



# READING GUIDE

April, 2026

## Akenfield

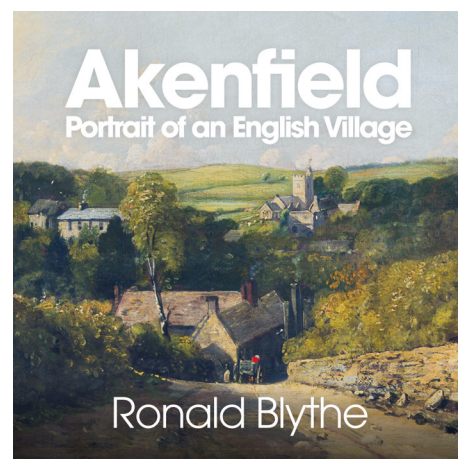
Ronald Blythe

### In short

A deeply evocative oral history that celebrates the dignity of everyday lives and the enduring spirit of the countryside.

### Synopsis

Originally published in 1969, *Akenfield* forms a unique document of a way of life that has, in many ways, disappeared. It reverberates with voices of survivors of the Great War evoking days gone by and reflects the concerns of a younger generation of farm workers during the second agricultural revolution - the land producing more but employing fewer men. It is a penetrating, unprejudiced, caring account of rural life, tapping into a variety of contemporary concerns about agriculture, the environment and the destruction of the traditional countryside.



### Discussion points

1. Is Ronald Blythe's choice of interviewees representative, and does that matter?
2. Whose story do you find most compelling?
3. What does reading *Akenfield* do to your picture of rural life?
4. Is country living still riven by class and social background?

### Next you should listen to

*The Bookshop, The Draper, The Candlestick Maker* by Annie Gray

*The Bookseller At The End World* by Ruth Shaw

*Time To Heal* by Michael Dixon