

Book sets available to borrow from Barnet Book Club

LP Sets which include a Large Print copy

NF Non-fiction titles

S Shorter read

YP Sets which are suitable for young people

BB or OD available in either eAudiobook or eBook on Borrow Box (BB) or Libby via Overdrive (OD) Apps, see Barnet Libraries Online Resources for further information visit

<https://www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries/online-resources>

Ben Aaronovitch – Rivers of London

Probationary Constable Peter Grant dreams of being a detective in London's Metropolitan Police. Peter's prospects change in the aftermath of a puzzling murder, when he gains exclusive information from an eyewitness who happens to be a ghost. Peter's ability to speak with the lingering dead brings him to the attention of Detective Chief Inspector Thomas Nightingale, who investigates crimes involving magic and other manifestations of the uncanny.

Poppy Adams – The behaviour of moths

Shortlisted for the Costa Award for best first novel. Two elderly sisters meet in the crumbling family mansion after many years apart, and dark secrets are revealed. Claustrophobic and creepy, but funny and compassionate as well.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – Purple hibiscus

Shortlisted for the Orange Prize. Set in Nigeria in the recent past, at a time of political and social crisis, and narrated by an unhappy 15-year-old girl, who discovers love and family scandals when she leaves her oppressive home to live with an aunt.

LP

Aravind Adiga – The white tiger

Man Booker Prize winner. A harsh and very black comedy set in present-day India. The narrator is a peasant turned entrepreneur, very well placed to expose the corrupt and cruel underside of India's rise as a global economic power. Not for the squeamish.

LP

Naomi Alderman - Disobedience

The story of Ronit, the daughter of an Orthodox Jewish Rabbi originally from Hendon now living in Manhattan, her childhood friend Esti and her husband David. The story tells of the contrasts between modern life, religious belief, spirituality and community.

Maya Angelou – I know why the caged bird sings

In this first volume of her six books of autobiography, Maya Angelou beautifully evokes her childhood with her grandmother in the American south of the 1930s. She learns the power of the white folks at the other end of town and suffers the terrible trauma of rape by her mother's lover.

NF

Kate Atkinson – A god in ruins

Explores the life of Teddy Todd, would-be poet, heroic World War II bomber pilot, husband, father, and grandfather as he navigates the perils and progress of the 20th century. For all Teddy endures in battle, his greatest challenge will be to face living in a future he never expected to have.

James Baldwin – Go tell it on the mountain

First published in the 1950, this is a powerful and partly biographical debut novel exploring the life of the Grimes family in Harlem during the Depression era. Emotive and lyrically written.

J G Ballard – High Rise

Within the concealing walls of an elegant forty-storey tower block, the affluent tenants are hell-bent on an orgy of destruction. Cocktail parties degenerate into marauding attacks on ‘enemy’ floors and the once-luxurious amenities become an arena for riots and technological mayhem.

Iain Banks - The Crow Road

Prentice McHoan finds that death always draws him back to his home town in Scotland and the bosom of his family. A study of family, love, grief, death with overtones of a horror novel.

Muriel Barbery – The elegance of the hedgehog

A surprise best-seller in France, this novel is set in an upper-class suburb of Paris, and deals with the lives of two eccentric individuals: a middle-aged working-class woman with highbrow cultural tastes, and an unhappy bourgeois 12-year-old who is planning suicide.

Pat Barker - Toby’s Room

Elinor receives news that her brother Toby is ‘Missing, Believed Killed’ during World War One but is desperate to know what happened to him. The novel depicts the pioneering work done at Queen Mary’s Hospital with facially disfigured soldiers.

Julian Barnes – The Sense of an Ending

Tony Webster and his clique first met Adrian Finn at school. Sex-hungry and book-hungry, they would navigate the girl-less sixth form together, trading in affectations, in-jokes, rumour and wit. Maybe Adrian was a little more serious than the others, certainly more intelligent, but they all swore to stay friends for life.

Sebastian Barry – The secret scripture

Costa Award winner. A very sane hundred-year-old Irishwoman in a mental hospital in County Sligo narrates her life story. Shocking and sad, but hopeful, and exquisitely written.

Alan Bennett – The uncommon reader

The Uncommon Reader is none other than HM the Queen who drifts accidentally into reading when her corgis stray into a mobile library parked at Buckingham Palace. Her reading naturally changes her world view and her relationship with people like the oleaginous prime minister and his repellent advisers. She comes to question the prescribed order of the world and loses patience with much that she must do.

LP & S

John Berendt – Midnight in the garden of good and evil

A nineties non-fiction bestseller, made into a film directed by Clint Eastwood. A journalist visits the extraordinary city of Savannah, Georgia. A true story of intrigue, murder and eccentricity. Part travelogue, part quirky thriller.

Malorie Blackman – Noughts and crosses

Sephy is a Cross – a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a nought – a ‘colourless’ member of the underclass who were once slaves to the Crosses. The two have been friends since early childhood. But that’s as far as it can go. Until the first steps are taken towards more social equality and a limited number of Noughts are allowed into Cross schools.

YP

William Boyd – Any human heart

A life-long series of journals by a fictional British upper-class writer and adventurer spanning the years 1906-1991. Poignant and entertaining, it plays with the idea of literary celebrity, and gives insight into many aspects of twentieth century history and culture.

LP

Bill Bryson – The road to Little Dribbling

To mark the twentieth anniversary of *Notes from a small island*, Bryson makes a brand-new journey round Britain to see what has changed. Following (but not too closely) a route he dubs the Bryson Line, from Bognor Regis to Cape Wrath, by way of places that many people never get to at all, Bryson sets out to rediscover the wondrously beautiful, magnificently eccentric, endearingly unique country that he thought he knew but doesn't altogether recognize any more.

NF

Bill Bryson - Notes from a small island

One of Bill Bryson's most popular books. A travelogue written by an American who lived in Britain for twenty years, this book provides an interesting and humorous account of the Britain.

