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Writing surrounds us in the modern world – but how did it develop into the systems we use today, and given the technological developments of the twenty-first century, what does its future hold?

This beautifully illustrated book, published to coincide with an interactive landmark British Library exhibition, celebrates the act of writing from across the globe. Exploring the history of writing and including more than 150 illustrations from carved stone inscriptions and medieval manuscripts to samples of early printing, modern handwriting and digital inputting systems, it reflects on the use of writing over the last 5,000 years and challenges our preconceptions about writing’s decline in the digital age.

Ewan Clayton is Professor in Design at the University of Sunderland. For twelve years he worked as a consultant to Xerox PARC, the research lab in California that developed much of the digital technology underpinning the world of digital communications that we know today. He is also a calligrapher and lettering artist. He grew up in and around a craft community at Ditchling in Sussex founded by Eric Gill. Ewan’s book The Golden Thread, a history of writing, was published in 2013 and has been translated into a number of languages.
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70 colour illustrations
Publishing June 2019

Juliana Barone is Associate Research Fellow in the Department of History of Art at Birkbeck College, London. Her doctoral thesis at Oxford University was on Leonardo da Vinci and motion.
In the mid-nineteenth century, as routes opened up, a new generation of travellers embarked on excursions to China, India and Japan. Globetrotters – leisure tourists with a keen interest in experiencing authentic culture – flocked to the East, casting aside preconceptions and gravitating towards what they hoped to be the unchanged landscapes and traditions of Eastern cultures.

The relics of their travels – the food they consumed and the souvenirs they brought back – allowed globetrotters to distinguish themselves from common tourists. They proudly returned with accounts that presented a global East, challenging public assumptions about the cultures they had visited and charting a journey of self-transformation through travel.

**The Globetrotter**

*Excursions in the East*

Amy Miller

In the mid-nineteenth century, as routes opened up, a new generation of travellers embarked on excursions to China, India and Japan. Globetrotters – leisure tourists with a keen interest in experiencing authentic culture – flocked to the East, casting aside preconceptions and gravitating towards what they hoped to be the unchanged landscapes and traditions of Eastern cultures.

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One ‘golden afternoon’ in Oxford, in July 1862, the Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson accompanied three young sisters, Lorina, Alice, and Edith, on a boating trip. To keep the children amused, Dodgson began to tell a tale about an inquisitive youngster called Alice, and her escapades in an underground world. Two years later, on the urgings of the heroine, Alice Liddell, he wrote the tale down and gave it to her as an early Christmas gift.

Dodgson’s story, later revised and illustrated by John Tenniel, would go on to become one of the most famous and best-loved children’s books of all time – published as *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, under the pen name Lewis Carroll. However, the original tale – *Alice’s Adventures Under Ground* – remains less well-known. In this facsimile edition of Dodgson’s manuscript – now one of the British Library’s most treasured possessions – with its accompanying commentary by former British Library curator Sally Brown, modern readers can enjoy the expressive story as it was first told.

Rosina Filippi (1866–1930) was a progressive actor and director who was associated with many of the theatrical greats of her generation. Filippi was also an advocate for women’s rights and was the first person to dramatise Jane Austen for performance. Margaret Fletcher (1862–1943) was an English illustrator and amateur actor. She was a social critic and feminist and went on to found the Catholic Women’s League.
**Smallbone Deceased**
*A London Mystery*
Michael Gilbert

Horniman, Birley and Craine is a highly respected legal firm with clients reaching to the highest in the land. When a deed box in the office is opened to reveal a corpse, the threat of scandal promises to wreak havoc on the firm’s reputation – especially as the murder looks like an inside job. The partners and staff of the firm keep a watchful and suspicious eye on their colleagues, as Inspector Hazlerigg sets out to solve the mystery of who Mr Smallbone was – and why he had to die.

Written with style, pace and wit, this is a masterpiece by one of the finest writers of traditional British crime novels since the Second World War.

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**Death in Captivity**
*A Second World War Mystery*
Michael Gilbert

A man is found dead in an escape tunnel in an Italian prisoner-of-war camp. Did he die in an accidental collapse – or was this murder? Captain Henry ‘Cuckoo’ Goyles, master tunneller and amateur detective, takes up the case.

This classic locked-room mystery with a closed circle of suspects is woven together with a thrilling story of escape from the camp, as the Second World War nears its endgame and the British prisoners prepare to flee into the Italian countryside.
At 8 o’clock in the evening on the 8th November, there was a terrific explosion in Green Lane, Evingden.

The offices of Excelsior Joinery Company are no more; the 3 directors are killed and the peace of a quiet town in Surrey lies in ruins. When the supposed cause of ignited gas leak is dismissed and the presence of dynamite revealed, Superintendent Littlejohn of Scotland Yard is summoned to the scene.

