

## Lovereadng Reader reviews of The Jazz Files by Fiona Veitch Smith

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereadng members.

### Edel Waugh

*This is a story about a young woman called Poppy who is helped by her mischievous and notorious aunt Dot to move to the very cosmopolitan London of the twenties!*

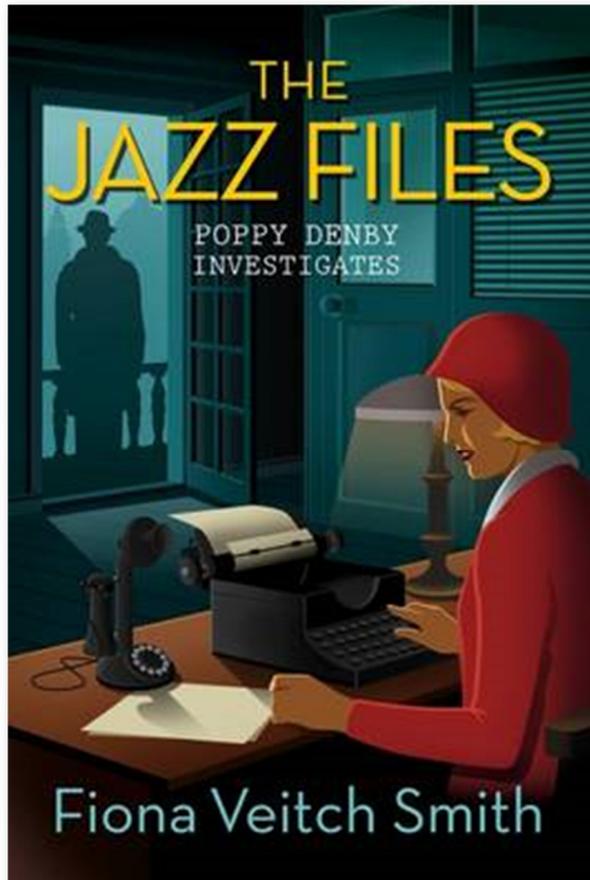
*Poppy is in need of a job and it's not long until she finds one with the help of her aunt. Poppy begins work for a newspaper and finally starts living the life she had always hoped for.*

*There is plenty of information in the story that was relevant to the time and setting of the story, so if you like your mystery mixed with a little history then this is a great book. **I adored it!** Poppy is a strong woman doing an unconventional job at a time that it was still frowned upon, she is also surrounded by other strong women who prove to be a good influence on her and I like her "go get em" attitude. **I hope there will be many more books featuring Poppy and the fabulous Dot!***

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.ie/2015/12/the-jazz-files-by-fiona-veitch-smith.html?m=1>

### Cath Sell

***It is 1920 and Poppy Denby is our intrepid investigator in London, fresh from the North. She lives with her suffragette Aunt and decides***



***to become a journalist.....and so the fun begins.***

*Before I talk about the book a little about me. I read a LOT of this type of classic style of mystery and I LOVE Jacqueline Winspear's Maisie Dobbs and more recently the thoroughly modern detective AmoryvAmes (beautifully created by Ashley Weaver). So I am familiar with these and other 1920's heroines: For that read 'not easily pleased.'*

*I really enjoyed this novel. The star of this soon-to-be series is Poppy Denby, a Northumberland lass (shame the story is set in London!) who becomes a cub reporter whilst staying with her famous suffragette Aunt Dot (Dot by name...)*

*I loved the range of characters: from the American Editor Rollo to Miss Swan her Thos. Cook ally on the ferry and I particularly liked the book's historical notes, further reading and differentiation between historical fact and fiction.*

*This book felt fresh, had some twists and a lovely sense of period - I look forward to meeting Poppy et al again.*

**Olivia D'Silva**

***A good old-fashioned mystery thriller!***

*It's the early 1920's when Poppy Denby moves from Northumberland to London to follow her ambitions for a career. The path has been paved by her suffragette Aunt and group of friends, who have paid a high price in the name of women's rights. She seizes the opportunity given to her by the misfit editor of The Globe, one of the emerging tabloid newspapers of the time. Poppy is a gutsy character who takes her chances when she unearths a political conspiracy that ends up being very close to home.*

*This is a thriller of a detective novel and the characters have real depth. Throughout the story we get to glimpse many aspects as fiction intertwines with historical representations of the era, from the dizzy heights of society glamour to the lows of post-war depression. The author has admitted to playing with the timeline a little for the good of the story, which is entirely forgivable as it all somehow felt very real. I'm looking forward to Poppy's next adventure in this male dominated world, where I have no doubt that she can continue to hold her own!*

**Sarah Musk**

***An exciting Suffragette murder mystery set after the First World***

**War. Poppy Denby is a tenacious heroine who becomes involved in reporting on a sinister family plot to silence one of their own.**

