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Autumn/Winter 2009 Highlights

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Tuscany

A History

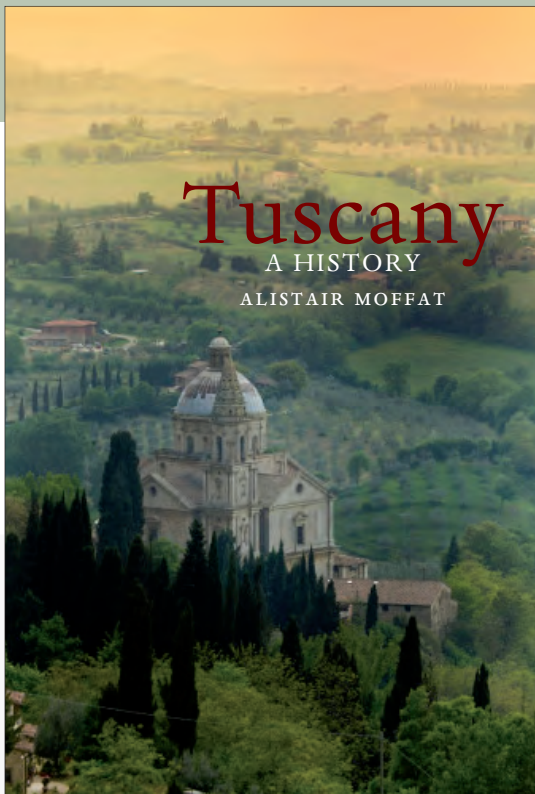
Alistair Moffatt

Ever since the days of the Grand Tour, Tuscany has cast its spell over the British, who are attracted by the perfect combination of history, art, architecture, superb natural beauty and weather – not to mention magnificent traditions of food and drink.

What is it that makes this exquisite part of Italy so seductive? To answer this question Alistair Moffatt embarks on a journey into Tuscany's past.

From the flowering of the Etruscan civilization in the seventh century BC through the rise of the powerful medieval communes of Arezzo, Luca, Pisa and Florence, and the role the area played as the birthplace of the Renaissance, he underlines both the area's regional uniqueness as

well as the vital role it has played in the history of the whole of Italy. Informative and entertaining, this book includes a wealth of information not found in tourist guides and is the first modern history of the area in English.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 831 5

£20 hbk

234 x 156mm

304pp

32pp colour plates

History/travel

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October 2009

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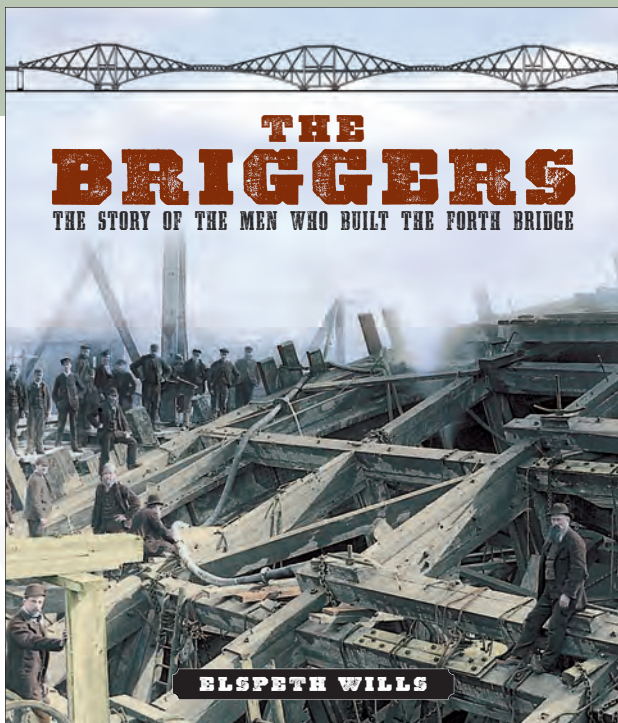
The Briggers

The Story of the Men who Built the Forth Bridge Elspeth Wills

The Forth Bridge has long been recognised as one of the finest examples of Victorian engineering on the planet and has achieved an iconic status as one of the great feats of western civilisation since its official opening in 1890.

