Lorraine Howard switches on her telly views

You really must book into The Hotel

Oh I do like The Hotel on Channel Four. And part of the reason is that a lot of the time it is cringe viewing – always a winner for reality shows.

It truly is a modern day Fawlty Towers, mostly thanks to harrassed owner Mark Jenkins who not only works there but lives there too. Though, it's a shame there's no Sybil.

Since the last series Christian has been promoted to Events Manager and his first is a magic night for guests.

There's a lot of stress and tension as interfering boss Mark attempts to take over Christian's big night.

Throw in some guests, a chaotic kitchen who run out of cheesecake and leave staff to microwave frozes ones and you have the makings of a true warts and all fly-on-the-wall.

It's Channel Four at its best as we want to see the guests in their rooms, we want a slice of the staff's personal lives and we want to know more about owner Basil, sorry, Mark.

I stayed with Channel Four for the Big Fat Quiz of the Year. Host Jimmy Carr attempted to keep the celeb contestants under control but Jack Whitehall and James Corden were clearly having too much fun to take any of it seriously.

I began to wish I had watched Ripper Street over on BBC 1 instead, something I must get round to before the second episode.

It's always a battle for the ratings over the festive season and this year there seems to be a clear winner. Eastenders once again took the limelight by being the most watched programme on Christmas Day. A staggering 9.37 million tuned in for the thrilling Albert Square episode with rival Corrie manging a respectable 8.83 million.

However the BBC took the rest of the top five positions with Strictly Come Dancing, The Royale Family and Doctor Who picking up the rest of the top slots.

Who knows what this year will bring in terms of TV viewing, I'm hoping for lots of brilliant telly.

Insight The Hotel on Channel Four is like Fawlty Towers

Home Fitness Hire

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Club Style Air Rower	8 weeks	£35
Elliptical Cross Trainer	6 weeks	£40
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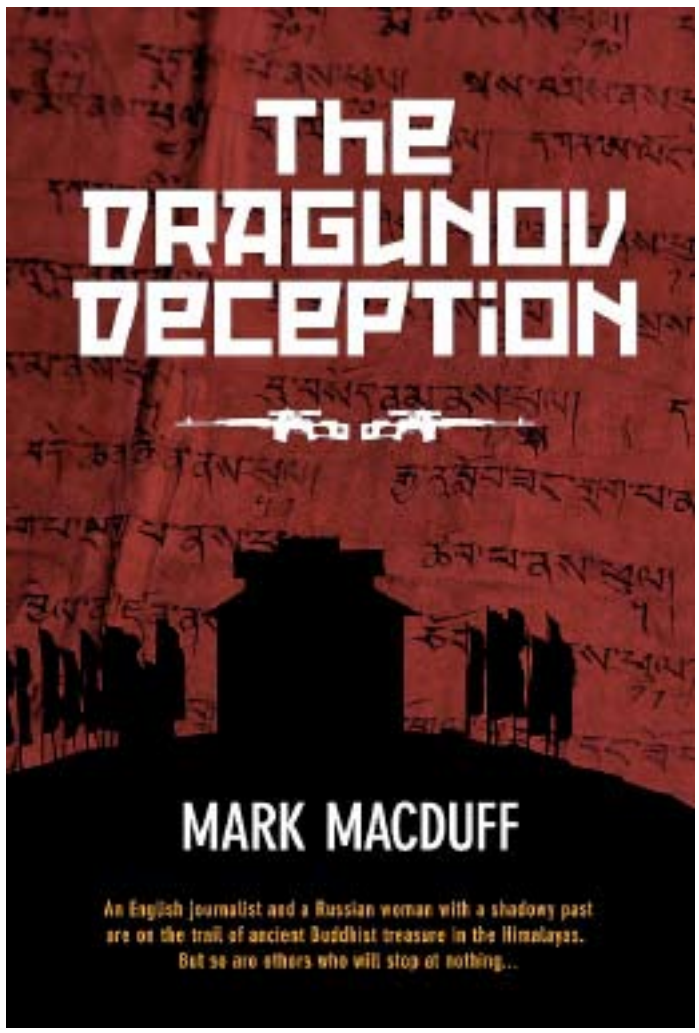
www.fitnesstakeaway.co.uk
TEL: 01236 767211 9am-9pm

NEW BOOK HITS THE SHOPS



A love of remote places and Buddhism took Mark MacDuff to the tiny kingdom of Bhutan in the 1990s.

At that point the writer had mainly produced articles on wine – another one of his loves – but this unique area nestled in the Himalayas provided plenty of inspiration for his first book.

