

Life in the Country

A New Chapter

You couldn't write it any better: A husband-and-wife team create a beloved bookstore-café-deli hybrid that turns a tiny town into a literary destination.

meet Bill!

When he's not organizing the shop's food and wine sections, you'll find Bill de la Hey strolling the nearby River Tweed.

meet Rosamund!

Rosamund de la Hey oversees the shop's book selections, which are shared with local schools via their 1969 Citroën H van.



From charcuterie to Champagne, Bill stocks holiday staples at Mainstreet Deli & Home, which is housed in the 19th-century barn behind the main bookshop.



It's a chilly winter's day in the Scottish village of St. Boswells, but inside The Mainstreet Trading Company (*mainstreetbooks.co.uk*), all is merry and bright. Visitors who have come to browse the more than 7,000 titles filling the shelves are greeted with four trees festooned with shoppable ornaments and the savory aroma of mince pies that wafts from the café. "Each year, our baker, Sue, tries to beat her record for pies made," says Bill de la Hey, who, along with wife Rosamund, owns the store. "She's up to 1,017."

The couple moved from London in 2003 to raise their children in the countryside. "I first wanted to open a children's book store," says Rosamund, the former children's marketing director at Bloomsbury Publishing, who helped launch the *Harry Potter* series. "But the building we bought was so big, I knew we'd need to offer more." Bill, a photographer-turned-chef, put his passion for food and wine into the mix, and—in 2008—they opened Mainstreet, hosting author events then cooking demos and tastings after adding the deli and homewares area in 2012. The accolades followed; in 2018, they were named Britain's Best Small Shop by the Independent Retailer Consortium.

The holidays are particularly busy, but stocking up for the rush is half the fun. "Whether it's books or wine, we still appreciate the daily joy of getting to share the things we love," says Rosamund.



ABOVE: Coffee and baked goods, such as blueberry-and-sour cream cake, are served in the café. **RIGHT:** Rosamund and shop staff host monthly book clubs and visits with best-selling authors.



IMPOSSIBLE CREATURES COVER ILLUSTRATION BY DANIEL EGNÉUS.



In its original use as a general store, Mainstreet's circa-1895 building offered patrons everything from women's shoes to Scotch whisky. These days, its literary selection has charmed the likes of Margaret Atwood and King Charles III.

FIELD NOTES

Season's Readings

Straight from the shelves of Mainstreet, here are Rosamund's top picks to gift this holiday.



"This book marks the beginning of an epic new children's series. Think Philip Pullman meets J.K. Rowling."



"A gloriously illustrated romp of a story that's wonderful for families to read together on a dark winter's night."



"This vivid novel follows four young women within an intensely close family. You will race through, but wish you had not rushed."