NF

Jessie Burton – The Miniaturist

On an autumn day in 1686, eighteen-year-old Nella Oortman knocks at the door of a grand house in the wealthiest quarter of Amsterdam. She has come from the country to begin a new life as the wife of illustrious merchant trader Johannes Brandt, but instead she is met by his sharp-tongued sister, Marin. Only later does Johannes appear and present her with an extraordinary wedding gift: a cabinet-sized replica of their home. It is to be furnished by an elusive miniaturist, whose tiny creations mirror their real-life counterparts in unexpected ways.

Jessie Burton – The Muse

On a hot July day in 1967, Odelle Bastien climbs the stone steps of the Skelton gallery in London, knowing that her life is about to change forever. Having struggled to find her place in the city since she arrived from Trinidad five years ago, she has been offered a job as a typist under the tutelage of the glamorous and enigmatic Marjorie Quick. But though Quick takes Odelle into her confidence, and unlocks a potential she didn't know she had, she remains a mystery - no more so than when a lost masterpiece with a secret history is delivered to the gallery.

LP, BB & OD

A S Byatt - Possession

Booker Prize winner. Contemporary academics investigate the life of a Victorian poet, discover controversial secrets and fall in love. A historical novel, a romance and a thriller all at the same time. Complex and very entertaining. The pastiche of Victorian verse is clever, but can be skipped!

Truman Capote – In cold blood

Controversial and compelling, *In Cold Blood* reconstructs the murder in 1959 of a Kansas farmer, his wife and both their children. Truman Capote's comprehensive study of the killings and subsequent investigation explores the circumstances surrounding this terrible crime and the effect it had on those involved. At the centre of his study are the amoral young killers Perry Smith and Dick Hickcock, who, vividly drawn by Capote, are shown to be reprehensible yet entirely and frighteningly human.

Tracy Chevalier – The last runaway

Honor Bright is a sheltered Quaker who has rarely ventured out of 1850s Dorset when she impulsively emigrates to America. Opposed to the slavery that defines and divides the country, she finds her principles tested to the limit when a runaway slave appears at the farm of her new family. In this tough, unsentimental place, where whisky bottles sit alongside quilts, Honor befriends two spirited women who will teach her how to turn ideas into actions.

Clare Clark – Savage Lands

It is 1704 and, in the swamps of Louisiana, France is clinging on to its new colony with less than two hundred men. Into this hostile land comes Elisabeth Savaret, one of twenty-three women sent from Paris to marry men they have never met. With little expectation of happiness, Elisabeth is stunned to find herself falling passionately in love with her husband, infantryman Jean-Claude Babelon. But Babelon is a dangerous man to love.

LP

Chris Cleave – Gold

Kate and Zoe are friends but also ardent rivals - athletes at the top of their game, fighting to compete in the world's greatest sporting contest. Each scarred by tragedy, and each with a great deal to lose, they must choose between family and glory and ask themselves: what will I sacrifice? GOLD captures the extraordinary effort and dedication that go into the pursuit of victory.

Marika Cobbold – Drowning Rose

It is winter in London. Eliza Cummings, a ceramics restorer at the V&A Museum, is leaving work when she receives an unexpected phone call. Standing in the haze of the Christmas lights she hears a voice which draws her back twenty-five years - to the tragic death of her best friend.

Paulo Coelho – The alchemist

An Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried in the Pyramids. What starts out as a journey to find worldly goods turns into a discovery of the treasure found within.

Hunter Davies – The Co-Op’s got Bananas

Despite the struggle to make ends meet during the tough years of warfare in the 1940s and rationing persisting until the early 1950s, life could still be sweet. Especially if you were a young boy, playing football with your pals, saving up to go to the movies at the weekend, and being captivated by the latest escapade of Dick Barton on the radio.

NF

Sallie Day - The palace of strange girls

The Singleton family visit Blackpool every year for their holiday. It is 1959 and Jack is considering his future career at the Yorkshire cotton mill. Meanwhile his wife and two daughters are each facing their own issues. Emotive and an excellent representation of family life during the period.

LP

Patrick Dennis – Auntie Mame

A lost classic, first published in the US fifty years ago. Hilarious and elegant, and set in mid-twentieth century Manhattan. A glamorous, boozy, bohemian socialite is entrusted with the care and education of a young boy.

LP

Patrick DeWitt – The Sisters brothers

An offbeat and modern twist on the Western genre. Charlie and Eli Sisters are gunmen for hire in the 1850s Gold Rush. Nominated for 2011 Man Booker prize.

Anthony Doerr – All the Light we cannot see

A beautiful, stunningly ambitious novel about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II

Sarah Dunant – Blood and beauty: the Borgias

A powerhouse of the Italian Renaissance, their very name epitomizes the ruthless politics and sexual corruption of the Papacy. Stripping away the myths around the Borgias, *Blood & Beauty* breathes life into the astonishing family of Alexander VI and celebrates the raw power of history itself: compelling, complex, and relentless.

Sarah Dunant – Sacred hearts

1570 in the Italian city of Ferrara. Sixteen-year-old Serafina is ripped by her family from an illicit love affair and forced into the convent of Santa Caterina, renowned for its superb music. Serafina's one weapon is her glorious voice, but she refuses to sing. However, watching over Serafina is Zuana, the sister in charge of the infirmary, who understands and might even challenge her incarceration.

Mark Dunn – Ella Minnow Pea: A Novel in Letters

Ella Minnow Pea is a girl living happily on the fictional island of Nollop off the coast of South Carolina. Now Ella finds herself acting to save her friends, family, and fellow citizens from the encroaching totalitarianism of the island's Council, which has banned the use of certain letters of the alphabet as they fall from a memorial statue of Nevin Nollop.

Jennifer Egan - A visit from the goon squad

Winner of the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, Egan's novel is told through a variety of narrators, each linking to the last, switching between time periods and locations. Focuses on themes of youth culture, the music industry, aging and friendship.

LP

Ben Elton – Two Brothers

Two babies are born. Two brothers. United and indivisible, sharing everything. Twins in all but blood. As Germany marches into its Nazi Armageddon, the ties of family, friendship and love are tested to the very limits of endurance. And the brothers are faced with an unimaginable choice. Which one of them will survive?

