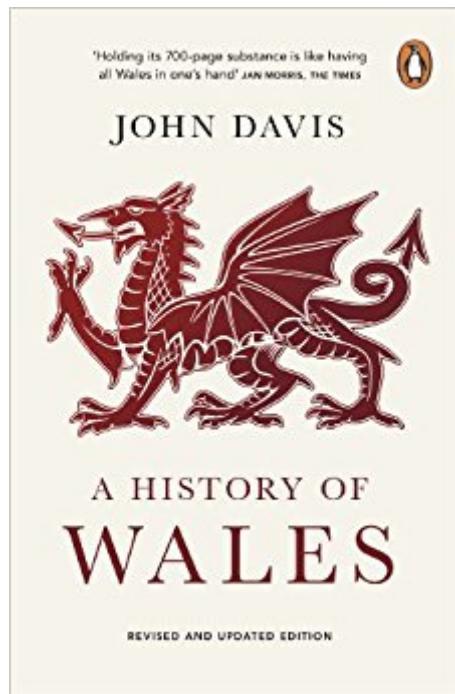


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# A History Of Wales



## Synopsis

Stretching from the Ice Ages to the present day, this masterful account traces the political, social and cultural history of the land that has come to be called Wales. Spanning prehistoric hill forts and Roman ruins to the Reformation, the Industrial Revolution and the series of strikes by Welsh miners in the late twentieth century, this is the definitive history of an enduring people: a unique and compelling exploration of the origins of the Welsh nation, its development and its role in the modern world. This new edition brings this remarkable history into the new era of the Welsh Assembly.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Davies, a teacher in Cardiff, has not only taken cognizance of, and fluidly applied, the new tools history avails itself of--such as economics and archaeology--he first wrote his history in Welsh. His tremendous exertion was something new that the readers of Wales recognized, and they made it a best-seller there. Davies unearths the evidence of prehistoric hill forts and Roman ruins; he delineates the feudal wars, the 1536 union with England and the ensuing Reformation; and he explains the transformations of the Industrial Revolution. Accurate in all details, using meaningful modern maps, balanced where doubts exist, this impressive history could be criticized as a labor of patriotic love, if not for the visibly high professional standard to which Davies adheres. Nothing even remotely as accomplished has been written about Wales since 1950. And, for a few future decades, don't expect a vessel this sturdy to pass by. Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From the Ice Age until 1992: the story of Wales, expertly chronicled by renowned Welsh scholar

Davies (Welsh History/University College of Wales). The Welsh can claim to be the original Britons. They preserved a language and culture--and, for many centuries, a legal code-- that, along with their topographical isolation, kept them distinct from the Angles ("English"), Saxons, and later Norman invaders. The subjugation of Welsh land by the English occurred in stages: the vanquishing of Llywelyn's revolution in 1282; the Act of Union in 1532; and the effects of the new commercial world that opened up after the Revolution of 1689 and led to the mixed blessings of the Industrial Revolution. Here, Davies relates the history of his people with proper pride. Avoiding sentimental generalizations and the temptation of portraying the Welsh as victims, he offers a closely written monument of scholarship lightened by flashes of dry humor. Davies sees radicalism as an important Welsh trait, exemplified in the Welsh role in the Chartist movement and, more recently, in the politics of the Liberal and Labor parties. He questions the common view that Methodism and Revivalism were authentic expressions of Welsh culture, and he points out that many Welsh migrated to America, especially to Pennsylvania, and that one-third of the signatories of the Declaration of Independence were their descendants. In the late 18th century, he adds, rumors abounded that America had been "discovered" in 1170 by a Welshman, one Madog, and that a tribe of Welsh-speaking Indians, the Madogwys, still dwelt deep within the continent. Davies devotes the last third of his book to the recent political scene in Wales, including the growth of the nationalist party, Plaid Cymru. He concludes that tenacity and adaptation to changed circumstances are the hallmarks of this nation, whose fullness is yet to be. Not for the casual reader--but a must for all who love to trace the story of an ancient people. (Thirty-three maps and diagrams) -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bought the book to get in touch with my Welch heritage. Apart from being a long kind of dry history book, which I expected, the big problem is that it is specifically written for the Welsh reader. My understanding is that it was originally written in Welsh and this edition is just a direct English translation of the Welsh version. I felt like the author expects the reader to have a decent hold on elementary Welsh history and geography already. As an American, I don't have that background and as a result I found it to be a difficult read.

If I have any pet peeves about the many history books I read, it is a history book where the author wishes to name a plethora of historians with which to argue or agree. There are enough names in Welsh history to wrap one's head around without mentioning all these other non-historical,

non-Welsh names. Mentioning these other people is fine for footnotes, etc. Also, this is a turgid read. I am still looking for a great book on Welsh history that is not quite so turgid and difficult to follow. Recommendations welcomed!

A surprisingly well written history of a fascinating region. Davies cannot, of course, cover the entire history in any depth but what he chose to highlight was, well, well chosen. So good I've read it twice!

Easy to read, informative, comprehensive, and more entertaining than you would think considering it is a history book. I got it as a reference, but it has proven to be an enjoyable read as well.

I agree with everything Patty said in her review. I actually discarded this book partway through because, flipping through the pages, I could see that it was never going to pick up. I gave this two stars instead of one because it's an impressive work of research. Davies has facts and figures for the most banal and trivial aspects of welsh life. I give two stars because he doesn't have much else. No personalities emerge. I don't know anything more about Welsh character or tradition or culture than I did before. He is obsessed with reporting vote tallies and what the price of steel was in a given year, but he fails to report on personality or use quotes or delve into anything interesting. if you ever saw the 1980s sitcom, Cheers, John Davies is a Cliff Claven: a guy who constantly pontificates about dry and trivial facts while listeners try to stifle a yawn and think of an excuse to "be right back." My own definition of history is that it is the story of everything that ever happened with the boring parts left out. Davies seems to invert this idea, delighting in how many times he can get away with reporting the most boring fact possible. My favorite was when he reported how many pages OTHER authors had devoted in THEIR books on Wales to a given time period. I thought he was pointing out that his book devoted more attention to that time period, but no...he had provided just about the same amount of pages. it was at that point that I decided to donate this book and purchase weisser's more general history. I wish there was something in between: a long form history with actual personality.

Good info. Too broad a survey. There were lots of historical characters and incidents I wanted a lot more detail on that the author glossed over to keep the chronology moving along. Good if you're looking for a survey of Welsh history.

I really enjoy history. This book helped me understand what Wales had been though as a people

and a country, Helped me learn about my ancestors and my geneology. The author kept my interest with his style of writing.

Great book about a great country. Very readable and very enjoyable.

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