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## SUNDERLAND ECHO

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# Pick of the paperbackbacks

### THRILLER

**The Tailor of Panama – John le Carré (Coronet, £6.99) ★★★★★**

IN John le Carré's latest espionage thriller, the Panama Canal is due to be handed back by the Americans at the turn of the century.

British Intelligence, in the shape of young spy Andrew Osnard, set up shop in Panama.

He recruits Harry Pendel, the tailor to the city's finest, including the President, and the ideal person to divulge all their secrets.

Le Carré is in top form, with a strong plot (owing much to Our Man in Havana) and meaningful characterisation.



**GLORIOUS FOOD: Linda McCartney with hubby Paul.**

### COOKERY

**Linda's Summer Kitchen – Linda McCartney (Little, Brown, £7.99) ★★★★★**

THE longest day is just a month away, summer cookery books are gracing the shelves and yet we've only just seen the back of snow showers, biting winds and frost.

But less about the vagaries of the British climate and more about the culinary inventiveness of the British veggie.

Linda McCartney, the doyenne of the anti-meat brigade, dishes up a cornucopia of mouth-watering recipes

to tempt even the most ardent of flesh lovers.

And the beauty of Linda's concoctions is they all seem easy to prepare. There's everything from stuffed peppers, mushroom moussaka and aubergine curry to vegan fruit cake and vegetable strudel.

My only gripe is that these recipes have already been published as part of her book Linda's Kitchen. Still, perhaps she needs the money!

### LITERARY

**The Woman Who Walked Into Doors – Roddy Doyle (Minerva, £6.99) ★★★★★**

RODDY Doyle's portrayal of raw, gritty Dublin life won a new army of fans when his novel Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha won the Booker Prize.

Previously he was best known for the harsh *The Commitments*, which brought him fame largely through the brilliant film version.

*The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* is a remarkable achievement and his most accomplished work to date.

Doyle speaks from inside the kind of a wife, battered by a brutal husband and driven to drink, so convincingly and compassionately it is easy to forget it has been written by a man.

There is no way you can read Paula Spencer's story without getting emotionally involved. Doyle drags you with him into her thoughts and dreams, her agony and forlorn hopes.

He importantly understands how love can overcome the most savage act of hatred, how, despite the beatings, Paula still loves Charlo whom she fell for the moment she first saw him. And she realises that love has survived when a young policeman arrives to break the bad news – of his death.

**The Innocence of Roast Chicken – Jo-Anne Richards (Headline Review, £6.99) ★★★★★**

AN honest and powerful comment on the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Jo-Anne Richards' first novel knits fiction with historical events and

personal recollections.

She contrasts an idyllic, white and privileged childhood on an Afrikaans chicken farm in the Eastern Cape in 1966, with post-apartheid

Johannesburg in 1989 when bitter memories cut through the euphoria.

### HUMOUR

**The Midden – Tom Sharpe (Pan £5.99) ★★★★★**

NOT so much humour as lunacy! Sharpe's hero, Timothy Bright (but dim), is loaded. When the birthright funds run dry, Timothy turns unsuccessfully to gambling.

He finds himself drugged and in bed with the Chief Constable's wife. When the top cop arrives home after celebrating the dropping of bribery charges against him, he finds Timothy and almost kills him.

He sees the disposal of the "body" as an opportunity to frame old enemy Mrs Midden.

It's wacky, it's enjoyable, it's typical Tom Sharpe!

### NON-FICTION

**The Evil That Men Do – Brian Masters (Black Swan, £7.99) ★★★★★**

*FROM Saints to Serial Killers:* Penetrating the Nature of Good and Evil, is the subtitle of the latest work from the author of the rightly acclaimed study of mass murderer Dennis Nilsen.

And though it is a thought-provoking and well-reasoned book, it doesn't hold the attention like that masterful work, or even his study of cannibal killer Jeffrey Dahmer.

Perhaps that is because the subject matter is so deep – put simply, what makes some men good and other evil?

He ponders whether there is good and bad in all of us, and if it is our breeding which makes us as we are. But to his credit, he offers no answers to a question which has occupied generations.

Crime buffs who don't mind considering such a diversity of cases could find it a rewarding read, if a little heavy.

Gary Welford