

Call of the Kingfisher

Bright sights and birdsong in a year by the river

NICK PENNY

Enchanting love letter to the River Nene and the wild things that live there – with unique bonus audio material

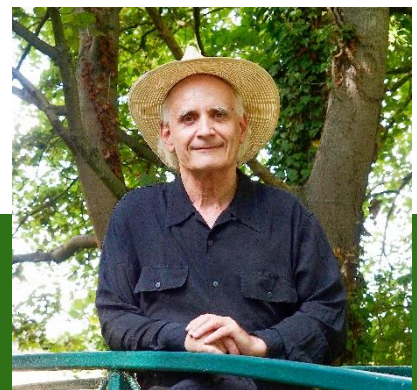
- Beautifully written debut from composer and wildlife recordist
- Includes access, via QR codes, to **a number of high-quality birdsong recordings** made along the River Nene – audio soundbites of nature’s riches, from kingfishers and nightingales to owls and cuckoos

Nick Penny has walked beside the river at Oundle for four decades. But for a whole year (2022) he gave the waterway all the time it asked for. The more attention he gave it, the more he saw the kingfishers and heard their high whistling calls.

Set in a lovely but little-known part of England, *Call of the Kingfisher* relates a year by the river, the author’s experiences there and the different people he meets. Other strands are woven around the elusive feathered protagonist: explorations of local history and landscape, from Roman and Bronze Age sites to watermills and centuries-old stone churches; visits at different times and to different places in the valley; homages to naturalists who lived nearby; forest dawns and dusks listening to the precious song of nightingales. But the background tapestry is the sights and sounds, and greens and browns, of the riverbank, shot through with the blue and orange threads of a kingfisher’s glowing feathers.

This is a book about the things that can be seen and heard when we approach nature with patience and curiosity. It celebrates people who have used that focus to help preserve wildlife and pass on their knowledge to future generations. Above all, *Call of the Kingfisher* serves as a call to appreciate what we’ve got, wherever we are, and to use our ears as much as our eyes when we experience the natural world.

Nick Penny is a writer, composer and sound recordist. After moving to rural Northamptonshire, he became fascinated by the birdsong in his local woods and started to record it and use the sounds in his own music. He’s talked about nightingales on BBC Radio 4’s *Open Country*, was interviewed by Lauren Laverne for BBC 6 music’s *Supernature* feature and has made many appearances on local TV and radio.



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