



## Nick Hunt

Author of *Walking the Woods and the Water*, an account of a seven and a half month walk across Europe from the Hook of Holland to Istanbul, in the footsteps of Patrick Leigh Fermor. Nick read Fermor's *A Time of Gifts* and *Between the Woods and the Water* when he was 18 and those have haunted him ever since - a walk he always dreamed of doing.

He undertook little detailed planning, using the hand drawn maps in Fermor's books as a rough guide and relying on offers of accommodation either garnered through the 'Couch Surfing' website or from those people he met on his way.

Notes from the podcast interview by Andrew Stuck: Recorded on a walk along the Regents Canal going west from Broadway Market in Hackney in March 2014 and published in September 2014 on <http://www.talkingwalking.net>

Nick Hunt's book is available from bookshops or on-line - seek out:  
***Walking the Woods and the Water***

**Patrick Leigh Fermor's** books: *A Time of Gifts* and *Between the Woods and the Water* told part of the story of his youthful walking adventure in the 1930s. *The Broken Road*, effectively the third volume of Leigh Fermor's memoir of his walking trip, was completed by Fermor's biographer, Artemis Cooper.

The route: across the Netherlands and into Germany, up the Rhine across the hills of Baden and into Bavaria, along the Danube to Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, the Great Hungarian Plain, the Carpathian Mountains, Bulgaria, the Black Sea coast, "head south keeping the sea to your left to reach Istanbul".

Fermor undertook his journey through Europe at a very different epoch, staying at aristocratic residencies along the his route. These castles, mansions and grand houses had all long disappeared, as had their residents. Nick relied on couch surfing, camping out and the generosity of passers-by.

Hardest part was over the Carpathian mountains in southern Romania:

"A desire to get lost, to go beyond the ordinary landscape that you are used to - there was always a moment of genuine fear, although at times it felt like flirting with proper wilderness but when you sense what that might be like it is scary - but regaining civilisation was something between relief and disappointment."

Couch surfing: <https://www.couchsurfing.org/>

### Nick Hunt recommends these sections of his walk

- Wachau Valley of the Danube in Austria - Nick walked this wild section in mid winter with the Danube frozen in stretches
- Carpathian Mountains of southern Romania - "elevated to another reality"
- Walking into Budapest from the Pilis Hills - amazing approach down the Danube, bridges, spires and turrets, and the Coronation Church on the Hill of Buda



# TALKING



# WALKING

## What Nick has done since our interview

“In the past year I have moved from London to Bristol, but am currently looking after a small cottage in the Lake District for the coldest, darkest, wettest of the seasons. In 2016 I spent three months living and working in Atlantis Books, a bookshop on the Greek island of Santorini, and last year led a group of friends on a ten-day walk through the Accursed Mountains of Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro.

I've been continuing to work with the Dark Mountain Project as editor and contributor, publishing two books of (loosely) ecological and 'uncivilised' writing a year. But my main project has been a series of walks following the invisible pathways of some of Europe's named winds - Helm, Bora, Foehn, Mistral, Sirocco - to discover how they affect landscapes, people and cultures. The book about these journeys, *Where the Wild Winds Are*, was published in September 2017 by Nicholas Brealey, and is soon being translated into Italian, German and Dutch. Currently I am working on a book about London's feral green parakeets for Paradise Road.”