READING: JANUARY 2018

Posted on January 26, 2018 by Eddie

Some brief remarks on the books I have read this month.
Category: Observations

As I mentioned in an earlier post, I'm going to try and give some brief notes on everything I read this year. Some books will get posts of their own, but most will get included in a brief summary at the end of the month. You will be able to find everything by looking at the tag reading2018.

Christian Books

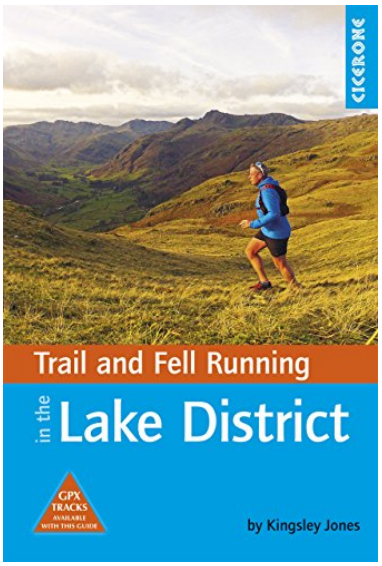
For the most part, this month, I've been reading the odd chapter here and there with regard to my PhD studies and some other writing projects that I've got on the go. One book that I did read all the way through is by the head of the Wycliffe Global Alliance, Kirk Franklin,Â Towards Global Missional Leadership: A Journey Through Leadership Paradigm Shift in the Mission of God.Â Overall, this is an interesting and useful book which looks at how mission agencies can and should change in the light of developments in the world church. I'd strongly recommend it. I do have a slight issue (which derives from my PhD) and that is that I'm not sure what relevance the theme of the mission of God has to the book - even though the term is found on virtually every change. The book doesn't set out to explore different theological approaches, but I wonder what difference it would have made to the reflections in the book if the term "the mission of God" was absent from it.

History

Gibraltar: The Greatest Siege in British HistoryÂ is a monster of a book. It's available for Kindle, but I received the hardback as a birthday present and spent a good deal of my Christmas holidays reading it. It tells a story that I knew nothing about and tells it very well. If you are interested in military history then you could do much worse than dig this one out. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Running

Hal Koerner's Field Guide to Ultrarunning: Training for an Ultramarathon, from 50K to 100 Miles and BeyondÂ is an interesting addition to my library of running books. It is less prescriptive than many books on distance running and encourages you to find out what works for you, rather than slavishly following what works for the author. There is good stuff on how to cope with the bad patches that come in any long race. A word of warning; the training plans at the end are definitely for those who want to actually compete in Ultra races, rather than just jog along at the back and complete them.



Trail and Fell Running in the Lake District: 40 routes in the National Park including classic routes (Trail Running)this does what is says on the cover and gives suggestions for running routes in the

Lakes. It's a bit like a walking guide, only it expects you to go faster! I anticipate trying a few of these routes as the weather gets warmer.

Fiction

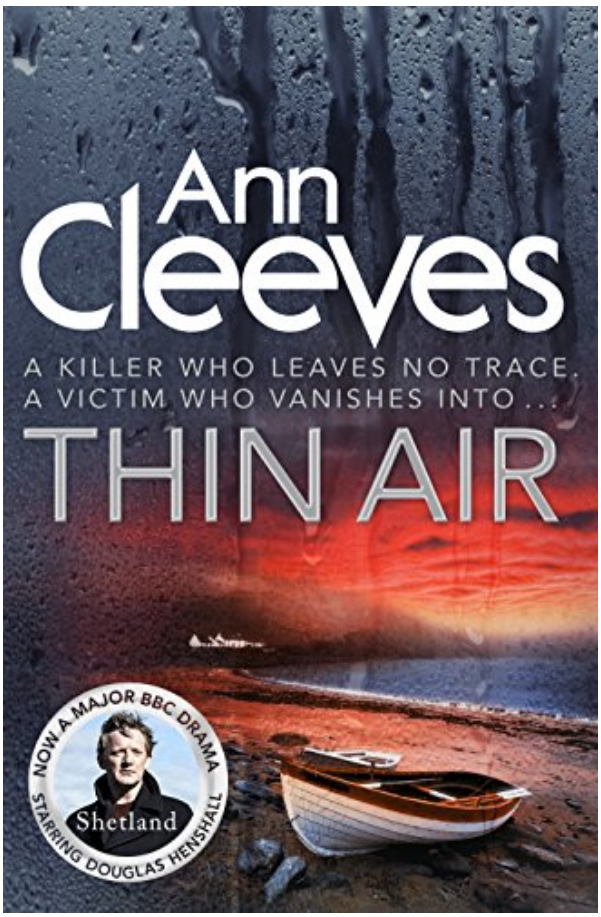
And so to by far the largest group; I've been having one of my periods of insomnia over the last few weeks, which always increases the amount of fiction that I read. The volume of fiction that I get through means that I am always on the lookout for a bargain. I use Amazon Prime reading and get regular emails from bookbub which offers books for free or at reduced prices. Both of these services offer a variety of stuff, some good, some less so and some execrable. In case you are interested, I've found that if the following terms occur in the description of the book, it will almost certainly be rubbish; "operative", "Navy Seal", "only X could save the world" and "special forces". I'd also avoid any book that calls itself the "first volume in the X trilogy", far too many authors think they are Tolkien and they are not!

Andy Weir's intelligent sci-fi thrillerÂ ArtemisÂ is definitely the pick of the fiction that I've read this month. It's a cracking read, worth it for the story alone, but the addition of well thought through scientific details elevates it to another level. If you've never pondered the problems of welding metals in a vacuum, this book will make you do so. If the government of Kenya have not read this book and started to follow some of the things suggested in it, they are missing a real trick!

Space Team: A Comedic Sci-Fi AdventureÂ is ok, no more. It's free on Kindle and certainly worth getting at that price. It's basically the Guardians of the Galaxy but not as funny.

Brick: an action-packed crime thriller (DI Braddick Book 1)Â another book that I got free on Kindle and quite enjoyed. It's a bit too violent for my tastes and I'm not at all convinced that it is action packed, but it would while away a long journey or a few sleepless nights well enough.

One of the real discoveries in my trawl through cheap books for Kindle is the author Ed James. His series of books set in Scotland and featuring Scott Cullen are excellent (if a bit heavy on the profanity). I'm less convinced by his new series which are set in London, butÂ What Doesn't Kill You (A DI Fenchurch novel Book 3)Â was pleasant enough read; certainly better than the two books above.



Ann Cleeves writes great character driven murder mysteries and I'd thoroughly recommend them to anyone looking for a good read. I actually pay for her books! If you've seen the ITV series Vera, or the BBC's Shetland, you will have an idea of the background to her two series, though the plots in the TV series diverge substantially from the books. This month I readÂ White Nights (Shetland Book 2)Â by mistake. I had been planning to read one of the later books in the series and it was only after a couple of chapters that I realised that I'd already read this one, but by then I was hooked. I then read Cold Earth (Shetland Book 7)Â andÂ Thin Air (Shetland Book 6)Â out of sequence because following titles on a Kindle isn't always as obvious as it might be at three in the morning. The character in these books are well drawn and it is intriguing following their stories from book to book. It's well worth reading the whole series in order if you can. The Shetland setting is wonderful, though, never having been there, I've no idea how accurate it is. I note in passing that we are now up to book seven in the Shetland quartet and that is without mentioningÂ Too Good To Be True (Quick Reads 2016)Â a novella/short story featuring Jimmy Perez the hero of the Shetland books who is transplanted to the Scottish Borders. It's well worth 98p of anyone's money.