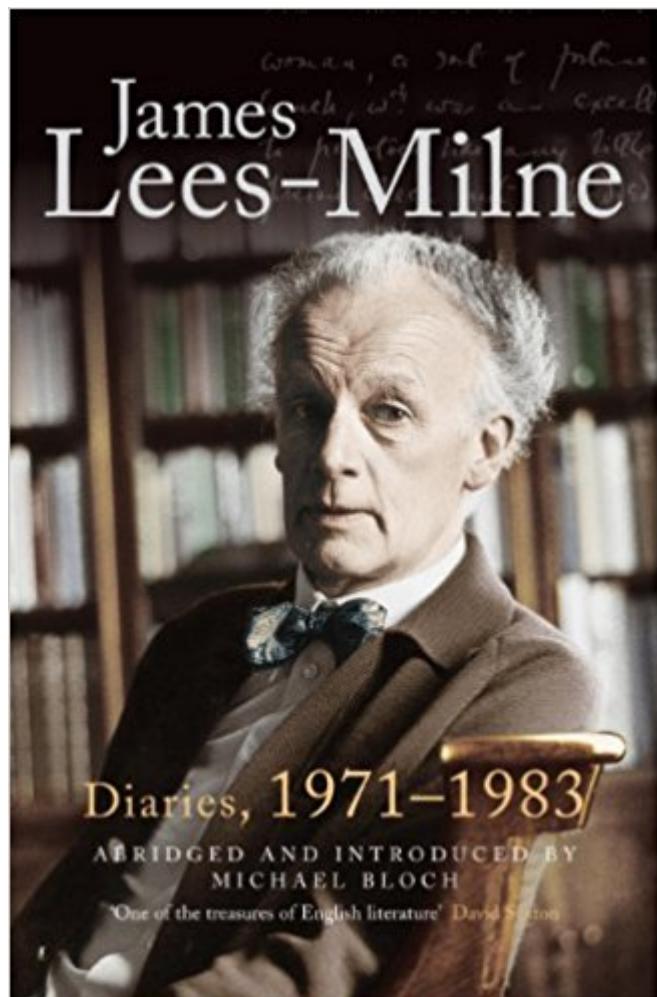


The book was found

Diaries, 1971-1983



Synopsis

James Lees-Milne (1908-1997) was both a noted expert on the English country house, and perhaps the greatest British diarist of the 20th century. Funny, indiscreet, candid, touching, and sharply observed, his journals reveal a fascinating personality and hold up a mirror to historical events large and small. This abridged volume covers Lees-Milne's life during his sixties and early seventies, when he was living in Gloucestershire with his formidable wife Alvilde. The vicissitudes of a writer's lot are vividly portrayed, and the merry-go-round of life on the Badminton estate of the eccentric Duke of Beaufort is charmingly illustrated, as are various meetings with many friends new and old. Visible throughout this unique collection are Lees-Milne's most remarkably poignant own feelings of joy, regret, frustration, amusement, and love.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'Acute observation is coupled with entertaining literary style and ever-present humour ... Michael Bloch has edited these diaries formidably well' -- Bevis Hillier 'Woefully funny, elegantly observed, appallingly indiscreet, these diaries are the best record we have of a world still recognizable but fast vanishing beneath the waves of history' -- Peter Parker 'His pages abound in delightful shafts of self-revelation ... a singularly funny, modest, sweet, lovable gentleman whose controversial prose is yet infused with a poetic vision of the essence of Old England' -- Hugh Massingberd 'Raw emotions, fearlessly expressed, spice every page' -- Duff Hart-Davis 'Always honest, always curious, always lovable' -- Lynn Barber 'What matters the clash of titans, when a clear and fastidious intellect shares

its preoccupation with the minutiae of a civilised gentleman's day?' -- Alan Clark 'The qualities which make his diaries addictive reading include a sense of the ridiculous, and a total frankness about whatever shows him at a disadvantage. He is wonderfully observant, and his sheer humanity shines out on every page' -- The Field 'Unquestionably one of the greatest English diarists, a rival to Pepys' -- David Watkin

Michael Bloch was appointed James Lees-Milne's literary executor in 1997 and is currently writing his biography.

I found this middle book of the three-volume set to be as good and interesting as the other two. A most knowledgeable and sympathetic younger friend of Mr. Lees-Milne, Michael Bloch, expertly edited all three. (It is my understanding that Mr. Bloch's formal biography of James Lees-Milne will be available later this year to the public.) If you might the enjoy good writing of one closely connected to the social and literary life of the upper, or at least educated, class in England during the years of 1971 to 1983 you would profit by reading this book.

I liked Mr. Lees-Milne's first collection enough to buy this collection as well. It's a pity that his marriage gave him the excuse not to publish during its first two decades (the 50s/60s). He just figured that his letters to his wife took enough of his time; hence, no diaries. He does not use the word gay. Nor does he bother with another word, bisexual. So a reader is left in the dark when a gay person (such as L-M, himself) marries, argues, and stays married. Maybe his role model was a member of his circle, Harold Nicolson, who married a gay person (Vita Sackville-West), cheated in order to keep up with her cheating, and coped with a gay son (who also married). Usually, such diaries dwell on meals, appearances, connection to the Royals, and not much else. bgeary263@live.com (I incl. my address in hopes of hearing from another Anglophile.)

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