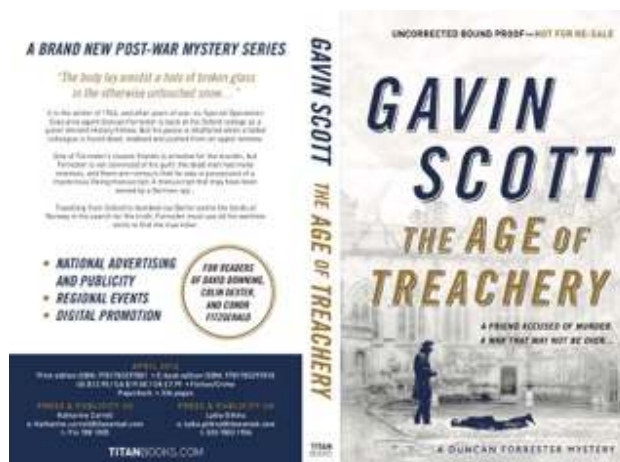


When I was growing up Penguin books were ubiquitous, elegantly presented and cheap.



But also a little bit austere and even - for the under ten set -forbidding. For sheer excitement, on the other hand, Penguin's rival Pan went all out to make their books irresistible on the bookstand, and I still take great delight in their cover art to this day. Even if - perhaps even because - some of the draughtsmanship is rather gloriously bad.

Here are three from my collection of Pan books dealing with World War Two adventures, of which there were many. Duncan Forrester, the Oxford History don and former Special Operations Executive agent who is the hero of my novel *The Age of Treachery*, to be published (in paperback!) next month.



He probably bought books like this in the 1940's and 50's, (the first book is set in 1946) but only to read on trains where he was unlikely to meet any of his fellow academics. He wasn't a snob about books, but many of *them* were, and he had no more desire to be teased than the rest of us.

But he had a sneaking affection for the lurid covers too - and passed them on to his nephews in Hull whenever he visited.

