

The group's views on this book - effectively a history of Hungary rather than Budapest per se - were strikingly mixed. Some loved it, others found it disappointing and difficult to read, while the remainder found it good in parts. Nevertheless, there was general agreement on two issues. On a positive note, we all learned something new, for example the key role of Scottish and English engineers in building the first permanent bridge that linked Buda and Pest. On a negative note, we felt that lack of discussion on recent Hungarian politics, particularly the role of Victor Orban, was a major, puzzling, gap. It would have been interesting to hear discussion of how current politics fits in the context of a national history punctuated by right wing extremism.

'How to Hide an Empire', by Daniel Immerwahr