

ESCAPE TO PROVENCE BY
MAUREEN EMERSON
CHAPTER AND VERSE,
PAPERBACK, £10.99

The true story of a pair of remarkable women who, with style and

energy, made a life for themselves in the South of France in the first part of the last century.

American Elisabeth Parrish Starr was a WWI heroine

who fled to Provence after the tragic death of her fiancé, while Englishwoman and author Winifred (Peggy) Fortescue felt she could be 'poor with dignity' there.

Always trying to keep loneliness at bay, the two women lived a bucolic existence in their hillside village until the start of WW2. After helping to set up an aid programme for mobilised French soldiers, Peggy raced to safety in England, where she worked tirelessly in aid of the Free French. However, Elisabeth refused to leave. Sadly she was not to see the end of the war and when Peggy returned it was to a Provence that was very different.

This is a captivating and sometimes poignant description of a pivotal time. Maureen Emerson, whose French home was in a neighbouring village to the one where Elisabeth and Peggy lived, has researched her subject meticulously.

And as well as introducing us to the two leading ladies, she also brings in many of their circle, among them the 6th Marquess of Anglesey, Consuelo Vanderbilt, John Betjeman, Richard Hilary and Rex Whistler. A fascinating history set in a fascinating time.