But beneath the sleepy veneer of Evingden lies a hotbed of deep-seated grievances. Confounding Littlejohn’s investigation is an impressive cast of suspicious persons, each concealing their own axe to grind.

Bellairs’ novel of small-town grudges with calamitous consequences revels in the abundant possible solutions to the central crime as a masterpiece of misdirection.
“Never make trouble in the village” is an unspoken law, but it’s a binding law. You may know about your neighbours’ sins and shortcomings, but you must never name them aloud. It’d make trouble, and small societies want to avoid trouble.

When Dr Raymond Ferens moves to a practice at Milham in the Moor in North Devon, he and his wife are enchanted with the beautiful hilltop village lying so close to moor and sky. At first they see only its charm, but soon they begin to uncover its secrets – envy, hatred and malice.

Everyone says that Sister Monica, warden of a children’s home, is a saint – but is she? A few months after the Ferens’ arrival her body is found drowned in the mill-race. Chief Inspector Macdonald faces one of his most difficult cases in a village determined not to betray its dark secrets to a stranger.

Deep Waters
Murder on the Waves
Edited by Martin Edwards

From picturesque canals to the swirling currents of the ocean, a world of secrets lies buried beneath the surface of the water. Dubious vessels crawl along riverbeds, while the murky depths conceal more than one gruesome murder.

The stories in this collection will dredge up delight in crime fiction fans, as watery graves claim unintended dwellers and disembodied whispers penetrate the sleeping quarters of a ship’s captain. How might a thief plot their escape from a floating crime scene? And what is to follow when murder victims, lost to the ocean floor, inevitably resurface?

This British Library anthology uncovers the best mysteries set below the surface, including stories by Arthur Conan Doyle, William Hope Hodgson and R Austin Freeman.
A vicious plague has broken out in China and spread to Japan. The world governments look on callously, until the shadow of the Hueste virus begins to sweep across the rest of the globe. The pandemic draws nearer to Britain; shelters are hastily constructed across the country, but for whom? As the death toll booms and the populace finds themselves sacrificed for the sake of the elite, the cry for revolution rings out amidst the sirens.

Maine’s savage portrayal of society on the brink of ruin is a cruel forerunner of a more pessimistic science fiction of the 1960s. This subversive novel shows that even the heroes may succumb to brutality as the world descends into a desperate scramble for the last shred of what it means to be human: survival.

If only they knew what was really in his mind . . . But they wouldn’t believe. They wouldn’t understand the cold single-mindedness of a desperate man.

When London journalist Philip Wade learns that his article on nuclear weapons testing has been censored by the British government, he is prompted to investigate the truth that lies behind it. Philip’s search leads to a mysterious job offer in a newly-formed government department, and he soon realises the lasting damage that the nuclear tests have caused. The country is rife with uncertainty and distrust – then the water levels start to drop.

This gripping apocalyptic novel, originally published in 1958, asks pertinent questions about censorship and the potential for violence in the face of disappearing resources. The Tide Went Out outlines the horrors that arise when we are forced to ask the question: ‘what happens when the water runs out?’

Charles Eric Maine was the pseudonym of David McIlwain (1921–1981), a prolific writer of science fiction novels in the 1950s and 1960s. His stories often feature a fast-paced thriller plot that experiments with the boundaries of new scientific technology.

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Technological advance is never straightforward. A man is murdered by an automaton built for chess. A computer system designed to arbitrate justice develops a taste for iron-fisted, fatal rulings. An AI governing what we now know as an internet wreaks havoc on society after removing all forms of censorship.

Assembled with parts from the late 19th century to the 1960s, this new collection of classic stories warns of the possible threats, both comic and severe, of a world in which human and machine live side by side.

A delightfully, and worryingly, prescient selection for today’s world in which robotic coexistence is passing with each day from speculation to reality.

Mike Ashley is the author and editor of more than a hundred books, and is one of the foremost historians of popular fiction. His books include Adventures in The Strand, Out of This World and The Age of Storytellers: British Popular Fiction Magazines 1880–1950. His multi-volume history of science fiction magazines is published by Liverpool University Press.

Sound the sirens! The end is here, and it comes in many forms in this new collection of apocalyptic short stories from the classic age of science fiction.

Join humanity on the brink of destruction in 13 doom-laden visions from the 1890s to the 1960s, featuring rare tales from the Library’s vaults. Tales of plague seizing an over-polluted capital, a world engulfed in absolute darkness by some cosmic disaster, and of poignant dreams of a silent planet after the last echoes of humanity have died away.

