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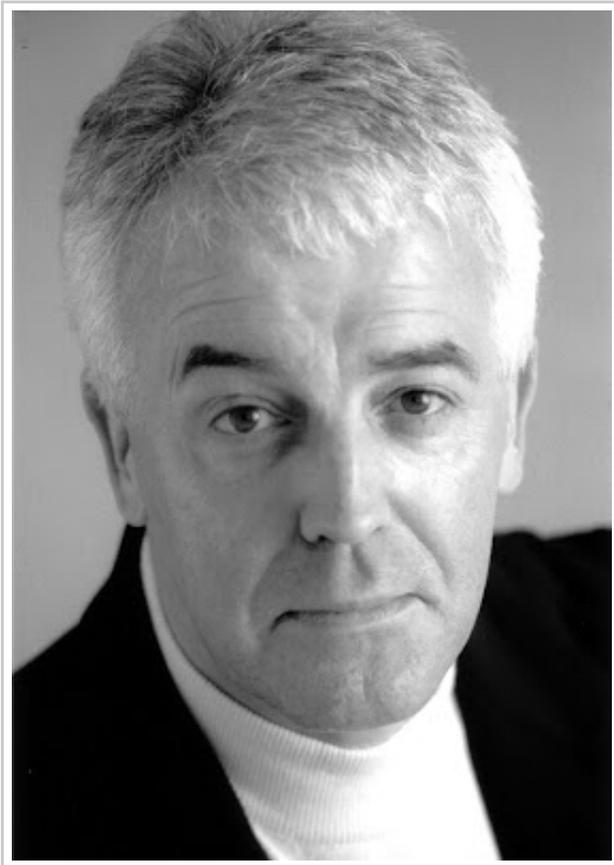
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MURDER IS EVERYWHERE

Seven renowned crime writers blog from different corners of the world

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2013

Guest Post - Tony Broadbent



Tony Broadbent is the author of a series of mystery novels about a Cockney cat burglar and jewel thief in post-war London that gets blackmailed into working for MI5.

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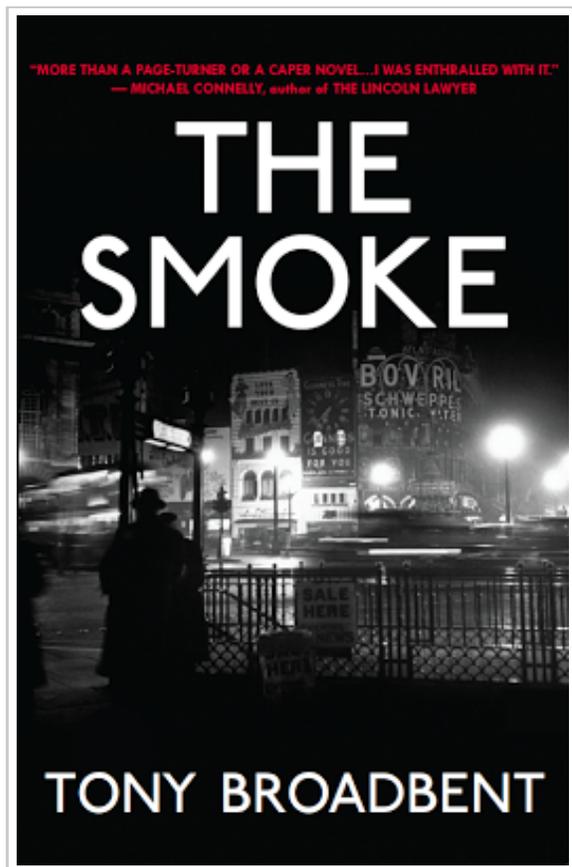
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CARA BLACK





His first in series, *The Smoke*, was named 'One of the Best First Mystery Novels of 2002'. *Booklist* called *Spectres In The Smoke* 'One of the best spy novels of the year' and the book went on to win the 2006 Bruce Alexander Historical Mystery Award.' The third, *Shadows in the Smoke*, was published in October 2012. Tony's post of today **London Peculiar – Of Times and Place** is one of two. The second instalment, **London Particular – Regarding A Murder Most Foul** will be published here on the 12th of March. Here's Tony:

London. Just the sound of it is enough to stop you dead in your tracks. As V. S. Pritchett once wrote: 'The very word has tonnage—like two thumps of a steam-hammer.' And he's not wrong. There are few cities that even come close—in history or in influence. London has gravity enough to pull most any story or conversation into its orbit—and everyone's version of England's capital city verges on the sacrosanct.

