

ISLAND BOOK CHART

Week starting
4 April

In association with

Waterstones

- 1. The Last Good Kiss by James Crumley (PB)**
Private detectives are supposed to find missing persons and solve crimes. But more often than not Detective Sughrue is the one committing the crimes – everything from grand theft auto to criminal stupidity. All washed down with a hearty dose of whisky and regret. At the end of a three-week hunt for a runaway bestselling author, Sughrue winds up in a ramshackle bar, with an alcoholic bulldog. The landlady's daughter vanished a decade ago and now she wants Sughrue to find her. His search will take him to the deepest, darkest depths of San Francisco's underbelly, a place as fascinating, frightening and flawed as he is. Welcome to James Crumley's America.
- 2. The Improbability of Love by Hannah Rothchild (PB)**
When lovelorn Annie McDee stumbles across a dirty painting in a junk shop while looking for a present for an unsuitable man, she has no idea what she has discovered. Delving into the painting's past, Annie will uncover not just an illustrious list of former owners, but some of the darkest secrets of European history – and in doing so she might just learn to open up to the possibility of falling in love again.
- 3. Early One Morning by Virginia Bailey (PB)**
A grey dawn in 1943: on a street in Rome, two young women, complete strangers to each other, lock eyes for a single moment. One of the women, Chiara Ravello, is about to flee the occupied city for the safety of her grandparents' house in the hills. The other has been herded on to a truck with her husband and their young children, and will shortly be driven off into the darkness. In that endless-seeming moment, before she has time to think about what she is doing, Chiara makes a decision that changes her life for ever.
- 4. SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome (PB) by Mary Beard**
Ancient Rome matters. Its history of empire, conquest, cruelty and excess is something against which we still judge ourselves. Its myths and stories – from Romulus and Remus – still strike a chord with us. And its debates about citizenship, security and the rights of the individual still influence our own debates on civil liberty today. SPQR is a new look at Roman history from one of the world's foremost classicists.
- 5. My Brother is a Superhero by David Solomons (PB)**
Luke is a comic-mad 11-year old who shares a treehouse with his geeky older brother, Zack. Luke's only mistake is to go for a wee right at the wrong time. While he's gone, an alien gives his undeserving, never-read-a-comic-in-his-life brother superpowers and then tells him to save the universe. Luke is massively annoyed about this, but when Zack is kidnapped by his arch-nemesis, Luke and his friends have only five days to find him and save the world...
- 6. Make Me by Lee Child (PB)**
Jack Reacher has no place to go, and all the time in the world to get there, so a remote rail road stop on the prairie with the curious name of Mother's Rest seems perfect for an aimless one-day stopover. Reacher's one-day stopover turns into an open-ended quest leading to the most hidden reaches of the internet, and right into the nightmare heart of darkness.
- 7. Predator by Wilbur Smith, Tom Cain (HB)**
Two men are responsible for the death of Hector Cross' wife and only one is left alive: Johnny Congo – psychopath, extortionist, murderer, and the bane of Cross's life. He caught him before and let him go. Now, Hector wants him dead. So does the US government. Congo is locked up on Death Row in the most secure prison in the free world, counting down the days until his execution. He's got two weeks. He wants out.
- 8. Finders Keepers by Stephen King (PB)**
Morris Bellamy is a reader so obsessed by America's iconic author John Rothstein that he is prepared to kill for a trove of notebooks containing at least one more unpublished novel. 2009: Pete Saubers, a boy whose father was brutally injured by a stolen Mercedes, discovers a buried trunk containing cash and Rothstein's notebooks. 2014: After 35 years in prison, Morris is up for parole. And he's hell-bent on recovering his treasure. Now it's up to retired detective Bill Hodges – running an investigative company called 'Finders Keepers' – to free Pete from an ever-more deranged and vengeful Morris.
- 9. Lady Midnight by Cassandra Clare**
It's been five years since the events of City of Heavenly Fire that brought the Shadowhunters to the brink of oblivion. Emma Carstairs is no longer a child in mourning, but a young woman bent on discovering what killed her parents and avenging her losses.
- 10. Return to the Little Coffee Shop of Kabul by Deborah Rodriguez (PB)**
In a little coffee shop in war-torn Kabul, five very different women unite for one important cause: to protect the women in Afghanistan. Together, these five women set out to change their lives, and the lives of women in Afghanistan, for ever.

Sark commando raid that caused Hitler to retaliate

London-based author Eric Lee was fascinated by the story of Operation Basalt, writes Gill Kay

AN order from Adolf Hitler issued in October 1942 sealed the fate of many Allied commandos, who thereafter, if they fell into German hands, were not to be taken prisoner, but immediately put to death.

And one of the factors believed to have caused Hitler to issue what was known as the Commando Order was a little known but ultimately controversial British raid on Sark.

And now a book on the subject has just been released – Operation Basalt, the British raid on Sark and Hitler's Commando Order – written by London-based author Eric Lee.

