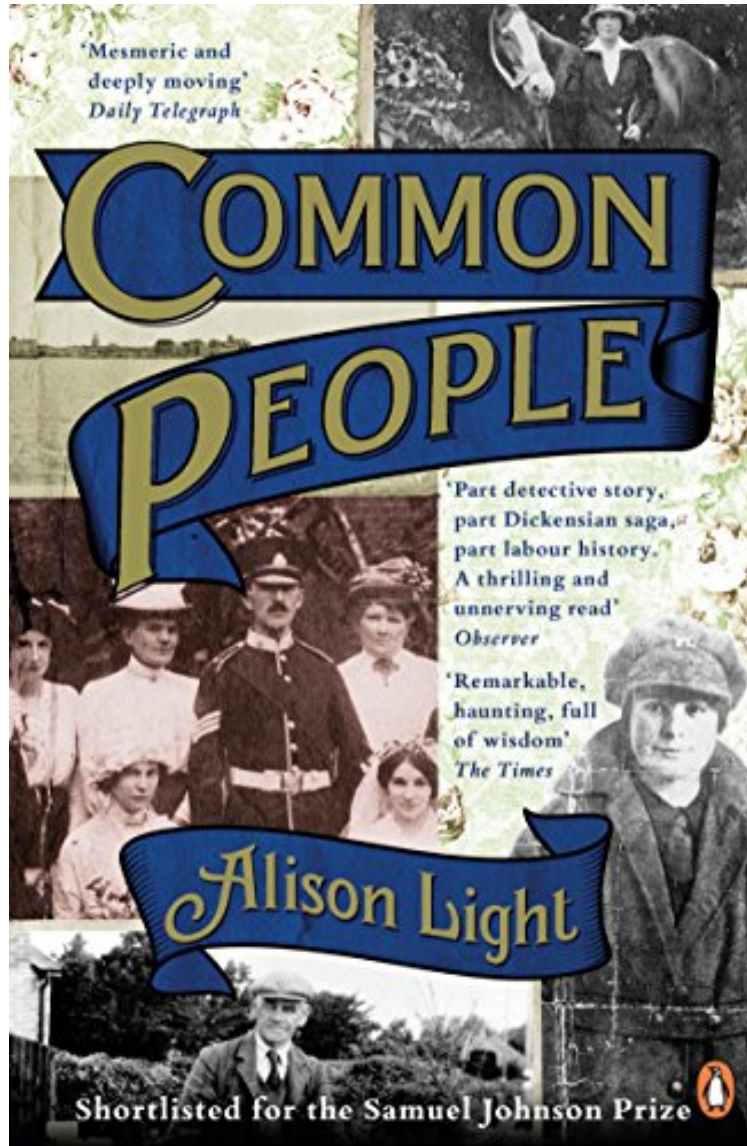


(Read free) Common People: The History of An English Family

## Common People: The History of An English Family

Von Alison Light

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**Von Alison Light : Common People: The History of An English Family** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Common People: The History of An English Family:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A look at the "real" English...Von Jill MeyerI suppose when we go delving into our family histories, we hope to find the odd billionaire, a pirate, a famous actor or, at least, someone "interesting". Interesting and rich is a good combination. But most of us, like British author Alison Light, find solid citizens who live fairly quiet lives, passing along from one

generation to another. A "family" that is actually a combination of tree limbs that come together to make one individual. We are a combination of all those who came before us. Alison Light, in her thoughtful book, "Common People", gives us brief histories of her forebears. Light's ancestors really were "common people". Not an earl or pirate or rich guy among them. Most were economically of the working class (or sometimes lower in bad times), while some made inroads into the British middle class. Her "people", on both maternal and paternal sides, rode the wave of the economies of Victorian and 20th century England. Coming from Ireland, Wales, Birmingham, Portsmouth, and rural areas in southern England, they were often tossed in times of economic and societal need. Large families regularly lost members - young and old - to tuberculosis and other diseases that were particularly pernicious in the slums the families often lived in. Other family members spent time in "work houses", institutions for the real needy. Others died forgotten in the crude mental hospitals of the times. A few left for Australia - usually as penal deportees - but most spent their lives moving around the areas I've listed above. Curiously, no one seemed to end up in London. Alison Light's extended family - from four or five generations back - really is the story of Britain and the affects of the Industrial Revolution. Her writing is always light and she tells the story of her people in almost a fictional way. But, her people were real, as are their stories. This is a really good book.