Lavishly illustrated throughout with stunning archive images, Elspeth Wills uncovers the human story behind 'the engineering marvel': the story of the Briggers. It is a story that has never been told before – of ordinary men working on an extraordinary structure in

an often hostile and dangerous environment. Recognised throughout the world as an enduring icon of Scotland, the Forth Bridge is more than just a testament to the genius of Victorian engineering; it is a monument to all those who worked to realise its vision and to the scores of lives that were lost in the process. In this groundbreaking new work, Elspeth Wills gives a voice to the forgotten heroes who helped to make the ambition of the bridge a reality.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 761 5

£16.99 pbk

280 x 240mm

144pp

b/w illustrations throughout

Birlinn

July 2009

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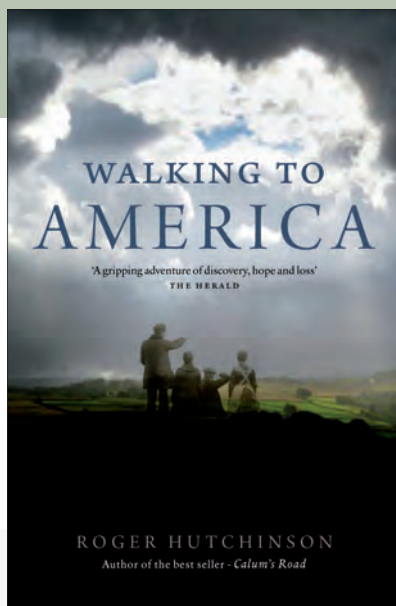
Walking to America

A Boyhood Dream

Roger Hutchinson

The moving story of an extraordinary odyssey undertaken 120 years ago by one small family: the author's own.

In the 1880s a small family set off on foot from County Durham on a remarkable journey that took them via Liverpool across the Atlantic to America – and then, after a string of epic adventures, back home again. Although spurred on by the hope of a better life far away from the mining towns of North-east England, they were also in search of something else. One of them was blind, and if a miracle cure existed, it must surely be found in America, a land of such immense opportunity that almost anything must be possible. Roger Hutchinson follows in their footsteps to paint a vivid picture of late Victorian Britain and America, and explore a much neglected story: that of the millions of New World immigrants who tasted its promise but then returned to the Old.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 783 7

£9.99 hbk

198 x 129mm

224pp

Non-fiction

Birlinn

September 2009

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An Accidental Tragedy

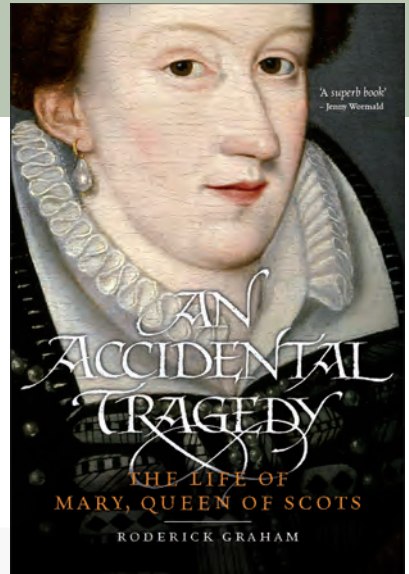
The Life of Mary, Queen of Scots

Roderick Graham

'fluent ... compelling' – Paul Scott, *Sunday Herald*

'a superb book' – Jenny Wormald,
University of Edinburgh

Based on contemporary documents and histories, Roderick Graham paints a unique picture of Mary that sees her neither as a Catholic martyr, nor as a husband-murdering adulteress, but as a young girl adrift in the dangerous seas of sixteenth-century politics. Mary Stuart had none of the ruthlessness of her contemporary sisters, and the female empowerment of Catherine de Medici, Diane de Poitiers or Elizabeth Tudor passed her by. In an age of intellectually brilliant and powerful women, Mary relied on her beauty and charm in place of reason and determination. Passively and gracefully, she allowed events to overtake her as accidents, and when she did attempt to control her future she unwittingly set in train the events that would lead her to the executioner's block.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 803 2

