BOOK REVIEWS


Visitors to various churches in south-west Surrey have reason to be grateful for detailed, well-researched guides written by Alan Bott. Godalming, where he was Churchwarden and is now Churchwarden Emeritus, was the first, originally appearing in 1978. He has revised and expanded this guide on successive occasions since then and he has now produced a fourth edition, significantly more than twice the size of its already detailed predecessor of 1997 and containing much new research. Indeed, it might be considered as much a monograph as a guide, with footnotes, ten appendices, a glossary, and an index.

Godalming church is not only among the grandest in Surrey, but is also a complex building, the story of which Mr Bott unravels and explains very effectively. The introductory chapter places the church in its broad context, in terms of the geography and history of the area, the ecclesiastical history of the parish, the architectural background to the styles encountered in the building, and the growth of the town of Godalming.

A substantial chapter follows on the development of the church building. The medieval sections elucidate many features that might confuse, or perhaps even be missed by, the casual visitor. Often these are parts of the building that have been superseded by later changes and have only been revealed in more recent centuries, but they come together to show how each medieval century has contributed to the structure. Significantly more space is devoted to the post-medieval centuries than to the medieval. This is not often the case in church guides, but here it is entirely appropriate, not only because so much change has occurred to the fabric, but because the motivation behind the changes can be better explored and understood. The 19th century enlargements and restorations are particularly well described as the demands of increasing accommodation and changes in liturgical taste were addressed – two aspects of the Victorians’ treatment of older churches that were not always easily compatible.

By the 1860s, work carried out less than 30 years earlier was rejected and despised, leading to the involvement of Sir Gilbert Scott with the co-operation of Ralph Nevill, in subsequent alterations. This period is particularly well documented, thanks largely to the survival of correspondence between the vicar and the architect, of which Mr Bott makes good use. Scott’s church restorations have often been criticised for being unnecessarily severe, but the major changes at Godalming – the replacement of the west tower arch and the widening of the nave aisles – were necessitated by the desire of the parish to connect the choir to the congregation and to remove the nave galleries rather than of any wilful action by Scott. Indeed, Scott’s response to the vicar’s query as to whether the tower could be moved was polite but firm; such a change would, he suggested, ruin the dignity and historical character of the church. We may well have Scott to thank that the tower with its fine lead-covered spire roof survived the 19th century to be admired today, but the work carried out on the spire in the 1980s, described by Mr Bott in an appendix, was also essential in ensuring its future longevity.

The other substantial chapter is on the furnishings and other items in the church, which inevitably has something of the character of a catalogue. Among the highlights are the Anglo-Saxon carved stones, now thought to be part of a 9th century font stand, various fragments of medieval wall painting, and the 16th century roof bosses. In a detailed survey of the monuments, both inside and outside the building, Mr Bott admits that as a collection they do not match the grandeur of the building itself, but many have interesting tales to tell, and they are well recorded here.
The guide is lavishly illustrated. A particular strength is the reproduction of many drawings and watercolours from the later 18th century onwards, as well as many Victorian photographs showing successive changes and losses.

If there is a quibble, it must concern aspects of the layout. Sometimes it is difficult to see where the divisions between text and captions lie. This is made visually more difficult by the use of italics for both captions and quotations in the text, with the latter especially helpful when following the 19th century correspondence on restorations. One is also sometimes left hunting for explanations of illustrations, particularly when several are covered by a single caption and are spread over more than one page.

However, any criticism is minor compared with the depth and breadth of research and the author’s clear affection and enthusiasm for the church. This is a volume that will certainly find a place in the collections of those with a serious interest in Surrey churches. To do it justice, more than one visit to Godalming church will be required.

PETER BALMER


Peper Harow church suffered 80% damage when a fire broke out late on Christmas Eve 2007. The tower was gutted, the nave roof, organ and most of the stained glass were destroyed, and at the east end the chancel and Midleton chapel suffered heat, smoke and water damage. One month before the fire Alan Bott had published his guide to Peper Harow and Shackleford churches, and in the present booklet he recounts the process of restoration carried out in the following years. Initial decisions needed to be made as to whether to reinstate the fabric exactly, leave the site as a ruin or, as the parishioners decided, execute a compromise proposal that would combine a large measure of reinstatement with some work to fit the building for modern requirements.

The text is clear, and much of the story is told by the author’s photographs of the church before the fire, the immediate aftermath, and the restored church, including its new organ, frontals, bell and two sweet stained glass roundels. There is also a helpful plan.

