



Old Bones

Cynthia Harrod-Eagles

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"Harrod-Eagles graces her narrative with a quiet wit that makes the book a pleasure to read"

Publishers Weekly Starred Review

Another sterling entry in a truly outstanding series"

Booklist Starred Review

DCI Bill Slider tackles the coldest of cold cases in this absorbing mystery.

A young couple discover human remains buried in the garden of their new house: could this be the resting place of 14-year-old Amanda Knight, who disappeared from the same garden two decades before, and was never seen again?

The problem comes almost as a relief to DCI Slider, still suffering from the fallout of his previous case. He is not popular with the Powers That Be, and his immediate boss, Detective Superintendent Porson, reckons that at least this little puzzle will keep Slider out of trouble. After all, with a murder twenty years in the past, this is the coldest of cold cases. Most of the suspects and principal players are now dead too, and all passion is long spent ... Or is it?

Old Bones Details

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Author : Cynthia Harrod-Eagles

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From Reader Review Old Bones for online ebook

Monica says

Bill Slider's team is still smarting from the fallout over their inability to bring to court a case involving senior police officers.

Porson, the wonderful boss and singularly gifted operator of the language salad spinner, gives them a cold case to keep them out of trouble.

Bones have been discovered in a suburban garden, the remains of a teenage girl dating back about 25 years. The daughter of the family who lived there at the time disappeared and was never found. Police and neighbors were suspicious of the father, but nothing was ever proven, and the couple remained under a cloud until he died. Witnesses have died and/or forgotten things, evidence has disappeared. It is a typical cold case exercise in evidence sifting. It is well plotted with an interesting twist at the end.

The chief pleasure in the book, as is typical of the series, is the interactions of the appealing characters - Slider's domestic life, Atherton's love life (fairly tranquil for once), the police team - and the author's very clever use of language and her excellent descriptive abilities.

Linda Strong says

3.5 STARS

A human skeleton is found in the garden of a house newly inhabited by a young couple. Twenty years ago teenager Amanda Knight disappeared from the same area. Could this be the missing teen?

DCI Bill Slider and his team are charged with investigating. But after so many years, there is no evidence, and a lot of the people who were questioned back then are no longer in the area or have passed.

With police corruption hanging over their heads, Slider almost welcomes a cold case. It will keep him busy and keep him out of the public eye at the same time.

This is the 19th book featuring DCI Bill Slider. While reading this one, there are a lot of references to previous cases. The book was not fast paced, and it was more mysterious than suspenseful. I did enjoy the characters and the humor that sparked along the way. OLD BONES is a fairly good British police procedural.

Many thanks to the author / Severn House / Netgalley for the advanced digital copy of OLD BONES. Opinions expressed here are unbiased and entirely my own.

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Severn House for an advance copy of Old Bones, the nineteenth novel in Ms Harrod-Eagles series of place procedurals featuring DCI Bill Slider.

After the events of the previous novel, *One Under*, Bill is decidedly not flavour of the month with the brass and Superintendent Porson, much to Bill's disgust, advises him to keep his head well below the parapet. To this end he allows a full scale investigation of a skeleton found in a suburban garden during the erection of a new shed. The bones would appear to be those of a teenager buried about 20 years ago but there is no apparent cause of death. After a fair amount of trawling (I hesitate to say digging, though Ms Harrod-Eagle wouldn't) through non computer records they tentatively identify the bones as those of Amanda Knight, a 14 year old teenager who vanished from the same garden in 1990. Cold cases, however, present their own problems, not least finding witnesses and jogging their faded memories. Throughout it all police politics and their last case rumble along in the background.

Old Bones is a first class procedural. I must admit that I guessed the twist at the end but it didn't spoil my enjoyment. With it being a cold case there is none of the modern fad of inserting the perpetrator's thoughts and feelings and it concentrates wholly on the investigation, its progress and the team's reactions to each new piece of information. I found the slow, logical build up to the reveal fascinating as the clues are all there for you to work it out and it was difficult to put the book down.