£9.99 pbk

198 x 129mm

480pp

16pp b/w plates

Scottish History

Birlinn

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The Leper's Bell

The Autobiography of a Changeling Norman Maclean

'a 24-carat comedy jewel that just keeps sparkling'

– Bruce Morton, Radio Scotland

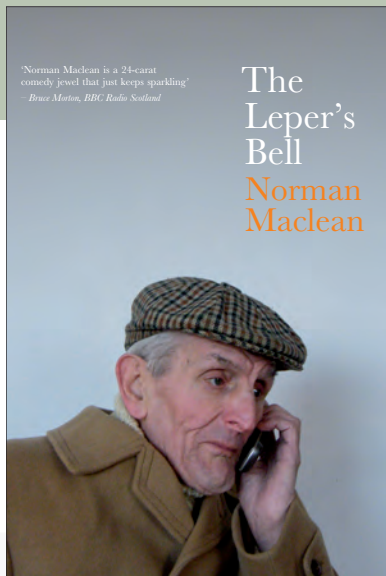
'the Billy Connolly of the Gaidhealtachd'

– Calum MacDonald, Runrig

'a one-off and the complete entertainer'

– Robbie Shepherd

A comedian, singer, composer, musician, linguist, actor and author, Norman Maclean is a living legend in the Gaelic world and a household name across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Yet his career has been etched with enormous highs and lows – a reflection of the turmoil of his private life. In this analytical, frank yet often humorous autobiography, Norman Maclean reveals the man behind the comedy and the crippling horrors of alcoholism. It is in turns tragic and uplifting, devastating and hilarious, elegant and heartbreaking, and one of the most compelling and moving memoirs to appear in recent years.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 827 8

£16.99 hbk

234 x 156mm

288pp

16pp b/w plates

Biography/Scottish

Birlinn

August 2009

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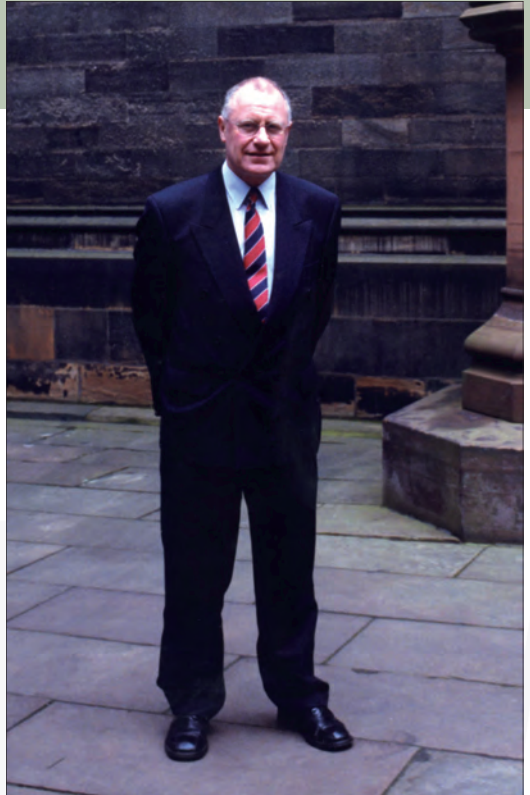
Let the People Decide

Dennis Canavan

Foreword by Tony Benn

Throughout his 33-year political career, Dennis Canavan has been recognised as one of the most colourful politicians in Westminster and Holyrood. A keen supporter of devolution, he gained recognition for voting against the Blair Government's proposals to cut benefits for single-parent children, abolish student grants and introduce tuition fees, as well as successfully amending parliament's landmark right-to-roam legislation to extend access to the Queen's estates, and introducing a bill to make St Andrew's Day a national holiday.