Kurzbeschreibung Shortlisted for the 2014 Samuel Johnson Prize 'A remarkable achievement...should become a classic.' - Margaret Drabble 'Light writes beautifully...Common People is part memoir, part thrilling social history of the England of the Industrial Revolution, but above all a work of quiet poetry and insight into human behaviour. It is full of wisdom.' - The Times Book of the Week Family history is a massive phenomenon of our times but what are we after when we go in search of our ancestors? Beginning with her grandparents, Alison Light moves between the present and the past, in an extraordinary series of journeys over two centuries, across Britain and beyond. Epic in scope and deep in feeling, Common People is a family history but also a new kind of public history, following the lives of the migrants who travelled the country looking for work. Original and eloquent, it is a timely rethinking of who the English were - but ultimately it reflects on history itself, and on our constant need to know who went before us and what we owe them. Pressestimmen An exploration of an English family tree the like of which has never been made before. (Claire Tomalin) [A] short and beautifully written meditation on family and mobility. (the Independent) Light writes beautifully. With such colour and with perception and lyricism she clads the past...Common People is part memoir, part thrilling social history of the England of the Industrial Revolution, but above all a work of quiet poetry and insight into human behaviour. It is full of wisdom. (Melanie Reid The Times Book of the Week) Intellectually sound and relevant...a refreshingly modern way of thinking about our past. (New Statesman) This book is a substantial achievement: its combination of scholarship and intelligence is, you may well think, the best monument you could have to all those she has rescued from time's oblivion. (Financial Times) Light [is skilled] in probing dark corners of her ancestry and exposing their historical meaning...packed with humanity. (Sunday Times) Exquisite...Barely a page goes by without something fascinating on it, betraying Light's skill in winking out the most relevant or moving aspects of her antecedents' lives, which echo through the generations. (the Independent on Sunday) Evocatively written...a thrilling and unnerving read (The Observer) Intelligent...admirably organised...deeply absorbing. (The Spectator) Alison Light's excellent and humane exploration of her family tree...confirms her as the pre-eminent exponent of a new kind of public family history. (Evening Standard) Extraordinary...Family history, thanks to the internet, has become a hugely popular pastime. "Common People", with its fine sense of nuance, raises the game for everyone. (The Economist) This is by turns mesmerizing and deeply moving: a poetic excavation of the very meaning of history (Daily Telegraph) A deeply researched and fascinating double story...Light hopes the books will encourage others to write their family history as public history, a feat she pulls off brilliantly. It is a hard act to follow. (Sunday Telegraph) Common People is not costume drama but the real thing - dirty, tragic but joyous, too. (Mail on Sunday) Beautifully written and exhaustively researched, Alison Light makes her family speak for England. (Jerry White, author of London in the Eighteenth Century) A remarkable achievement...should become a classic. (Margaret Drabble) Kurzbeschreibung Shortlisted for the 2014 Samuel Johnson Prize 'A remarkable achievement...should become a classic.' - Margaret Drabble 'Light writes beautifully...Common People is part memoir, part thrilling social history of the England of the Industrial Revolution, but above all a work of quiet poetry and insight into human behaviour. It is full of wisdom.' - The Times Book of the Week Family history is a massive phenomenon of our times but what are we after when we go in search of our ancestors? Beginning with her grandparents, Alison Light moves between the present and the past, in an extraordinary series of journeys over two centuries, across Britain and beyond. Epic in scope and deep in feeling, Common People is a family history but also a new kind of public history, following the lives of the migrants who travelled the country looking for work. Original and eloquent, it is a timely rethinking of who the English were - but ultimately it reflects on history itself, and on our constant need to know who went before us and what we owe them.