France

LISA BRACKMANN



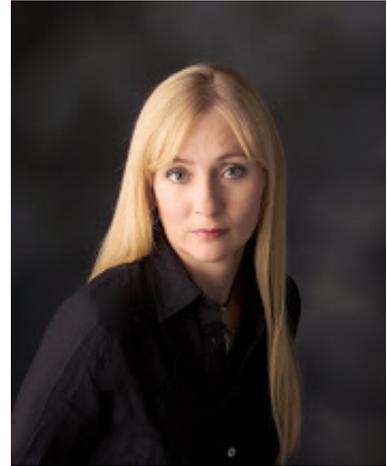
China

LEIGHTON GAGE

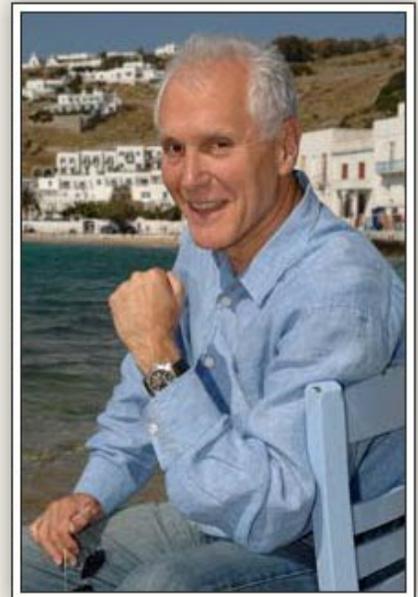


Brazil

CARO RAMSAY



Scotland

 JEFF SIGER


Greece

 YRSA SIGURDARDÓTTIR


Iceland

Of course with more than two thousand years of history to draw from, it's not just the 'Cool Britannia' London of 1960's Carnaby Street, The Beatles, and the Rolling Stones, or the modern-day London of the BBC's coolly reimagined *Sherlock*—that people necessarily choose to revere. There's Roman London, Medieval London, Elizabethan London, Restoration London, Georgian London and Victorian London to name but a few historically recognized periods. Then, of course, there are the London's of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Pepys, Boswell, Mayhew, Dickens, Conan Doyle, and Henry James.

And all that before you even touch upon 'Clubland' London, London's 'Theatreland', the London Underworld, or the unique peculiarities of London's 'The Great Fire', 'The Great Stink', 'The Blitz', 'The Killer Fog.'



 MICHAEL SEARS AND STANLEY TROLLIP

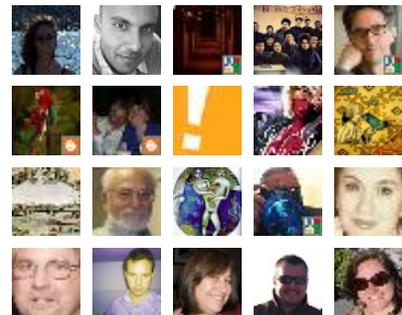

Southern Africa

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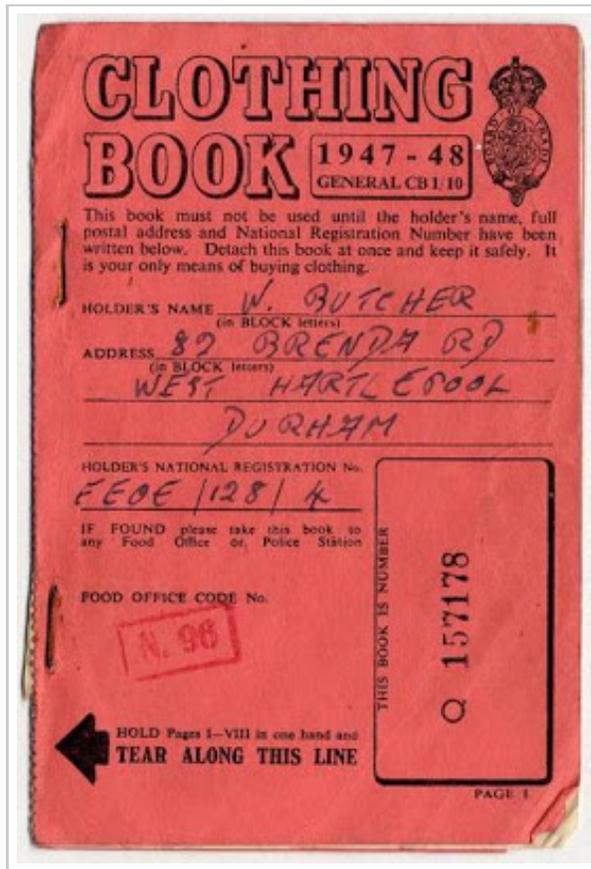
Caro Ramsay

