



## **A Traveller's Life**

*Eric Newby*

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## A Traveller's Life Eric Newby

A chronicle of travels, some homely some exotic, from the man who can make a schoolboy holiday in Swanage as colourful as a walk in the Hindu Kush.

Eric Newby's life of travel began in 1919, on pram-ride adventures with his mother into the dark streets of Barnes and the chaotic jungles of Harrods, and progressed to solo, school-bound adventures around the slums of darkest Hammersmith. His interest piqued, Newby's wanderlust snowballed, and his adventures multiplied, as he navigated the London sewer system, bicycled to Italy and meandered the wilds of New York's Broadway. Whether travelling abroad as a high-fashion buyer for a British department store or for pure adventure as a travel writer, even when reluctantly participating in a tiger shoot in India, Newby chronicles his adventures with verve, humour and infectious enthusiasm.

After nine years as the travel editor for the Observer, Newby reluctantly gave up the post, eschewing the new form of human-as-freight travel. However, this change was certainly no pity for his readers, as the latter-day Newby continued on his unwavering quest for fascinating detail and adventure wherever he roamed, whether on two feet or two wheels. 'A Traveller's Life' chronicles the incredible adventures of one of the best-loved tour guides in the history of travel writing.

## A Traveller's Life Details

Date : Published March 28th 2013 by HarperPress (first published 1982)

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Author : Eric Newby

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## From Reader Review A Traveller's Life for online ebook

### Rich says

A patchy if occasionally enjoyable travelogue-cum-autobiography. As a first-time Newby reader, I couldn't help but feel I had chosen the wrong entry point. Naturally, he doesn't re-tell the better known stories in A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush or The Last Grain Race. Instead we get snippets of a restless life, from class-related brawls as a child in London, to an uninteresting spell as a German PoW in Italy, to later gigs as a travel journalist all over the world. Newby has a wistful, faintly bemused voice, which he puts to good use when describing the more unorthodox characters he meets. But there just isn't enough depth in A Traveller's Life for me to recommend it.

Best chapters: Birth of a Traveller (1919), Journeys Through Darkest Hammersmith (1928-36), A Visitor From Lhasa (1958), Down the Drain (1963)

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### Jmolentin says

picked it up at a book exchange in 2001/2 I remember the sections about the island off the British coast.

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### Peter says

A collection of leftover stories that had not been otherwise written about in Newby's numerous other books. He certainly led an eventful life! While this is an often very funny and interesting book, I'd recommend it only to those who have read some of his other books first. So much of his travel writing has been collected elsewhere that the book is peppered with notes something like "I wrote about this in (title of book), so I'm not going to go into that story here." It's understandable that he would want to set the book up this way but if you are not already familiar with at least some of his other books, you will most likely feel left out of the best stories he has told.

Newby's style can take some getting used to as well. Each sentence goes on and on, and on, with parenthetical thoughts, tangents, and somewhat unrelated bon mots and non-sequiturs added in. It's a great book for those who like to do sentence diagrams! Here' a random example:

"One of the advantages or disadvantages - according to what sort of temperament one possessed - of working for such a paternalistic, some might say maternalistic, organization as The Partnership was that its members were encouraged to engage in one or other of the extramural activities which it sponsored, but when the chips were down, were expected to do so."

Not so bad on it's own, but a large percentage of the sentences are like that. Maybe I just wasn't awake enough by the the time I went to read the book, usually late at night after running around after my six year old, but I sometimes had to reread portions to make sure I picked up what he was talking about.

A worthwhile book, but really, check out 'Love and War in the Apennine's' or 'A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush' first.

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**5greenway says**

Nice collection of short pieces. The first chapter, in which he romps through the year of his birth, particularly good off-the-cuff history. Sewers, bicycling, sailing, war, fashion, disappearing lonely places. Does a fine job as something to dip into and be entertained by.

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**Lawsie says**

a good read.

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**Pippa says**

A note I made at the time says that this book was rather like the bottom of a bottle of wine. I skim read a lot of it.

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