In this book he looks back over his distinguished and sometimes controversial career as well as a personal life that, with the loss of three sons, has been marred by tragedy.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 839 1

£16.99 pbk

234 x 156mm

224pp

Politics/Biography

16pp b/w plates

Birlinn

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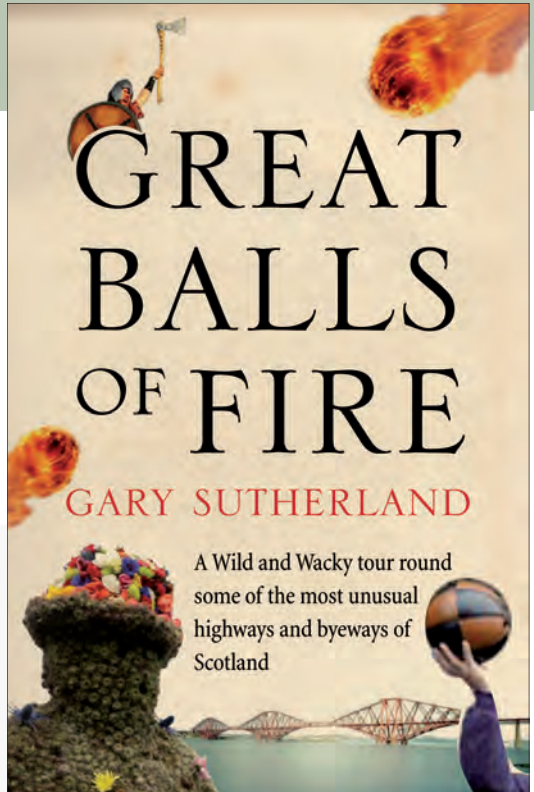
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Great Balls of Fire

A Year of Scottish Festivals

Gary Sutherland

Old habits die hard in Scotland. During the calendar year, communities in every corner of the country get up to all sorts of capers in the name of tradition. Gary Sutherland's year of living ceremoniously results in this custom-made guide to Scotland's annual festivals in all their wonder and eccentricity. From Up Helly Aa in Shetland to Whuppity Scourie in Lanark, *Great Balls of Fire* is a hilarious and insightful journey around Scotland that should not be missed.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 768 4

£9.99 pbk

198 x 129mm

224pp

b/w plates TBC

Scottish/Travel

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September 2009

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Just Daft

The Chic Murray Story Robbie Grigor

'full of Chic's gloriously absurd humour' *Daily Mail*

Chic Murray's oblique, often perverse look at life was underpinned by a stunning sense of timing and led him to become one of the great comic innovators of the twentieth century. Family friend Robbie Grigor follows Chic's career from his amateur beginnings in the 1930s and subsequent double act with his wife Maidie all the way to the Royal Variety Show of 1956 and his appearances in films such as *Casino Royale* (1967), *Gregory's Girl* (1980) and the hit musical *You'll Never Walk Alone* (1984). With jokes, stories, photographs and tributes from fellow comedians and others, this is the ultimate celebration of the king of alternative humour.

ISBN: 978 1 84158 846 9

£14.99 pbk

246 x 189mm

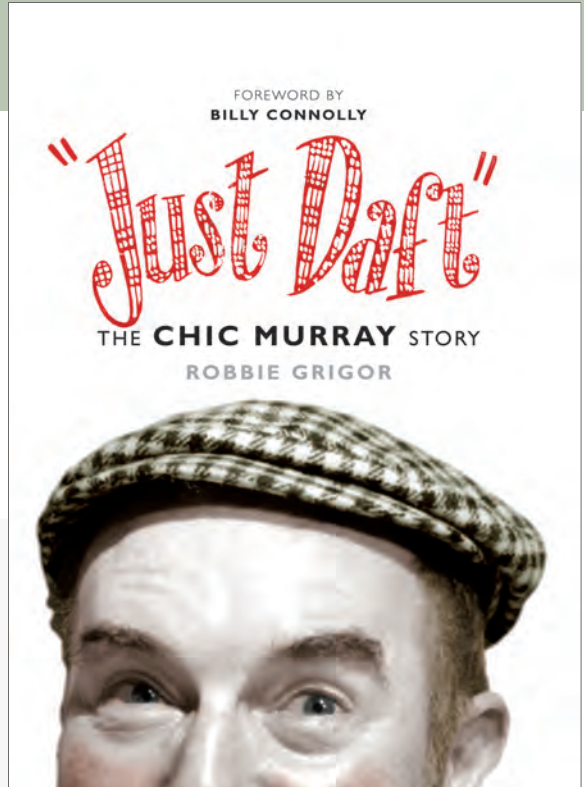
240pp

b/w illustrations throughout

Humour/biography

Birlinn

September 2009



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Chic Murray's Funnyosities

Edited by Robbie Grigor

My boss is so narrow minded that
when he has an idea, it comes out
folded

I use to write her love letters in
the sand. But it was an incredible
hassle trying to get sand into the
pillar box

