

CHRIS DODD

New Wildernesses

Lost Histories and Recovered Nature

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Chris Dodd



Key selling points

- Exploring fourteen diverse, abandoned places across Britain, **New Wildernesses** reveals nature's remarkable ability to recover when left alone – offering an uplifting vision at a time of environmental anxiety.
- Rich natural history is contrasted with forgotten human stories – from sunken coal mines turned to wetlands, to textile mills reclaimed by the forest – exploring brought to life through encounters with volunteers and rangers helping protect these places today.
- Drawing on both his own hands-on stewardship of rewilded land in the Lake District, and his wild garden (subject of the BBC's *Secret Garden*), Chris Dodd, with curiosity and wonder, offers learnings and literary insight – alongside practical inspiration for mindful 'slow-exploring'.

Over the centuries, land and buildings have, in various ways, fallen out of use. In **New Wildernesses**, Chris Dodd explores fourteen unique places across Britain, discovering how, after being abandoned they have naturally rewilded. Once left alone, these landscapes have become wildernesses with rich habitats and wildlife. What can we learn from them?

From Wigan's subsiding coalmines that created a region of lakes, to a Suffolk coastline facing rising sea levels; and from Pennine textile mills, now like overgrown Mayan ruins, to a Scottish dune-field that overwhelmed farmland, each has a unique story of its history and nature. During his explorations Chris meets a quietly inspiring cast of characters, including rangers and volunteers who now help protect these sites.

In this celebratory study of nature's resilience, Chris offers up a different way to see the world around us, to 'slow-explore', and some simple actions we can all take: a way forward. **New Wildernesses** is uplifting, restorative and poetic in its power, proclaiming that positive change is always possible.

Chris Dodd has long worked on the interpreting and mapping of ancient landscapes, and he has a deep curiosity for history and nature. He and his wife, Liz, are guardians of land in the Lake District – land that they are naturally wilding. They and their nature-friendly garden are also subject of the new BBC wildlife series *Secret Garden*.

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