



August 1914

Mark Rowe

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August 1914 is the story of England in that watershed month when the country went from peace to war. It tells of what life was like in a country that looked, and smelt, very different to today. Work could be long, hard and deadly; pleasures were rough and simple; religion was a comfort for many.

Some of the people whose stories you will encounter are well-known, such as Winston Churchill, the rising First Lord of the Admiralty. Others were not famous figures - Winston's sister-in-law, the self-centred Lady 'Goonie' Churchill; William Swift, the village headmaster, retired to his garden; the game-shooting student Clifford Gothard, and the aristocrat Gerald Legge. Their diaries and letters tell vividly what they did and thought, and how they reacted to the news of armies on the march across Europe.

Mark Rowe's fascinating book gives a unique insight into the main events of that month - the outburst of patriotism in front of Buckingham Palace, the panic-buying, the rush by some to volunteer, and the confused and bloody fighting. Not everyone welcomed the war, just as some were in revolt against the peacetime order: suffragettes, socialists, and Irish nationalists. August 1914 shows a kaleidoscope of disunited people who just happened to share the same island - suddenly faced with the greatest war the world had ever seen.

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