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In the Shadow of Inspiration

A Unique Book About Canada's National Parks and Beyond

By
Julian Ashbourn

It is a pertinent time to think about the importance of conservation and the protection of our natural habitats. Prince Albert National Park is the ideal focus for such discussions, both because of its particular history, and also because of the broader work of Parks Canada. The “Grey Owl” connection is similarly significant and it is a good time to revisit Archie Belaney’s key message and the warning he was raising about the potential destruction of natural habitats. Our contemporary understanding of the interconnected natural world supports the view that habitat destruction is actually the most serious threat we face today, more so than climate change. It is crucial to consider a different sort of research into such matters, as well as a different international framework with which to manage associated situations for the common good.

- *In The Shadow Of Inspiration* addresses these factors and is thus very timely.
- There is nothing quite like this book, which brings many strands of discussion together in order to weave a particular tale of conservation in a style which is both engaging and informative.
- The photography in the book presents its own beautiful story and a pleasure to browse through.
- It is the sort of book which, due to its unique approach, will undoubtedly attract attention and inspire ongoing discussion to conserve and protect our natural habitats.

Author is available for appearances and interviews and can be reached through:

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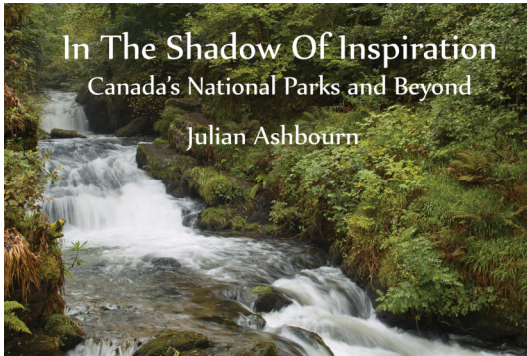
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Synopsis



In the Shadow of Inspiration is a unique book which draws together many strands to cover concepts such as conservation, natural history, social history and a celebration of Canadian National Parks. In so doing, it revisits the story of Archie “Grey Owl” Belaney and his essential message and considers the early settlement of these lands. The book constitutes a highly pertinent and timely milestone in its focus upon the implications of habitat destruction. In addition, it looks to the future and offers some important ideas with respect to the

preservation of our living planet. The whole is underpinned by the beautiful photography for which the author is renowned, rendering the book a pleasure to own and re-read again and again. *In the Shadow of Inspiration* is an important book for all those who understand and appreciate our world and would want to contribute to protecting our planet. www.shadowofinspiration.zzl.org

About the Author



Julian Ashbourn was born and lives in England and has enjoyed a varied career, mostly concerned with technology and the use of technology in society. He is particularly known for his pioneering work in human factors and user psychology in relation to technology and has undertaken much voluntary work in this context. In latter years however, he has returned to his enduring love of the natural world, undertaking research into natural processes within the geosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and atmosphere and considering the links and interdependencies therein. His passion for recording the natural world photographically adds another dimension to his writing, bringing the subject matter to life and reflecting the beauty and wonder of our planet. His is a mission to raise awareness of the need for conservation and to encourage the natural sciences in education.

Title: In the Shadow of Inspiration:

Canada's National Parks and Beyond

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Readers comments for *In The Shadow of Inspiration*

I've just read through your introduction without a break. It instantly drew me in especially your style of narration - direct and original just as the natural world . Some of your sentences would make wonderful quotes for mankind to reflect on. Truly unique & beautiful!

Yes, you've put it aptly - humanity and our relationship with the natural world indeed builds our future and most importantly I think you've just aptly described the poor man. I've learnt so much from this one chapter and I intend to learn more by reading the rest.

It is indeed a book with a difference that will make for great reading. It not only makes us understand the nature around us better but also understand ourselves in how we can all be a part of this great journey called conservation.

Thank you for the wonderful read!

You write with such passion! I read your first two chapters and truly felt your heart on these pages. The introduction does a marvellous job setting the stage. I especially enjoyed how you directed our attention to so many poets, composers, and artists, who were all deeply inspired by nature. In a world so full of technology these days, it is good to be reminded of the majesty around us, to breathe, to experience the beauty of nature. I fear we do indeed forget to take notice of the "joyous song of the robin" and the "magnificent coloured coats of the butterflies."

Chapter two wonderfully weaves in the historical elements of the Saskatchewan homesteaders. I love it when a book takes me back to those who have gone before and teaches me something new from their perseverance and hard work.

It is obvious tremendous research has gone into this piece. It is very well-written, and your style flows smoothly. Mostly, though, it makes me want to venture outdoors and rejoice once again in the beauty around us! Giving you high stars and wishing you every success with this piece.

