

# weekender LITERATURE & DVDs

## An East End publican, with visits abroad and at home

### ROME: AA ESSENTIAL

Available in paperback by AA Publishing, priced £5.99

Review by Stephen Sinfield

ALTHOUGH I have yet to travel to Rome, it is a city that I, like many others, know something about.

Without the help of any travel guides I know that any visit to this magnificent city demands a visit to the Basilica, the Trevi Fountain and the Colosseum.

So far so good as this pocket-sized guide features all of these main tourist sites.

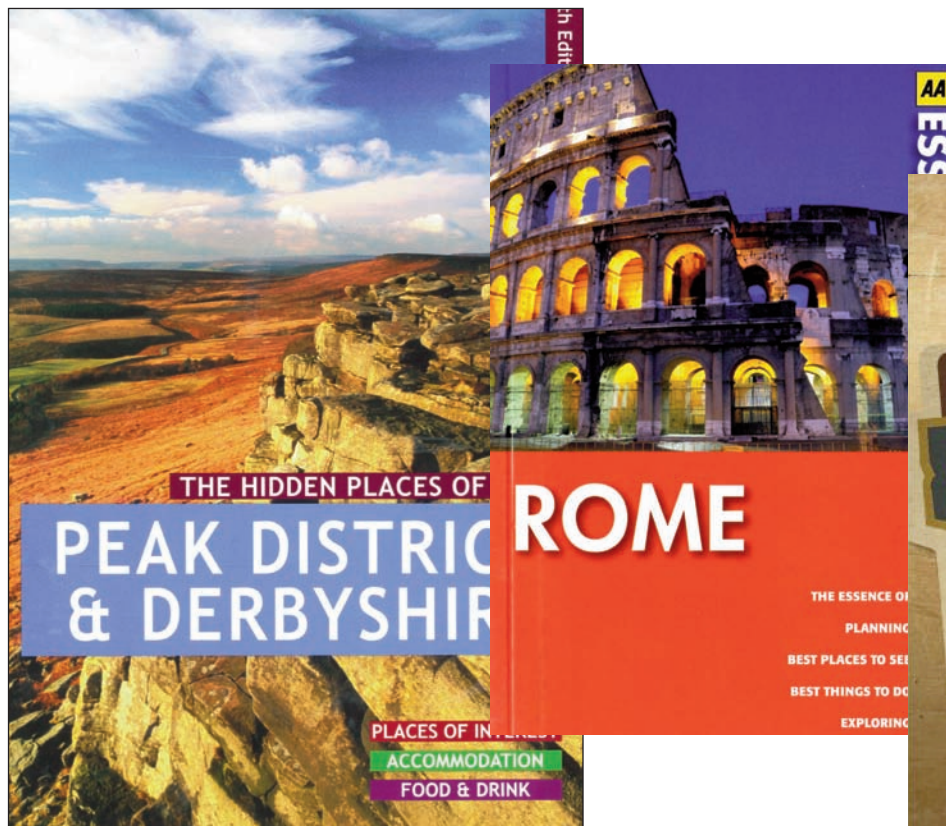
Coverage differs between attractions with the Colosseum being tipped as one of the 'must-see' attractions in the guide while I had to search in the index for the single page entry for the Trevi Fountain.

The book achieves a good balance of giving everything a little coverage so that you have the basics to help along the way — not forgetting of course this book is solely designed as a pocket travel guide. If you wanted detail you could opt for one of the many chunkier AA guides.

In addition to the tourist attractions, the book also features essential advice on food and drink, weather and transport.

To help you plan your time better the guide divides Rome into sections so that you can visit all of the key attractions in one area before moving on. As expected, contact details, a rough price guide, bus numbers and opening times are included with every attraction listed.

The book packs in so much in such a small space. Combined with a chunkier, in-depth analysis guide, you could easily survive for weeks in the city.



### THE HIDDEN PLACES OF THE PEAK DISTRICT AND DERBYSHIRE

Available in paperback by Travel Publishing Ltd, priced £8.99

Review by Gareth Butterfield

HAVING read most of the previous editions of the Hidden Places series of local guidebooks, I was very keen to get my hands on this, the ninth edition of Travel Publishing's Peak District and Derbyshire guide.

The books, which cover most of the country's tourist hotspots, offer readers a well-researched and enthralling guide to the subject area of the book, by delving deeper than most guidebooks and unearthing the secrets of some of the area's finest towns and villages.

Village by village, region by region, The Hidden Places of the Peak District and Derbyshire keeps springing surprises.

For example, would you know which South Derbyshire Village is home to a phone box that has been given listed building status? Did you realise the pretty village of Sutton-on-the-Hill has a rather interesting sporting

claim to fame? It's all in the book, and a lot more besides.

What's hidden away on your own doorstep might surprise you, but I've never come across a book that's offered as much motivation to get out and explore the magnificent countryside near to where we live.

The Peak District is one of the country's most beautiful national parks, but it's huge. And exploring it might seem appealing, but perhaps a bit intimidating.

