



The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction

John Guy

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First published as part of the best-selling The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain, John Guy's Very Short Introduction to The Tudors is the most authoritative short introduction to this age in British history. It offers a compelling account of the political, religious and economic changes of the country under such leading monarchs as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

The work has been substantially revised and updated for this edition. In particular, the reigns of Henry VII, Edward VI, and Philip and Mary are comprehensively reassessed.

The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction Details

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From Reader Review The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction for online ebook

Helen says

This book is part of a series offering, as the title suggests, a very short introduction to a wide variety of different topics. This one is devoted to the Tudors and takes us through the reigns of each Tudor monarch - Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, (briefly) Lady Jane Grey, Mary I and Elizabeth I. All of the basic facts are here, presented in a format that is easy to follow and understand. There are also some illustrations, genealogical tables, a chronology and a list of suggested further reading.

The only problem I had was that I already have quite a good knowledge of the Tudor period, so very little of the information in this book was new to me. For those readers who don't know much about the Tudors, however, this will be an excellent starting point. The book is also very small and would be easy to carry around in a bag or pocket so that you could dip into it when you have a few spare moments to read.

Overall, I enjoyed reading this Very Short Introduction and will consider trying another one on a different subject.

Valarie Smith says

I'm not sure who this book is supposed to be for. You can tell from its dry opening chapter focusing on economics and population statistics that it isn't the light, breezy history you might've guessed from its size (and subhead: "A Brief Insight"), yet it's far too short to offer the kind of context that would make such dry information compelling. It goes into enormous detail in some places (price of cutlery during the Tudor era, anyone?) and then barely even touches on Henry VIII's wives. A little storytelling would've gone a long way to making this more palatable.

Kelly says

So far, great. Realistically, its more of a history book, but people that know me know I love, love, LOVE the Tudor era. I really love all history pertaining to English Monarchy but the Tudor era is my favorite - from Henry VIII to Elizabeth I.

Shawn Mooney says

I found this to be a very useful and informative refresher on Tudor history. It's not quite accurate to describe it as a "refresher"; there was a heck of a lot of information here that I didn't know before. I was most surprised to find out that Elizabeth I was actually not all that powerful and was largely controlled and manipulated by her male advisers.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

The Tudors: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions #20), John Guy

John Guy's Very Short Introduction to The Tudors is the most authoritative short introduction to this age in British history. It offers a compelling account of the political, religious and economic changes of the country under such leading monarchs as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

The work has been substantially revised and updated for this edition. In particular, the reigns of Henry VII, Edward VI, and Philip and Mary are comprehensively reassessed.

Danielle Reily says

I found this book very interesting. It went into details I hadn't heard before. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in Tudor England.

Helene Harrison says

Review - I wouldn't really recommend this book if you have an in-depth knowledge of the Tudors, as it is quite simplified in places. However, saying that, it would be excellent for those looking for an overview of the period i.e. students and those just developing an interest in the topic. John Guy has written countless books on the Tudors, so is probably the right person to do this introduction. I do think that it lacks in several places - the six wives of Henry VIII are barely given a page between them and Henry VII, Edward VI and Mary I are skimmed over. Elizabeth I seems to come to the forefront here.

General Subject/s? - History / Tudors

Recommend? – Maybe

Rating - 15/20

Nicola says

Really excellent little book which does what it says it will: introduces you to the Tudors. I especially liked the story of Bosworth on opening pages and the section on Mary. With scant knowledge of her reign, this proves a good starting point. More than burnings, pseudo-pregnancies and Calais.

I enjoyed the section on Bess (of course) and found it interesting to glean Guy's views here (of her losing her grip in the final decade). Especially liked his barbed description of Essex as "dazzling but paranoid". Looking forward to reading his new book soon.

Also looking forward to teaching rebellion and disorder to my year 13s and doubtless will refer to this in the course of that. Will be helpful for them.

Certainly this is easily decipherable if studying the Tudors in some detail. The general reader might be helped by a glossary. It implies some familiarity with 16th century monarchy, economics, culture and society.

Michael says

The idea behind this "brief insight series" is great--give readers a quick, intelligent hit on a big subject in a boiled-down textbook format. Unfortunately Guy is a dull, elliptical writer who seems bored with and dismissive of his subject. (With a curt wrist flick he dispenses with the Six Wives of Henry VIII, for example, by saying a lot has already been written on this.) He treats the rise and fall of Cromwell as little more than a box score.

Frustratingly several large charts eat up a lot of prose real estate where Guy could have injected life and content into what passes for a narrative.