This is an attractive booklet and a valuable record of a key period in the life of the church. Many of our churches are now experiencing substantial alteration, although not under such distressing circumstances, and similar contemporary accounts of the changes they are undergoing would be welcomed by future historians. If only such accounts had been prepared when churches underwent Victorian restoration!

DAVID ROBINSON


The Upper Palaeolithic of lowland Britain remains one of the most challenging and fascinating periods to study. It is easily characterised as small groups of hunters following migrating reindeer herds across frozen tundra; the reality is likely to have been a diverse range of subsistence, social and symbolic activities in a landscape enthused with memory
and myth. Trying to grasp that likely reality from the evidence is enormously challenging if not simply impossible with regard to the social and ideological aspects of behaviour. So much weighs against this; the sparse evidence that Upper Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers left behind; the millennia of burial, decay and bioturbation; disturbance by later prehistoric, historic and recent human activity; the sheer difficulty of finding such sites without causing further destruction to their fragile deposits. Once the material has been recovered, there are the myriad challenges of quite how to interpret scatters of chipped stone artefacts, heavily fragmented animal bones and amorphous hollows that might, or might not, be man-made.

All of these challenges are illustrated by Phil Jones’ report on the excavation of two Upper Palaeolithic sites in the vicinity of Staines and Weybridge, both having been discovered by Surrey County Archaeology Unit. The first, Wey Manor Farm, is a Creswellian site dating to c 12,000 cal BC and consists of c 400 flint artefacts that have been piece-plotted and subject to microwear and re-fitting analysis. The second is Church Lammas, which has two clusters of flint and animal bone fragments most likely dating to c 10,000 cal BC or very soon afterwards. It is a superb volume, well written, structured and illustrated. It takes the interpretation of the evidence as far as it can reasonably go, although perhaps inevitably concluding that both sites most likely derive from small groups of hunters following reindeer across frozen tundra.

The volume begins by useful reflections on the difficulty of locating and identifying Upper Palaeolithic sites within contract archaeology. Trial-trenching, test-pitting or stripping are not ideal, while the methods used within university-based research projects, such as systemic coring, are too costly for units to adopt. The artefact scatter at Wey Manor Farm had a lucky escape, with its long, curved blades ‘pinging’ off the metal bucket of the machine that was stripping the site; Church Lammas was less fortunate with a significant part of the site destroyed before its valuable Upper Palaeolithic remains were identified.

Both sites are of considerable academic significance and well served by the quality of this report. Wey Manor Farm is only the second Creswellian open-air site known in Britain without admixture from later periods and the only one to have received a controlled excavation. It has an assemblage of 371 struck flints concentrated in a c 4m² cluster, some of which have been re-fitted and/or have wear traces indicating the working of antler (or hardwood) fresh and dry hide by piercing, scraping and cutting. Six artefacts have impact damage, suggesting use as spear or projectile points. Optically stimulated luminescence dating confirmed the typological and technological indications that the site dated to what we call the Creswellian in Britain, which is part of the extensive Late Magdalenian cultural complex of north-west Europe. Typological details of the assemblage suggest that it might be quite late in this period, perhaps 12,000 BP.

Those making and using the artefacts had sat on a terrace above what would become the river Wey, looking out across the floodplain and close to a crossing point of the river. The low density and spatial patterning of the artefacts suggest that they derive from a single activity event, perhaps lasting no more than a few hours of possibly not more than four individuals engaging in butchery, re-tooling in the vicinity of a small hearth. If the results of the Laser Ablation-Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometric sourcing of flint are reliable, this group had once been to the west, in the vicinity of Salisbury Plain, where they collected raw materials.

The artefact scatters at Church Lammas are in a landscape disturbed by later prehistoric and historic activity and are likely to be palimpsests from multiple activity events; the excavators quite appropriately chose not to undertake the piece-planning treatment as used at Wey Manor Farm. The first, Scatter 1, is technological and typologically near identical to the far better preserved site of Three Ways Wharf, Uxbridge (Lewis & Rackham 2011) located c 13km to the north and falls into the Long Blade industry, known to span between 10,300 and 9700 cal BP. Scatter 2 is more problematic, having both Late Glacial and Mesolithic-like elements, but being attributed to the former on the basis of a probable association
with fragmented reindeer bones. However, Holocene fauna elsewhere at the site suggests Mesolithic activity and hence this assemblage might well be a palimpsest.

