

## Waterstone's, Exeter Roman Gate



With Christmas on the way, and our thoughts turning to getting loads of lovely books as presents (hopefully, anyway!) Cyprus Well popped down to our local Waterstone's to have a chat with Paul and Gill about [Waterstone's](#), bookselling and books in general.

**We'd imagine November and December are good months for selling books. Is that the case? What are the big sellers in Exeter?**

Paul: Yes, the highest percentage of sales for the year are made during this period

Gill: *Jamie's Thirty Minute Meals*, Keith Richards' *Life*, Neil MacGregor's *History of the World in 100 Objects* and Stephen Fry's *Fry Chronicles*.

**Throughout the year, do you see differences in the sales of different types of book, or genres of fiction?**

Gill: Yes. In the New Year lots of Self Help, Dieting, Giving up Smoking, etc. New Years Resolution books! Spring into Summer travel picks up, and Study Guides for school exams. Going into Autumn we have the academic season; lots of textbooks and reference books (dictionaries etc). From mid-October things start to build for Christmas. We sell lots of biographies, humour, gift books, art, music, photography. Fiction does well throughout the year but especially so at Christmas.

**Is there a big impact on sales of a particular book if they are included in particular offers, eg 3for2?**

Gill: Very big. Some titles would sell well anyway but the 3for2 offer does significantly uplift sales and give books a higher profile than they would otherwise have received.

**We hear a very great deal about the rise of the eBook, digital downloads, iPads etc. How is this all viewed from a Bookshop's perspective?**

Paul: Waterstone's have embraced the technology in a big way and, whilst I personally would not enjoy reading books in this fashion, anything that promotes reading and literacy has got to be a good thing. Sales are certainly on the rise.

**If any of our readers wanted to work in a bookshop, what's the best way to go about that?**

Paul: All our bookseller vacancies are posted on [Waterstones.com](http://Waterstones.com). Applicants are then vetted and suitable candidates passed down to the branch concerned. We then call people in for interview.

**You take part in lots of Exeter book events, eg Exeter Library Live, Exeter Poetry Festival. Do you like taking the shop out “on tour” so to speak?**

Paul: Yes, it’s probably one of the best parts of the job for me, out there flying the flag for Waterstones and helping to enthuse people in the wonderful ancient art of reading! Meet a lot of interesting people too!

**What are the Books of the Year for the Exeter RomanGate staff?**

Paul & Gill: Too many to mention but *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett, the *Hunger Games* series by Suzanne Collins, *Zeitoun* by Dave Eggers, *Swan Thieves* by Elizabeth Kostova, and *Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* by David Mitchell, have all been mentioned.

**And inside info on big books for 2011? ....**

Paul & Gill: Ah, that would be telling now! Seriously though, there’s a new Jean Auel in January, the next Robert Jordan (as written by Brandon Sanderson), *Wise Man’s Fear* by Patrick Rothfuss, *Blood Count* by Robert Goddard, and (set in Devon), the new Philip Hensher, *King of the Badgers*.

**Thanks all!**

