HERE WE GO READING BOOKS IN MAY

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Four murder mysteries, two spy novels and four books on mission: some of what I got round to reading this month.
Category: Observations

There is no doubt about it, the best spy novels I've read were written by John LeCarrÃ©. It's surprising then that the first two novels featuring his leading denizen of the espionage world, George Smiley, are actually more or less run of the mill murder mysteries. I readÂ Call for the DeadÂ andÂ A Murder of Quality (Penguin Modern Classics)Â this month. They aren't LeCarrÃ©'s best by any means, but it was pleasant to revisit them. I also continued my pilgrimage through Antony Price's spy novels (just one more to go), reading bothÂ A New Kind of WarÂ andÂ A Prospect of VengeanceÂ both of which are excellent, though highly convoluted. With Price's books, you sometimes need to read two-thirds of the book before you really have a grasp of what is happening.

It's interesting to compare LeCarrÃ© and Price. For my money, they were both at their best when writing about the height of the cold war. LeCarrÃ© undoubtedly wrote better novels, but crucially, Price writes much better series of novels. The core characters in Price's books are followed through a forty year period and through this they are entirely consistent. LeCarrÃ© on the other hand, plays fast and loose with his characters between books. The George Smiley of the first two novels, isn't really the same person as the one we encounter in the Carla series and other people go through complete character transplants between one novel and the next (Jerry Westerby, for instance).

Unforeseen: (Tenth Anniversary Edition) (Thomas Prescott Book 1)Â is currently free on Kindle. If you like murder mysteries and don't mind them being a touch grizzly, youÂ Â may well enjoy this. It's certainly worth splashing out for while it's free - I'm not sure I'd pay the regular price of Â£16 for it, though. Another Kindle cheapie isÂ Holy Island: A DCI Ryan Mystery. It's not bad though I suspect the population of Holy Island, not to mention the tourist offie, were not best pleased with the way the island and its people are represented.

My non-fiction reading this month has more or less been confined to stuff that I'm reading for work or study. I'll list the books for the sake of completeness, I suspect that anyone who plans on reading any of these books already knows about them:

- Changing Frontiers of Mission (ASM)Â by William Shenk
- Christian Mission in the Modern WorldÂ by John Stott (good, but bear in mind that 'modern' means 1974)
- The Story of Faith Missions by Klaus Fiedler is out of print.
- The British Missionary Enterprise since 1700 (Christianity and Society in the Modern World)Â by Jeffrey Cox is superb, but if you want to read it find a copy in a library. It's forty quid on Kindle!