

Bloody Welsh History by Geoff Brookes, a gobbett by Mx. Nat Kane

'Bloody Welsh History' is a non-fiction history book that I purchased from Amazon. It was written in 2012, this copy being produced in 2017 for Amazon, on behalf of the publisher History Press.

I would say this book is not for academic purposes as such, though produced by an educator who is qualified in History. Its target audience would be the general public who have interest in the local history, though academics of all disciplines who have moved to Cymru would also appreciate it as a quick, uncomplicated introduction to the history of Abertawe/Swansea, and Cymru.

The author Geoff Brookes, who is the deputy head of Cefn Hengoed comprehensive school in Swansea, is a graduate of Leicester University. He studied English and History, and has written books on local Swansea history, as well as teaching aids as an educator. The author is of English birth, though it seems has a deep passion for the area and its people.

Though I would be pondering into my own mind to wonder why this was produced when it was, my opinion is that the author had many conversations with local people, and as an educator who was fully aware of the multitude of books already in print, still saw a gap where information was needed but unable to be processed. Most teachers to my experience want to inspire their students, local and Cymreig history is not taught in the way 'British' or European history is taught to Cymreig students. I suggest that the books format, and writing styles were created with the working or young person in mind, people who are locals or have become locals, that may or may not have experience with references. We live in a society where we are either working, doing chores, trying to fit in other responsibilities and selfcare, finding space and time for education outside of the timetable many people are living within can be hard. It is a point I have made often in recent times, that the general public need a bridge between scholarly approach and what is easily digestible, like pop culture (TV, Film and social media), especially with younger generations, and this is a deputy head of a school where said demographic are the niche audience.

The content

I find the book to be very informative for the suggested target audience, and intriguing for those who have experienced further education but are not experienced in the history of the city. The author has included a multitude of drawings, impressions and photographs for the reader to provide a mental image of the information they are observing, this also helps to memorize what is read.

The bibliography and referencing can do with improvement, it is a far cry from the local history books I have seen in recent times, especially printed by Amazon, that do not have either, even when the books are taken from scholarly works.

"Sir Thomas had a lot to thank William for. After a long investigation, lasting thirteen years, he was made a saint by 1320. They decided it was a miracle, pure and simple."¹

¹ Brookes, Geoff. 2017. *Bloody Welsh History: Swansea* (Gloucestershire: The History Press) P.21.

It would be an improvement to number key points, and claims, alike a scholarly piece of work would with referencing, then to display that into the reference format that the author has already produced, each number beginning at one again at the start of a new chapter. This would be an efficient way of proving an author's work and the basis of an author's opinions, it would also help introduce the intended audience to referencing. This would take care of the effort needed to double check sources, or as the author suggests in the bibliography, help reduce the fuss for further reading when knowing where to locate said information efficiently. This results in the book having an easier sense of access to information, without overwhelming the reader within the content of the main information.

How can the book aid academia?

The points the author is trying to make are all made by previous authors and scholars, being a local history book, written by a graduate of history, there is not much to say about that, the contents are what is expected, though the books usefulness has many 'boxes to tick' as so to say.

This book, as well as the authors other pieces, have merit with academia, though it is not for advanced reading it can aid in numerous ways, I shall suggest a few below;

1. An introductory piece for students to learn about referencing styles
2. An introductory piece for students to learn about the history of Abertawe/Swansea
3. An introductory piece for students to learn the different styles of writing and what careers are suited for different styles, E.g secondary education, local history resources, journalists etc.
4. An introductory piece for students to learn how to review work, or to determine if a source is credible
5. A tool to help students learn which era of time in the city they would like to focus their discipline on.
6. A leisure tool for academics who's hobby interests include the history of Cymru, or Abertawe/Swansea.
7. This book could also inspire many an academic to work with the Author on further projects concerning secondary school, education, history and how they intersect. This could apply to politics, sociology, history, trainee teachers of secondary and higher education, and many other disciplines.
8. Inspire someone, like myself, to actually go to university to learn more, which can open many doors for the student, and academia equally.
9. As part of a study on non-fiction for the general public, and how disinformation can be remedied with local history books, and other genres.

It is clear that the book that is in-between the worlds and work of scholars like Louise Miskell and the knowledge of the general public, the author apologises for any mistakes they make when regarding their source materials. Though not to put down another author, it is a far cry from the

work of Ann Marie Thomas, though with some inspiration from the likes of Miskell, Harriot Webster and Brookes, Thomas could do very well in making new editions. Brookes is a local historian, a modern person writing about people across time, he acts as a bridge between the communities he belongs to, a first port of call for higher education, whereas Thomas's work presents more as a fan non-fiction as it currently stands.

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