In addition to the artefacts scatters, Church Lammas provided a number of hollows, the smaller ones most likely tree-throws but the larger possibly man-made. One (Hollow 2) has sediments for which an early Holocene vegetation succession was derived by palynology; another (Hollow 1) contains the bone fragments of aurochs, red deer and possibly elk, suggesting Mesolithic activity although no butchery marks could be identified.

The striking similarity between the artefacts of Scatter 1 and those at Three Ways Wharf leads Jones to suggest that they might actually derive from the same group of hunters, winding their way along the Colne Valley c. 10,000 years ago in search of reindeer and other game. This can only be verified by identifying some especially idiosyncratic features of tool-making at both sites that could only derive from the same individual. Even if the two sites are several centuries apart in time they contribute to the reconstruction of an enduring pattern of Upper Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer life, and raise the possibility of a hunter-gatherer landscape archaeology if more sites and their environmental settings could be identified within the region.

They would have to be found in the areas that have not been destroyed by recent gravel working and the constant migrating of the river channels within the Colne Valley throughout the Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene. Their chances of discovery are slim unless survey methods specifically geared to discovering such artefact scatters can be adopted. We should remain hopeful because the Upper Palaeolithic represents an important and enthralling phase of lowland Britain. Moreover, as illustrated by this volume and that regarding Three Ways Wharf, the quality of the excavation, analysis and reporting is outstanding.

Jones and his colleagues not only provide a very clear excavation and artefact report, but also embed their results in the Upper Palaeolithic archaeology of north-west Europe, finding the site of Verberie in the Paris Basin to be the closest parallel to Wey Manor Farm. We can speculate about various social and symbolic activities that may have occurred within the ice age landscape of the Wey and Colne river valleys. Nevertheless, the current evidence for short-term camps by hunters primarily tracking reindeer is exciting enough for me: it provides us with fascinating moments in the life of some especially elusive prehistoric forebears.

STEVEN MITHEN

Reference
Lewis, J S C, & Rackham, J, 2011 Three Ways Wharf, Uxbridge: a Late Glacial and Early Holocene hunter-gatherer site in the Colne Valley, MOLA Monogr, 51


The results of excavations by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) in 2005 of intensive and extensive Mesolithic occupation in a 1.1ha valley head depression on Folkestone sands at Bletchingley have now come to fruition in this volume. Following much publicity at the time of the excavations, which included areas of community and volunteer involvement (SyAS Bullets 384, 386–8, 390–1) and leading to the successful events of Stone Age Summer at the Surrey History Centre in 2006 (SyAS Bullets 394–7), this book has been eagerly awaited.

This is the eighth monograph from SpoilHeap Publications, a joint venture between Archaeology South-East (part of University College, London) and Surrey County
Archaeological Unit (part of Surrey County Council) intended ‘to provide a publication outlet for the results of archaeological excavations and research from across south-east England’. Published with the aid of a grant from English Heritage, this is a lavish production, packed with information and greatly enhanced by excellent graphics, mostly in colour and including three fold-out plans, largely credited to Giles Pattison who, together with Nick Marples, presented the fine photographs of flintwork. Rob Poulton, as editor, should be congratulated for bringing together all the facets that make up this monograph together with Phil Jones for his authorship.

The report begins with an introduction that covers fieldwork prior to the excavations, the objectives of the programme of work in 2005, and a note of other excavations and Mesolithic discoveries in the quarry. This is followed by the topographical and geological background of the site, and a detailed report on the 2005 excavations of twelve selected areas of the Mesolithic levels in the valley head depression. Then come the specialist reports: the geoarchaeological investigations (C Green, L Farr, N Branch, P Jones and R Kemp); lithic microwear analysis (R Donahue and A Evans); macrobotanical analysis (L Farr); optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating (N Branch, J Stallard and R Bailey); and scientific dating (radiocarbon, OSL and thermoluminescence) (P Marshall, A Bayliss, C Bronk Ramsey, G Cook, P Toms and R Bailey).

