

## Exploring Wales on foot : small group walking tours for seniors

### Reading List

#### **The story of Wales**

by Jon Gower

*The Story of Wales* is a vibrant portrait of 30,000 years of power, identity and politics. Revisiting major turning points in Welsh history, from its earliest settlements to the present day, Jon Gower re-examines the myths and misconceptions about this glorious country, revealing a people who have reacted with energy and invention to changing times and opportunities. It's a story of political and industrial power, economic and cultural renewal- and a nation of seemingly limitless potential.

*The Story of Wales* is an epic account of Welsh history for a new generation.

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#### **The Last King of Wales: Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, c. 1013-1063**

by Michael Davies (Author), Sean Davies (Author)

Gruffudd ap Llywelyn was a mighty king, yet 1,000 years after his birth he is all but forgotten. In 1055 he led a great army into England, burning Hereford and forcing King Edward the Confessor to seek peace. Gruffudd united Wales and conquered border land that had been in English hands for centuries, turning the Viking threat into a powerful weapon. In 1063, however, he was betrayed and beheaded by the forebears of the princes who have entered history as Wales' national heroes, leaving the country in chaos on the eve of the arrival of the Normans. The death of the last king of Wales would nevertheless also lead to the downfall at Hastings of England's last Anglo-Saxon king, Harold II.

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#### **Castles of Wales**

by Alan Phillips

Wales, a small country, is littered with the relics of war - Iron Age forts, Roman ruins, medieval castles and the coastal forts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The biggest construction of fortifications in Wales took place during the reign of Edward I. They were not only built to deter an invader, but to control the frequent Welsh uprisings. The next wave of constructions occurred during

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when a number of forts and gun emplacements were built, mostly in South Wales, to deter a seaborne invasion. The twentieth century introduced a new mode of defence, especially during the two world wars, in the form of pillboxes, tank traps and gun emplacements. The various airfields constructed were the most visible form of defence and could be regarded as the castles of the period. This book looks at how Welsh castles protected Wales to make it what it is today.

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### **Maritime history of Newport Pembrokeshire: Castles, Inscribed Stones, Pilgrim Crosses, Shipwrecks, Shipbuilding, Rowing Races, and Newport Nonsense** by TOM BENNETT

A collection of Historical notes about the Welsh coastal town of Newport, Pembrokeshire. A few of its legends, characters and little known facts are included in this delightful book. An important Medieval town with one of the first stone built Castles that replaced one at Nevern which was a prime meeting place for the Welsh Princes. Newport (Trefdraeth) lies under the sacred mountain of Carningli but it is the mischievous nature of its inhabitants that coined the phrase "Newport Nonsense". This book looks at the towns ancient and recent history, and shows how Newport's regatta , with its Down River Rowing Race was the prelude to the Dinas Head Challenge, so popular today with the Celtic Longboats. Intensive research has produced a comprehensive list of the Sloops, Schooners and Brigs built at Newport between 1760 and 1850. With no less than 80 ships listed, this is the first time names, tonnage, rig and owners of Newport vessels has been published.

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### **Life in a Medieval Castle** by Joseph Gies & Frances Gies

From acclaimed historians Frances and Joseph Gies comes the reissue of this definitive classic on medieval castles, which was a source for George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones* series.

"Castles are crumbly and romantic. They still hint at an age more colorful and gallant than our own, but are often debunked by boring people who like to run on about drafts and grumble that the latrines did not work. Joseph and Frances Gies offer a book that helps set the record straight—and keeps the romance too."—*Time*

A widely respected academic work and a source for George R.R. Martin's *Game of Thrones*, Joseph and Frances Gies's bestselling *Life in a Medieval Castle* remains a timeless work of popular medieval scholarship.

Focusing on Chepstow, an English castle that survived the turbulent Middle Ages with a relative lack of violence, the book offers an exquisite portrait of what day-to-day life was actually like during the era, and of the key role the castle played. The Gieses take us through the full cycle of a medieval year, dictated by the rhythms of the harvest. We learn what lords and serfs alike would have worn, eaten, and done for leisure, and of the outside threats the castle always hoped to keep at bay.

For medieval buffs and anyone who wants to learn more about this fascinating era, *Life in a Medieval Castle* is as timely today as when it was first published.

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