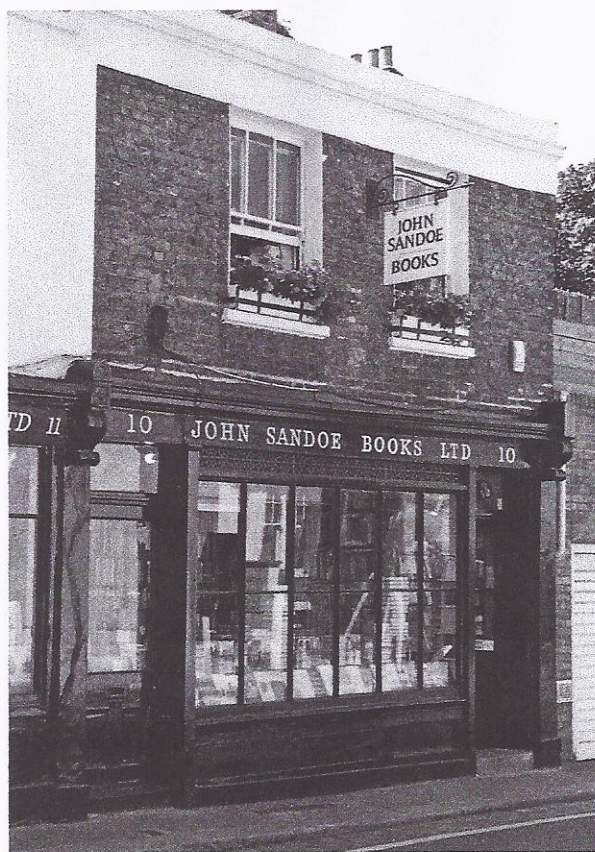


the-Wold's Borzoi Bookshop, named after the original owner's dogs. For 30 years, this Cotswold place of pilgrimage has been supplying locals and literary luminaries (Jeanette Winterson has praised it in print) with high-quality reading matter. Canines remain a feature—the three staff members are assisted by Tyke, a charming Staffordshire bull terrier, and Brock, a Jack Russell cross.

According to owner Anthea Lycett, flexibility is key to the shop's continuing success. 'We have the luxury of being able to order whatever we want and we'll always do our utmost to be helpful. If someone comes in, we'd hate for them to leave disappointed.' Borzoi Bookshop aims to fulfill most requests in 48 hours, making buying through them a speedier process than shopping online. Another powerful draw for customers is knowledge—Miss Lycett's colleagues are routinely sought out as experts on military history and children's literature. For her, there's nothing more rewarding than watching children who've been



John Sandoe has been a much-loved Chelsea institution since 1957

brought to the shop by their parents to choose their first proper book grow into avid readers. 'I'm embarrassed to say I'm probably on my third generation now, but I believe passionately in what I'm doing—I'll be going out of here feet first.'

Like the friend who introduces you to the love of your life at a party, an independent bookshop can alter the very fabric of your existence by bringing you into contact with authors you might never have otherwise found. Nobody knew this better than Helene Hanff, who was devastated to receive a letter telling her that Frank Doel had succumbed suddenly to peritonitis in 1968. 'The blessed man who sold me all my books died a few months ago,' she later wrote to a friend who was about to travel to London. 'But Marks and Co is still there. If you happen to pass by 84, Charing Cross Road, kiss it for me! I owe it so much.'

COUNTRY LIFE's Independent Bookshop Directory

Borzoi Bookshop Stow-on-the-Wold

Beloved of residents and visitors alike. Tyke and Brock the dogs will give returning customers a hero's welcome.

Church Street, Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire (01451 830268; www.borzoibookshop.co.uk)

Daunt Books London

This graceful Edwardian beauty, with her long oak galleries, presides over a city-wide family of Daunts.

83, Marylebone High Street, London W1 (020-7224 2295; www.dauntbooks.co.uk)

Heywood Hill London

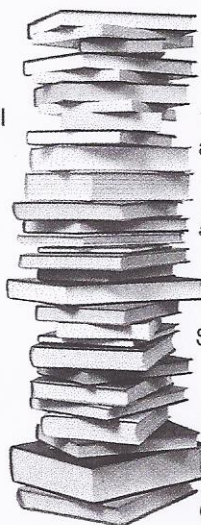
Debs, diplomats and explorers galore have passed through the doors of this Mayfair haven, where Nancy Mitford once worked.

10, Curzon Street, London W1 (020-7629 0647; www.heywoodhill.com)

John Sandoe London

The tables, chairs and even the stairs in this literary Aladdin's cave groan under the weight of some 25,000 books that have been carefully selected by the erudite (but never intimidating) staff.

10, Blacklands Terrace, London SW3 (020-7589 9473; www.johnsandoe.com)



Potterton Books Thirsk

This former rectory's expertise in the fields of architecture, design and decoration has seen it extend its reach to London and the USA.

Sessay, Thirsk, North Yorkshire (01845 501218; www.pottertonbooks.co.uk)

Slightly Foxed London

Stocks a handpicked selection of old and new volumes, many of which have appeared on the pages of *Slightly Foxed*, its much-loved quarterly review.

123, Gloucester Road, London SW7 (020-7370 3503; <http://foxedbooks.com>)

Stromness Books & Prints Stromness

Come for the quality non-fiction and classic novels, then stay for a chat with the regulars and a true taste of Orcadian life.

1, Graham Place, Stromness, Orkney (01856 850565)

The Chepstow Bookshop Chepstow

A diminutive outfit that punches well above its weight—queues for signings stretch right the way down the street, and the owner was a Costa First Novel Award judge in 2009.

13, St Mary Street, Chepstow, Monmouthshire (01291 625011; <http://chepstowbooks.webplus.net>)

The Aldeburgh Bookshop Aldeburgh

The spiritual home of the Aldeburgh Literary Festival, and the place to go if you're looking for a volume on East Anglia. Also runs an excellent book club.

42, High Street, Aldeburgh, Suffolk (01728 452339; www.aldeburghbookshop.co.uk)

Topping & Company Bath

A world-class programme of talks (recent visiting authors include Rupert Everett, Jonathan Dimbleby and Booker nominee Will Self) sets this independent apart. Its sister branch in Ely is equally impressive.

The Paragon, Bath, Somerset (01225 428111; www.toppingbooks.co.uk)

The Boarders' Book Club

Children who are away at school needn't miss out on the joys of independent bookshops, thanks to Lutyens & Rubinstein on London's Kensington Park Road. For £100, they'll send your absent youngster ('whether at school, a juvenile offenders' institution or simply ruling Narnia') a new book every month of the academic year, plus a sweet treat for them to enjoy while they're reading it. The shop's website (www.lutyensrubinstein.co.uk) advises that

delivery to Narnia may take an additional 50 years—or no time at all.

