



# Greater London: The Story of the Suburbs

*Nick Barratt*

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## **Greater London: The Story of the Suburbs** Nick Barratt

London's suburbs may stretch for well over 600 square miles, but in historical accounts of the capital they tend to take something of a back seat. In *Greater London*, historian Nick Barratt places them firmly centre stage, tracing their journey from hamlets and villages far out in the open countryside to fully fledged urban enclaves, simultaneously demonstrating the crucial role they have played in the creation of today's metropolis.

Starting in the first century AD, he shows how the tiny settlements that grew up in the Thames Valley gradually developed, and how they were shaped by their proximity to the city. He describes the spread of the first suburbs beyond the city walls, and traces the ebb and flow of population as people moved in to find jobs or away to escape London's noise and bustle. He charts the transformation wrought by the coming of the railways, the fight to preserve Hampstead Heath, Epping Forest and other green spaces and the struggle to create a London-wide form of government. He gives an account of wartime destruction and peacetime reconstruction, and then brings the story to the present with a description of the very varied nature of today's suburbs and their inhabitants. In the process, he evokes Tudor Hackney and Georgian Hampton, explains why Victorian Battersea and Finchley were so different from one another, and follows Islington's fall from grace and subsequent recovery.

Magnificently illustrated throughout with contemporary engravings and photographs, this is the essential history for anyone who has ever lived in London.

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