Jeffrey Siger

Every London it seems has its expert chroniclers and—gratifyingly—a good few of them mystery writers employing a particular period or locale as backdrop to their stories. The London of the Twentieth Century Moderns: Gerald Kersh, Margery Allingham, Patrick Hamilton, Norman Collins, Colin Macinnes, Derek Raymond, John Lawton, Jacqueline Winspear, Deborah Crombie—favourites all—and most all of them superb ‘first guides’ should you ever wish to venture into some fresh field or back alley of London’s fabled history.

Even I’ve claimed a little bit of London as my own. My own particular London—the postwar London of the late 1940s, early 1950s—a London that stretches from the East End to the West End, everywhere north of ‘the water.’ A bombed-out, battered, bloodied London. A London where everyone’s not only still trying to recover from the effects of the ‘Blitz’ and the deprivations of war but also coming to terms with the loss of Empire. Britain might well have won the War, but the country is to all intents and purposes bankrupt and the populace have no choice now but try and survive the peace.

All of which means it’s the London of stringent government austerity measures and rationing. A time when every single blessed thing—clothes, food, sweets, furniture, coal, petrol—is scarce and almost impossible to come by—and even beer has been watered down by Government mandate. It’s the London of the ‘Spiv’ and the Black Market, where luxuries as well as necessities, be it cigarettes or whisky, bars of soap or packets of razorblades, could only be had once it’d ‘fallen off the back of a lorry’—and everyone—high born or low—at one time or another—‘at it’ and ‘on the take’.



It's a London chock-a-block full of theatres and cinemas, cafes and pubs, 'five-shilling' restaurants and eel-and-pie shops, of night-clubs and 'spielers' and out-of-hours drinking clubs—the London of street performers and buskers, of smoke-filled penny-arcades and billiards-halls, gymnasiums and boxing clubs—and ever-crowded speedway and greyhound and football stadiums.

It's a London where trams and trolley-busses still trundle the streets and the docks are still the busiest in the world. A city where teams of brewer's dray-horses pull huge wagons through city streets and rag-and-bone men can still be heard calling out for business from the top of their rickety horse-drawn carts even through the better parts of London. A London that's still littered with numberless bombsites—that if not already pressed into service as temporary car parks, are carpeted with yellow dandelions, purple willow herb and constellations of tiny white-petals of 'London Pride.'

Stan Trollip (of Michael Stanley)
Leighton Gage
Michael Sears (of Michael Stanley)

BLOG ARCHIVE

▼ 2013 (57)

▼ February (26)

Guest Post - Tony Broadbent

Carnival In Rio -- It Stinks

Happy Year of the Snake!

A Houston Hodgepodge and a
Cry for Help

The Confessions Interview

"Dr. Livingstone, I presume?"
Stanley asked. Or ...

Taking passengers

Paris it's not all croissants

Readers Who Don't Read

Ordinary Places...

Easter Comes But Once a
Year...Uhh, Uhh.

One Man's meat....

MOSI-OA-TUNYA – the smoke
that thunders

Let's celebrate!

Double trouble in Marseille +
signing in blood

The Triple Frontier

Why Did the Laowai Cross the
Road?

Once Upon a Time, There Were
Gas Deposits in Greec...

Richard The III

The African Disease

Pet Peeves

Chandeleur + crepes



It's a London where, on a clear day, the view of St Paul's Cathedral still dominates the skyline. It's the London of the 'pea-souper' where wraith-like policemen garbed in long-white slickers ceaselessly tend hissing, wildly flaring green-hued naphtha lamps that throw eerie shadows onto soot-laden curtains of fog. It's a city where streetlights are reduced to nothing but dim halos of dirty orange-yellow. And where lines of double-deckers, lost and forlorn, are forced to a standstill along Oxford Street and Regent Street—no onward journey or return to the bus depot at all possible.

