

1. The Midnight Library by Matt Haig
2. Grown Ups by Marian Keyes
3. The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman

4. The Darkest Evening by Ann Cleeves
5. Still Life by Val McDermid

Source: WH Smith

ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Marika Cobbold, £14.99

THORN MARSH has always loved her demanding job as the news editor for a respected newspaper. She thrives on pressure and prides herself on producing gritty, honest stories.

But when the paper gets a new owner in the Goring Group, things change rapidly.

Thorn's way of doing things is deemed old-fashioned and she is shunted off to work on a midweek supplement, where she is tasked with creating anodyne "human interest" features – something she hates.

With her job on the line, she resorts to fabricating a story – and it goes viral.

Soon Thorn is caught between doing the right thing and keeping her job.

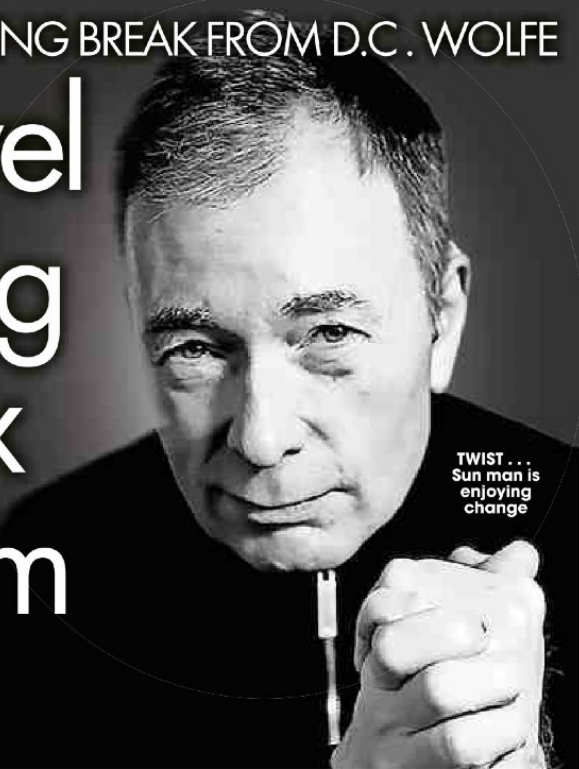
A great read that offers an insight into newspapers in all their warts-and-all glory.

★★★★



TONY PARSONS ON TAKING BREAK FROM D.C. WOLFE

New novel is allowing me Max headroom



TWIST . . . Sun man is enjoying change

FOR the past six years Tony Parsons has written an explosive crime series about DC Max Wolfe. But his latest novel could not be more different.

In *Your Neighbour's Wife*, Tara Carver's seemingly perfect life unravels in spectacular fashion when she makes a simple mistake. The dark story highlights how quickly life can change and will surprise you until the last page.

Tony, 67, says: "I enjoyed writing it. I spent a lot of time getting it just so and I'm pleased with how it turned out."

"The mark of a good book is you don't see the twists coming. If it's obvious from the first page, that's poor storytelling. The revelations have to make sense to the reader and you can't put twists in for the sake of them."

To date, Tony has written 12 novels, of which *Man And Boy*, published in 1999, is perhaps his best-known story.

The dad of two says: "For the last six years I've focused on my crime series about DC Max Wolfe."

"When you write a series, it can get a bit cosy. You see writers getting trapped by their heroes and constrained by the success they might be having and I never want to get to that stage."

Honest opinion

"It takes so long to write a book and you have to go with the story you're passionate about."

As well as his novels, Tony continues to write a column for *The Sun* on Sunday.

He says: "They both help the other. I'm fairly disciplined because I'm used to meeting deadlines and I understand the importance of clean copy."

As a *Sun* columnist, Tony is used to giving his honest opinion on anything that might be happening in the news. So is he ever short on ideas?

Laughing, he says: "Luckily, the front page is never empty and there is always something to talk about. I love newspapers."

"There is something special about holding a newspaper that a screen won't ever replace."

Despite coming from a modest background, Tony has achieved



FAIR POINT . . . grilling The Clash



BOSS . . . with Bruce Springsteen

success that many working-class writers can only dream of. He says: "There's less social mobility in general these days."

"I came from quite a poor background but I didn't feel hard done by because I felt if I worked hard, I'd get on. I'm not sure that's necessarily the case now."

"My first writing job was for *(music journal)* NME and it was a huge stepping stone for me."

After cutting his teeth in the music business, interviewing The Clash and Bruce Springsteen among others, Tony worked as a freelance writer. He wrote George Michael's authorised biography, *Bare*, in 1990.

Tony adds: "It's a shame the younger generation might not get the same chances I had because those kinds of magazines and journals don't exist any more."

His hopes for 2021 are pretty simple.

He says with a final laugh: "I want to continue what I'm doing and not fall off my perch."

● *Your Neighbour's Wife* is out now (Century, £12.99).



PIZZA CRUNCH

WHO: Ewan Hearn (guitar/vocals), Nathan Stokoe (guitar), Craig McDermott (bass), Ewan Nicholson (drums)

WHERE: Glasgow

FOR FANS OF: The Vaccines, The Strokes, Arctic Monkeys

JIM SAYS: Formed at the end of 2019, Pizza Crunch had only played a handful of shows before the pandemic hit.

The downtime has been a creative period with a stack of music ready to be unleashed.

Ewan admitted: "There were probably 50 songs written. Recently it has begun to feel like normal life and creativity comes and goes as it does when life is being lived normally. Condensing a set down to 30 minutes is going to be very difficult. Some arguments may arise there."

If the tracks I've heard so far are anything to go by, we'll be in for something special when live gigs return.

Pre-lockdown they debuted with *Fraud*, a glorious ode to the transition from student life to the working world. Melodic indie rock with a punky edge it grabbed me instantly.

However, the band name was what first got my attention.

Ewan said: "Terrible name that was made up because we had no idea what else to call ourselves and we had a gig booked. I think we wanted something with some Glasgow link and that suggested we don't take ourselves too



seriously." The music is just as tasty as their namesake, without the guilt factor. Just three singles into their career they are shaping up as real contenders. The lads followed *Fraud* with the equally compelling *Twelve Month Seasonal Depression* in September.

It's got an anthemic feel, and surprisingly uplifting, despite the subject matter.

But even The Smiths had the knack of putting you in a good place despite the melancholy. "Time moves along, being OK is postponed" is a very Morrissey lyric.

The track also features on the excellent *Classy Lassy & Friends: Volume 2* compilation. It was put together by Lou Rogers of *Classy Lassy PR & Management*, Strictly Scotland radio show presenter Stuart Macaulay and music manager Rory Barnes.

Proceeds are going to SAMH, the Scottish Association for Mental Health.

The latest single *Coma-Inducing Gibberish*, their first release through Liverpool label *Disobedient Records*, is another corker.

The boys have some big plans once we get back to some normality. Ewan added: "Our short-term goals are to keep releasing singles and support some of our favourite bands in and around Glasgow. Long-term, who knows, maybe we'll get on a TRNSMT line-up at some point."

That, I'd love to see.

MORE: facebook.com/pizzacrunchmusic
● Jim presents a showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm. amazingradio.com/jimgellatly.com

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* BANANARAMA - KENWOOD, ARDINGLY & AUDLEY END KIM WILDE - ARDINGLY & ENGFELDFIELD GABRIELLE - ENGFELDFIELD & AUDLEY END

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