Now almost 20 years on, the father-of-three from the Scottish Borders, completed his novel 'The Dragunov Deception,' a thriller set in the Buddhist nation devoted to peacefulness.

And that backdrop provides a stark contrast to the drama and violence that explodes at the end of the recently released book.

Main character Michael Harding travels to eastern Russia to write about the plight of the Siberian tigers but he stumbles upon the wholesale theft of religious artefacts on a vast scale and the Russian authority's seemingly valiant attempt to bring the criminals to justice.

Meanwhile, Yantar Valesky is employed by the Russian Federal Security Bureau as an undercover agent pursuing a criminal gang who are stealing Buddhist art treasures and selling them through the auctions houses of London and New York.

Michael sees Yantar as a communist fanatic, while she regards Michael as the embodiment of the western capitalism she despises.

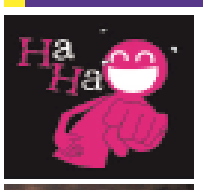
But both Michael and Yantar are pawns in a deadly game where grand thefts are inextricably caught up with dark and politically motivated machinations.

As the body count rises they realise that whoever is behind the thefts will stop at nothing to cover their tracks and if a Russian secret police officer and an English journalist know too much neither can be allowed to stay alive.

Michael and Yantar are caught in a deadly web of corruption and murder and to survive they need each other.

The Dragunov Deception is available via Amazon.co.uk for Kindle or other eReader devices for £4.49.

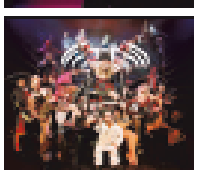
The Palace



Ha Ha Comedy Club
Friday 11 January
Eight fun, open-mic acts (groups of four)
Host of Scottish Comedian of the Year. Absolutely no interference the winner and two runners-up from the main competition. Five acts of the future on hand to help them hit the big time.

Tommy Truesdale & The Swingsters
With special guest Lorraine Todd
Saturday 12 January
7.30pm, £9 (£8/£7.50 conc)
One of Scotland's most well loved and legendary bands will play a selection of hits, new and 'in' tell and country music. Including tunes from Elvis, Buddy Holly, Kenny Rogers, Johnny Cash and more.

The Liam Bolan Show
Saturday 26th January
7.30pm, £10, £9 conc, £36 Family Ticket
Palace Theatre favourite Liam has been entertaining audiences for over 20 years. His new show is packed with all his favourite characters for this fantastic evening of first class entertainment.



Circus of Horrors
Sunday 27th January
7.30pm, £25, £20 conc, (£15 back row restricted view)
Featuring fantastic aerial skill & bizarre circus acts from all four corners of the world that will have you on the edge of your seat — when not falling off it with laughter!

T: 01563 554900
www.enjoyeastayrshire.com
The Palace Theatre, 9 Green Street, Kilmarnock KA1 3BN
Opening Hours: Mon - Sat, 10am - 5pm, and show nights.

West FM 96.7

Alan Shaw

Is Christmas over already?

Well, that's the Christmas and New Year celebrations over for another year. We always complain that it arrives too quickly each year but it also seems to be over just as quick. We're only a few days into 2013 and already the Christmas tree and twinkly lights are tucked away at the back of the loft.

I did have one last bonus festive moment when dismantling the tree though as I discovered that I'd hardly eaten any of the chocolate decorations! The room looks empty now but it's still just as sparkly as my tinsel appears to have moulted and I've spent the last two days trying in vain to hoover it all up. But at least now we can look forward to whatever the New Year may hold. We escaped the worst of the weather over Christmas, so I'm hoping that the predictions of another Big Freeze are going to come to nothing. Maybe 2013 will finally be the year of that barbecue summer. Actually, I'll be happy with any kind of summer since I blinked and missed last year's.

Then there are the New Year resolutions. Normally I go on about not really making any, but since I started eating mince pies, chocolates and general festive junk food back in October I really am going to stick to the one about eating better and getting more exercise. Maybe.

One thing I do plan to do before too long is watch all the rest of the Christmas telly that I've recorded. Last year I was still watching Christmas specials at Easter and it didn't quite feel the same.

Hopefully there will be more great events to look forward to in 2013 as well. It looks set to be a big year for music with T in the Park's 20th Anniversary as well as loads of big names coming to Scotland including Robbie Williams, Bon Jovi and Bruce Springsteen. And remember the West Sound Burns Supper returns to the Glasgow Thistle Hotel on Saturday, January 19, celebrating the life and works of Scotland's National Bard. You can call West Sound reception on 01292 283 662 to find out how to purchase your ticket to one of the biggest Burns Suppers in the world, or click on to westfm.co.uk.

And I'll talk to you every afternoon on West FM from 2pm!