

Jan 08 SUMMARY – A WELSH CHILDHOOD by Ellis

Well, we are off and running for 2008 with A Welsh Childhood to our credit. Our trusty group of Willie, Barb, Judi, Phyllis, Keith, and Curt in absentia, evaluated Ms. Ellis' childhood remembrances. Curt, our Maryland representative had suggested the book and he graciously sent notes, the obituary of the author and spoke with me for over an hour about the book. Hopefully, I conveyed his sentiments appropriately.

Curt explained that he had made several trips to Wales and wished he had read her book before his last visit. He told of his experiences on Mt. Snowden and compared his view to the photograph on page 123 saying it was how he remembered it. He also mentioned that like in Colorado, 90 minutes after he had been to the vista, he was in whiteout conditions on Mt. Snowden. Judie was another fan of the book and found it so intriguing; she read it in two nights and repeatedly enjoyed the photos and myths.

To be candid, the other reviewer's opinions leaned heavily on not enthusiastic with some not finishing the book. The general feeling was this author was hard to like and to appreciate her rhythm. Some members felt she spent too much time on myths and legends, and to be frank, myths that most of us had not experience with or interest in.

The black and white photos were an interesting touch. To some they appeared bleak, but others felt they really portrayed the simplicity and austerity of much of Wales.

Personally, within the first twenty pages, I was bored with her haranguing about the "tourist maggots" and how much her childhood home had changed. I was determined to get to the end and was rewarded because in the second part, Ellis finally got around to childhood reminiscences that I had expected. I found her story about shopping for a special outfit a way to connect with her. The discussion about the death of her child and raising children in the small stone house made me admire her fortitude if nothing else. Many readers never made it to the end of the book and missed some of her better stories.

I found that after reading her obituary and learning about her life and literary career, I had a better understanding of her as a person and while I was still not a raving fan of A Welsh Childhood, I could appreciate it.

The group discussed that when we travel we search for different things. Some people crave culture and crowds, other solitude and experiences with nature.

We all agreed that the benefit of the book club is to be introduced to literature that we otherwise might have missed or never heard about. True, we won't

always adore the book, but we appreciate the suggestion and the opportunity to explore another place on the globe.

Thank you for your interest and attention for the Travel Lovers Book Club!

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