Bill Slider is a pleasant protagonist. He is mildly anti-authoritarian, not a great character attribute in a hierarchical organisation like the police, and prepared to stand up for his views, even if it may be career suicide and sometimes it seems that his boss, Superintendent Porson, exists to stop him being reckless. He is a bit of an Everyman, standing up for victims at personal cost, intent on doing right, very solicitous of his team and managing to hold on to his sense of humour. The novel is not a comedy but the team have a few good lines of banter to make you smile.

I really enjoyed *Old Bones* and have no hesitation in recommending it as an excellent read.

Christine says

To DCI Bill Slider, colleague DCI Ron Carver's retirement party is just another sign that the police force is changing. Top ranking officers come straight from college now instead of working their way up through the ranks and now beat cops are actually being eliminated. Slider's job consists of more and more paperwork every day and he has made enemies of his superiors on his last case. When old human bones are found at a local home renovation site, Slider's boss gives him the cold case to hopefully keep him out of trouble, but the case heats up more than anyone could have imagined.

I really enjoyed this installment of the long-running Bill Slider series. The case of missing teenage Amanda Knight is interesting and it's great to read about old-fashioned detective work as Slider and his team work to solve the case. I love the clever, witty writing. One small example is a character saying they are going to the police café for some "cruel and unusual nourishment." I have read several of the prior installments in the series and have gotten to know and love the characters. Slider is a great detective and person and anyone would love to have a boss as encouraging and understanding as he is. There is a wonderful subplot with one of Slider's direct reports, Connolly, and a young witness from a prior case that is interesting and touching.

It would be going too far to say there is a happy ending, but there is a satisfying resolution to the case. Reading a new Bill Slider book is a joy and if you are familiar with the series or are just looking for a great police procedural with likable characters, I highly recommend "Old Bones."

I received this book from NetGalley through the courtesy of Severn House. The book was provided to me in

exchange for an honest review.

Jen says

This is my first Bill Slider police procedural, and I just realized there are many more to enjoy.

It was a nice surprise to discover how much I liked the book since I was not much impressed with the cover.

Old Bones is about the discovery of a skeleton in a garden. Bill Slider's boss thinks an obviously cold case will keep his detective out of trouble since Slider's previous investigation of an underage sex ring involving upper echelons in the police hierarchy has put him under a cloud.

The case does get under Slider's skin. The skeleton of a fourteen-year-old girl who went missing two decades previously will be difficult--memories of the day Amanda Knight disappeared are twenty years old, files are missing, and possible suspects are dead or have moved away, but Slider's team will give it every effort.

Old Bones is an excellent police procedural with good characterization and an intriguing plot. That alone would have been enough, but what raises the bar even further is Harrod-Eagles writing. She skillfully maneuvers all elements of the story--the characters, plot, and pacing.

And then there are the occasional lines that brought a little humor, an allusion, or a neat comparison:

"That's what I like about you, Maurice," Swilley said sweetly. "Always ready to go the extra meal."

"...as lively as a botoxed brow."

"You're no fun on a road rip, Thelma."

on architectural styles: "Twentieth Century Insensitive"

All in all, a book to be enjoyed on many levels, but first and foremost the competence of the author in presenting a serious and intriguing cold case police procedural.

Favorite minor character: Connie Bindman, the police archivist.

Read in Oct.; blog review scheduled for Jan. 23, 2017. A Garden Carried in the Pocket

NetGalley/Severn House

Police Procedural/Mystery. Feb. 1, 2017. Print length: 265 pages.

LJ says

First Sentence: There comes a point in the life of a balloon when it has lost so much air that its taut, festive

body becomes sagging, wrinkled and—well, frankly, sad.

DCI Bill Slider is decidedly unpopular at HQ due to those implicated in his last cast. A young couple discovers a skeleton in their back garden. It's thought to be that of a young girl who disappeared from that garden two decades ago. Slider's boss, DS Porson, hope this case will be simple and will keep Slider out of harm's way. But does it?

