother than a friend.

With its feisty heroine, close-knit community and fast-moving plot, *Belle of the Back Streets* follows saga conventions, but what makes it stand out for me is the real sense of time and place the writer achieves with descriptive prose that takes us through hardship and happier times as the trauma of WWI gives way to the miners' strike and Meg finds a way to escape the grinding poverty of her early life.

Belle of the Back Streets by Glenda Young is published by Headline in paperback, RRP £6.99