The principal specialist account, and the heart of the book, is the excellent flint report by Nick Marples. The many thousands of flints excavated from the twelve selected areas are assessed with particular regard to the key aspects of the flintwork – context, relationship with the twelve identifiable hearths and a ‘firepit’, task-specific activities and dating by microlith typology and somewhat loosely associated radiocarbon determinations. Of around 1000 microliths excavated Marples has chosen to illustrate only 29 as representatives of those types to be found in the classifications of Clark (1933) and Jacobi (1978). While of course this method does not demonstrate the nuances of shape and size of microliths, it is perhaps a wise way of dealing with the huge numbers involved. Marples also makes a further departure from conventional means of describing and illustrating Mesolithic flintwork. He has done this with many pages of superb photographs of typical Mesolithic artefacts from the excavations. These range from the larger pieces such as core tools, picks, axes, adzes and their sharpening flakes to smaller pieces such as scrapers, truncated blades, piercers, burins and notched, denticulated and serrated flakes. Also photographed are many examples of general debitage that would be found on any Mesolithic site – flakes and bladelets, microburins, cores and core dressings, etc. Even tiny chips have been included. For anyone who wishes to be introduced to the Mesolithic period and has no immediate access to its flintwork, this is the nearest approach to the real thing.

This book is of course an excavation report together with specialist reports relating to geology, plant species, scientific dating and struck flint/usewear analyses. There is therefore much here for those whose main interests lie in these aspects of archaeology, but in view of the great interest arising from the aforementioned publicity a more general readership might be expected. This is arguably well catered for with ‘results’ and ‘conclusions’ after each specialist report, while the final eleven pages of the book bring everything together in a discussion chapter by Phil Jones and Nick Marples. In short, the valley head depression appeared to have its origin way back in the Pleistocene, and subsequently filled with sand intermittently until the Mesolithic and beyond. Microlith typology indicates that visits began in the Early Mesolithic, perhaps in the 9th millennium cal BC, and continued via the ‘Horsham’ industry of the earlier 8th millennium cal BC and the Later Mesolithic to c 4000 cal BC. However, of the thirteen radiocarbon dates obtained pertaining to the Mesolithic, twelve lie within the period 7480–6240 cal BC. While not specifically remarked upon, this time span more or less coincides with the earlier part of the Later Mesolithic in south-east England and is characterised by microlith collections of variable counts of straight-backed pieces and scalene microtriangles. A feature of all the twelve excavated areas is the dominance of straight-backed microliths, and this could suggest that the floruit of Mesolithic occupation in the valley...
lay within this period. The novel microliths that appeared in the South East after c 6240 cal BC, apparently at the expense of straight-backed pieces, are also represented. Comprising lanceolates, convex-backed and four-sided pieces, microcrescents, microequilateral triangles and tanged and shouldered points, these all occur in relatively small numbers, an implication perhaps of diminished occupation of the valley in the latest part of the Mesolithic. Whether true or not, the visits throughout the Mesolithic are estimated, from extrapolation of the total flints excavated, to have left over a million pieces and at least 17,000 microliths as a ‘near continuous mantle of struck Mesolithic flints’ across the depression.

It is the intensive use of the valley and its environs throughout the Mesolithic that leads Jones to describe the area as a ‘persistent place’, a term that he ascribes to other long-occupied sites in Surrey. The reasons given for such longevity appear to centre on the availability of flint, springs and particularly the siting of some, including North Park Farm, at headwater areas of two different river systems (meeting places). Whatever the reasons they were obviously good places to be. However, this persistency resulted in a rather disappointing outcome of the excavations, as summed up in the conclusion paragraph at the end of the volume. The intensive use of the site over five millennia precluded perception of any single visit among the overwhelming quantity of flint debitage. Single visits are of the greatest importance in Mesolithic studies because their microlithic component and associated radiocarbon dates will assist in the consolidation of a Mesolithic chronology, which at present is far from secure.

While this book is highly commended, there are a number of unfortunate errors that mar an otherwise very good report, for instance ‘Palustrina’ for Paludina limestone (pp115–16) and ‘late 8th century cal BC’ for late 8th millennium cal BC (p 110). These might be regarded as quibbles, but less forgivable are mistakes on the geology and location maps on the very first page: the legend for chalk is missing, while Bletchingley is rather disconcertingly placed deep in the Weald somewhere near Horsham. Readers wishing to follow up the references will be presented with a number of difficulties: at least ten cited authors are not listed in the bibliography and some are clearly wrong. Criticisms and disappointments apart, all those involved in the excavations, fieldwork and the compilation of this report should be congratulated, not least for increasing the profile of Mesolithic studies in Surrey.

