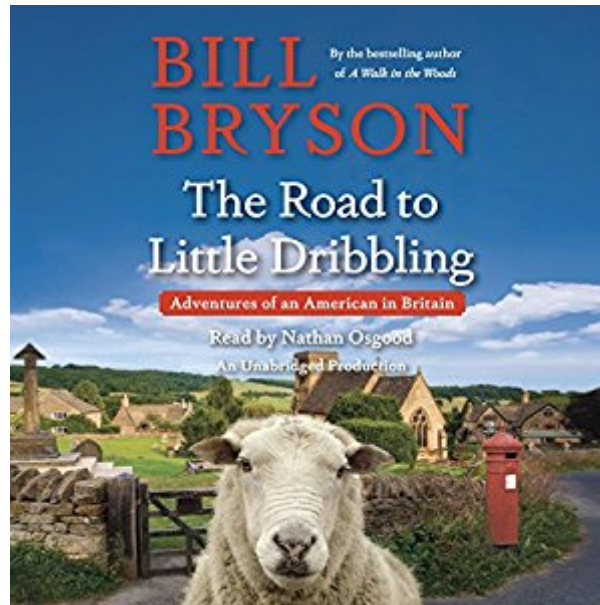


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The Road To Little Dribbling: Adventures Of An American In Britain



Synopsis

The hilarious and loving sequel to a hilarious and loving classic of travel writing: *Notes from a Small Island*, Bill Bryson's valentine to his adopted country of England. In 1995, Bill Bryson got into his car and took a weeks-long farewell motoring trip about England before moving his family back to the United States. The book about that trip, *Notes from a Small Island*, is uproarious and endlessly endearing, one of the most acute and affectionate portrayals of England in all its glorious eccentricity ever written. Two decades later, he set out again to rediscover that country, and the result is *The Road to Little Dribbling*. Nothing is funnier than Bill Bryson on the road; prepare for the total joy and multiple episodes of unseemly laughter.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Travel literature is the genre that made Bill Bryson famous. From his debut, *The Lost Continent* (1989), to *Down Under* (2000), the cerebral yet comedic author from Des Moines, Iowa helped resuscitate the travel narrative and take it mainstream. However, after the millennial publication of his romp around Australia, Bryson diversified, penning books about science (*A Short History of Nearly Everything*), his youth (*The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid*), the Bard of Avon (Shakespeare), and everything from the spice trade (*At Home*) to baseball (*One Summer*). My first Bryson read was *A Walk in the Woods*, giddily passed around my workplace, and hurriedly followed by the prequel to *The Road to Little Dribbling*: *Notes from a Small Island* – the book that made Bill a celebrity in Britain and supposedly outsold more than any other travelogue. Subsequently, I was hooked and devoured most of Bryson's other efforts. Some of those efforts (e.g. Shakespeare) are outstanding, but it was the travel narratives that left the deepest impression. Bill Bryson

introduced me to travel literature, meaning that prior to *A Walk in the Woods*, I didn't know the category existed. In an interview, Bryson intimated he liked Paul Theroux (whose *Kingdom by the Sea* may have inspired *Notes from a Small Island*) and Redmond O'Hanlon, so I read their books and the authors they liked and discovered a rich genre populated by talented and erudite writers. Bill Bryson also introduced me to a unique style: fluid yet humorous, informative yet entertaining, charmingly complimentary yet devastatingly critical. Once a fan who eagerly anticipated Bill's newest release, I eventually discovered other wordsmiths and gave his last two efforts a miss.

Twenty years ago (yes, really!), Bill Bryson wrote the brilliant "Notes from a Small Island" about his travels around Great Britain. This is a sequel, of sorts, with Bryson again travelling around Britain and making observations. He explains in Chapter 1 that his plan was to travel between the two points that were the furthest apart when separated by a straight line: Bognor Regis in the South and Cape Wrath in northernmost Scotland. Rather than follow the line religiously, he determined to use it as a rough guidance whilst visiting as many new places as he possibly could. This is rubbish. In fact, Bryson veers all over the south of Britain, going as far west as Cornwall and Wales and as far east as Norfolk and East Anglia, and showing remarkably little interest in venturing north. Two thirds of the way through the book and he's only made it to Birmingham. Scotland gets a mere 12 pages of the total 381 (Wales gets 15). So really, he should have been honest about the fact that when he says Britain, what he really means is England. There is a map at the front of the book showing all sorts of places in Britain: it bears zero resemblance to the places that he actually visits. The other thing that emerges - and I suspect the real reason for the lower English focus - is that rather than being one long piece of travel, this is a group of day trips and overnight trips, which are broken up by family events and trips to the US and various other commitments. If this was to be the approach, I wish Bryson had taken a bit more care in the planning. So often he turns up somewhere, realises it's Sunday and the museums are closed, and then gives up and leaves again.

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