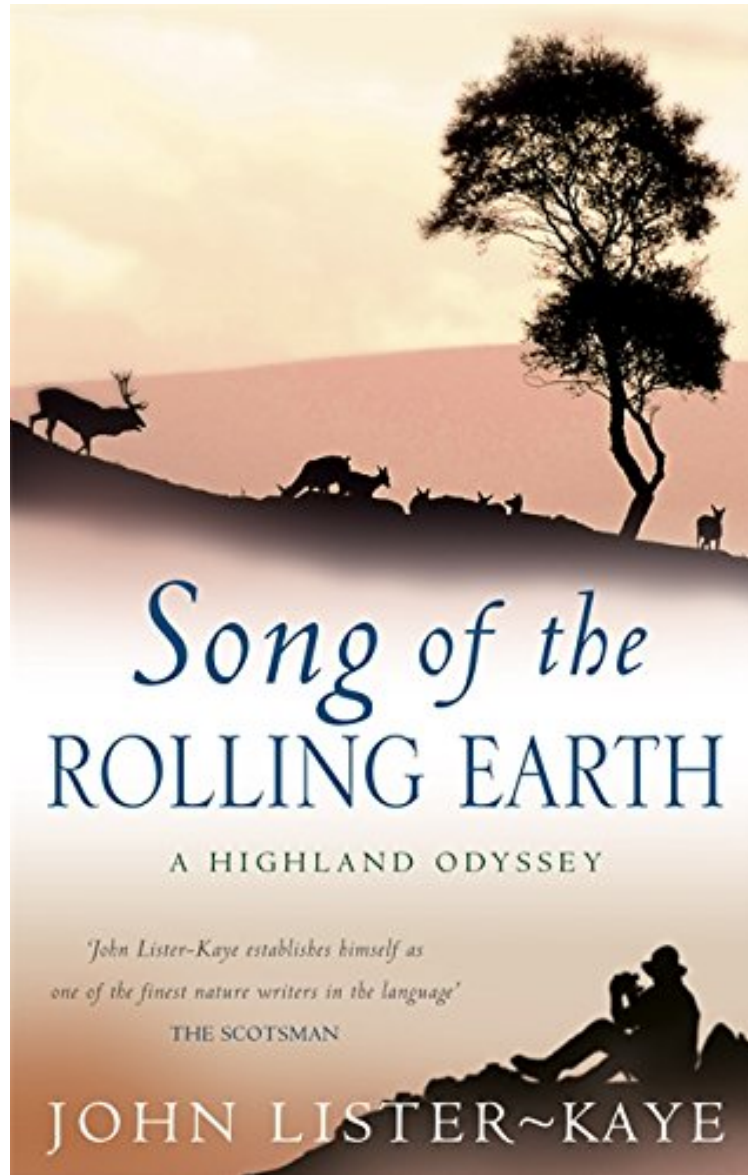


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Song of the Rolling Earth

John Lister-Kaye

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John Lister-Kaye : Song of the Rolling Earth before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Song of the Rolling Earth:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A book to read; a song to singBy Denzill've never been to the Aigas Field Centre (unfortunately), which the author established in 1977 and which is the focus of this book. But thanks to Mr. Lister-Kaye's excellent book, I feel I know it and the surrounding area as well as I do my own garden and local

patch of countryside. His powers of observation are phenomenal and his way with words when he describes his experiences are exceptional. His description of the Uroceros wood wasp laying her eggs in a log is a prime example. "She is a power tool in chitin ... straining like every schoolboy who has tried to force his compass points into the desktop". I feel I am there, crouching down with the author, and like him I have to stand up and stretch my sore legs. That's the magic of Lister-Kaye: he's not just telling you about his intimate experiences; he's sharing them with you. Read this and you'll find yourself hearing the wild songs of the rolling earth yourself, without a doubt.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The Highlands of Scotland: from extinction of wolves to restoration ecology By T. Patrick Killough It is not enough for a person simply to notice that the earth is being avoidably stressed by human practices such as hunting beavers and wolves to extermination. Nor will the problem of environmental damage be solved by that person's moving from noticing the problem to resolving to do something about it. The new convert to environmental activism has to find -- or create -- working channels for his or her zeal. Awareness, personal resolve, public channels: each is necessary, each has its own story.