Harrod-Eagles never disappoints. Her use of language, Britishisms notwithstanding, is always a delight, including her chapter headings. Her description of people makes them immediately recognizable—"Carver was a miserable bastard, who had raised resentment to an art form, and his leaving do was appropriately cheerless." and—"It was time that Atherton, the serial romancer, settled down. He was tall, handsome, elegant, and irresistible to females. Pure catnip. He could commit sexual harassment by sitting quietly in another room. Really, the world needed him to be taken out of circulation."

How lovely to have the protagonist be in a marriage that has suffered its rocky patches, but that works. There is an excellent comparison between Slider being a cop, and his wife Joanna being a professional musician. There is also a moving and painful description of a mother learning of her daughter's body being found years after her disappearance. It is this ability to convey both light and dark equally well that makes CHE such a fine writer.

Slider and his team truly are a team. They are an ensemble cast, each with their own parts to play and backgrounds about which we learn. The case is a jigsaw puzzle, put together piece-by-piece, following the clues. But don't make the mistake of thinking the cases are clichéd or the ending pat. They are far from so being.

"Old Bones" is a very well-done police procedural with excellent characters. It is so well written; no prologue, no tricks, no portents or cliff hangers, just 256 pages of solid writing.

OLD BONES (Pol Proc-Insp. Bill Slider-England-Contemp) – Ex
Harrod Eagles, Cynthia – 19th in series
Severn House, Feb 2017

Jerry B says

For over a quarter-century, we've been fans of Brit Harrod-Eagles police procedurals featuring the doggedly persistent Inspector Bill Slider. The author is so busy with other projects that the Slider stories appear seemingly at random every couple of years – but are invariably entertaining and thus worth the wait. We might add that this now 19-book series is best read in chronological order, as the characters and their relationships progress throughout the set – and in this particular novel, Slider's staff is still somewhat preoccupied by their feelings about the case solved in the just prior novel ("One Under"), the outcome of which bothers them quite a bit. As an aside, we sometimes suspect we find these tales particularly likable as Bill is married to a professional violinist, whose insights about her profession and about being a musician in general parallel both our own experiences and those of our professional violinist daughter.

In "Bones", the police are working the cold case of a skeleton discovered buried in a garden, which is rather quickly preliminarily identified from a missing persons report of some 20 years ago at that same address,

merely awaiting the DNA confirmation. For once able to pursue a case somewhat at their leisure, the staff have remarkable luck in finding past witnesses, including especially a woman thought to be the dead girl's best friend. That a higher police official might be tangentially involved adds to the suspense, especially in light of Bill's somewhat shaky status after his targeting of police higher-ups in the prior tale. A relatively surprising ending caps off the whole affair – as does the decision of a long-time staffer to perhaps leave the force.

As usual, Slider and company provide an ample return on our reading investment!

Kyrie says

The events of the previous book really hang over this one, so it definitely needs to be read first to appreciate some of the subplots.

As to the main mystery of this one - a 25 year old case of a missing girl, I felt quite clever at figuring part of it out early, BUT I honestly second guessed myself a lot and I didn't figure it all out by a long shot. Small families, falling outs, neighbors moving in and out, it's hard to trace people to interview them for such an old case.

I love this series, particularly when the puns and word play get going. I hope this series continues for a long run.

Anne says

Sadly, I come to the end of my Bill Slider reading binge. Now I will await the next in the series. I have come to the point that I think like Harrod-eagles and I sussed out the solution to the mystery about halfway through. It was still a good read. I do think she hasn't decided what to do with Atherton, so he isn't as prominent in this or the other later books. He rather goes in circles, as opposed to the other characters.

Lynn says

Another excellent Slider entry. I was a little unsure about the last one, what with cracking the corruption ring at the top echelons. Seemed a little bit of a stretch. And of course it was, and is revisited in this book.

