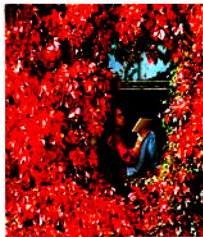


OF THE KEY INFLUENCES ON TRAVEL WRITING

Ten years ago travel scribes such as Redmond O'Hanlon, Paul Theroux and Jonathan Raban were enjoying their heyday. Along with Colin Thubron, the late Ryszard Kapuscinski and others, they redefined what it meant to be a travel writer. The game has changed since then. Giles Foden selects some of the most interesting influences on the genre today, including writers, publishers and the Internet



1 Michael Palin. *traveller and TV presenter.*

The former Python would be the first to admit that his books are a by-product of his programmes, but he is the single most influential figure in British travel media today.

2 Mark Cocker. *travel writer and naturalist.* Author of *A Tiger in the Sand*, *Crow Country* and frequent contributor to *The Guardian* nature notes, Cocker is the most sympathetic observer of nature now writing in English. Along with his peers Richard Mabey (with whom he edited *Birds Britannica*) and Robert Macfarlane, he has an instinctive sense of the faculties needed by writers in the 'environmental age'.

3 Kevin Rushby. *travel writer and journalist.* An adventurer of the old breed whose book *Hunting Pirate Heaven*, about pirate haunts in the Indian Ocean such as Anjouan and Mayotte, is a personal favourite.

4 Dervla Murphy. *travel writer.* It is impossible to leave out this stalwart of the genre. She seems to belong to another age, but with books such as *Eight Feet in the Andes: Travels with a Mule in Unknown Peru* (2003), she has produced most of her best work in the past decade.

5 Simon Calder. *journalist and travel activist.* There are many fine journalists specialising in travel, but the *Independent's* travel editor has been the most tireless

campaigner for better travel and writing about travel.

6 Bill Bryson. *travel writer.* The million-selling author of *A Walk in the Woods* and *Notes from a Small Island* is as prolific as Murphy. It will be interesting to see whether his appointment as president of the Campaign to Protect Rural England will influence his writing.

7 Louisa Waugh. *travel writer.* The coming woman. Her first book, *Hearing Birds Fly: A Year in a Mongolian Village*, was a worthy winner of the Ondaatje prize. Her new book *Selling Olga* looks at global human trafficking, with a particular focus on Italy and the former Yugoslavia.

8 Anthony Sattin. *travel writer and journalist.* One of a host of writers who combine literary skill with professional travel writing. Others include Justin Cartwright, Robyn Davidson, Jason Elliot, Jason Goodwin, Sebastian Hope, Stanley Stewart, Rory Stewart and Robert Twigger.

9 The Internet. *the traveller's friend (mostly).* This is actually the biggest change of all. There has been an explosion in the number of sites which either offer fellow-traveller reviews, such as www.expedia.com, or specialist knowledge such as the wonderful train site www.seat61.com.

10 Eland Books. *independent publisher.* In keeping the greats of travel writing in print, John Hatt, Rose Baring and Barnaby Rogerson at Eland Books do us all an inestimable service, setting the bar for the writers of today. They bring a wealth of experience to that task: Hatt, author of *The Tropical Traveller* and travel editor of *Harpers & Queen* for 10 years, founded Eland in 1982, Baring is an expert on Russia and Rogerson's specialism is North Africa.