

Tim Burrows

Author



Books

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Biography

Tim Burrows is a journalist and author who writes about culture and place for publications including the Guardian, Vice and the Quietus. A recurring subject in his work is Essex and the Thames Estuary. He plotted a course through Essex myth, from Towie to Dr Feelgood, in his joint essay project with Lee Rourke for Influx Press, Trying to Fit a Number to a Name. His first short story, Broadgate, is partly set on the Dengie Peninsula and is published in An Unreliable Guide to London, also on Influx.

Current publication;

THE INVENTION OF ESSEX: The Making of an English County (Profile Books, June 2023)

A Financial Times 'Book to Read in 2023'

Essex. A county both famous and infamous: the stuff of tabloid headlines and reality television, consumer culture and right-wing politicians. England's dark id.

But beyond the sensationalist headlines lies a strange and secret place with a rich history: of smugglers and private islands, artists and radicals, myths and legends. It's where the Peasants' Revolt began and the Empire Windrush docked. And - from political movements like Brexit to cultural events like TOWIE - where Essex leads, the rest of us often follow.

Deeply researched and thoroughly engaging, The Invention of Essex shows that there is more to this fabled English county than meets the eye.

Praise:

'His odyssey was sparked by an epic walk from east London, and he weaves in subsequent walks with family, friends and local experts. Some of the "spongy vistas" of these trips are nature reserves built on London's landfill: Bottle Beach and Mucking Marsh are names to conjure great ironies with, and Burrows does not disappoint. There is always another story, a myth concealing a reality "mysterious, unknowable and incongruous." And he has a lyrical turn of phrase — after a trio of small-time gangsters are found dead on a dirt trail, the county, he writes, is portrayed as "despoiled and devilish and wanting more than it could handle".' – the *FT*

'A love letter to a county whose variety and richness is so often overlooked because it fails to adhere to the dreary English ideal of picturesque gentility. Burrows digs deep. He meanders like a creek. Nothing is off limits. It's a stellar performance' **Jonathan Meades**

'Tim Burrows has written the most insightful, thorough, hilarious and at times poignant investigation of place, of people, of history and of belonging. I loved every page. The way Tim weaves his own family and experience into such a detailed and well-researched narrative of geography, sociology and history is masterful. I would recommend it to anyone with an interest in identity, landscape, family and the concept of home. This book deserves to do brilliantly well and will launch Burrows into the public consciousness as one of our great living writers' **Nell Frizzell, author of *Holding the Baby***

'Evocative and smart ... Essex is often a prism through which England is seen, whether in terms of housing, politics, art or land ... beautifully written, with intelligence and heart' **Amy Liptrot, author of *The Instant***

'A lively tour of a place everyone thinks they know, but seldom understand – and a great book about a built landscape of social mobility, both collective and individualistic – and how quickly one can curdle into the other before anyone has noticed' **Owen Hatherley, author of *Red Metropolis: Socialism and the Government of London***

'Everyone thinks they know Essex. Tim Burrows really does. In this fond but clear-eyed cultural history, he writes of skies and mud, utopian dreams and wastescapes, travellers and gangsters, estuaries and Depeche Mode. A vivid new Essex emerges – mysterious, modernist, inventive'. – Sukhdev Sandhu