



# The Pursuit of History: Aims, methods and new directions in the study of history

By John Tosh

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This classic introduction to the study of history invites the reader to stand back and consider some of its most fundamental questions - what is the point of studying history? How do we know about the past? Does an objective historical truth exist and can we ever access it?

In answering these central questions, John Tosh argues that, despite the impression of fragmentation created by postmodernism in recent years, history is a coherent discipline which still bears the imprint of its nineteenth-century origins. Consistently clear-sighted, he provides a lively and compelling guide to a complex and sometimes controversial subject, while making his readers vividly aware of just how far our historical knowledge is conditioned by the character of the sources and the methods of the historians who work on them.

The sixth edition has been revised and updated with key new material including:

- a brand new chapter on public history
- sections on digitised sources and historical controversy
- discussion of topics including transnational history and the nature of the archive
- an expanded range of examples and case studies
- a comprehensive companion website providing valuable supporting material, study questions and a bank of primary sources.

Lucid and engaging, this edition retains all the user-friendly features that have helped to make this book a favourite with both students and lecturers, including marginal glosses, illustrations and suggestions for further reading. Along with its companion website, this is an essential guide to the theory and practice of history.

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*By John Tosh*

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Review

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"John Tosh's book is the most useful introduction to recent historiography now available. It surveys major trends and achievements more clearly and concisely than its main competitors, and is an excellent and easy resource for contextualising other historical writings of all kinds. It can add a great deal to students' understanding of historical writing."

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"The Pursuit of History has many strengths. It is extremely well-written and lucid. It strikes a very nice balance between tracing historiography, delineating historical methodology, and discussing the major historiographical developments over the last few decades. Comprehensive, insightful and conversant with the latest historiographical currents, it is essential reading in any undergraduate or graduate theory and method course."

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"John Tosh's *Pursuit of History* was so far ahead of the game on its first publication that much of the profession are only just now catching up with his wonderfully diverse and pluralistic approach to the study of the past. This new edition promises to equip and inspire the next generations of historians once again very much for the better."

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"Tosh's *Pursuit of History*, in its newest edition, remains the definitive introduction to historical criticism and historiography. Well-structured, up-to-date, highly readable and drawing on a wealth of fascinating illustrative material from the author's own research, it stands out as the best text combining fundamental method with key theoretical approaches and research trends."

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