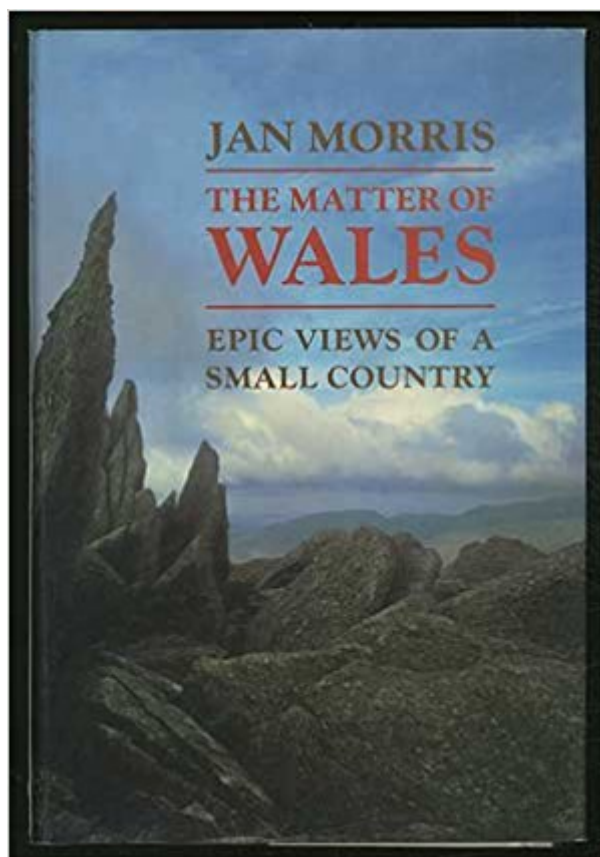


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The Matter Of Wales: Epic Views Of A Small Country



Synopsis

This passionate evocation of Wales by the author Rebecca West has hailed as "perhaps the best descriptive writer of our times" encapsulates that country in all its aspects, past, present, and even future. Jan Morris shows clearly the manners of thought of the Welch people, as well as their art, their landscapes and their folklore, their ways of earning a living, their character, their meaning and their historical destiny. Half Welsh, half English herself, Morris is a historian, a travel writer, and an essayist. All three disciplines she brings to this work--a vivid tribute to a country not just on the map or in the mind but also in the heart. "All of us," Morris writes, "have some small country there."

About the Author: Jan Morris is the author of such books as the Pax Britannica trilogy, Spain, Destinations, and most recently, Journeys.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book will make any Welsh person homesick.

This book had a lot of information about Wales that I didn't know .my family is enjoying this read.

I haven't read all of it, but what I have is very easy and enjoyable.

Service was fine but the book itself was way more detailed and more a history book than I expected. I thought it would be more like a travelogue.

This is a beautiful work, ever fresh, on how the country thinks, its significant landmarks, its people and their historic language. Jan Morris is an exceptional, gifted writer who can interest people in a country's finer points. The hardcover version, which I purchased from a private online seller, is so much nicer than the paperback, including a few strange pictures taken by the author. The book may be considered travel writing by some, but it is so much more. I would compare it to Pablo Neruda's *Memoirs*. So colourful and deeply felt.

Jan Morris is a prolific writer, whose books provide the reader with a window on the world. Half English, half Welsh, she has adopted the latter culture as a focus for her sense of belonging. The Wales she writes about is an enigma. It is barely understood internationally. Most outsiders to Britain have some concept of an area of England where people work in dreary coalmines and sing in male voice choirs. The fact that Wales has never been part of England would surprise many (even if it is tied to its umbilical cord by way of Henry the VIII's undemocratic Act of Union in 1536). To be Welsh is to stand up for what you are for, not so much of what you are against. This requires a particular level of emotion and national passion that Morris describes exquisitely in her book. Her story of Wales is one of Celtic dreams and folklore that blends in seamlessly with a modern Wales, partly Anglicized and yet distinct despite 500 years of English domination. Owain Glyndwr, a Welsh hero, features prominently, as do other Welsh figures of the past. Some Welsh traditions are exposed as 'fakes' (however much loved today) whilst facets of Welsh history, unknown to many in Wales themselves, are uncovered. Morris could be criticised for being too much a romantic. However her writing defies criticism, it being both deep and sincere as well as adroit and precise. A highly recommended book for those with a curiosity for Wales.

Didn't read it. I went to Wales and have returned months ago. I probably won't read it either. I can't say I hate it either.

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