

David Elder, *Gloucester: unique images from the archives of Historic England* (Stroud, Amberley Publishing 2018). 96pp., 160 ill. Card covers, £14.99 [ISBN: 9781445683324].

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Gloucester is the most recent in a series that already includes Bristol and will in future feature Cheltenham. This is not the usual 'Then & Now' type book but a collection of photographs from the Historic England collections, supplemented with a number by the author. Each image has a short piece of descriptive text, though not all say when the picture was taken. As might be expected, they are mainly black & white images though there are a 19 in colour, mainly of city pubs, by the author. Some of the pictures, which date to the late 19th century, will be very well known to readers from other publications but there are a significant number that are 'new' including a number from the Aerofilms Collection. Also included are one of Sharpness Docks and nice rural shot of one of the canal bridges.

Following a short introduction there is a nod to Roman Gloucester; a close-up of the bronze statue of Nerva in Southgate Street and two small images of drawings from the 1930s excavations at 36/38 St Aldate Street. The book is then subdivided under a series of headings; the Cathedral, places of worship, public buildings, entertainment & leisure, the prison, the docks and commerce & industry; of which the first and last are the longest sections.

Obviously there are points that one picks up on. For instance, a number of the photographs are effectively duplicated. For instance, in the Cathedral those used to illustrate the transept arch and the crossing [19] and there are five long views along the cloisters; including one labelled 'film sets' [16]. The picture captioned The Mariners' Chapel in the section on places of worship [37] is of a banner inside the church; to see what the building looks like the reader must turn to the redevelopment of the docks [69]. More could have been made of the section on public buildings which is disposed of with five pictures. Entertainment & leisure is mainly devoted to pictures of the Park but does include one unidentified Gloucester rugby player of past times [47], and Alney Island from the air showing the extent of the floods in the early months of 1947 [49]. Industry & commerce is one of the longest sections including well known factories, the railways, early service industries and retail outlets. The agricultural show on Oxlease in 1932 [76] was the Three Counties not the Royal as implied by the caption, while the building in the background of the gas holder in Horton Road [76] was first of the city's mental hospitals not the city general hospital. The lay-out within each category does tend to 'jump around' and this is well illustrated in this section where an aerial view of Kings Square in 1932 [91] and the classic 1891 picture of Oxboode Lane [92] are sandwiched between aerial views of the GAC works at Brockworth and photographs of the Walls' factory at Barnwood under construction.

There will be readers who, like this reviewer, will feel that such-and-such a building could/should have been included but given the various constraints of this type of book it does provide an interesting overview of some features of the city in the past.

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