



The Water Road: A Narrowboat Odyssey Through England

Paul Gogarty

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The Water Road is the story of a four month circumnavigation by narrowboat of 'The Grand Cross', the name given to the inland waterway linking the Thames to the Humber, Severn and Mersey. Starting in London, Paul Gogarty follows a figure of eight through Britain's major cities and across the Pennines. Entering the world's most concentrated canal network Gogarty sails into England's past and future. 'The Cut' (the name most commonly used for the canals) is a blueprint of when England was a big island and the inland waterways its motorway. But, after more than a century of neglect, 'The Cut' is now enjoying a second golden age with waterfront cities being regenerated and more inland waterways currently opening in Britain than were being built at the height of Canal Mania 200 years ago. 'The Cut' is a hidden garden flashed with kingfishers and traditional narrowboats; a parallel universe ringing with the laughter of water gypsies, the thin cries of bats and drunken congregations in waterfront pubs. This is a journey across the face of England with all its exultations and darkness; rave boats, glorious sunshine and sheeting rain: canals that have been resurrected and enjoying their new summer and those still abandoned like shameful secrets. The Water Road is a voyage that is poignant, illuminating and entertaining at every turn.

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