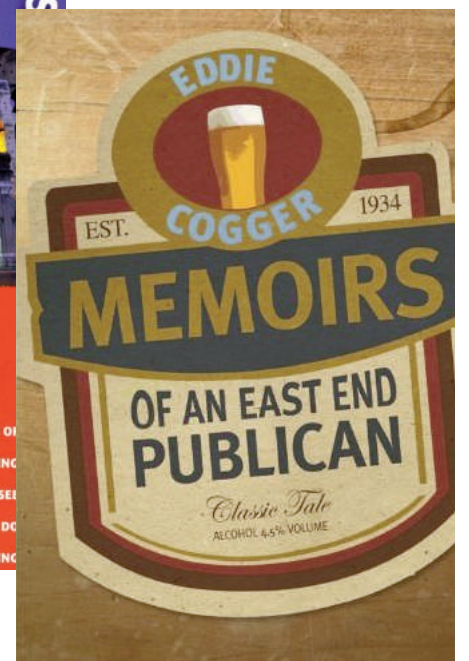
So grab yourself a copy of this book, arm yourself with knowledge that would rival some of the best local historians, pick a nice day and make the most of this fascinating and inexpensive "guided tour".

### MEMOIRS OF AN EAST END PUBLICAN BY EDDIE COGGER

Published in hardback by Book Guild Publishing priced £17.99.

Review by Caroline Kay

DUCKING and diving most of his life, Eddie Cogger had a tough East End upbringing. A father with a violent temper, and hanging out



with gangs on the street, taught him to look after himself.

Born in Manor Park in 1934, Eddie may not be the celebrity we are used to reading about, but his autobiography is fascinating, recounting his adventures on land and sea.

Among his many jobs (and I mean many) he spent three years in the Merchant Navy (as many East Enders did), and did his National Service in the Army Catering Corps, based in Germany.

He talks openly about his love for his wife and her battle against alcoholism, and how he survived serious accidents at work, a terrifying collision at sea, and a stabbing by a member of his family.

In this no-holds-barred autobiography Eddie tells of how he built a successful career for himself as a publican, meeting all the challenges thrown at him. Underpinning it all is his love and pride in his wife and sons, who have stuck together as a family through many testing times.

Full of anecdotes, this is a smashing book — one which I thoroughly enjoyed reading, especially the hilarious chapter when Lena tells Eddie what she wants to call their second son!

## weekender DVD RELEASES



### MERLIN SERIES THREE

Cert PG. Fremantlemedia Enterprises. Approx 570 mins. 5 discs. £34.99

Review by Caroline Kay

TAKING a dip to the dark side, the latest series of Merlin to be released on DVD doesn't fail to entertain.

I didn't think the programme could get any better after the climax of season two, but the producers have pulled out all the stops and no expense has been spared. There's something for everyone in the programme — humour suitable for the children, but also a dark side which establishes Merlin as another triumphant drama from the BBC.

Sorcery, swords and swashbuckling adventures make for compulsive viewing as the DVD boxset follows our heroes as they face their greatest challenge yet. Misbegotten secrets are exposed and old friends choose new sides.

Has Merlin finally met his match as Morgana's corruption reaches fever pitch?

Extras including an exclusive 'making of series three' with interviews from the stars of the show including Colin Morgan (Merlin), Bradley James (Arthur) and Katie McGrath (Morgana), along with the creative minds behind the story, the monsters and

building the world of Camelot. Watch out for the out-takes, they are simply hilarious as we see another side to the actors we have come to love. I can't wait for series four!

### WIN ● WIN ● WIN ●

The Burton Mail has teamed up with Fremantle Enterprises to give away three copies of the DVD boxset of Merlin Series 3.

For your chance to win simply answer the following question:

**Name the actor who plays the character King Uther Pendragon.**

Send your answer on a postcard, together with your name and address, to Merlin Series 3 DVD Competition, Burton Mail, 65-68 High Street, Burton, DE14 1LE. Normal Staffordshire Newspapers rules apply and closing date for entries is noon on Monday, January 31 2011.

### SEA PATROL UK — COMPLETE SERIES ONE

Cert E. Acorn Media UK. Approx 260 minutes. 2 discs. £19.99

Review by Stephen Sinfield

One of the first fly-on-the-wall



documentaries looking at the work of our emergency services was Police Camera Action! back in the early 90s.

Since that time the popular behind the scenes documentaries have covered all of our emergency services and this time, it was the turn of the sea patrol services.

Rescuing climbers from cliffs is the typical scenario for the Sea King rescue teams but this DVD covers far more.

From the fishermen using illegal nets through to smugglers bringing contraband into the UK and sailors in trouble.

What makes this series different to many is that it doesn't focus on one particular group. We get an insight into the working lives of the RNLI, the RAF, the Royal Navy and even the UK Border Agency.

Also making an appearance are the bomb disposal teams who are kept very busy with post war discoveries.

The English Channel is the busiest shipping lane in the world so it really is surprising, that this 22 mile stretch of water that must be littered with unexploded bombs, doesn't cause endless fatalities.

I enjoyed watching the series on Channel Five at the end of last year and this DVD is a nice reminder of that.