OD

Gavin Extence - The Universe Versus Alex Woods

17-year-old Alex is stopped at Dover customs with a 113g of marijuana in the glove compartment and the ashes of his dead friend Mr Peterson on the seat next to him. How did he get here? A quirky tale that follows Alex's teenage years.

Sebastian Faulks – A week in December

Set in London, December 2007. A thrilling “state-of-the-nation” satire, cleverly plotted with a large varied cast of characters. More light-hearted than Faulks' previous work. Deals with the recent banking crisis, religious fundamentalism and various other contemporary issues.

LP

Sebastian Faulks – Birdsong

A story of love, death, sex and survival. Stephen Wraysford, a young Englishman, arrives in Amiens in northern France in 1910 to stay with the Azaire family, and falls in love with unhappily married Isabelle. But, with the world on the brink of war, the relationship falters, and Stephen volunteers to fight on the Western Front.

Elena Ferrante – My brilliant friend

A generous hearted story about two friends, Elena and Lila. The story begins in the 1950s, in a poor but vibrant neighbourhood on the outskirts of Naples. Growing up on these tough streets the two girls learn to rely on each other ahead of anyone or anything else. Through the lives of these two women, Ferrante tells the story of a neighbourhood, a city and a country as it is transformed in ways that, in turn, also transform the relationship between her two protagonists.

F Scott Fitzgerald – The great Gatsby

An American classic, published in 1925. A critique of the American Dream, and a portrait of the excesses of the Jazz Age. Self-made millionaire Jay Gatsby falls in love, and falls from grace. Events unfold with tragic inevitability. **LP & S**

Gillian Flynn - Gone Girl

Nick Dunne discovers that his wife, Amy, has gone missing on the morning of their fifth wedding anniversary. The police immediately suspect him, but Nick protests his innocence. What happened to her? A best-selling psychological thriller.

Gillian Flynn – Sharp objects

When two girls are abducted and killed in Missouri, journalist Camille Preaker is sent back to her home town to report on the crimes. Long-haunted by a childhood tragedy and estranged from her mother for years, Camille suddenly finds herself installed once again in her family's mansion, reacquainting herself with her distant mother and the half-sister she barely knows - a precocious 13-year-old who holds a disquieting grip on the town.

Jonathan Safran Foer - Extremely loud and incredibly close

Nine-year-old Oskar lost his father in 9/11, two years before this story begins. He sets out on a mission to search for information on a key he finds that belonged to his father. The tale is narrated both by Oskar and his paternal grandparents, mostly via a series of letters.

Robert Galbraith – The cuckoo’s calling

A gripping, elegant mystery steeped in the atmosphere of London from J K Rowling writing under a pseudonym. When a troubled model falls to her death from a snow-covered Mayfair balcony, it is assumed that she has committed suicide. However, her brother has his doubts, and calls in private investigator Cormoran Strike to consider the case.

Jane Gardam – Old Filth

Long ago, Old Filth was a Raj orphan - one of the many young children sent 'Home' from the East to be fostered and educated in England. Jane Gardam's novel tells his story, from his birth in what was then Malaya to the extremities of his old age.

Sally Gardner – Maggot moon

Winner of the Carnegie Medal and a 2012 Costa Award winner.

Narrated against the backdrop of a ruthless regime determined to beat its enemies in the race to the moon. When his best friend Hector is suddenly taken away, Standish Treadwell realises that it is up to him, his grandfather and a small band of rebels to confront and defeat the ever-present oppressive forces of the Motherland.

YP**Alex Garland – The Beach**

Richard lands in East Asia in search of an earthly utopia. In Thailand, he is given a map promising an unknown island, a secluded beach and a new way of life. What Richard finds when he gets there is breath taking: more extraordinary, more frightening than his wildest dreams. But how long can paradise survive here on Earth? And what lengths will Richard go to save it?

BB & OD

Lisa Genova – Still Alice

A moving story of a woman with early onset Alzheimer's disease. Alice Howland is proud of the life she worked so hard to build. At fifty, she's a cognitive psychology professor at Harvard and a renowned expert in linguistics, with a successful husband and three grown children. When she begins to grow forgetful and disoriented, she dismisses it for as long as she can until a tragic diagnosis changes her life.

LP**Ciara Geraghty - Finding Mr Flood**

Dara Flood's father walked away from the family home thirteen days before she was born. She has now grown up, but her sister Angel has a chronic illness and needs a kidney. Neither Dara nor her mother are a match, can Dara find her absent father in time, and will he help?

Kathleen Grissom – The kitchen house

Set in 1791, this novel sees poor Irish orphan Lavinia sent to Virginia to work in the kitchen of a wealthy plantation owner. Her life becomes entwined with a family of black slaves, however as time progresses her skin colour begins to set her apart.

George & Weedon Grossmith – Diary of a nobody

A classic late-Victorian work of humour, set in a respectable but dull London suburb. Describes 15 months in the life of Mr Pooter, a clerk with absurd social aspirations, and his family.

S**Sara Gruen - Water for elephants**

Jacob, a veterinary student joins the Benzini Brothers' circus to care for the animals just before taking his final exams. Written as a series of memoirs as Jacob remembers this period of his life whilst in a retirement home aged 70. Contains vivid descriptions of life in the Big Top.

Joanne Harris – Chocolat

Vianne Rocher and her six-year-old daughter arrive in the small French Village of Lansquenet-sous-Tannes and set up a Chocolate shop, but trouble ensues as it is Lent, the shop is located opposite a Church, and opens on Sunday. Parish priest Francis Reynaud is furious but soon the villagers are won over.

Jane Hawking – Travelling to infinity: my life with Stephen

In this compelling memoir Stephen Hawking's first wife, Jane Hawking, relates the inside story of their extraordinary marriage. As Stephen's academic renown soared, his body was collapsing under the assaults of motor neurone disease, and Jane's candid account of trying to balance his 24-hour care with the needs of their growing family will be inspirational to anyone dealing with family illness.

NF

Kirstan Hawkins – Dona Nicanora's hat shop

In a sleepy South American village, a woman dreams of love and hats. A sweet and quirky novel with magical realist tendencies. Lots of fun.

