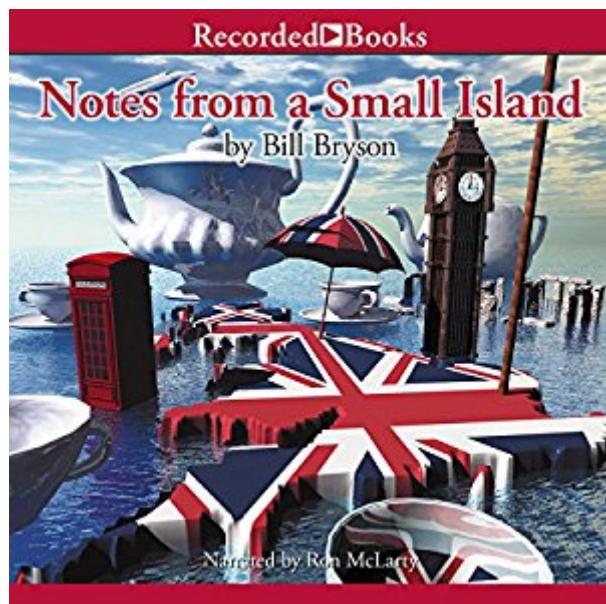


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Notes From A Small Island



Synopsis

Grab your umbrella and join best-selling author Bill Bryson for a grand tour through the heartland of the United Kingdom. As he wanders through tiny villages and bustling cities, his irreverent travelogue will keep you laughing out loud and eager to explore what lies just around the next corner. Before he returns to the United States after nearly two decades on British soil, Bryson decides to take a farewell jaunt through his adopted homeland. But his plans to neatly traverse the island by foot, bus, and train are soon thwarted. On weekends, odd train and bus schedules leave him stranded in isolated communities with damp, moldering inns. And as a destination beckons above the rooftops, a maze of city streets leads him further away. Amidst the difficulties, Bryson encounters quirky age-old customs, charming architecture, and salt-of-the-earth inhabitants. His uproarious social commentary and Ron McLarty's warm and witty performance will leave you feeling as if you have actually been travelling across the enchanting island.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've never been to England and this book won't inspire me to take a trip there. The book is very well written (the only reason I was able to finish reading it) but, Bill's intimate knowledge of the country sometimes left me standing on the outside looking in. I was often disappointed when Bill's description of a place was rendered as if the reader had some familiarity with the setting. Be prepared for pages of dreary, grey rain and lots of cold mucking about. Mr Bryson's wit and ability to poke gentle fun at an entire people, individuals and himself save this book.

As usual, Bill Bryson both educates and entertains as he moves through his travelogue. In this adventure he takes the reader to both familiar and unfamiliar parts of the British Isles, often seeking sites that he has read about but that few tourists would ever even know about. His narrative is sparked with his characteristic sense of humor, and he "paints" vivid pictures of both the country and the people he encounters. While I would not consider this his best work (My personal favorite is *In a Sunburned Country*), it is an enjoyable read.

A pleasant, slightly dated ramble through Britain, often on foot, with evocations of his first visit many years before, by an American who lived and worked in England for decades and who loves the place. Pleasant, well written, discursive, mildly funny, pretty pleasing. Mostly of interest, I would guess, to Brits and Anglophiles.

An engaging light-hearted travelogue about the less traveled areas of Great Britain. If you are an Anglophile, or if you have ever traveled to, or lived in the UK, you will enjoy reading this book about some of the cities, towns, villages, and places beyond the beaten track of most American tourists (i.e. London and environs). Bryson, an American journalist living in Great Britain, is the perfect travel guide; his experiences of living and working in the UK, and his rifts on British and American customs are quite entertaining and give the reader unique insights into the British way of doing things. If you are looking for an armchair vacation, this might be it.

This prolific author has produced yet another entertaining and absorbing book about his supposedly final look at England. Travelling briefly from one town to another, he gives a startlingly snap view of each place. Some are very good; others such as his comment on Cambridge, for example, suggest that he never actually explored this incredibly beautiful city beyond the bounds of his mediocre hotel. It must have been yet another rainy day. Henners

Actually, a previous reviewer sums up this book and author quite nicely - Mr. Bryson is much better with places than with people. That being said, I must say I have never laughed so hard while reading a book as I have with this particular publication; good thing I read it at home and not someplace public as people would have been giving me funny looks. I am going to be traveling to the UK soon and thought it would be nice to read someone else's thoughts and views about the country. So I logged onto and picked up this book, in which Mr. Bryson (an American who lived in Great Britain for 2 decades) details his travels via train, bus, and on foot through various portions of

the country. I appreciated the author's candidly hilarious experiences, thoughts and views, and almost poetic (well, sometimes more like a limerick than a poem - ahem) descriptions of the countryside, towns, buildings, and people. The only time I take issue with this book is during a few of his less-than-happy encounters with some of those people described, where Mr. Bryson occasionally comes off as being rather rude (ok, sometimes it felt justifiable - to me - as when he was up against an older couple who used him as their whipping post regarding their recent trip to the US). But I took issue with his treatment of a poor young man working at a McDonalds in Scotland who was simply doing his job and didn't deserve the fractious diatribe to which Mr. Bryson subjected this kid. Granted, the author was suffering an apparently large hangover, but even I wouldn't be so rude (well, I don't *think* I would, and I've had my own share of hangovers). Perhaps it's also because I used to work in the service industry and have myself dealt with less-than-cheerful customers who tended to blame the order-taker for a variety of ills. Nevertheless, I thoroughly enjoyed this book and do recommend it to anybody interested in reading about the beauty, vagaries (funny as well as sad), and small histories of a country as seen through the eyes and experiences of a non-Brit who loves this country whole-heartedly.

As one that was born and raised in England until my late 20's but have not lived there for the last 40+ years I found I enjoyed this as it took me places I have never been and made my smile when some of the British quirks as discussed, I remembered them and some places the book takes you very well. If you have no experience of the UK you will find this book gives you a true if somewhat quirky picture at least in my opinion well worth the read.

Glad I stuck with this book to the end - I did like it overall. But I didn't love it as much as some of Bryson's previous works. Got a little tired of his complaints about bad weather, bad food, and bad rooms, but luckily the last couple of chapters are more positive.

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