



Some of Newton's papers, auctioned in 2000.

STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA

the shocking allegation that Newton had gone mad in the early 1690s, and never entirely recovered — which, Biot insinuated, made him fervently devout and inspired his religious writings. In 1835, an edition of letters and memoirs by the first British astronomer royal, John Flamsteed, brought to light Newton's seemingly heartless treatment of Flamsteed. The revelations engendered debates in England and across the Channel, prompting Scottish physicist David Brewster to spring to Newton's defence. His work culminated in 1855 with a magisterial two-volume biography, which mostly glossed over Newton's heterodox religious views.

Along with her narrative of these debates and discussion of how the history of science evolved in England, Dry offers lively portraits of those who enabled the recovery of the “true” Newton. These include the two earls of Portsmouth who owned his papers — Isaac Newton Wallop, who donated the scientific and mathematical manuscripts to Cambridge in 1872, and Gerard Wallop, who put the rest up for auction in 1936 to pay for death duties and his own divorce. Also discussed are the dealers involved in the dispersal of the papers, and the passionate collectors who vied for a share in the spoils — particularly the economist John Maynard Keynes and the polymath Abraham Yahuda. These two acquired a considerable portion of Newton's alchemical and theological manuscripts in the 1936 sale. Keynes and Yahuda's wife later donated their respective collections to King's College, Cambridge, and the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem, finally allowing free access to Newton's nonscientific papers for the first time.

Dry is to be congratulated for furnishing us with a fresh and readable chronicle of the tortuous route that Newton's manuscript took to being made public — ostensibly in accordance with the wishes of the great man. ■

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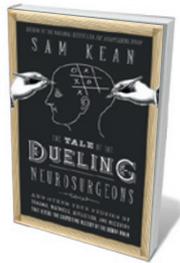
Books in brief



You Are Here: From the Compass to GPS, the History and Future of How We Find Ourselves

Hiawatha Bray BASIC BOOKS (2014)

Getting lost — that adjunct to exploration — is rare in our minutely mapped world. Hiawatha Bray traces the technologies that have driven us to this state of hyper-visibility. Kicking off with Tudor physician William Gilbert's finding that Earth is a colossal magnet, Bray covers radio and gyroscope, global positioning satellites, Wi-Fi, smartphones, Google maps, chip-and-reader tracking and more. The implications of this Orwellian “locational transparency” are amply discussed, to unsettling effect.



The Tale of the Dueling Neurosurgeons

Sam Kean LITTLE, BROWN (2014)

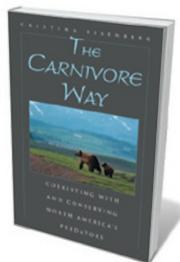
Oliver Sacks's 1985 *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* (Summit Books) set off a tsunami of interest in brain anomalies and linked behaviours. Sam Kean braves that wave, revealing how intercranial calamities have built neuroscience case by puzzled-out case, gross anatomy to consciousness. However pop the science, there is much to compel. Victorian explorer James Holman, for instance, was blinded by an infection yet, Kean writes, travelled 400,000 kilometres by echolocation (sounding out surfaces by tapping them with a cane) and was cited by Darwin for work on island seed dispersal.



Hope on Earth: A Conversation

Paul R. Ehrlich and Michael Charles Tobias UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS (2014)

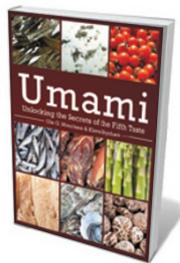
For those wearied by the malaise enveloping high-level negotiations on planetary ills, these ‘bilateral talks’ between biologist Paul Ehrlich and ecologist Michael Charles Tobias offer relief. Their often heated dialogue on the scientific, ethical and conceptual approaches to our global predicament is cogent on details such as the realities of unsustainable livestock farming, or the broken equation of population and resources. Despite the grim litany, their action plan for humanity — such as limiting family size — is convincing.



The Carnivore Way: Coexisting with and Conserving North America's Predators

Cristina Eisenberg ISLAND PRESS (2014)

The “carnivore way” is a vast, fragmented wildlife corridor stretching along the Rocky Mountains from Alaska to Mexico. In this call for a unified vision in conservation, ecologist Cristina Eisenberg argues that big carnivores such as grizzly bears underpin the corridor's ecological health, and need it in turn for dispersal into new territory. She interweaves multiple skeins of science — on predator population resilience, the success of highway wildlife crossings and more — to build a putative scenario of human–carnivore coexistence.



Umami: Unlocking the Secrets of the Fifth Taste

Ole G. Mouritsen and Klavs Styrbæk COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS (2014)

From Parmesan's savoury tang to the deep complexities of the Japanese soup stock dashi, umami adds a fifth dimension to the flavour universe. Biophysicist Ole Mouritsen, whose *Seaweeds* (University of Chicago Press, 2013) seamlessly meshes science and gastronomy, here reprises that recipe with chef Klavs Styrbæk. Research into areas such as umami's role in appetite regulation alternates with a stunning menu featuring, for instance, braised monkfish liver with peanuts and raspberries. [Barbara Kiser](#)