'Do you know the piano's resting
on my foot?' 'No, but hum it and I'll
play it.'

Featuring a huge number of Chic's
funniest one-liners – some well
known and others taken from
material newly found by the
great man's family – *Funnyosities*
is the perfect distillation of Chic's
gloriously off-beat humour.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 848 3

£7.99 pbk

156 x 112mm

160pp

Humour

8pp b/w plates

Birlinn

September 2009

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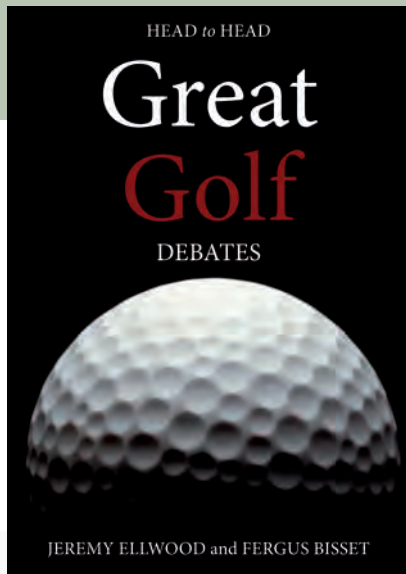
Head to Head

Great Golf Debates

Jeremy Ellwood and Fergus Bissett

Illustrated by Rupert Besley

Golf clubs the length and breadth of the UK are hotbeds of debate. Go into any clubhouse on a Saturday afternoon and you'll find people arguing the virtues of links golf over parkland or Stableford over medal play. In *Great Golf Debates* Jeremy Ellwood and Fergus Bissett look at forty of golf's most disputed issues from the serious to the more light-hearted, examining them from opposing viewpoints in an entertaining yet informed manner. From 'Tiger Woods vs Jack Nicklaus' to 'Pull carts vs Carry bags' they provide convincing arguments to give supporters of both camps some added ammunition, appealing directly to every British golfer's argumentative nature.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 777 6

£9.99 hbk

198 x 129mm

176pp

b/w illustrations throughout

Sport/Humour

Birlinn

September 2009

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Robbie Shepherd

Auto-biography

Robbie Shepherd

One of the most distinctive voices of the North-east, Robbie Shepherd is known throughout the country as presenter of BBC Radio Scotland's *Take the Floor* and *The Reel Blend*. He is equally renowned as a champion of his native Doric – his weekly columns for the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, written in this rich and evocative tongue, have long enjoyed an enthusiastic following. In this book, Robbie looks back over a long and illustrious career which has seen his lifelong commitment and passion for Scottish music rewarded by numerous awards and accolades, including an MBE for services to Scottish Music and Culture. Packed with anecdote and insight, and told in Robbie's inimitable style, this is one of the most eagerly awaited Scottish biographies of the year.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 837 7

