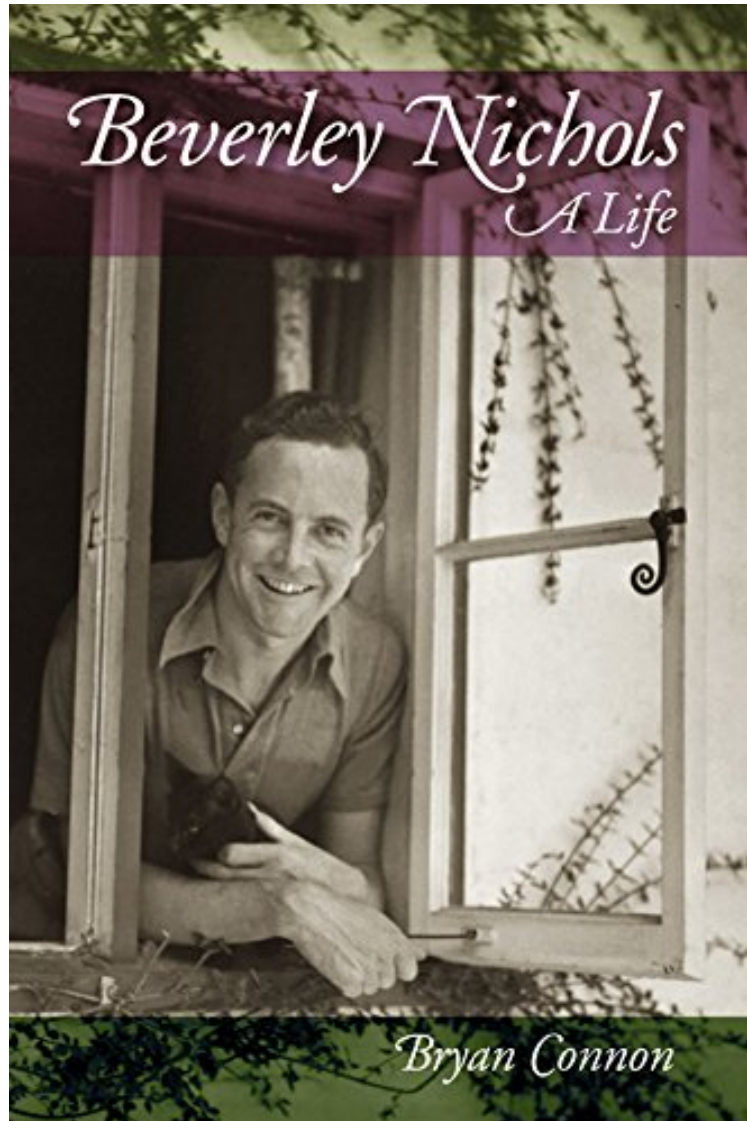


[Free] Beverley Nichols: A Life

Beverley Nichols: A Life

Bryan Connon

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Bryan Connon : Beverley Nichols: A Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beverley Nichols: A Life:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Well researched biography of a complex man By avid reader Excellent, well-researched biography of a complex man. Connon is very forgiving of Nichols's tendency to exaggerate/manufacture in print. This caused Nichols considerable criticism during his life. I would have liked more

depth to the years of WWII, which were largely glossed over in disproportion to the historical events. Nichols, his lover, and his manservant, all homosexual, refused to flee London and immediately enlisted--this despite the fact that homosexuality was at that time a serious felony. I would like to have seen a further exploration of this touching devotion to the country which rejected their lifestyle. It would have been a wonderful opportunity to explore London at war, a familiar subject to Brits but still an object of fascination for younger generations and those across the pond. That said, it was an enjoyable, objective, and thoroughly entertaining biography which paints an accurate picture of Nichols without tarnishing his many accomplishments. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Disappointment By Abigail L. If you love and adore Beverley Nichols, you might be dismayed that he asked this author to do his autobiography. It isn't that his writing is bad; it isn't. It's that he sold Beverley Nichols so short. He seemed not to understand nor empathize with the extraordinary and charming Mr. Nichols, his depth and brilliance and phenomenal gift for living and enjoying, his love and appreciation for people not necessarily rich or famous, his sheer giftedness in so many disparate areas, and most of all, his delightful writing. Connors carped on things which he felt he knew better about, looking for petty ways to belittle which seemed designed to make Mr. Nichols appear frivolous, while seldom allowing him an altruistic motive and an act of generosity-- and Mr. Nichols was generous to the soles of his feet, and above all, good. Nil magnum, nisi bonum. Connors seems to have forgotten this. Impossible to read Nichols without appreciating his intrinsic goodness and the value he placed on it. I hope for a more loving biography someday. 29 of 30 people found the following review helpful.

