JULY 2015 READING

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One great novel, one good one, two indifferent ones and three (surprisingly) irritating ones alongside two history books of varying quality; my non-work reading for the month.
Category: Reviews

Much of my reading time has been dominated by getting into Schnabel's Early Christian mission; I've mentioned this once or twice elsewhere, so I won't say more here. Suffice to say that it will keep me going for a few month's yet. I've also written a publishers blurb for another book that I'm really excited about, but can't say anything till it actually comes out. However, on the less serious side of things, I've done a little reading this month.

Fiction

The first book I ever read through in one sitting was Lewis' The Lion The Witch and the Wardrobe, that was forty odd years ago. Since then, I've read theÂ Chronicles of Narnia (7 Volumes)Â more times than I can count. I started reading them again this month, but gave up after Dawn Treader. Perhaps I'm getting old, but I was found Lewis' prose really irritating and couldn't face any more of it.

Ed James writes gritty police procedurals based in Scotland, that are generally available fairly cheaply on Kindle.Â SnaredÂ is his latest offering, with a new central character. All the usual elements of a police story are here; a good mystery, clever detectives with dysfunctional private lives and a nice twist in the last couple of chapters. If you don't mind the odd rude word and gruesome scenario, this isn't a bad read for a journey or by the beach. I have to admit that my enjoyment was rather spoiled because I read it immediately afterÂ Original SinÂ by P.D. James. No one writes crime fiction as well as P.D. James. I've read this book a few times, but I'm still amazed by the quality of her writing and the loving detail in which she sketches even minor characters. Great stuff!

Blindsided (A Thriller)Â is available for free on Kindle. I read it on holiday and quite enjoyed it at the time, but couldn't remember much about it afterwards; it's that sort of book. Likewise,Â A Man of Some Repute (A Very English Mystery Book 1)Â didn't strain the brain cells, but it was a pleasant enough read when the rain was pouring down on Skye.

Non Fiction

It's interesting how many battles in European history have been fought in northern-France and Belgium. I seem to remember that John Keegan wrote an interesting chapter on why that is so; I should revisit it. This month, I read two books about battles which were fought within fifty miles of each other and 130 years apart and which couldn't have been more different.

Ardennes 1944: Hitler's Last GambleÂ by Antony Beevor is an excellent overview of the Battle of the Bulge. I've read most of this author's books about different aspects of the second world war and can't recommend them highly enough. If you are interested in military history, you will want to read this, but you probably don't need me to point that out.Â Waterloo: The History of Four Days, Three Armies and Three BattlesÂ by Bernard Cornwall is a bit of a mixed bag. It's not the best overview of the battle that I've read, but, as you would expect from the author of the Sharpe novels, it is very readable. If you've read the Sharpe books and would like to know more, or if you just fancy reading

some history on holiday, this isn't a bad place to start. However, if you are really interested in knowing what went on 200 years ago, you'd do much better to get hold ofÂ The Battle: The Definitive History of the Battle of WaterlooÂ by Alessandro Barbero.