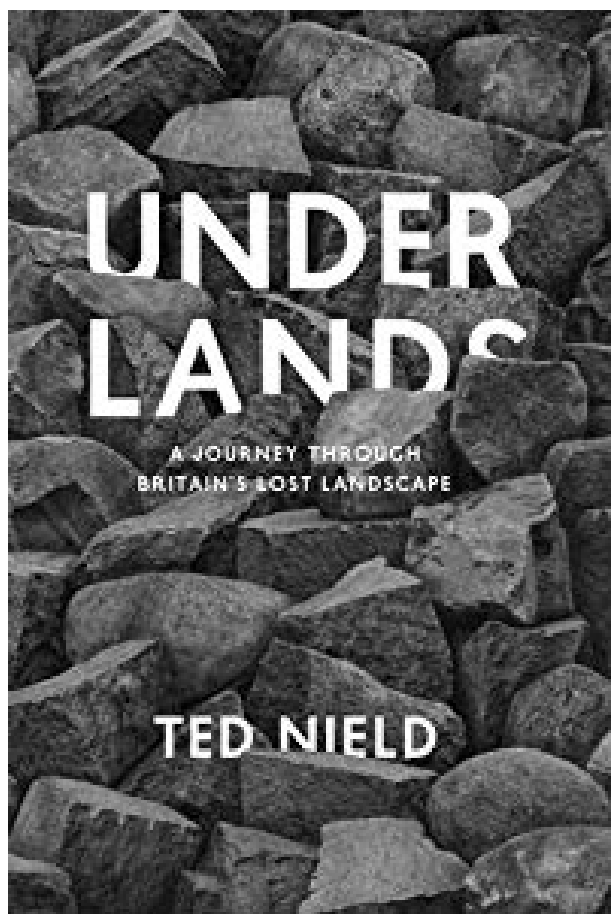


Underlands: A Journey Through Britain's Lost Landscape



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Not so very long ago, our roads, our buildings, our gravestones and our monuments were built from local rock, our cities were powered by coal from Welsh mines, and our lamps were lit with paraffin from Scottish shale. At the height of the empire, British stone travelled across the world; to India and China, Sri Lanka and Argentina, Singapore and South Africa. Across the British Isles were mines, quarries, slag heaps and brick pits, where the earth was dug up and made visible. Today we live among the remnants of these times - our older cities are built from Bath limestone, or Aberdeen granite - but for the most part our mines are gone, our buildings are no longer local, and the flow of stone now travels from east to west. Spurred on by the erasure of history and industry, Ted Nield journeys across this buried landscape, from the small Welsh village where his mining ancestors were born and are buried, to Swansea, Aberdeen, East Lothian, Surrey and Dorset.

Delving into the history and geology of this forgotten Britain, and into his ancestors' connection with the rocks of Britain, Nield unearths the raw veins of coal, stone, oil, rock and clay that make up the country beneath our feet, illuminating the ties between earth and place, and what the loss of kinship between past and present means for Britain, and the rest of the world today.