



# Great Hedge of India: The Search for the Living Barrier That Divided a People

*Roy Moxham*

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Remarkable" and "astonishing," says Jan Morris of Roy Moxham's account of his search for "one of the least-known wonders of Queen Victoria's India," and John Keay finds it "a compelling read, simply told, and simply wonderful." An unquestionably fascinating tale, as well as a travel book and historical detective story, The Great Hedge of India begins in a secondhand bookshop on London's Charing Cross Road. There Roy Moxham buys the memoir of a nineteenth-century British colonial administrative officer, who makes a passing reference to a giant hedge planted by the British across the Indian subcontinent. That hedge—which for fifty years had been manned and cared for by 12,000 men and had run a length of 2,500 miles—becomes what Moxham calls his "ridiculous obsession." Recounting a journey that takes him to exotic isolated villages deep in the interior of India, Moxham chronicles his efforts to confirm the existence of the extraordinary, impenetrable green wall that had virtually disappeared from two nations' memories. Not only does he discover the shameful role the hedge played in the exploitative Raj and the famines of the late nineteenth century, but he also uncovers what remains of this British grand folly and restores to history what must be counted one of the world's wonders—and a monument to one of the great injustices of Victorian imperialism. "Grandly entertaining ... close to being a perfect story of a fanciful quest."—Boston Globe "A compelling read, simply told and simply wonderful."—John Keay

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