Paula Hawkins – The girl on the train

Rachel catches the same commuter train every morning. She knows it will wait at the same signal each time, overlooking a row of back gardens. She's even started to feel like she knows the people who live in one of the houses. 'Jess and Jason', she calls them. Their life, as she sees it, is perfect. If only Rachel could be that happy. And then she sees something shocking. It's only a minute until the train moves on, but it's enough. Now everything's changed.

Emma Henderson - Grace Williams says it loud

Grace Williams is sent to a mental institution aged 11 in the 1950s. Here she meets Daniel and a love story follows. Vivid descriptions of the treatment of mentally ill people in this era are intertwined with the warmth and compassion Grace and Daniel show to each other. An emotive story.

Susan Hill – The woman in black

A chilling ghost story. A young solicitor is sent to the English countryside to attend the funeral of a reclusive widow who lived alone. He glimpses a strange woman in black at the cemetery, and strange events begin to unfold.

LP & S

Victoria Hislop – The Sunrise

In the summer of 1972, Famagusta in Cyprus is the most desirable resort in the Mediterranean, a city bathed in the glow of good fortune. An ambitious couple open the island's most spectacular hotel, where Greek and Turkish Cypriots work in harmony. Two neighbouring families, the Georgious and the Özkans, are among many who moved to Famagusta to escape the years of unrest and ethnic violence elsewhere on the island. But beneath the city's façade of glamour and success, tension is building.

Victoria Hislop – The thread

Set in the city of Thessaloniki, this third novel from Hislop expertly depicts events in Greece from 1917 onwards as Dimitri and Katerina grow up during a period of great unrest. An emotive, fascinating read.

Amanda Hodgkinson - 22 Britannia Road

A husband waits for his wife and son to join him in Ipswich at the start of World War Two, but she holds a terrible secret after living in the Polish forests for years. They have spent six years apart and things have changed dramatically.

LP

Alice Hoffman - The Dovekeepers

Set during the Roman siege of the fortress Masada in 70AD, this novel tells the tale of a group of four women who cared for the doves in the fortress. Supplies are dwindling, and times are desperate. All are the keepers of secrets, as well as doves.

Gail Honeyman – Eleanor Oliphant is completely fine

Eleanor Oliphant leads a simple life. She wears the same clothes to work every day, eats the same meal deal for lunch every day and buys the same two bottles of vodka to drink every weekend. Eleanor Oliphant is happy. Nothing is missing from her carefully timetabled life. Except, sometimes, everything. One simple act of kindness is about to shatter the walls Eleanor has built around herself. Now she must learn how to navigate the world that everyone else seems to take for granted – while searching for the courage to face the dark corners she's avoided all her life.

BB, OD & LP**Anthony Horowitz – House of Silk**

The first new Sherlock Holmes novel to be approved by the Conan-Doyle estate. Dr Watson is elderly and reflecting on one of the pair's early adventures together. A reimagining of the classic novels.

LP**Khaled Hosseini – A thousand splendid suns**

In this novel Hosseini takes us through more than forty years of Afghan history, and how Miriam and Laila rise through challenges and victimisation against all odds. Captivating with remarkable characters.

Khaled Hosseini – And the mountains echoed

Ten-year-old Abdullah would do anything for his younger sister. In a life of poverty and struggle, with no mother to care for them, Pari is the only person who brings Abdullah happiness. Hosseini explores the many ways in which families' nurture, wound, betray, honour, and sacrifice for one another; and how often we are surprised by the actions of those closest to us, at the times that matter most.

Aldous Huxley – Brave new world

A classic dystopian novel set in the distant future. Everyone is born in a laboratory, and knows their place. Plenty of food for thought – which is more important, freedom or happiness?

Kazuo Ishiguro – Never let me go

Short-listed for The Man Booker Prize in 2005. A remarkable novel of love, loss and hidden truth set in English countryside with a science-fiction leaning. This book will make you think.

Marlon James – A brief history of seven killings

Winner of the Man Booker Prize 2015. Jamaica 1976.

Seven gunmen storm Bob Marley's house, machine guns blazing. The reggae superstar survives, but the gunmen are never caught. Spanning three decades and crossing continents, this chronicles the lives of a host of unforgettable characters – slum kids, drug lords, journalists, prostitutes, gunmen and even the CIA.

PD James – Death comes to Pemberley

A Crime Thriller set in the world of Jane Austen, six years after the marriage of Elizabeth Bennett and Mr Darcy. A man is found dead in the woods during the Darcy's annual ball, but has the right man been charged with the crime?

Wendy Jones – World is a wedding

It's 1926 and Wilfred Price, purveyor of superior funerals, is newly married to the beautiful Flora Myfanwy. His brief and painful marriage to Grace is in the past. He's busy with funerals - and preparing for fatherhood by reading a philosophy book and opening a paint and wallpaper business. As much as he loves Flora, he senses her distance from him - are marriage and fatherhood going to be very different from how Wilfred imagined?

Alan Johnson – This Boy

Alan Johnson's childhood was not so much difficult as unusual, particularly for a man who was destined to become Home Secretary. Played out against the background of a vanishing community living in condemned housing, the story moves from post-war austerity in pre-gentrified Notting Hill, through the race riots, school on the Kings Road, Chelsea in the Swinging 60s, to the rock-and-roll years, making a record in Denmark Street and becoming a husband and father whilst still in his teens.

NF

Jonas Jonasson – Hundred-year-old man...

Allan Karlsson is waiting for his hundredth birthday party to commence when he decides to climb out of his bedroom window and begin an unlikely journey. A feel-good international bestseller.

Wendy Jones-The Thoughts and Happenings of Wilfred Price, Purveyor of Superior Funerals

Young undertaker Wilfred Price proposes to a girl he barely knows whilst on a summer's picnic and soon regrets his actions. Set in a 1920s Welsh village, this is an emotional story of love and secrets.

Hillary Jordan - Mudbound

Bellwether prize-winner. Mudbound is a story of Laura, a schoolteacher married to Henry who buys a farm in Mississippi Delta, but it becomes a struggle for Laura to adapt to life in the countryside with her two children.

