DECEMBER 2018 READING AND BOOKS OF THE YEAR

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Over the last year, I have read 133 books, some good, some less so and some awful! Here is December's offering with a mention of my two favourite books of the year.
Category: Observations

Non Fiction

I've read a lot of history, but I've never actually studied it formally. This means that I don't always see how things link together or what things happened at the same times as which other things.Â Endeavour: The Ship and the Attitude that Changed the WorldÂ is a book written for people like me. At face value, it's the story of the ship that Captain Cook sailed in, but in the amount of period detail and background makes this a wonderful example of how history should be taught. Any book about a ship which starts off by examining the growth of oak trees in North Yorkshire is alright by me. I can't recommend this one highly enough.Â Falklands Gunner: A Day-by-Day Personal Account of the Royal Artillery in the Falklands War, does what it says in the title. I can't imagine that anyone would want to pay the full price of around Â£12 on Kindle, but I got it for a pound or so and it was a good read at that price.

Science Fiction

The Lost Tales of Power: Volumes 1-3 (Lost Tales of Power Box Set Book 1)Â Apparently, there are lots of books in this series, but I only read the first three (cheap on Kindle). If you can imagine something like Azimov's Foundation series crossed with Lord of the Rings, you won't go far wrong. The story telling isn't as strong as either of those two, but the mixture of space opera and sword and sorcery is quite good fun for a while.

Detective Fiction

I know that I readÂ The Advent Killer, but I really can't remember much about it. It gets lots of good reviews on Amazon, but the fact that I can't recall it less than a month after finishing it indicates that it didn't do much for me.Â Code to ZeroÂ isn't a detective novel, but I had to include it somewhere. If you've read anything by Ken Follett, you will know what to expect; a convoluted story, well told. If you like your detective stories to be free from gore and violence then you can't really go wrong withÂ Deadly PatternÂ (or, presumably, other books in the series. Set in the sixties or seventies, this novel is all woodbines and pints of bitter, and the killer is obvious from the moment you meet him or her, but it's not bad.Â Frost and AshesÂ is made of altogether grittier stuff. This Scandi-Noir story set in rural Denmark is a great read, with well though through characters and an excellent, if somewhat disturbing denouement. I will go back and read others in this series.Â Natural Causes, starts off like a normal detective novel, but there is a paranormal twist that I found very unpleasant. This is a shame, because the author writes well and has produced a great mystery story which did not need the messing around with the occult to make it worth a read. Sadly, I won't read any others by this author. Finally for the year,Â The Body in the Dales (A Yorkshire Murder Mystery Book 1)Â is set very close to where we live and is a pretty good read. The author is trying a bit too hard to be "Yorkshire", but the book doesn't suffer too much from the random bits of dialect that are thrown in. All in all, it's a pleasing mystery with well drawn characters (despite the obligatory cockney who must appear in any book set in the North) which kept me guessing to the end.

A rough count indicates that I've read 86 fiction books and 47 non-fiction books this year for a grand total of 133. This total is partly because I read quickly and partly because I don't sleep very well. Much of the fiction has been consumed when I would rather have been sleeping!

There are two books which stand out from the pile and which deserve being mentioned again, these are Global Humility by Andy McCoullough which is a must read for anyone who is a missionary, trains missionaries or supports missionaries. If you read Kouyanet, you should probably read this book, too. Perhaps just beating this one for my best book of the year is Christianity in the Twentieth Century by Bryan Stanley. If you want to know what is going on with the church around the world, you have to read this book.