



Backroom Boys: The Secret Return of the British Boffin

Francis Spufford

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A brilliant, beautiful account of how British boffins triumphed across the decades in creating everything from computer games to Martian landers.

The book contains chapters on the Beagle II, Elite - the 80s computer game, the Blue Streak missile, Concorde, mobile phone technology and the Human Genome Project, among others.

Britain is the only country in the world to have cancelled its space programme just as it put its first rocket into orbit. Starting with this forgotten episode, 'Backroom Boys' tells the bittersweet story of how one country lost its industrial tradition and got back something else. Sad, inspiring, funny and ultimately triumphant, it follows the technologists whose work kept Concorde flying, created the computer game, conquered the mobile-phone business, saved the human genome for the human race - and who now are sending the Beagle 2 probe to burrow in the cinnamon sands of Mars.

'Backroom Boys' is a vivid love-letter to quiet men in pullovers, to those whose imaginings take shape not in words but in mild steel and carbon fibre and lines of code. Above all, it is a celebration of big dreams achieved with slender means.



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