LP

James Joyce – Ulysses

Capturing a single day in the life of Dubliner Leopold Bloom, his friends Buck Mulligan and Stephen Dedalus, his wife Molly, and a scintillating cast of supporting characters, Joyce pushes Celtic lyricism and vulgarity to splendid extremes. An undisputed modernist classic

Sue Monk Kidd - The secret life of bees

Humorous and tragic by turns, a teenage girl grows up in racially divided America in the 1960s. Memorable for its portrayal of the eccentricities of South Carolina and tender description of relationships forged in the absence of traditional family bonds.

LP

Harper Lee - To Kill a Mockingbird

Pulitzer Prize winning novel set in the 1930s American South and the only book by Harper Lee. Narrated by a young girl who understands only a fraction of what she observes so closely, this is the tale of lawyer Atticus Finch and his fight for racial justice in an eccentric small town.

Harper Lee – Go set a watchman Maycomb, Alabama. Twenty-six-year-old Jean Louise Finch – ‘Scout’ – returns home from New York City to visit her ageing father, Atticus. Set against the backdrop of the civil rights tensions and political turmoil that were transforming the South, Jean Louise’s homecoming turns bittersweet when she learns disturbing truths about her close-knit family, the town and the people dearest to her.

Laurie Lee – Cider with Rosie

Laurie Lee’s depiction of life growing up in the Cotswolds and attending school in a remote village close to Stroud during the pre-war years is a classic. A trip down memory lane.

NF**Doris Lessing – The golden notebook**

The inner and outer life of a young woman who is a writer, a single mother and a Communist. A worldwide bestseller, and a key text for any feminist. Necessarily complex, fusing sex, love, politics, madness and motherhood. A portrait of the intellectual and moral climate of Britain in the 1950s.

Ira Levin – The Stepford wives

A journey to the heart of darkness set in Connecticut’s wealthy suburbs. A newcomer wonders why all the housewives in Stepford are so perfect, then is terrified by what she discovers in this 1970s thriller.

LP

Andrea Levy – The long song

Levy, winner of the Orange Prize and Whitbread for her novel *Small Island* about the black experience in Britain, reaches further back. Set in Jamaica in during the period of Abolition, this is the harrowing tale of a slave named July, narrated in a distinctive voice.

LP

Eric Lomax – Railway man

During the Second World War Eric Lomax was forced to work on the notorious Burma-Siam Railway and was tortured by the Japanese for making a crude radio. Left emotionally scarred and unable to form normal relationships, Lomax suffered for years until, with the help of his wife, Patti Lomax, and of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, he came terms with what happened. Fifty years after the terrible events, he could meet one of his tormentors.

LP

Tom McCarthy – Satin Island

U. is a 'corporate anthropologist' who, while working on a giant, epoch-defining project no one really understands, is also tasked with writing the Great Report on our society. But instead, U. spends his days procrastinating, meandering through endless buffer-zones of information and becoming obsessed by the images with which the world bombards him daily: oil spills, African traffic jams, roller-blade processions. Is there a secret logic holding all these images together?

Carson McCullers – The heart is a lonely hunter

A deaf-mute becomes the touchstone for blacks and whites living in isolation in the American South in the 1930s. Published in 1940, this is an astonishing, resonant novel about the human need for relationships and the forces that keep us separate.

Helen MacDonald – H is for hawk

As a child, Helen Macdonald was determined to become a falconer, learning the arcane terminology and reading all the classic books. Years later, when her father died and she was struck deeply by grief, she became obsessed with the idea of training her own goshawk. She bought Mabel for £800 on a Scottish quayside and took her home to Cambridge, ready to embark on the long, strange business of trying to train this wildest of animals.

NF

Paula McLain - The Paris wife

In 1920s Chicago Hadley Richardson meets Ernest Hemmingway and the pair set off to France. Set amid the Paris Jazz scene this is a tale of the pair's relationship and Ernest's early literary career.

LP

Alexander Maksik – You deserve nothing

See through the eyes of three characters, this is the tale of the influence of a teacher over his pupils at an international school in Paris.

LP

Hilary Mantel - Bring up the Bodies

Winner of the 2012 Man Booker Prize, and the sequel to Wolf Hall, this book continues the story of Thomas Cromwell and his attempts to secure the future of the British monarchy through his role as Henry VIII's Chief Minister in 1535.

LP

Hilary Mantel – Assassination of Margaret Thatcher

A short story collection by this prize-winning author. Whether set in a claustrophobic Saudi Arabian flat or on a precarious mountain road in Greece, these stories share an insight into the darkest recesses of the spirit.

David Mitchell – Cloud atlas

Six interlocking lives - one amazing adventure. In a narrative that circles the globe and reaches from the 19th century to a post-apocalyptic future, *Cloud Atlas* erases the boundaries of time, genre and language to offer an enthralling vision of humanity's will to power, and where it will lead us.

Erin Morganstern - The Night Circus

It's 1886 and the mysterious Cirque des Rêves appears one day as if from nowhere and opens only at night. The story centres on two young magicians, surrounded by the fantastical setting of the circus. Escapism at its best.

LP**Liane Moriarty – The husband's secret**

Mother of three and wife of John-Paul, Cecilia discovers an old envelope in the attic. Written in her husband's hand, it says: to be opened only in the event of my death. Curious, she opens it - and time stops. John-Paul's letter confesses to a terrible mistake which, if revealed, would wreck their family as well as the lives of others.

Heather Morris –The Tattooist of Auschwitz

For readers of Schindler's List, The Man Who Broke into Auschwitz and The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas comes a heart-breaking story of the very best of humanity in the very worst of circumstances. I tattooed a number on her arm. She tattooed her name on my heart. In 1942, Lale Sokolov arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau. He was given the job of tattooing the prisoners marked for survival - scratching numbers into his fellow victims' arms in indelible ink to create what would become one of the most potent symbols of the Holocaust.

BB & OD

Toni Morrison - Beloved

A Pulitzer Prize winning novel, this is a searing, beautifully written story of an ex-slave living with the ghost of a child. Using matter of fact language, Beloved's portrayal of slavery and freedom in America is memorable.

Jojo Moyes - Me before you

Lou takes on a job caring for Will after he is involved in a motorcycle accident. Will, a previous high-flying career man, needs encouragement to enjoy life again and Lou may provide a solution. Chick-lit in appearance, but with a serious message.

