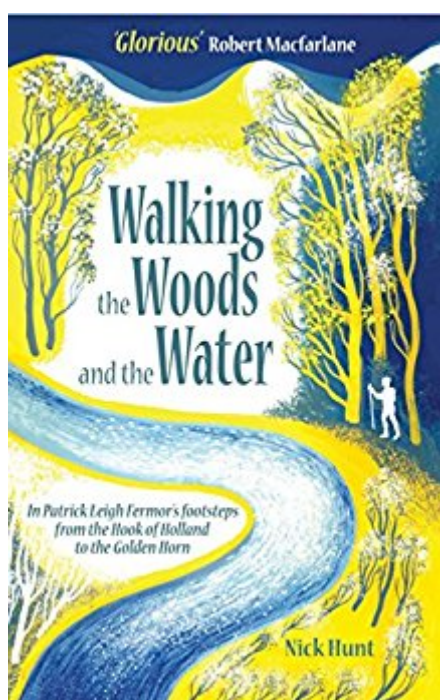


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Walking The Woods And The Water: In Patrick Leigh Fermor's Footsteps From The Hook Of Holland To The Golden Horn



Synopsis

In 1933, the eighteen year old Patrick Leigh Fermor set out in a pair of hobnailed boots to chance and charm his way across Europe, like a tramp, a pilgrim or a wandering scholar. The books he later wrote about this walk, *A Time of Gifts*, *Between the Woods and the Water*, and the posthumous *The Broken Road* are a half-remembered, half-reimagined journey through cultures now extinct, landscapes irrevocably altered by the traumas of the twentieth century. Aged eighteen, Nick Hunt read *A Time of Gifts* and dreamed of following in Fermor's footsteps. In 2011 he began his own great trudge - on foot all the way to Istanbul. He walked across Europe through eight countries, following two major rivers and crossing three mountain ranges. Using Fermor's books as his only travel guide, he trekked some 2,500 miles through Holland, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. His aim? To have an old-fashioned adventure. To slow down and linger in a world where we pass by so much, so fast. To discover for himself what remained of hospitality, kindness to strangers, freedom, wildness, adventure, the mysterious, the unknown, the deeper currents of myth and story that still flow beneath Europe's surface.

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Customer Reviews

Let's start by saying that 5 stars is perfect and this book is not that. But compelling, interesting, fascinating, utterly enjoyable it is. If you know the Paddy Fermor trilogy the enjoyment level is raised even more, but that knowledge is not absolutely essential. Nick Hunt's book stands on its own. He is a man of our time and, while PLF's reflections on history, culture, ancient personalities and so on, are wonderful and erudite, Nick has a different agenda. He wants to compare the changes that have taken place in the 80 years between their journeys. He is out to discover if the little communities of Paddy's time still exist, whether any of what Paddy describes still stands. Suffice to say that Communism, the second world war and various uprisings have changed the 8 countries Nick walks through immeasurably. Three seasons, 2500 miles, many encounters and alcoholic beverages later - all on one pair of boots, I might add. Why he doesn't replace them I'm not sure - this journey will leave you sorry that it ended.

This would be a very difficult topic to do well, given the quality and fame of the work of PLF. It could have been a lot of things, and they would have all been lesser than this result. The world of Fermor is gone, and that simply 'is' - neither good, nor bad, it is merely history. Hunt avoids nostalgia for something he never experienced, but he also has the sense to avoid turning the trip into trash, which it could easily have been. The author has substance, and it gives him an honest eye. I am a dedicated Fermor fan, but this new book in no way detracts from the Fermor legacy, nor does it rest on it. A valuable examination of change. I am also loving Hunt's ground level view of life today in Central Europe. Western news coverage on that area is pathetic, but with over a million refugees doing almost a reverse Fermore, it's really interesting for a hearts and minds perspective.

It's a great story because you can melt into it at a moment's notice. He evokes a real feeling of 'being there'. We meet great characters on the way. Fascinating to compare Europe pre WW2 and now. Recommended.

Nick gives an interesting updating of the trek across Europe that Paddy took in the 1930s. There were many changes due to the war and the Soviet presence, but many things stayed much the same.

Nick Hunt does credit to the memory of Patrick Leigh Fermor, in what I hope is to be his first of many travel books. Following in Paddy's path from the Hook of Holland, across Europe to Istanbul following the Danube river much of the way, Hunt has vividly captured the current culture of Europe

as PLF did the dying of the old feudal regime in the years leading up to WWII and Communism. What I appreciated so much about "Walking" is that Nick Hunt wrote his own book from his own experiences, referencing PLF as their journeys merged in Powerful ways such as meeting the Great-Granddaughter of one of the members of the nobility with which Paddy had stayed. At the same time, Hunt sheds light on PLF's wanderings by using place names often where PLF is vague. Now I can finally look up and see for myself the ruins of some of those great country houses where PLF read leather bound books in well stocked libraries, dined with elegantly dressed Counts and Countesses and lived the dying days of the old estates. Hunt has an engaging writing style that carries you along on a journey he evidently enjoyed himself; a refreshing change from some other attempts at travel journalism I have read recently. While mostly focused on the landscape and people he meets in the present day, Hunt brings in enough history and deft political analysis to provide context without overshadowing the travel narrative.

Excellent book...all fans of Patrick Leigh Fermor need to check this out!

Excellent book. Almost as fascinating as Leigh-Fermor. In fact, in some ways it is more fascinating - seeing that today it is possible to follow him, whether on foot or by car. Not to be missed.

Great followup to Patrick Fermor's book.

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