*I really enjoyed this book. I love the Jazz Age and this book brings it vividly to life. What was life like for people after the devastation of the First World War. They just tried to get on with normal life and Fiona Veitch Smith portrays this really well. Everyone had lost someone - some more than most - but they had to carry on.*

*Poppy Denby, the heroine of the book, is smart, quick witted - a great role model for a time in which women were classed as second class citizens, despite their major contribution to the war effort in filling in for men's jobs and keeping home life going while the men were at the front. She becomes embroiled in a suffragete mystery from seven years before and proves her worth and credentials as a first class reporter in a man's world.*

*I loved the forays she makes into high society - a world, which we now know, was changing forever. Although we know it wasn't going to last it is still so enjoyable to become involved in a totally hedonistic time which was careering towards destruction.*

*If you like crime and mysteries with some interesting history thrown in then you will love this book. I did.*

### **Ruth Paterson**

***'The Jazz Files' is an interesting and at some points thrilling mystery. It is the first in a series, 'Poppy Denby Investigates'. I found it hard to put down and can't wait to read more.***

*I would put it in the genre that I have come to know as a cosy mystery – a term not everyone appreciates, but for me personally, it means exactly what it says time to sit back, cosy down and enjoy.*

*The action occurs in 1920 at a time when times are changing, women dare to become more useful in society working and wearing shorter fitted, clothing. Poppy Denby has led a sheltered life and in this first instalment goes to London to look after her Aunt Dot, who is an infamous Suffragette. Her Aunt encourages to aspire to more and she ends up applying to work in a Newspaper Office. By Chapter 4 she is completely embroiled in the life of the paper, including filling the shoes of the journalist who falls to his death in front of her, and leaves a mystery to solve that involves several big names in society, including her own Aunt. The main characters are likable with that hint of*

*intrigue in their background that adds to the mystery.*

*This novel is well researched. In the front of the book a cast of characters includes the list of those that are fictional and historical. A historical note makes it clear what is artistic licence and what is based on fact. Colourful descriptions of fashion, cars, music and clubs set the scene brilliantly. The era is one of high hopes and change which is illustrated well in Poppy's journey through the chapters.*

*I can highly recommend this book, particularly to fans of the Kate Shackleton, Daisy Dalrymple and Dandy Gilver mystery series.*

### **Phylippa Smithson**

***Feared this would be a 'fluffy' lightweight but found it remarkably engaging most notably for capturing many of the social changes of the 1920s.***

*Poppy Denby is experiencing London life after her quiet and sheltered upbringing in Morpeth as a daughter of practising Methodists. This new world is on the cusp of change. Motor cars replacing horse drawn carriages, woman taking on work after the Suffragette campaigns and so on.*

*She is living in London to be staying on the pretence of assisting her Aunt but in fact what her Aunt has in mind is to broaden naïve Poppy's imagination and abilities.*

*So Poppy doesn't become her Aunt's assistant but takes on a job as an assistant to the head of The Globe newspaper, an American driven only for the next story. And as a result of Poppy's connections, the next story sees her pulling on a number of her contacts to track down what may have been the reason for the Globe's political editor's death.*

*Thanks to Poppy finding her inner determination and 'voice,' her investigation uncovers a number of members of the suffragette movement whose fight has either left them dead under mysterious circumstances, disabled or sentenced to a life in a mental institution despite having no symptoms to justify her imprisonment. And with her many and varied contacts as a result of those in her personal life, notably her Aunt, a former actress, and Delilah, daughter of the founder of Marconi's Wireless Telegraph & Signal Company, she grounds out the persons responsible for such tragedies.*

*This is a delightful and fast-paced story. Really do anticipate this first introduction to Poppy will not be the last.*

## **Linde Merrick**

**What a delightful introduction to a new female detective Fiona has given us in this first mystery of the “Poppy Denby” series.** In ‘The Jazz Files’ Poppy is transformed from a naive, stay-at-home daughter in Northumbria into an independent novice investigative journalist working in London during the 1920s for The Globe newspaper. Her first case arises from the sudden death of the political reporter: it is concerned with a “story that has a whiff of high society scandal” and involves a fascinating mix of characters from the political and theatrical worlds. The novel uses events of the Suffragette movement in 1913 to bring together these disparate strands into an exciting, action-packed plot which comes to a satisfactory ending. The historical touches are handled in a pleasingly way whilst still touching on corruption and misogyny. There is a gentle romantic interest for Poppy with the paper's photographer. I'm very much looking forward to reading the second, already written, novel and following the development of such a feisty heroine.

## **Nicola Underwood**

**Brilliant read. Well written, entertaining and addictive.**

As the first book in a series, this was great. The scene was set right from the beginning and Poppy was immediately likeable. There were references to popular culture at the time it was set and although there were some indiscrepancies with this, they fit in with the story well. Poppy, the main character, was easy to identify with and kept the story moving. There were twists and turns during the investigation and ever present danger, but it was kept quite light hearted and the outcome was still unexpected. I can't wait to read the next instalment and hope that it is as good as this was one was. Readers who enjoy the Daisy Dalrymple series by Carola Dunn should read this book.