ROGER ELLABY

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When Shaan Butters’ The Book of Kingston appeared in 1995 it was the first serious modern history of Kingston upon Thames. It challenged the myths that have beset the history of Kingston from Caesar’s Thames crossing in 54 BC to the town’s alleged rejection of the railway in the 1830s. Its only significant defects were its brevity and the lack of notes, both the result of the publisher’s commission. That Famous Place is double the length, with 569 pages and weighing 3 lbs, and enhanced by more than 1800 notes, most of them providing detailed references but some examining evidential points that could not readily be addressed.
in the text. It is well produced with clear type and good layout, and with illustrations, other than the sixteen pages of colour plates, distributed throughout the book. The flexible binding appears to be sufficiently robust to withstand the heavy use that the book will receive over many years at home and in libraries.

The early history of Kingston is difficult to present coherently. Evidence of scattered settlement in the area, without anything we might call a village, let alone a town, predominates until the 12th century, and into this period erupts the documentary and chronicle evidence of Ecgberht’s Great Council of 838 and the 10th century coronations. Dr Butters handles this well. In her first two chapters she describes the archaeological evidence from the Palaeolithic to the end of the Roman period before the chapter that many readers will turn to first, in which she assesses the evidence for the coronations and the ‘coronation stone’, and then the Saxon settlements, the Great Council, and ecclesiastical buildings on or near the site of the medieval parish church and St Mary’s chapel. For the coronations she first examines the antiquarian tradition and then the historical evidence. Her conclusions are cautious, but what is important is the scrupulous presentation of the evidence, both in text and notes. One possibility that is not mentioned is that expressed by Heather Edwards and, more cautiously, Janet Nelson, in their articles on Ecgberht and Æthelwulf, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, suggesting that Æthelwulf may have been anointed as king at the 838 Council. Dr Butters’ discussion of the coronation stone is meticulous and well judged.

From the 12th century there is a coherent story of a riverside town, which remains small until the 19th century and then grows quite swiftly, although without the explosive growth found in the main manufacturing centres. Three chapters cover the period from Kingston’s urban origins, confirmed by the first charter granted in 1200, to the eve of the Reformation and Tudor expansion, and marked by the development of trade, communications and self-government. The rare occasions on which the town figured on the national scene are described, notably when its Thames bridge was key to military manoeuvres at times of civil strife, but the concomitant myths of ‘King John’s Palace’, ‘Gilbert of Clare’s castle’ and ‘Warwick’s castle’ are examined and found wanting. The dominant trades of the town are discussed, although it would have been nice to have quoted the wide range of traders who appear in 15th century court records and include 23 ‘common tranter’ (retailers of beer, four of whom were women), three ‘barbitonsores’ and a parchment maker who was also a gluemaker.

Chapters 7–9 cover the Reformation and religious divisions and the 16th and 17th century economy. In about 1540 John Leland described Kingston as ‘the best market town of all Surrey’ and it is from this period of the ‘Great Rebuilding’ that secular buildings begin to survive in central Kingston. Religious history is handled particularly well, a description of late medieval worship based on the early 16th century churchwardens’ accounts leading naturally into the effects of religious change. The townspeople appear to have been initially conservative, but after the lapse of a generation some of them actively endorsed a militant Puritan preacher. By the middle of the 17th century the town was deeply divided and the Corporation became the battleground for rival religious and political factions. After the final excitement of the 1680s when the Borough charter was revoked and then restored, we enter into a period of steady but slow growth, ‘The Peaceful Era’ of the long 18th century, which in Kingston extended to 1838 when the railway arrived at Surbiton.

From the Victorian age onwards the quantity of evidence is immense, challenging any author’s powers of selection and narrative. Dr Butters divides the Victorian period among three chapters. ‘A Town Transformed: 1838–1900’ covers population growth and the creation of the new communities of Surbiton and New Malden, communications – notably the railway – and business, in particular the slow decline of Kingston’s traditional industries of malting and brewing and its emergence as a major centre for shopping. Dr Butters has made the conscious decision largely to omit Surbiton and New Malden thereafter from her narrative until they were incorporated with Kingston in the newly-established London
Borough in 1965. ‘Apathy and Improvement’ traces the response of Kingston’s reformed municipal corporation to challenges primarily related in one way or another to public health, in particular the long-running struggle to make arrangements for disposal of the town’s sewage that would be acceptable to townspeople and the government. ‘The Pursuit of Virtue in Victorian Kingston’ takes in churches, schools, libraries and centres of self-improvement, and entertainment and leisure. Finally, the 20th century and the opening of the present century are covered in four chronological chapters: ‘A Change of Identity: c 1900–39’; ‘Civil Defence and Secrets: 1939–45’; ‘Planning a “Brave New World”: 1945–80’; and ‘Modern Times: 1980–2013’. The treatment in the seven chapters covering 1838–2013 is encyclopaedic, covering the foundation and, where relevant, demise of almost every Kingston institution, from hospitals to swimming baths and the main stores and manufacturers. In addition to building up a picture of change in a pointillist style, this will be invaluable to Kingston residents trying to remember just when a particular cinema was opened and later closed to become a bingo hall, or what existed on a site before it was cleared for development.

