



The Green Lane to Nowhere: The Life of an English Village

Byron Rogers

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When Byron Rogers moved to the village of Blakesley, quitting the city for the country was for many people a way of escaping change: nowadays we can see how they brought change with them. Over the years, in his 'Village Voice' column in The Sunday Telegraph, he observed his village's gradual evolution from a place where everyone knew everyone else into a dormitory haven for car-borne commuters. Now, as his many weekly readers requested, his idiosyncratic and personal chronicle of an English village is collected in this book. Here, then, are the stories of how the Methodist chapel became a car showroom, the village's first-ever charabanc outing to the seaside back in the twenties, the summer fête at which the author bought his neighbour's shirts, his elevation to heady civic responsibility as Warden of the Paths, and the decidedly strange tale of stubble-burning in the home. But this tranquil Northamptonshire landscape is also located at the absolutely geographical heart of England, and Byron Rogers uncovers its astonishing and mysterious past, when it was truly at the centre of things. Where traffic now crawls along the A5, finds Rogers, the ground used to shake beneath the feet of the Roman troops marching down Watling Street. For hundreds of years these placid fields were a war front between Saxons and Danes, Royalists and Roundheads, in yesterday's headlines. And, after only a century, a gaunt viaduct that is the only monument to a great mainline railway seems as old as pre-history. By turns touching and hilarious, *The Green Lane to Nowhere* is a unique exploration of the great return to the countryside, and the often weird surrealism of village life.

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