SONG OF THE ROLLING EARTH: A HIGHLAND ODYSSEY is one Englishman's story of how he targeted the Highlands and Islands of Scotland by mixing personal awareness, resolution and action-oriented public channels into a package called "restoration ecology." It was tensions in his life story that made John, the current Eighth Baronet Lister-Kay (1946 -), an apostle of restoration ecology. For centuries his Yorkshire ancestors had accumulated wealth through holding and working coal mines. Had the post World War II Labor government not nationalized Britain's coal industry, young John Lister-Kaye might have had handed to him an earth-unfriendly family business to support, uncriticized, his boyhood enthusiasms for butterflies and worms and lessons learned in a school providentially placed next door to a huge nature preserve. Then came the 1967 Torrey Canyon oil tanker spill off the coast of Cornwall, not far from where John Lister-Kaye was working in the steel industry. He went in person to the miles upon miles of polluted beaches and saw the destruction of fish and birds. To fight ruination of all human environments instantly became John's lifelong crusade. A channel for his energy was offered by famed naturalist Gavin Maxwell (see The Ring of Bright Water Trilogy) who invited John to work with him on nature projects on and around Scotland's Isle of Skye. From this collaboration came Lister-Kaye's first book, THE WHITE ISLAND, with emphasis on otters (see The White Island). Maxwell's untimely death in 1969 launched John Lister-Kaye into a self-directed search for techniques to make others see millennia of destruction of the Scottish environment and then empower them to do something about it. He began by conceiving, advertising and conducting simple one-on-one and small group treks to view golden eagles, grey seals, capercaillies, etc. and to discuss in as much depth as the visitors cared to the natural history of the Highlands and Islands. Soon Lister-Kaye had acquired a travel van, permanent lodgings in the highlands to house and feed guests and a renowned mountaineer partner. He also married his talented publicist, an earl's daughter, Sorrel Bentinck. They had three children while realizing the first stages of John's restoration ecology crusade. The crusade found its final form in 1977 with the purchase of House of Aigas, an estate west of Inverness. This became Lister-Kaye headquarters, hotel, boarding house, classroom and base for exploration of the Highlands near and far. It flourishes in late 2008 as Aigas Field Centre (see [...] Thousands and adults and children have studied there in the intervening 31 years. Soon to come: official opening of a large super insulated, thatched roof classroom facility with full audio-visual capacity. All this sounds prosaic enough. But Sir John is gifted with a vivid, poetic pen. He makes you shiver with the cold of his home above north latitude 57, flinch from the Highland midges, thrill to have a badger wander by you a foot away in the dark and marvel at the stoic courage of Scotsmen who "be-long" to their crofts. As a self-anointed popularizer of other people's good ideas, Lister-Kaye also shares his vast specialized reading with you. Thus you sip Sir Martin Holdgate's theory of five great waves of human impact on the land -- turning finally in desperation to restoration ecology (see From Care to Action: Making a Sustainable World). Gavin Maxwell, of course, becomes your key to otters and on and on. Sir John wears his erudition lightly. The book's Epilogue concludes with a noisy, good-hearted businessman visitor from Houston, Jim McColl, asking Sir John: "What's your product?" and concluding after days at Aigas Field Centre, "This time I know it's real. ... I've got your product! ... Insight! That's what it is, ... insight." How right Jim was. -OOO-

Conservationist and naturalist John Lister-Kaye, founder of the Aigas Field Centre, writes about his life in the glens, the wildlife that surrounds him and the primeval magical exchange that takes place between man and nature once so central to ancient civilisations. He describes finding the ruined nineteenth-century estate that is to become Aigas, taking it over and turning it into a going concern as an Educational Centre, and his own personal motivation, following the Torrey Canyon oil spillage and natural disasters in the 1960s, to become a conservationist. Interspersed within the narrative detail are engaging and enlightening descriptions of flora and fauna. John Lister-Kaye carries the reader very effectively into the minute worlds he observes and backs up keen scrutiny with facts and figures. SONG OF THE ROLLING EARTH is a notably entertaining and enlightening addition to the canon of naturalist writing that includes Gavin Maxwell's RING OF BRIGHT WATER, Henry Williamson's TARKA THE OTTER and the works of Gerald Durrell.

Deeply personal and perceptive...a wonderfully lyrical book surging with the sheer joy of nature, from Scotland's

premier nature writer? Magnus Magnusson Lister-Kaye establishes himself as one of the finest nature writers in the language? SCOTSMANA personal, finely poetic book, an odyssey of people, places and wild things.? Christopher Smout, Historiographer Royal in Scotland An environmental classic? SPECTATOR About the Author Born in 1946, John Lister-Kaye worked with celebrated author Gavin Maxwell on a tiny Hebridean wildlife sanctuary and in 1977 opened the Aigas Field Centre, the first privately owned field studies centre in Britain.