



Walking the Woods and the Water: In Patrick Leigh Fermor's footsteps from the Hook of Holland to the Golden Horn

Nick Hunt

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SHORTLISTED FOR THE 2015 STANFORD DOLMAN TRAVEL BOOK AWARD

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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