LP**Neel Mukherjee – The lives of others**

Shortlisted for the Man Booker and Costa prizes.

Calcutta, 1967. Unnoticed by his family, Supratik has become dangerously involved in extremist political activism. Compelled by an idealistic desire to change his life and the world around him, all he leaves behind before disappearing is a note. At home, his family slowly begins to unravel.

Haruki Murakami - Norwegian Wood

Japan's bestselling author rose to fame with this tale of teenage love and madness in 1960's Tokyo. A spare style, wistful mood and perfect ear for dialogue are Murakami hallmarks.

Patrick Ness – A monster calls

Conor has the same dream every night, ever since his mother first fell ill, ever since she started the treatments that don't quite seem to be working. But tonight, is different. Tonight, when he wakes, there's a visitor at his window. It's ancient, elemental, a force of nature. And it wants the most dangerous thing of all from Conor. It wants the truth.

YP & S

David Nicholls – One Day

On 15th July 1988 Emma and Dexter meet for the first time on the night of their graduation. Tomorrow they must go their separate ways. This story catches up with them on the same date over a twenty-year period. Will they remain friends?

LP

Maggie O'Farrell - The hand that first held mine

A gorgeously written story of love and motherhood at the heart of the 1950s Soho art scene and in the present day. An extraordinary portrait of two women is revealed, separated by fifty years, but connected in ways that neither could ever have expected.

LP

Catherine O'Flynn – The news where you are

Set in Birmingham, this is the funny, touching story of Frank, a local TV news presenter haunted by disappearances. A page-turning novel which asks the big questions in an accessible way, and is laugh-out-loud funny, genuinely moving and ultimately uplifting.

LP

Tea Obreht – The tiger's wife

An Orange Prize winning debut novel. A tiger escapes from the local zoo in the Balkan village of Galina. His nocturnal visits hold the villagers in a terrified thrall. But for one boy, the tiger is a thing of magic.

R J Palacio – Wonder

Auggie wants to be an ordinary ten-year-old. He does ordinary things - eating ice cream, playing on his Xbox. He *feels* ordinary - inside. But ordinary kids don't make other ordinary kids run away screaming in playgrounds. Ordinary kids aren't stared at wherever they go. Born with a terrible facial abnormality, Auggie has been home-schooled by his parents his whole life. Now, for the first time, he's being sent to a real school - and he's dreading it.

YP**S.J. Parris – Prophecy**

Cityread 2017 title. A Tudor thriller featuring Giordano Bruno, renegade monk, philosopher and heretic. Autumn, 1583. The skies above England harbour dark omens. An astrological phenomenon heralds the dawn of a new age and a young maid of honour is murdered, occult symbols carved into her flesh.

Jodi Picoult - My sister's keeper

This story covers the issue of genetically engineered children who are born to save their siblings lives. Anna fights for the rights to her own body, whilst sister Kate suffers from cancer.

LP**Jodi Picoult – Small Great Things**

When a new born baby dies after a routine hospital procedure, there is no doubt about who will be held responsible: the nurse who had been banned from looking after him by his father. What the nurse, her lawyer and the father of the child cannot know is how this death will irrevocably change all their lives, in ways both expected and not.

BB

Chaim Potok – The chosen Set in 1940s New York, this is the story of the lives of two Jewish boys and their friendship despite their religious differences. Danny is from an orthodox background, whilst Reuven's father is keen he is grounded in the twenty-first century.

Barbara Pym – Excellent Women

This is an endearing and amusing minor classic, set amongst contemporary hard-up English gentlefolk who try to keep up appearances. Beautifully written, this will particularly appeal to fans of Jane Austen.

LP

Charlotte Rogan – The lifeboat

When an ocean liner sinks, just years after the loss of Titanic, the survivors take to the lifeboats. But they soon must face up to the reality that rescue may not be coming. A gripping, multi-layered debut novel.

J.K. Rowling - The Casual Vacancy

Pagford is a pretty cobbled English town, but behind the idyllic façade the townspeople are at war. When Parish Councillor Barry Fairbrother dies, the fight for his empty seat becomes a catalyst for conflict.

Sunjeev Sahota – The year of the runaways

Tells of the bold dreams and daily struggles of an unlikely family thrown together by circumstance. Thirteen young men live in a house in Sheffield, each in flight from India and in desperate search of a new life. Tarlochan, a former rickshaw driver, will say nothing about his past in Bihar; and Avtar has a secret that binds him to protect the chaotic Randeep. Randeep, in turn, has a visa-wife in a flat on the other side of town: a clever, devout woman whose cupboards are full of her husband's clothes, in case the immigration men surprise her with a call.

Sathnam Sanghera – Boy with the Topknot

A Memoir of Love, Secrets and Lies in Wolverhampton is a hilarious and heart-rending reinvention of the modern British memoir. For Sathnam Sanghera, growing up in Wolverhampton in the eighties was a confusing business. On the one hand, these were the heady days of George Michael mix-tapes, Dallas on TV and, if he was lucky, the occasional Bounty Bar. On the other, there was his wardrobe of tartan smocks, his 30p-an-hour job at the local sewing factory and the ongoing challenge of how to tie the perfect top-knot.

OD

Maria Semple - Where'd You Go Bernadette?

Bernadette is a mother, wife, famous architect and considered a menace by local school mums, but why has she disappeared, and where has she gone? It is up to daughter Bee to discover the truth through a series of journal entries, emails and letters written between various characters in Bernadette's life.

Lynn Shepherd – Tom-All-Along's

The story of *Tom-All-Along's* takes place in the 'space between' two masterpieces of mid-Victorian fiction: *Bleak House* and *The Woman in White* - overlapping with them, and re-imagining them for a contemporary reader. The novel explores a dark underside of Victorian life that Dickens and Collins hinted at - a world in which young women are sexually abused, unwanted babies summarily disposed of, and those that discover the grim secrets of great men brutally eliminated.