## **Siobhan McDowell**

**The heroine of this novel is Poppy Denby and she is a delightful addition to the Sleuthing Set !!**

She is clever and plucky...two character traits that come in useful in her adventures.

This book was full of well-defined individuals who were portrayed clearly and who were very believable.

*The plot was well paced and convincing as actual historical details were skilfully blended into the storyline.*

*A terrific read and one which at times was breathtaking as Poppy strode forward in her search for justice!*

### **Jocelyn Garvey**

*It's what we call any story that has a whiff of high society scandal but can't*

*This is really the adventures of Poppy and life in the early 1920's. War is over and the 20's are about to 'roar'.*

*We meet Poppy Denby arriving in London from Northumberland to stay with and help her disabled aunt. Her aunt was a famous actress and suffragette.*

*This is Poppy's excuse to leave home and go to London to seek a new world and a job in Journalism. She finds that jobs for women are few and far between after all this is 1920!*

*With the help of a lot of luck and coincidence she finds herself as an assistant in the office of 'The Daily Globe'.*

*An unfortunate accident (it appears) to one of the reporters give her a chance to show her worth. She starts looking into the story he was writing and finds bits of information in the 'Jazz files' that lead her forward. Who is the Mysterious woman that sent a letter to the reporter? What connection does her aunt have to this?*

*Poppy is an avid reader of Agatha Christie and is always looking for a sinister reason behind things. This gets Poppy into some sticky situations.*

*Through her aunt Poppy meets such interesting people, Delilah Marconi, an aspiring actress; Lord Dorchester and his son Alfie, Rollo Rowlandson, the editor of the Globe and even Charlie Chaplin.*

*With lots of authentic details the book takes you back to the 1920's post war London.*

***A great read, really enjoyable. The book moves along at a pace and is difficult to put down.***

### **Evelyn Barrett**

*A classic 'whodunnit' and perfect for a winter's night read. 'The Jazz Files', set in*

*London in 1920, introduces the character of Poppy Denby, a 'modern' girl looking for a career as a journalist. Poppy, slightly naïve and arriving in London for the first time, to take care of her Aunt Dot, or so her parents believe, becomes involved in investigating the mysterious death, some seven years previously, of an ardent suffragette. Does it help or confuse the situation that Aunt Dot was also a suffragette and knew the dead woman?*

*From enlisting the assistance of a window cleaner, and his ladder, in the audacious rescue of an asylum inpatient, to secretly dashing off to Paris at the drop of a hat, nothing seems to daunt the irrepressible Poppy.*

***The first book in the series, full of 'daring-do' and cliff-hangers, and leaving the reader eager for more adventures with a delightful character.***

### **Barbara Goldie**

***A great mix of history, mystery and even a little romance set in the evocative city of London just after the First World War.***

***Fiona Veitch Smith has crafted an excellent novel; the first of which I hope will be a long series. The cover catches the eye and would stand out on any bookshelf.***

*Her characters are well written and easy to get to know. Of course my favourite was Poppy Denby who is a strong motivated girl setting out on a new phase of her life. Rollo her boss and Dot her aunt stood out as well for me but all the characters were well pictured had hidden depths and stood as individuals throughout the book.*

*The plot was compelling and kept me entertained, it was cleverly brought together and had many twists and turns along the way making it a quick and easy read, it remained light hearted and did not get heavy and slow.*

*The historical context of the 1920's and the women's struggle for suffrage was obviously well researched and the locations perfect. Northumbria, London, the newspaper offices, the stage, and even lunatic asylums were brought vividly to life.*

*It had a satisfying ending and I will certainly be looking out for the next in the series, comes highly recommended.*

### **Lee Mumbray**

*This is the first in what I hope is going to be a long series: Poppy Denby Investigates and let me say now that there are NO SPOILERS within as though I love reading crime and thriller fiction I am not the sort of reader who turns to the last chapter first! I really enjoyed reading this; **the writing is sharp and witty and the attention to period detail really brings the characters and their surroundings to life.** Poppy is a vivacious aspiring journalist who moves to London and we meet her looking wonderingly at her new environment as she moves from the rural north country to join her Aunt Dot, an infamous suffragette. These little details bring the characters vividly into a rapidly developing plot as Poppy joins the staff of a daily newspaper, discovers the London of the Roaring Twenties, finds Jazz, romance and danger and realises that things are going on in 1920 which others wish to conceal.*

*It's a great yarn, Poppy is a compelling lead character and having really enjoyed her first adventure I can't wait for the next instalment which according to the author's blog is in the pipeline. I do hope others enjoy this as much as I have!*