The book reveals in gripping detail the story of the night-time raid when 12 British commandos, led by Major Geoffrey Appleyard, climbed the Hog's Back on Sark with the intention of gathering intelligence and taking prisoners. The raiders reached Dixcart Hotel where in a nearby annexe five German soldiers, who were engineers, were sleeping. Commando Anders Lassen killed a sentry and after the raiders secured their five prisoners, it seems all hell broke loose – all of which is revealed in the book, backed up by eye-witness testimony and historical records. The resulting backlash is described in Mr Lee's book in which he explains that the raid would have been a footnote in history but for the reaction of Hitler, who believed that British soldiers had executed German soldiers who had already surrendered and whose hands were bound. Days after the raid, Hitler issued the infamous Commando Order. The order was subsequently regarded as a war crime in the Nuremberg Trials.

Mr Lee (60), who was born and raised in New York City but lived in Israel on a kibbutz from 1981 to 1998, became interested in the story when he visited Sark two years ago. 'People have



Eric Lee

written accounts on this and other raids as part of other books, but no one has done a book on just that raid. I thought there was enough for a whole book and I've also put it into the context of the German occupation of British lands during the war,' said Mr Lee. The author read everything published on the subject and spent a lot of time researching archives and reading accounts written by commandos and the maps that they drew. 'I also spent a week in Sark last year and was taken on a walk by Jeremy La Trobe-Bateman, of the La Trobe family who published the walking guide to Sark (which is still available) that the commandos had with

them. He led me on the route that the commandos took that night.'

Mr Lee believes that what the commandos did was not actually illegal. 'In the course of military occupation it was entirely legitimate. It is a controversial subject but this was not a war crime. When the German soldiers emerged they thought they were facing a whole army who were invading and then they realised there were only a few British soldiers. So they started shouting and ran away and tried to raise their own troops – so one of the British officers gave a command to stop this. One of the Germans decided not to resist and was taken as a prisoner to the UK – that was the smart guy, he was the lucky one,' said Mr Lee.

The author has illustrated the book with photos, mostly from the period, including several offered by Sark residents and some that were sent to him by the daughter of the German commandant.

'I interviewed survivors of the time including a lady on Little Sark and got some of the gossip from her. I also spoke to Werner Rang, who came to Sark during the war and was stationed there after the raid. He fell in love with a local girl and stayed and they both talked about that period,' he said.

'These commandos were brave men who faced climbing up the steep cliff in the dark, with no maps and up against mine fields and the German infantry. Few of them survived the war. Some were captured and killed through the Commando Order, while Lassen was killed in action and Appleyard was killed in an air crash.'

Published by the History Press, Operation Basalt is available online from Amazon. The book will also be launched in Sark on Saturday 21 May. For more information go to thehistorypress.co.uk.

COMPETITION

WE have three copies of Operation Basalt to be won. To enter the competition to win one of the copies simply answer the following question:

What is the name of the hotel near the annexe where the German soldiers were sleeping?

Send your answer to Operation Basalt Competition, Features Desk, Jersey Evening Post, PO Box 582, Jersey, JE4 8XQ or email features@jerseyeveningpost.com with Operation Basalt Competition in the subject line. Please include your name and phone number. The closing date is Thursday 14 April.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Win a £25 voucher from Waterstones for your book review

CAN you recommend a book?

Every Saturday we will feature readers' recommendations, and if you tell us about a book that you've been reading you may win a Waterstones gift voucher worth £25 if your review is published.

Reviews should include the title of the book, the author and – in 80 words – why you think that the book is a good read. Submissions should be emailed to features@jerseyeveningpost.com, or sent to Book Reviews, JEP Features, Jersey Evening Post, PO Box 582, JE4 8XQ.

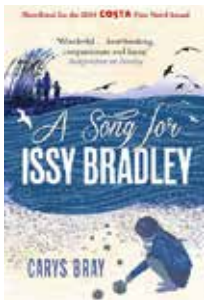


Reader recommendation of the week

When the Sky Fell Apart by Caroline Lea

This is the first novel by local writer Caroline Lea and given the calibre of her writing one can only hope it will be the first of many. It is a gripping tale set in Jersey during the occupation of the Island by the Germans during the Second World War. The bombing of Jersey at the beginning of the Occupation establishes the relationship between the main characters and the privations and the struggle of these Islanders to survive are powerfully drawn. While the novel is not historically accurate in the strictest sense of the word it is nevertheless a gripping read and the liberties taken are done so to good effect.

Mary Young



Waterstones recommendation of the week

A Song for Issy Bradley by Carys Bray

A captivating and intense read that grabs the reader from the first page. It follows a family of Mormon faith that try to deal with the loss of their youngest daughter, Issy. The point of view changes from chapter to chapter, and we get a glimpse into the thoughts and feelings of each member of the family: a father determined to draw his answers from the scripture; a mother whose grief simply crushes her world; the eldest daughter, who has to take on responsibilities; the younger brother that seems uninterested and almost unaffected by their predicament. I feel it had the perfect ending. Like a dot at the end of a sentence. It needed nothing more, nothing less.

Orsolya Gyorfí