Sara Sheridan – The secret of the sands

1833 – The British Navy are conducting a survey of the Arabian Peninsula where slavery is as rife as ever despite being abolished. Zena, a headstrong and determined young Abyssinian beauty has been torn from her remote village, subjected to a tortuous journey and is now being offered for sale in the market of Muscat. Zena finds herself the property of Lieutenant James Wellstead, now on a daring rescue mission into forbidding territory.

LP

Martin Sixsmith – Philomena

The true story of Philomena Lee. When she fell pregnant as a teenager in Ireland in 1952, Philomena was sent to the convent at Roscrea in Co. Tipperary to be looked after as a fallen woman. She cared for her baby for three years until the Church took him from her and sold him, like countless others, to America for adoption. Coerced into signing a document promising never to attempt to see her child again, she nonetheless spent the next fifty years secretly searching for him, unaware that he was searching for her from across the Atlantic.

NF

Tom Rob Smith – Child 44

Stalin's Soviet Union is an official paradise, where citizens live free from crime and fear only one thing: the all-powerful state. Defending this system is idealistic security officer Leo Demidov, a war hero who believes in the iron fist of the law, but when a murderer starts to kill at will and Leo dares to investigate, the State's obedient servant finds himself demoted and exiled.

Natasha Solomons - Mr Rosenblum's List

Jack and Sadie Rosenblum move to England from Germany in the 1930s. Jack is keen to blend in with the locals and devises a list of rules on how to behave, however Sadie is missing home and the loved ones left behind.

Elizabeth Speller - The return of Captain John Emmett

It's 1920 and Laurence Bartram is trying to establish what caused his old school friend to commit suicide following the end of World War 1, but Laurence also has his own personal traumas to deal with along the way.

LP

M L Stedman – The light between oceans

A boat washes up on the shore of a remote lighthouse keeper's island. It holds a dead man - and a crying baby. The only two islanders, Tom and his wife Izzy, are about to make a devastating decision. They break the rules and follow their hearts.

Mari Strachan – The earth hums in B flat

A warm but unsentimental story, set in a small Welsh town in the 1950's. The quirky teenage heroine investigates a mystery and uncovers secrets which she does not altogether understand. Moving and funny.

LP

Cheryl Strayed – Wild

At twenty-six, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother's rapid death from cancer, her family disbanded and her marriage crumbled. With nothing to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life: to walk eleven-hundred miles of the west coast of America - from the Mojave Desert, through California and Oregon, and into Washington state - and to do it alone.

NF

John Steinbeck – Of mice and men

George thinks of himself as an intelligent man, and is searching for work in the fields of California with his friend, gentle giant Lenny. However, Lenny doesn't know his own strength and gets into trouble along the way. A Classic American novel.

Kathryn Stockett - The help

Set in Jackson, Mississippi in 1962, this book tells the story of a group of black maids and the white families they work for. A fascinating study of race relations in the USA during this period, particularly as members of the two groups attempt to work together.

LP

Donna Tartt – The goldfinch

Aged thirteen, Theo Decker, son of a devoted mother and a reckless, largely absent father, survives an accident that otherwise tears his life apart. Alone and rudderless in New York, he is taken in by the family of a wealthy friend. He is tormented by an unbearable longing for his mother, and down the years clings to the thing that most reminds him of her: a small, strangely captivating painting that ultimately draws him into the criminal underworld.

Roma Tearne – Brixton Beach

Alice moves with her parents to England to escape the turmoil of the conflict in Sri Lanka. A story of conflict and assimilation written in a vivid and evocative style.

Colm Toibin – Brooklyn

Eilis Lacey moves from Ireland to 1950s New York, but just as she establishes herself events draw her home and the gap between her two lives is revealed. Evocative and beautifully crafted portrait of a young woman.

LP

William Trevor – Love and summer

A quiet yet very affecting book, longlisted for the Booker Prize, about the passions and frustrations of the people of a small Irish town during one long Summer. The characters are brilliantly drawn.

LP

Anne Tyler – A spool of blue thread

Shortlisted for the Man Booker and Baileys prizes, and a Richard & Judy pick. "It was a beautiful, breezy, yellow-and-green afternoon." This is how Abby Whitshank always begins the story of how she fell in love with Red that day in July 1959. The Whitshanks are one of those families that radiate togetherness: an indefinable, enviable kind of specialness. But they are also like all families, in that the stories they tell themselves reveal only part of the picture.

Alice Walker – The Color Purple

A wonderfully moving modern classic, told in the voice of a poor black woman born in 1909 in the American South. She suffers terribly, but has enough spirit to resist her oppression and is transformed by love.

Katie Ward – Girl reading

Seven artists, seven portraits, seven eras, seven women reading, yet one unusual debut novel. Spans from the medieval period to the modern day.

S J Watson – Before I go to sleep

A vivid psychological thriller in which Christine loses her memory each time she goes to sleep and struggles to make sense of her life and relationships. A widely-praised and accomplished debut novel.

Sarah Ward – In bitter chill

Rachel Jones has tried to put the past behind her and move on with her life. But news of the suicide re-opens old wounds and Rachel realises that the only way she can have a future is to finally discover what really happened all those years ago. This is a story about loss and family secrets, and how often the very darkest secrets are those that are closest to you.

Winifred Watson – Miss Pettigrew lives for a day

Conservative governess Miss Pettigrew is accidentally sent to the house of flamboyant night club singer Delysia La Fosse by her employers. This book, written in 1937, depicts their twenty-four hours spent together, and the ways in which they learn from one another.

Evelyn Waugh – Vile Bodies

Vile Bodies reveals the darkness and vulnerability that lurks beneath the glittering surface of the high life. In the years following the First World War a new generation emerges, wistful and vulnerable beneath the glitter. The Bright Young Things of twenties' Mayfair, with their paradoxical mix of innocence and sophistication, exercise their inventive minds and vile bodies in every kind of capricious escapade - whether promiscuity, dancing, cocktail parties or sports cars. In a quest for treasure, a favourite party occupation, a vivid assortment of characters, among them the struggling writer Adam Fenwick-Symes and the glamorous, aristocratic Nina Blount, hunt fast and furiously for ever greater sensations and the fulfilment of unconscious desires.