And what do these charts tell you? That a lot of people died during the Black Death and England's population grew after it was over. Wow. I hear Brits also drink tea and it rains a bit there. They like their soccer, too.

The ludicrously entertaining series "The Tudors" drew me to this subject wanting to know the real story of Henry VIII beyond the college boy haircuts and rough sex scenes.

If anyone knows of a non-ponderous, non-tome of less than 12,000 pages on such subjects as Cromwell, Henry VIII's seizing of the monasteries, founding of the Church of England, the Reformation, etc.--do let me know.

Leah says

A romp through history...

The Very Short Introduction series from Oxford University Press began in 1995 and now lists more than 300 titles, according to this book's blurb. I've seen positive (and not so positive) reviews of several of the titles, but this is the first one I've read. I thought that starting with a subject I'm familiar with would give me an opportunity to see how well the book captures the essentials.

First off, the book is not only Very Short but also very small – with a very small font. So handy to carry in a pocket or bag, so long as you don't need to tote along your reading lamp and magnifying glass. However, it is well laid out and contains some illustrations to break up the text. The reading material in this one runs to 129 pages, plus a list of further reading, a chronology and an index. Handily it also has a genealogical table and a note explaining the value of currencies.

Written by John Guy, one of my favourite historians, I expected the history to be accurate and well-presented, and it is. It's roughly divided into a chapter per monarch (from Henry VII to Elizabeth I, who gets two in recognition of the length of her reign), with a couple of extra chapters on the Reformation and on Arts and Culture. You can tell from the scope that this must therefore be an exceedingly quick romp through the

period. It gives the basics, but not much more. I found it pretty unsatisfying in the early parts where I was most familiar with the history – up to about mid-way through Elizabeth’s reign. I felt the facts were there, but I didn’t get much feel for the personalities or the international picture. However, when we reached the latter part of Elizabeth’s reign, about which I knew very little, it seemed much more rewarding. So I concluded that the error was mine – I should probably have read one on a subject about which I know nothing to really find out how effective these little books are.

Overall, then, a decently presented little history, well-written by a respected historian, that will give the reader the basic facts, but doesn’t add anything new for the reader who may know a little about the subject. I may try another of these at some point in the future. They cover all kinds of topics other than history – philosophy, science, even literature - so it shouldn’t be too hard to find something I know nothing about!

NB This book was provided for review by Amazon Vine UK.

www.fictionfanblog.wordpress.com

Lauren Short says

While I appreciated the photographs and concept of including brief snippets of the Tudor reign, I found much of it hard to follow. After reading Alison Weir, I thought this would be a nice refresher, but Guy writes without contextualizing what he is referring to which left me feeling lost. Some of the context that we are given seems impulsive and unnecessary.

Gabrielle says

This brief, and almost concise book about the Tudors is a good introduction to their world. It covered the reign of Henry VIII to Elizabeth I, along with economic and political summaries of their rule. Of course Elizabeth I gets the spotlight in this book, covering brief economic, political, and the arts. How her rule changed the dynamics of the English throne. Even though the language in this book is not friendly, for me reading it felt like I was reading a textbook than like those pop-books like "Dummies" book series. It covered some of the gaps that I have not learned like the short reign of Mary Queen of Scots and the boy-king Edward, also it introduced me to how the parliament really worked before and during the reign of Elizabeth.

Overall this book is good if you have some knowledge of the said subject like I do. But if you are a history buff this might be a turn-off especially with the textbook feel of language and format.

todd says

I found this book via a reference in the Wall Street Journal at a time I was cruising through the trashy Showtime series, The Tudors, on Amazon Prime. It is a pretty succinct version of the political and social forces at work at the time and was actually a good complement to the surprisingly accurate TV series. The book could have benefited from a bit more sex and violence and the TV series might have been better with improved historical flow. But together they made an entertaining and informative package.

James says

A friend noted this was on sale for Kindle and I picked it up. It's a quick overview of the Tudor dynasty (Henry VII to Elizabeth I). Mostly my knowledge of these monarchs is through the lens of Church history. This is a secular historian's perspective, though much of the source material is the same (Guy is a little kinder to Mary, and I don't think I knew much of her husband Philip)

Adam Shields says

Short review: This is a middle of the pack book from the Very Short Introduction series. It avoids the biggest problem of talking about the scholarship and not the subject. Except for two chapters at the end that talk about the influence of the era on the arts, this is straight narrative history. Mostly focused on succession, war, taxes, and economics. The reformation is not talked about more than necessary (but the VSI book on the Reformation is good.)

My full review is on my blog at <http://bookwi.se/tudors/>
