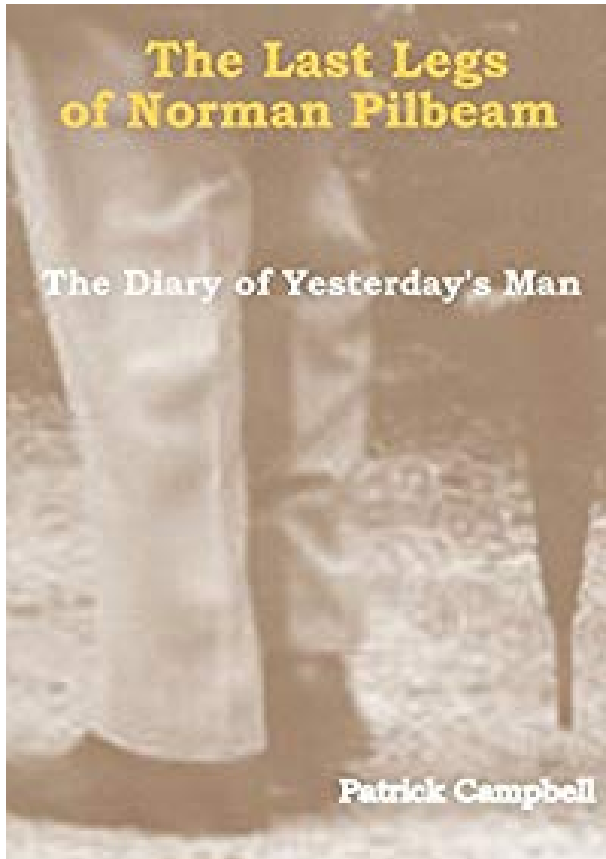


The Last Legs of Norman Pilbeam: The Diary of Yesterday's Man



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There's much wrong with modern life and if you want specifics, let Norman Pilbeam bend your ear. He's never forgiven the young for taking over the world, especially the music world, and he blames their parents for giving them too much pocket money. He blames Elvis too. What really irks him is that he will leave nothing memorable behind when the grim reaper calls, despite being an expert on the Bard. Worse, a local bricklayer shows himself superior in the legacy stakes. Those close to Pilbeam do not feel bed by the intimacy. His public-spirited Dutch wife, Wilhelmina, merely tolerates her indolent husband. This makes him feel like pushing someone around, and his unemployed son Orlando will do. Gerrie, his shady drinking pal, with whom he shares a love of old-time jazz, is his only friend, though there is greater mutual respect in his relationship with Othello the dog. To be fair, Pilbeam can be brave. Or, if you prefer, foolhardy. Why else would he challenge a benefits cheat to come clean, take part in a demonstration with violent yobs, pick a fight with a large man for failing to pick up his dog's poo and orate at Speakers' Corner? All with unfortunate results. He is lazy, intolerant, snobbish, reactionary and hypocritical. But don't dismiss Norman Pilbeam out of hand. There might be a little of him in all of us. You may even feel some sympathy for him, though not too often, one hopes. This witty novel will keep you chuckling.