OD

Scott Westerfeld – Uglies

Tally lives in a world where your sixteenth birthday brings aesthetic perfection: an operation which erases all your flaws, transforming you from an 'Ugly' into a 'Pretty'. She is on the eve of this important event, and cannot wait for her life to change. But then she meets Shay, who is also fifteen - but with a very different outlook on life. Shay isn't sure she wants to be Pretty and plans to escape to a community in the forest - the Rusty Ruins - where Uglies go to escape 'turning'.

YP

Edith Wharton - The house of mirth

A modern classic. Lily Bart is impoverished and attempting to find a rich husband to establish herself within the social elite. A study of changing morality and social structure at the turn of the century.

LP

Colson Whitehead – The Underground Railway

Cora is a slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. All the slaves lead a hellish existence, but Cora has it worse than most; she is an outcast even among her fellow Africans and she is approaching womanhood, where it is clear even greater pain awaits. When Caesar, a slave recently arrived from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they take the perilous decision to escape to the North.

John Williams – Stoner

William Stoner enters the University of Missouri at nineteen to study agriculture. A seminar on English literature changes his life, and he never returns to work on his father's farm. Stoner becomes a teacher. He marries the wrong woman. His life is quiet, and after his death his colleagues remember him rarely. *Stoner* tells of the conflicts, defeats and victories of the human race that pass unrecorded by history, and reclaims the significance of an individual life.

P G Wodehouse – Leave it to Psmith

A typical Wodehouse romance, quite daft but blissfully hilarious and cleverly written, played out against the background of Blandings Castle, home of the dotty and pig-obsessed Lord Emsworth. A book to cheer anyone up.

John Wyndham – The Chrysalids

David Storm's father doesn't approve of Angus Morton's unusually large horses, calling them blasphemies against nature. Little does he realise that his own son, and his son's cousin Rosalind and their friends, have their own secret aberration which would label them as mutants. This is a post-nuclear apocalypse story of genetic mutation in a devastated world and explores the lengths the intolerant will go to keep themselves pure.

Louisa Young – My dear I wanted to tell you

Moving between Ypres, London and Paris. *My Dear I Wanted to Tell You* I is a deeply affecting, moving and brilliant novel of love and war, and how they affect those left behind as well as those who fight.

Hanya Yanagihara – A little life

Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2015 and Bailey's Prize for Women's Fiction 2016. When four graduates from a small Massachusetts college move to New York to make their way, they're broke, adrift, and buoyed only by their friendship and ambition. There is kind, handsome Willem, an aspiring actor; JB, a quick-witted, sometimes cruel Brooklyn-born painter seeking entry to the art world; Malcolm, a frustrated architect at a prominent firm; and withdrawn, brilliant, enigmatic Jude, who serves as their centre of gravity.

Marcus Zusak – The book thief

The bestselling literary debut novel of 2007, narrated by Death and set against the dark days of the Third Reich.

YP & LP**New Barnet Book Club Titles January 2020****Heidi Amsinck - The Last Train to Helsingor**

Copenhagen is a mysterious city where strange and sinister things often happen. Menacing and at times darkly humorous there are echoes of Roald Dahl and Daphne du Maurier in these stories, many of which have been specially commissioned for Radio 4.

OD

Margaret Atwood - The Handmaid's Tale

Offred is a Handmaid in The Republic of Gilead, a religious totalitarian state in what was formerly known as the United States. She is placed in the household of The Commander, Fred Waterford – her assigned name, Offred, means 'of Fred'. She has only one function: to breed. If Offred refuses to enter sexual servitude to repopulate a devastated world, she will be hanged. Yet even a repressive state cannot eradicate hope and desire. As she recalls her pre-revolution life in flashbacks, Offred must navigate through the terrifying landscape of torture and persecution in the present day, and between two men upon which her future hangs.

BB & OD

Jane Austen - Pride and Prejudice

When Elizabeth Bennet first meets eligible bachelor Fitzwilliam Darcy, she thinks him arrogant and conceited; he is indifferent to her good looks and lively mind. When she later discovers that Darcy has involved himself in the troubled relationship between his friend Bingley and her beloved sister Jane, she is determined to dislike him more than ever. In the sparkling comedy of manners that follows, Jane Austen shows the folly of judging by first impressions and superbly evokes the friendships, gossip and snobberies of provincial middle-class life.

BB & OD

Edmund de Waal - The Hare With Amber Eyes: A Hidden Inheritance 264 wood and ivory carvings, none of them bigger than a matchbox: Edmund de Waal was entranced when he first encountered the collection in his great uncle Iggy's Tokyo apartment. When he later inherited the 'netsuke', they unlocked a story far larger and more dramatic than he could ever have imagined.

From a burgeoning empire in Odessa to fin de siècle Paris, from occupied Vienna to Tokyo, Edmund de Waal traces the netsuke's journey through generations of his remarkable family against the backdrop of a tumultuous century.

NF & OD

Adam Kay - This is Going to Hurt: Secret Diaries of a Junior Doctor

Welcome to the life of a junior doctor: 97-hour weeks, life and death decisions, a constant tsunami of bodily fluids, and the hospital parking meter earns more than you.

Scribbled in secret after endless days, sleepless nights and missed weekends, Adam Kay's This is Going to Hurt provides a no-holds-barred account of his time on the NHS front line. Hilarious, horrifying and heart-breaking, this diary is everything you wanted to know – and more than a few things you didn't – about life on and off the hospital ward.

NF, BB & OD

Yrsa Sigurdardottir - I Remember You

The crunching noise had resumed, now accompanied by a disgusting, indefinable smell. It could best be described as a blend of kelp and rotten meat. The voice spoke again, now slightly louder and clearer:

Don't go. Don't go yet. I'm not finished.

In an isolated village in the Icelandic Westfjords, three friends set to work renovating a derelict house. But soon they realise they are not alone there - something wants them to leave, and it's making its presence felt.

Meanwhile, in a town across the fjord, a young doctor investigating the suicide of an elderly woman discovers that she was obsessed with his vanished son.

When the two stories collide, the terrifying truth is uncovered.

If your group would like to borrow any of these sets please contact us at barnetbookclub@barnet.gov.uk

