

Candidates for the 2023 Literary Prize

Recital 1961, by David Looseley. Bloomsbury Academic. x,113 pp. £15.29. ISBN 9781501362101.

One of a wide series examining seminal recordings worldwide; this title examines the album of Piaf's celebrated comeback concert in December 1960 (which introduced *Je ne regrette rien* to the world) in the context of Piaf's career, life and celebrity.

192: the mystery of Lot 212 and a Tour de France obsession, by Ned Boulting. Bloomsbury Sport. 284 pp. £18.99. ISBN 9781399401548.

Lot 212 was the number of the auction lot bought by the author, a sports journalist: it contained scraps of newsreel of part of the 1923 Tour de France. It set him off a wider investigation of the political, social and psychological state of France in the aftermath of the Great War, woven into the story of the Tour de France itself.

Barnave: the revolutionary who lost his head for Marie-Antoinette, by John Hardman. Yale University Press. £30. xv,394 pp. ISBN 9780300270r846.

Antoine Barnave is less known these days but was an important figure in the early years of the French Revolution. A moderate revolutionary, he hoped to institute a reformed, constitutional monarchy in France and for this reason left the Jacobins and formed a moderate grouping; he also conducted a secret correspondence with Marie-Antoinette. However, the radical revolutionaries grew more powerful and his grouping less so; he retreated to his native Grenoble but his dealings with Marie-Antoinette, who seems to have been playing him along, came to light and, like so many moderate revolutionaries, he was tried and guillotined during the Reign of Terror in late 1793.

The Hundred Years war: Volume V: Triumph and illusion, by Jonathan Sumption. Faber. £40. xiii,977 pp. ISBN 9780571274574.

The final volume of Jonathan Sumption's magisterial history of the Hundred Years' war, covering the years from 1422, perhaps the apogee of English success, when the enfeebled Charles VI of France died (shortly after the death of Henry V of England) after naming the infant Henry VI of England as his successor as king of France, to 1453, when Gascony, the last English possession

in France except for the toe-hold of Calais, fell to a revived French monarchy and army. This period includes the successful military career, capture, trial and execution of Joan of Arc.

France on trial: the case of Marshal Petain, by Julian Jackson. Allen Lane. £25. xxxii,445 pp. ISBN 9780241450253.

A study of the 1945 trial for collaboration of Marshal Petain, the hero of Verdun who became the head of Vichy France, and its significant role in the debate on French actions and culpability during that regime – a debate that has reverberated, with changes of focus and emphasis, to the present day.

Monet: the restless visionary, by Jackie Wullschlager. Allen Lane. £35. xiii,545 pp. ISBN 9780241188309.

A very full biography of Monet from his early, struggling years as a painter to his years of fame, covering not only his artistic career but also his friendships, loves, his fallings-out - artistic and political - with other well-known Impressionists, and the influence of the three important women in his life.

La vie: a year in rural France, by John Lewis-Stempel. Doubleday. £16.99. viii, 198 pp. ISBN 9780857526458.

The author moved from a farm in rural Herefordshire to a farm in rural Charente; this book describes his experience of his first year there and how he was beguiled by the way and pace of life in *la France profonde*.