This one, though, was a real puzzler, given that it was a 25-year-old crime and most of the lead players were aged or dead. Hard to find witnesses that way. Then there were a couple of nice twists at the end. The central one I kind-of suspected, but the way Slider figured it out was quite fascinating.

I really like the humor, the characters, and the plots in this series. There's only one more I haven't read, so I'm hoping she's working on more. Well done, H-E!

Rog Harrison says

This is my favourite so far in this series. As well as being a story about the investigation of the skeleton of a teenage girl being found buried in a garden it ties up the loose ends from the previous book "One under". It's a grim book though it is leavened by the humorous chapter headings and the banter between the characters. Usually with this series I do not really understand what has happened until the reveal at the end but in this book I did pick up on some clues well before Detective Chief Inspector Slider. A really engrossing read which I could not put down.

Jon says

I've only got one more to read in this clever and reliable series until the author writes another. I'll have to be patient and pace myself. This one involves the discovery of a girl's skeleton buried behind a small house in London. Twenty-five years ago the girl who lived there disappeared and was never found. Her father was immediately suspected of abusing and murdering her, but no evidence was ever discovered. He has since died. The solution to this one occurred to me fairly early as a notional possibility, but it seemed too far-fetched to be really quite possible. Harrod-Eagles works it out with such well-drawn characters and circumstances that she makes it finally seem not just possible but plausible. And of course there are the usual (for this series) puns, jokes, and teasing among the team of detectives. One of them though, decides at the end to leave the force and pursue other interests. I'll miss her.

Clare O'Beara says

More work for the Shepherd's Bush police station but luckily this is a cold case. DI Bill Slider is still treading carefully after uncovering senior figures up to no good in the last book. Now a garden reveals the remains of a young woman or girl, and Slider's crew have to investigate who she may have been and how she died.

The painstaking work is well detailed with antediluvian filing methods and evidence storage revealed; interviews are tricky because possible witnesses have moved away or died. The station staff are not too exercised about the outcome it must be said, and some of their lives are shown, slightly out of step at times. A couple of new transfers are added and with regret we see an old hand decide to move in other directions.

For fans of the series or indeed anyone coming to the books for the first time, this is a good read. I downloaded a copy from Net Galley. This is an unbiased review.

Pamela says

This is my first "Bill Slider" book, and I found it to be quite good. Now, of course, I know there are several prior books, but I didn't feel too left out in this one even though there were many references to the previous case.

I liked these characters, I also liked the way we all solved the case together, piece by piece. The author

shows us their flaws and strengths. I felt the plot was nicely paced with some twists and turns. A very credible police procedural. I would most definitely check out more of these books.

Thank you to the publisher and Net Galley in exchange of an honest review.

Shirley Schwartz says

I love Cynthia Harrod-Eagles' Bill Slider character. He's such an everyday guy and such a great boss to his CID team in Shepherd's Bush, London. Ms. Harrod-Eagles' sly sense of humour, and dry wit beams out on almost every page of every book in this series starting with the puns that are used in all chapter titles. In this case, Bill and his team are dealing with a set of "old bones", that have been buried for over 20 years. His hilarious boss. Porson thinks that Bill needs a cooling off period after the explosive last case that he was working, so he thinks old bones are just the ticket to keep his DI out of trouble, and most importantly, out of the eye of the higher-ups in the police department. But in typical Slider fashion, the bones open up a rather explosive line of enquiry, and the twists and turns in this case keep Bill and his team on their toes at all times. The final denouement was totally unexpected by me. I honestly didn't see it coming, But that is what a Bill Slider book is like. i love this light-hearted series. And the dark side, which is always there as well, brings everything into perspective and makes the books even more realistic. I highly recommend this series for those who love police procedurals with realistic characters and a cracking plot. And this book wouldn't even be a bad place to start with this series. If you do read it, it will make you want to read the whole backlist.