Great Biography By Matthew This was a great read, and gave true insight into one of the world's most celebrated Garden essayists of the 20th century. Connors brings to life the Beverley many fans never got to see, as many of his readers only read his Gardening books. Nichols holds to his credit several autobiographies, no less than five mysteries, several political novels, and multiple weekly columns in various American and British newspapers and magazines. Beverley was also a noted composer, and even appeared in film. His good looks and charm allowed him a very versatile career. The novel unravels fact from fiction, as many readers assumed his novels were all unadulterated fact. The truth is he mixed fiction with many of his books, lending a skewed vision of the author--and one that Connor does a brilliant job straightening out. Mr. Nichols worked with Connor on this book, and had help from Beverley's life long companion/friend Cyril Butcher. The book outlines his upbringing in a whirlwind society of notable people and places to his fascinating life filled with so many that sometimes the biography reads more like a "Who's Who" of the 20's through the 70's. Beverley was friends or friendly with some of the most noteworthy people of the day, including Beaton, Coward, and Maughm. It is not a scandal biography, rather a warm portrait of an amazingly entertaining man. The photographs in the book are wonderfully clear, and allow the reader a glimpse of his childhood, adolescence, and later years. Again, he is shown with many celebrities of his time. There are bits that reveal a sad, depressed Beverley who struggled with finance--and chapters about the socialite Beverley who never gave up an opportunity to hob nob and make new social alliances. Other parts reveal the very full romantic life of Nichols. All together, a charming portrait of one of Britain's most notable men. This book is a must for all Nichols fans!

The reissuing of Beverley Nichols's delightful books by Timber Press has sparked renewed interest in this unjustly neglected writer. He burst onto the literary scene not long after his studies at Oxford, and his versatility was impressive; his successes included novels, plays, children's stories, biography, political commentary, and books on religion, travel, and gardening. He also composed for the musical stage and ghostwrote the autobiography of the famous singer Nellie Melba. He moved in fashionable and artistic circles where he attained a certain measure of celebrity. Fame did not elude him, but greatness did. In his later years, Nichols was known chiefly for his books on gardens and cats, and he grew increasingly bitter about his failure to be accepted as a serious writer. Bryan Connors has written a fascinating study of a talented man in whom, in J. W. Lambert's phrase, a keen mind "functioned beneath the glad rags," and whose huge and diverse literary output chronicles the events, moods, and personalities of the fascinating age in which he lived. This biography was first published in 1991 by Constable in the U.K., but its distribution was limited and it was never available in the United States. It will be of interest to the thousands of readers who have come to know Nichols through *Merry Hall*; they will discover an altogether more complex personality than the witty, sometimes sardonic persona he created in his writings.

.com Beverley Nichols was a multitalented, nearly frenetic British socialite who would no doubt be humiliated to know that he is best remembered for his garden writings. He starred in movies in the 1920s, wrote music and songs for the theater, reported for newspapers, and wrote his own memoirs early on (*Twenty-Five*), plus numerous novels, mysteries, cat books, and biographies. He captured all his wild enthusiasms in print, and--lucky for us--he loved plants, gardens, and the eccentric personalities associated with them, which he celebrated in books about his own houses and gardens, *Down the Garden Path*, *Merry Hall*, *Laughter on the Stairs*, and *Sunlight on the Lawn*. This biography re-creates Nichols's lively role in the English social milieu between and after the wars. Nichols consorted with the best and brightest (or the most written and talked about, anyway) for more than 40 years. He spent time with the Greek royal family, interviewed President Coolidge, and maintained friendships with Cecil Beaton, Noel Coward,

and Somerset Maugham. Somehow he found time not only to create and care for gardens but also to write about them, and putting the man in the setting helps to understand and further appreciate his garden writings. While *A Life* certainly throws light on the circumstances of Nichols's life, readers familiar with the man from his own melodramatic autobiography *Father Figure* may close the covers of this book no more enlightened about his emotional reactions to growing up one of three sons with a mother he idealized and a drunken father he abhorred, or his unfulfilling personal life as a homosexual in a time when such behavior was illegal and widely unacceptable. --Valerie Easton

From Booklist Handsome, urbane, and multitalented, Nichols has emerged as one of the most enduring garden writers of the previous century. Curious readers who have just discovered the reprinted Merry Hall trilogy will relish Cannon's candid look at the man who is perhaps best remembered for these charming books. In a convincing and copiously researched biography, Cannon establishes the fact that a survey of Nichols' impressive vita, encompassing journalist, novelist, playwright, satirist, and musical composer, cannot begin to reveal the true identity of this complicated twentieth-century Renaissance man. Mercurial in his likes and dislikes, Nichols often executed remarkable professional turnabouts. In 1944, for instance, he followed his nonfiction work, *Verdict in India*, with the very popular children's book *The Tree That Sat Down*. Expect fans to ask for this fascinating portrayal of Nichols' life and times, with its continuous procession of celebrities and bon vivants. Alice Joyce Expect fans to ask for this fascinating portrayal of Nichols' life and times, with its continuous procession of celebrities and bon vivants. Booklist This biography re-creates Nichols's lively role in the English social milieu between and after the wars.