I have read most of what is posted here: chapters one and two, most of three and four. I would happily read more, as you write in a light and well informed style which manages to be enlightening and entertaining at the same time. I love books I can learn from, and those that I enjoy. Your book manages both.

You write with eloquence about the emergence of the movement for ecological justice and restoration. Your subject matter urgently needs to be heard. Much of what you describe we know already. We know that we must learn to take care of what is precious. We know that we are part of an integral system without which we will perish, though the world, pursuing its own inscrutable agenda, may well survive. We know all this, yet too often we prefer to forget, and no amount of hectoring will help to change our ways.

Your book is therefore welcome, as it avoids the pitfalls of preaching. Unlike me. I better stop now. You have written a marvellous book and I hope you upload some more.

I read through chapter one and half of chapter two this evening. Lovely, well written book! I enjoyed the chapter about the early pioneers in Saskatchewan, Canada. I loved the references to Van Gogh and Beethoven. Highly starred!

A lovely, well-written book. You have no doubt rendered an excellent job in drawing a fabulous introduction. Your style of narrating events is vivid and can hook readers in to the story. Highly starred.



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Author Q & A

1. **What inspired you to write *In The Shadow of Inspiration*?**

A combination of my own deeply felt feelings for the natural world and the current destruction of habitats without understanding the consequences, and my re-reading Archie Belaney's books and wondering that some of his suggestions might have had more attention paid to them. In addition, I came to appreciate the efforts of Parks Canada and thought that they deserved to be wider known. Bringing several related strands together under one focus, seemed like a worthwhile undertaking.

2. **What surprised you most while researching information for this book?**

Rediscovering what a beautiful land Canada is and how extraordinarily lucky Canadians are to live there.

3. **What were the challenges (research, literary, and logistical) in bringing this book to life?**

I was told by an acknowledged literary professional that no one person could possibly write this book as it would be much too large an undertaking. However, this person was assuming a traditional author style and approach. I knew differently from prior experience, although I was under no illusion about the amount of work involved, including the planning, structuring, researching, writing and, of course, undertaking all the photography and being able to collate this all together in a meaningful way. This is what gives the book its unique appeal.

4. **What are the most important points that you would like readers to have gained and appreciate after reading your book?**

I would like them to think more deeply about conservation and the manner in which so many natural habitats are currently being destroyed. I would also like them to think about the longer term implications of this, especially for the complex set of natural balances which make our planet unique. Mostly, I would like to inspire a more reasoned and sympathetic discussion of such matters and to highlight the importance of the natural sciences within primary and secondary education. In addition, I hope that this book may serve to acknowledge and promote the good work undertaken by Parks Canada in this respect. Perhaps only a non-Canadian would truly understand this and thus be able to write the book.

5. **Why is this story unique?**

Because no one would take the same pains as the author to present this subject in such an accessible, down to earth and thoroughly engaging manner. Furthermore, the imaging will serve to form an impression in the mind of the reader which will reinforce the dialogue. There are many related academic papers (a little too technical and inaccessible to the lay reader) and some pleasant enough popular science titles (which barely scratch the surface and are much too politically correct) but



nothing which tells the tale in quite this way. In addition, this book will be something to be savoured and enjoyed, like a fine wine or an especially good piano recital.

6. **What is your response to those who are surprised by your findings?**

I don't expect that many people will be surprised in what I say, although they might not have considered the situation in quite the same way. My response would be that they might usefully consider some pertinent facts and use their natural reasoning to extrapolate the possible consequences. I would also welcome associated discussion.

7. **What is the most controversial issue in relation to the conservation of Canadian parks and parks around the globe?**

The situation in Canada is unique and there exists a much better understanding there, as expressed in the Ecological Integrity initiative of Parks Canada. Elsewhere, the situation tends to be variable and driven largely by commercial exploitation and considerations of profit. Perhaps the most controversial issue is the lack of understanding of the importance of natural habitats, not merely in isolation, but as interconnected entities across nations and across the world.

8. **How did you organize the book?**

There is a consistent theme running throughout. However, I deliberately fashioned each section as a stand alone piece. In some respects, it may be considered several books in one and may be enjoyed in this vein. There will be some surprises for many readers, which will hopefully add to the interest. When they reach the end, they will feel a completeness of understanding which is rarely provided by books of this nature.

9. **What advice would you offer your readers so they can make the best of the information provided to them in the book?**

To absorb each section slowly. Think carefully about the messages coming across. Enjoy the imagery. Be thankful that they have experienced the wonder of nature and think carefully about how fragile our natural world actually is. Then go out and discuss the matter with others, talk about the book and its messages, and consider what this means in their own back yard.