To be honest though it's a London as much built on sights and sounds drawn from newspapers and picture books, newsreels, television and films, as it is from family photo albums and family legend—inevitable, I'm sure, for any memories born of the latter half of the Twentieth Century. But whether real or imagined or received, it's all grist for the London mill.

The Last Ball

A Tale of Two Trains...

May Robert Frost Forgive Me.

Fly Like An Eagle

▶ January (31)

▶ 2012 (346)

▶ 2011 (347)

▶ 2010 (325)

▶ 2009 (41)

MY BLOG LIST

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Mickey Spillane's Lite Side
11 hours ago

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Central Asia's International Metropolis - Almaty, Kazakhstan
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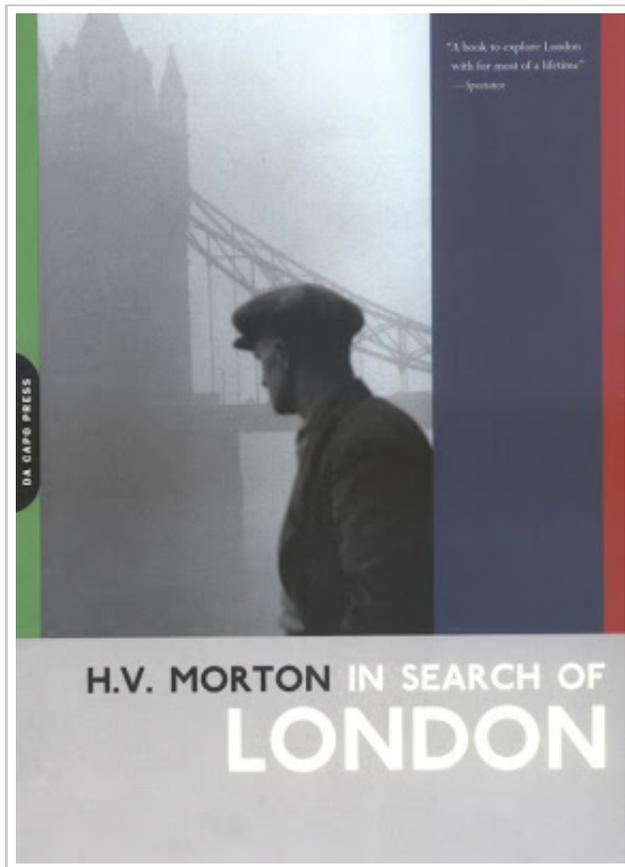
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Book Review of Kate Atkinson's



Which of course begs the question, does the London of memory belong to me or is it perhaps a London more shaped by H. V. Morton's engaging *'In Search of London'*, V.S. Pritchett's wittily evocative *'London Perceived'*, or even Ian Nairn's wonderfully eclectic *'Nairn's London'*—each one, a well-thumbed companion of long-standing. Is it London as seen through the hawk-like eyes of more recent chroniclers: such as Dan Cruikshank, Peter Ackroyd, and Iain Sinclair.

As the protagonist of my tales, the rascally cat burglar and jewel thief, Jethro, says in *'The Smoke'* when he again finds himself on a particular street corner: *"But that's the funny thing about London, it's chock-a-block full of history and oddly enough, a lot of the time, it turns out to be yours."*

Truth is London is far too vast a subject for anyone to ever hope to capture completely. (Although, Peter Ackroyd's remarkable *'London'* comes damn close.) And I suppose—as Dan Waddell's excellent past posts on *Murder Everywhere* have shown—in the end, London is whatever you bring to it—its history whatever you make of it—and exactly that and no more. It's certainly all you ever get to take away with you when you leave.

Love it. Wonder at it. Ponder it. Take time to delve beneath its

Life After Life

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Junyingkirk

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NEVER BEFORE.....

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Blog of James Thompson - Author of Snow Angels

Detective Kubu

BLOG FLUX

BF DIRECTORY

multiple surfaces and London will open up its wonders to you in abundance. Make no effort at all and London will leave you cold. It will simply retreat back into the shadows, safe behind its edifices of newly cleaned red brick and Portland Stone, and leave you to ponder its age-old reputation of being quite unfathomable—a cold-hearted, hard and wicked place—that goes by the name of London.

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LABELS: LONDON, THE SMOKE, TONY BROADBENT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2013

Carnival In Rio -- It Stinks



Not that it isn't fun.

It is. But Carnival in Rio de Janeiro is, as most people know, a frenetic, energy-packed event.