Extreme climate change, nuclear annihilation, comet strike; calamities self-inflicted and from beyond the steer of humankind vie to deal the last blow in this countdown from the first whisper of possible extinction to the Earth’s final sunrise.
Howling down the tunnels comes a new collection showcasing the greatest stories of strange happenings on the tracks, many of which are republished here for the first time since their original departure.

Waiting beyond the barrier are ghostly travelling companions bent on disturbing the commutes of the living, a subway car disappearing into a different dimension without a trace, and a man’s greatest fears realized on the ghost train of a carnival.

An express ticket to unforgettable journeys into the supernatural, from the open railways of Europe and America to the pressing dark of the tube.

The events which I purpose detailing are of so extraordinary a character that I am quite prepared to meet with an unusual amount of incredulity and scorn. Between horror and fantasy lies a world in which the inexplicable remains unsolved and the rational mind is assailed by impossible questions. Welcome to the realm of Dark Fantasy, where safe answers are beyond reach and accounts of unanswerable dilemma find their home.

Delving deep into the sub-genre, fiction expert Mike Ashley has gathered an unsettling mixture of twisted tales, encounters with logic-defying creatures and nightmarish fables certain to perplex, beguile and of course, entertain.
I have tumbled upon one of the most peculiar cases of ‘haunting’—or devilment of some sort—that I have come against. Now listen.

A splash of something huge resounds through the sea-fog. In the stillness of a dark room, some unspeakable evil is making its approach.

This new selection offers the most chilling and unsettling of Hodgson’s short fiction, from encounters with abominations at sea to fireside tales of otherworldly forces from his inventive ‘occult detective’ character Carnacki, the ghost finder.

A master of conjuring atmosphere, when the horror inevitably arrives it is delivered with breathtaking pace and the author’s signature evocation of overwhelming panic.

William Hope Hodgson (1877–1918) is renowned as a master of nautical mystery and horror stories, which possess a unique authenticity due to Hodgson’s youth spent at sea and in the navy. He is also celebrated as the creator of the memorable occult detective character, Carnacki. Hodgson wrote many classic ghost and sea stories before his death near Ypres during the First World War.

A young girl whose love for her fiancé continues even after her death; a sinister old lady with claw-like hands who cares little for the qualities of her companions provided they are young and full of life; and a haunted mirror that foretells of approaching death for those who gaze into its depths. These are just some of the haunting tales gathered together in this macabre collection of short stories.

Reissued in the Tales of the Weird series and introduced by British Library curator Greg Buzwell, *The Face in the Glass* is the first selection of Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s supernatural short stories to be widely available in more than 100 years. By turns curious, sinister, haunting and terrifying, each tale explores the dark shadows beyond the rational world.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1835–1915) was a prominent and prolific Victorian novelist whose major works included *Lady Audley’s Secret*. She was the editor of the literary magazine *The Mistletoe Bough*, in which several of her short stories were first published.
Cats were illustrated in medieval manuscripts throughout the Middle Ages, often in exquisite detail and frequently accompanied by their natural prey, mice. Medieval cats were viewed as treasured pets, as fearsome mousers, as canny characters in fables, as associates of the Devil and as magical creatures. Featuring an array of fascinating illustrations from the British Library’s rich medieval collection, *Cats in Medieval Manuscripts* includes anecdotes about cats – both real and imaginary – to provide a fascinating picture of the life of the cat and its relationship with humans in the medieval world.
The Old Man’s Guide to Health and Longer Life
John Hill

A lifestyle guide to longevity and good health – from 1750.

Writing in an age when the majority of men didn’t live to see their fiftieth birthday, John Hill provides practical advice on diet, exercise and lifestyle, including sleep and emotional health.

Full of genuinely good advice, the book offers sage insights as well as ridiculous regimes – making it a perfect gift for a man of more mature years.

Holmes & Watson
A Miscellany
S C Roberts

First published in 1953, this classic book is one of the earliest and best studies of English literature’s most iconic characters. S.C. Roberts searches Conan Doyle’s stories for clues and develops biographies of the characters.

The Whole Art of Dress
A Cavalry Officer

Part fashionable guide, part defence of dandyism, this manual for menswear was originally published in 1830. It advises on the nuances of men’s fashion, on how to perfect all elements of dress, from the elegant staple of cravatiana to the delightful whimsy of masquerade dress.

Taking to the Air
An Illustrated History of Flight
Lily Ford

The possibilities of flight have long fascinated us. Each innovation captivated a broad public, from those who gathered to witness winged medieval visionaries jumping from towers, to those who tuned in to watch the moon landings.

Focusing on moments of great cultural impact, this book is a visual celebration of the wonder of flight.
**The Gothic Tales of H P Lovecraft**
*Edited by Xavier Aldana Reyes*

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*Alex Johnson*

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