£16.99 hbk

234 x 156mm

256pp

Biography

16 pp b/w plates

Birlinn

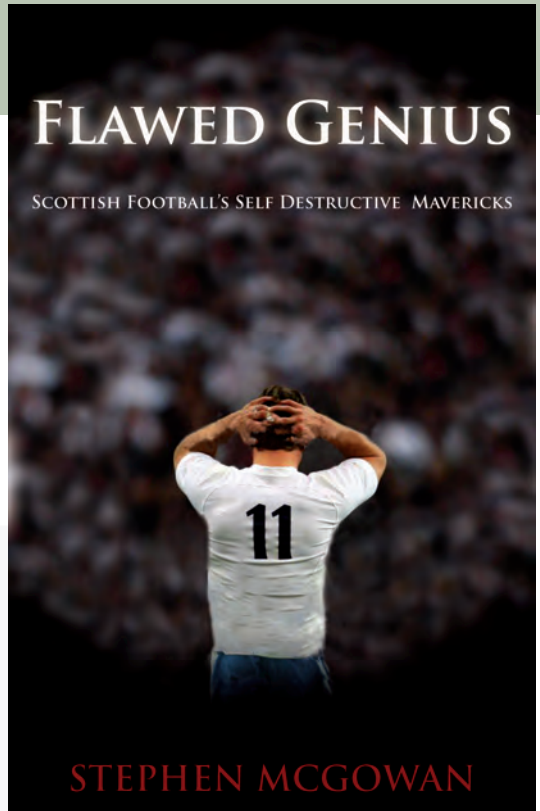
October 2009

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Flawed Genius

Scottish Football's Self-destructive Mavericks Stephen McGowan

What is it that makes seriously flawed footballer so intriguing? From Hugh Gallacher, the Wembley Wizard who died of shame, to George Best, Hibernian's ageing lothario, to the Three Amigos – Celtic's trio of wayward overseas mercenaries – the great entertainers have always come with baggage. In *Flawed Genius*, Stephen McGowan recounts the in-depth stories of Gascoigne and Goram, Best and Baxter, Charnley and Cadette and the equally wayward figures of Paolo Di Canio, Andy Ritchie, Pierre van Hooijdonk, Willie Johnston and Willie Hamilton. Here, together for the first time, the colourful contributions of each and every player in the Scottish game's rich tapestry of flawed geniuses are brought vividly to life.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 842 1

£9.99 pbk

216 x 138mm

256pp

Illus.

Sport

Birlinn

October 2009

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Tom Morris of St Andrews

The Colossus of Golf 1821–1908

David Malcolm and Peter E. Crabtree

Voted 2009 Golf Book of the Year by the United States Golf Association

Authors presented with the Herbert Warren Wind award by the American Golf Writers Association in 2009 for their contribution to the game

This is the first biography in over a century of the great Tom Morris of St Andrews who, more than anyone before or since, stamped his individual character upon the sport and who, in large measure, made golf what it is today. By the time of his death golf had become the most popular and geographically widespread of all sports and the essential recreational pursuit of gentlemen. Tom Morris was a sporting hero in an age of heroes, as well as golf's first iconic figure.



ISBN: 978 1 84158 818 6

£35 hbk

235 x 290mm

352pp

b/w illustrations throughout

Sport

Birlinn

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Architect of Victory

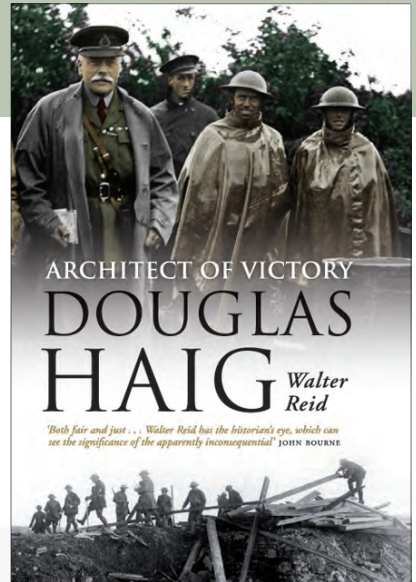
Douglas Haig

Walter Reid

'makes a virtue of presenting the facts dispassionately' – Great War Forum

'a superb biography, authoritative, balanced, persuasive – and highly readable' – *Scotland on Sunday*

Douglas Haig's popular image as an unimaginative butcher is unenviable and unmerited. This is the first biography of Haig that takes into account modern military scholarship, giving a more rounded picture of the private man than has previously been available. What emerges is a picture of a comprehensible human being, not necessarily particularly likeable, but honourably ambitious, able and intelligent, and the man more than any other responsible for delivering victory in 1918.



ISBN: 978 | 84341 045 4

£9.99 pbk

198 x 129mm

496pp

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Biography/Military history

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