There is a price for this approach. The narrative thread tends to get lost in the detail. One reason for this is the use of large bold type for sub-headings, of which there are often two and sometimes three to a page. Also, no space is available for comparisons with other towns. When, for example, reductions in the death rate or the rate of infant mortality are quoted there is no indication of how they compare with those of similar places elsewhere. There is in fact a general lack of statistics: to some extent in the 19th century and certainly by the 20th century occupational and other information for the town is available in the published censuses. The intense focus on Kingston is recognisable in other ways. Alderman Finny is given sole credit for the façade of Boots the Chemist in the Market Place with its wealth of historical references, but this was a feature of the firm’s design policy in the early 1900s and similar ‘black and white’ façades with local historical themes can be found from York to Exeter. There is also no space to exemplify the conflicts of small-town life and government in the Victorian age, such as almost any copy of the *Surrey Comet* recounted in great detail. When the newspaper is quoted it is usually making a blandly approving comment on a new development or a town worthy. It would have been good if the ability to analyse and present conflicting evidence that marks the early chapters could have been given space to operate in these later ones.

The reviewer has the luxury of being able to draw attention to omissions without being bound to indicate which parts of the text ought to be omitted to make way for their insertion, and with so lengthy a book there can be no question of simply asking for more. It also needs to be recognised that an author covering so broad a canvas is inevitably dependent on published research. Many important aspects of Kingston’s history, including the Victorian and modern periods, have not been studied in detail and a remarkable amount of *That Famous Place* is based directly on Dr Butters’ own archival research. There are only two specific omissions that seem to me regrettable. The first is the absence of Kingston residents and their homes. The Back Lanes, north of the Horsefair, which were cleared in the 1890s were described at the time as ‘the dumping ground for all the disreputable characters in the neighbourhood’. Were they from Kingston or had they moved from London, from other parts of England, or from Scotland, Ireland or Wales? It would have been possible from the census enumerators’ books, without undertaking extensive research, to give an indication of their origins. More generally, by the outbreak of the First World War almost the whole area north of the railway line and east and south of the Fairfield was covered in terrace, semi-detached and detached houses, most of which survive to the present day, but there are no photographs or indication of who their developers were or who first moved into them. In contrast, council housing, both inter-war and post-war, is well covered. The other omission, striking in a history that comes up to the present, is the recent explosion of the ‘night time economy’. The incursion of young men and women on Friday and Saturday nights into the pubs and nightclubs, the streets and riverside of central Kingston is significant for the town’s economy and employment but has posed a major challenge requiring close co-operation
between the local authority, town centre management, police and (in the form of Street 
Pastors) churches, and deserves a place in this history.

The author of the history of a town has a difficult task. The expectations and requirements 
of local readers are significantly different from those of the non-local urban historian. The 
primary readership for *That Famous Place* will be the people of Kingston, and this is recognised 
in the author’s brief but clear descriptions of technicalities and provision of context in the 
earlier chapters. It is also recognised in her willingness, for example, to devote a page to 
the highwayman Jerry Abershaw, who might at most rate a passing reference in a work 
aimed primarily at an audience of urban historians, in the detailed coverage of the World 
Wars, and in the regular identifications of the sites of buildings and institutions mentioned 
in the text, often referring to their current uses. It is also valuable for local readers to be 
reminded of the extent to which Kingston’s early history relies on numerous archaeological 
investigations, most of them dependent on requirements placed on developers over the past 
half-century. The urban historian will nonetheless find an abundance of relevant material 
for comparative study. Most importantly, both classes of readers can enjoy, for the first time, 
a detailed, reliable and fully referenced history of Kingston. It is a remarkable achievement.

DAVID ROBINSON