



B L O O M S B U R Y

'Gray brilliantly interweaves social history, modern day public and political life and, of course football itself.... Highly recommended'

Daily Telegraph

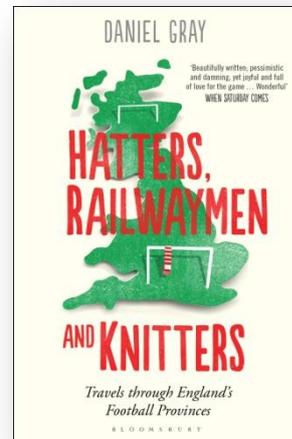
'Like a footballing version of Bill Bryson's 'Notes from a Small Island'

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HATTERS, RAILWAYMEN AND KNITTERS

Travels Through England's
Football Provinces
By Daniel Gray

Published 14 August, 2014, £8.99, Pb



On the verge of turning thirty Daniel Gray set out to reacquaint himself with his native England after a decade's exile in Scotland. There were many things he missed about his home country – red bricks, canals, fish and chips cooked to order, beer gardens – but it was nostalgia for English football that really inspired him. Since 2011 appeared to be a tribute act to his year of birth (riots, royals, racists....) the 1981/82 season seemed as good a guide as any, and he set out to visit the teams that had significant years then.

HATTERS, RAILWAYMEN AND KNITTERS is Gray's affectionate account of the search for the essence of England and its national game. Using only public transport for full communal experience Gray travelled from Carlisle to Newquay, Middlesborough to Chester, visiting some of the towns and cities, that define a nation. Pausing to observe more than just the matches, he takes in moments of history, discovering how the provinces made the England we know, from Teeside's role in the Empire to Luton's contribution to our mongrel DNA.

Watching teams from the Championship (or Division Two, as any right-minded person calls it) to the South West Peninsula Premier League he finds that, away from the cynicism of the higher divisions, football remains a social movement to be proud of, unifying an England in flux with its vibrant sense of community. As Gray writes, *'For ninety minutes no one is alone, everyone is united by a shared purpose and sense of identity.'*

HATTERS, RAILYWAYMEN AND KNITTERS is part-travelogue, part-football book, and part-love letter to the bits of England that often get forgotten, celebrated in all their blessed eccentricity.

About the author: *Daniel Gray is a writer and historian who for a brief period in the early 1990s was the finest left-back in his village. A Middlesborough supporter, he has worked in a psychiatric hospital, a library and in TV and politics. He lives in Leith.*

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