

Synopsis

Scotland's history gets a rewrite by archaeologist and historian Neil Oliver. How accurate are the accounts of Mary Queen of Scots's tragic demise or Bonnie Prince Charlie's forlorn cause? Oliver reveals a Scotland that forged its own identity with success, despite its union with England in 1707.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A gripping and enlightening work of history. One could read all of these facts countless times and yet miss the larger picture, but Neil Oliver has a writer's gift of drawing the forces, natural, military, religious, political and artistic, that created Scotland. We witness the ruthless passions which shape history; the unbridled fanaticism which shatters lives and yet becomes integrated into a larger dialog, which (sometimes) turns to the good. In 435 pages, Neil Oliver covers centuries without ever seeming to rush. His unsparing devotion to truth approaches a force of righteous judgment; in his Scotland, I saw a mirror of the patterns which have shaped America, and my own psyche. I recommend A History of Scotland without reserve.

On the scale of history buffishness, I am in the middle, and I certainly have no previous knowledge of European history- until now! I checked out this book to learn more about Scotland before I visit and was treated with an in-depth, pleasant and sometimes humorous outline of Scottish history. While I wouldn't call the style informal, it is definitely easier on the mind than textbooks and is written to captivate the reader with war stories, memorable descriptions and accuracy from every angle.

Bought this for a trip to Scotland I was taking. Even though I'm a history major I only knew the bare

essentials of it's history. This book was excellent! Although it started just a tad slow, he really managed to present A LOT of years of history, kings, clans, culture, and wars into a pretty brief and very readable text. Believe me, I have read a TON of really dry, long history books, this one was definitely interesting enough to keep even a "non-history" person interested. Plus, it was a great aid for the trip as I knew a lot of the background to explain to my friend. Often times the brief few sentences you get as you tour through a castle or in a pamphlet just give you very basic facts- the more you know the more interesting the country is! I would definitely recommend for anyone travelling there, it gives a true sense of the history, people, and culture of the land and as I learned on my trip, their history is definitely NOT just in their past, it is very much a part of who they still are.

If Mr. Oliver ever writes a history of the world, I'm getting it...His conversational style of writing makes historical characters and events come alive, so that complicated events follow logically.

Neil Oliver on screen comes across as sincere, informed and passionate about his love of history and archaeology. This book reveals just as clearly those traits. From the evocative geological start, we feel grounded in a holistic understanding of the flow of time. I cut my historical teeth on John Prebbles "Lion in the North". I think that Neil Oliver has more than surpassed that work, and for me there can be no higher praise. He has drawn clear paths through the different movements, made clear those murky areas, is precise in defining just where conjecture starts and historical fact stops. I was not only educated, but also greatly entertained by his writing style, the sheer love of the topic - which shines through the pages, and gained an appreciation of the forces moving through time. My Scotland is now more clearly understood. When I visit those places and castles, I will now see and hear the events which occurred there long ago. Do buy this book

Reads like a thriller and having just been to Stirling Castle the sounds of battle are still in the glen. A very palatable way of understanding who the Scots are and why they love their independence.

Neil Oliver is an archaeologist and a historian. More, he is passionate about both, and especially is he passionate in his love for Scotland, the land of his birth. I've enjoyed his documentaries. And now this book fills in loads of details that make his presentation even more rich and fascinating. Beginning with the formation of the land itself, from geological discoveries, Oliver traces the development of an environment that would spawn and encourage the human beings who would not be daunted by the "wind-swept rock," but who would become as tough, hardy, and independent

as they needed to be in order to survive and endure. It's a myth-dispelling book, one in which the author deals as honestly as he can, given historical and archaeological evidence, with the strengths and weaknesses of a fascinating people. The book is beautiful and highly readable. I recommend it with all my heart.

delighted with the ease and speed of getting the book The book itself is a first class outline of Scottish History In an unschool bookish manner and presents a broad and insightfull look at history which I have'nt seen before. Excellent treatise. Jack Willis

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