



London's Blue Plaques in a Nutshell: Blue Plaque Story & Theatrical Plaques (Volume 1)

Bill McCann

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London's Blue Plaques in fewer than 170 characters – including spaces! Never has a nutshell been bursting with such wisdom, humanity, dreams realised, and dreams dashed. The heart of London's Blue Plaques in a Nutshell lies in the aphorism – a short, pithy summing up of essential facts. The life and achievements of the subject of each plaque is summarised in a number of aphorisms, none of which contains more than 170 characters. Crammed into this nutshell you will find the character, achievements, peccadilloes and humanity of the great and good (and the not so great and not so good) who once lived and thrived in the great metropolis that is London. The Blue Plaques have now become part of the tradition of London, but a very special part. They are an adventure. They can be a planned adventure or a rollercoaster of discovery where the shades of London's past are waiting around practically every corner of the metropolis to delight and inform you. Part of the delight in walking the streets of London is the discovery of a Plaque on a house where someone famous once lived, and the sudden realisation that you are sharing a little bit of what was their daily view of the world. Less of a delight is the discovery of a plaque to someone whose name you are vaguely familiar with, but about whose life or achievements you can recall very little, or even nothing at all. Then there is the discovery of someone of whom you have never heard but who is tantalisingly briefly described on plaque itself. Experiences such as these provide stimuli to discover more, but very often, by the time we get home and have been distracted by other things, the stimulus has lost much of its power. Even if we make the effort to go to a library, or search the internet, there is no guarantee that we will find all the relevant, or most interesting, information. This is where Blue Plaques in a Nutshell comes in. This book is aimed at the habitué of London who walks the streets in fine weather or who sits on the top deck of a London bus on a rainy day, and at the tourist who tries to cram as much of London as possible into a short visit. It is designed to provide the essential information about each blue plaque instantly. Indeed it does more than that. For the armchair traveller or historical explorer, it provides a handy and ready source of information on the doings and undoings of the almost 900 residents of London who have made significant contributions to the historical, cultural, scientific and economic development of the western world over the past six centuries. Now revised updated in a series of lavishly illustrated individual volumes, the new edition includes all map and GPS coordinates to allow the modern traveller to precisely locate each plaque. Volume 1 is right up to date and summarises the history of the Blue Plaques themselves and presents unique portraits of the 50 actors, actresses, playwrights and theatre managers who have been honoured with a Blue Plaque between 1881 and 2014.

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