



1902 Sainsburys on South Street

Architecture

Romford has a fascinating architectural history. Although many older buildings have disappeared from Romford's constantly changing urban landscape, there are many registered buildings of local heritage interest still standing - such as the 1930s classical red-brick buildings on the crossroads of South Street and North Street, part of Romford's large Conservation Area.

Look down South Street and you can see registered buildings dating from the 1930s, a period characterised by Art-Deco style architecture. The key example of Art-Deco architecture is the 'L-shaped' Quadrant Arcade opened in 1935. It was built by William Goodchild, who grew up in Romford, and promised a modern shopping experience and new employment opportunities for the local community. It was even used as headquarters for Romford Air Training Corps during the Second World War!



Thank you to the Romford Shopping Centres for use of their archive imagery.

Developing The Town

The area around the Market has changed a lot since 1850, when John Laurie commissioned the building of the "middle-class" Laurie Town which contained 8 villas and several homes. Situated at the end of the Market, Laurie Hall was the most important building of the town. Once a court house, it soon became a venue for Victorian entertainment. Its literary institute once hosted Charles Dickens! In 1913, it became the Laurie Cinema, showing the first of the 'talking pictures'. But within the space of 20 years Laurie Town, and it's once famed hall had been demolished to make way for new twentieth century developments. The ring road was developed between 1965 and 1970 to ease the heavy traffic passing through Romford's town centre. This transformed South Street into Romford's main thoroughfare, allowed for pedestrianisation, and ensured Romford would continue as a commercial centre - which has been further enshrined by the building of The Liberty shopping centre in 1968, the Dolphin swimming baths in the 1980s, and the Mercury (The Liberty 2) in 1990.

LIBERTY ROMFORD
Romford's Brightest
Shopping & Leisure Complex

RATNERS • TONI & GUY • ATHENA • CLINTON CARDS • LENS CRAFTERS • PHONE IN • OPTIONAL EXTRAS • LLOYDS SUPERSAVE
 HALL OF CARDS • SPOILS KITCHEN REJECT • ZOO FASHION • INTERSPORT • SAINSBURYS • HOGG ROBINSON TRAVEL
 ZUGI FASHION • POWERPOINT • OAKLAND • McDONALDS • GREENFIELDS FAMILY RESTAURANT • BONUSPRINT
 ORIGINAL ART • ODEON CINEMAS • RITZY DISCOTHEQUE • TOP RANK CLUB • A1 MINICABS • GAME • SHOECARE • EXTRA

THE MANAGEMENT SUITE, LIBERTY 2 SHOPPING CENTRE, MERCURY GARDENS, ROMFORD, RM1 3EE, TELEPHONE: 0708 733620

ROMFORD

EST. 1247

MASH

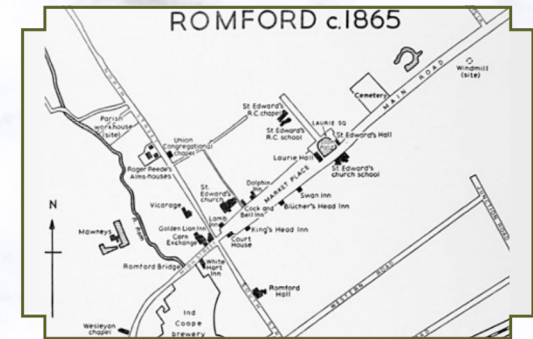


Heritage Tour Guide

Romford Roots

When you think of Romford, shops, pubs, and, of course, its 775-year-old market come to mind. Lesser known is Romford's long and varied history. 'Romford', believed to mean 'wide' ford, was first recorded in 1153-4, but people had been living in the area for centuries. Both the Iron Age Trinovantes tribe and the later Roman encampment of Durolitum are believed to have been in the Romford area. However, the Romford we recognise today developed in the Middle Ages around its successful market, acting as a resting place and later coaching stop for the main Colchester-London Road. By 1687, Romford was a post town, and troops passed through here during the English Civil War. Both Elizabeth I and actor William Kempe have also passed through Romford - Kempe for a two-day break on his Morris dance from London to Norwich in 1600.

Romford's history is one of change. From the granting of market status in 1247, to the introduction of the railroad in 1839 and the development of the ring road in the late 1960s, Romford has taken on many forms. But its identity as a thriving market town has endured. As Havering became part of Greater London in 1965, Romford now embraces a dual heritage as an Essex country town and part of London's East End. Although the market ceased selling cattle in 1958, Romford as a commercial centre has only gone from strength to strength.



Romford's long and exciting history of development is often overlooked by its visitors and residents. From its pubs, to shops, to famous faces and bustling market, Romford truly has history bursting from its streets!



Romford Market with livestock

A Historic Market Town

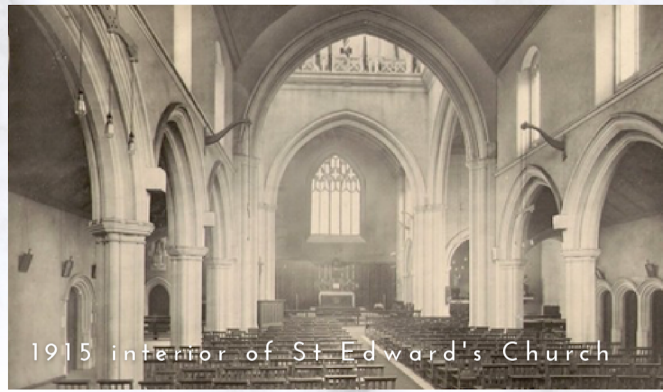
In 1247, a Royal Charter was granted by Henry III which permitted Romford to host a cattle market every Wednesday and stated that no other market could be held within a 6- and 2/3-mile radius. During its 775-year history, various interesting items have been sold there - from the fresh vegetables and flowers we recognise today, to 'leather breeches' made in Hornchurch, and even Thomas Newcombe's wife in 1831.

Perhaps one of its most famous residents was one Ayloff, who in 1670, practiced medicine in a house close to where the Shopping Hall stands today. No ordinary doctor, Ayloff was actually the notorious Colonel Blood, a wanted man whose previous exploits included joining a Cromwellian siege on Dublin castle and the attempted kidnap of it's Governor. But Blood's most infamous crime would come in 1671, when he attempted to steal the crown jewels, plotting from his home in Romford.



Church Bells

There has been a church on the marketplace since 1410, and the tenor bell, which is still used to chime the hour today, is thought to date from this period. However, the current Grade II listed building was constructed later in 1849-50. Built in an iconic Gothic style, its architect, John Johnson, would later design the Alexandra Palace. Inside the church is a memorial to Sir Anthony Cooke of Gidea Hall, who served as High Sheriff of Essex in 1544-45. Friend and tutor to Edward VI, he was most famous as a scholar, and is remembered for his commitment to ensuring his daughters received a high standard of education.



1915 interior of St Edward's Church

Although its stained-glass windows were damaged by nearby bombing during World War Two, much of the church and its history remains as it continues to play an important role in the local community.

A Working Class Legacy

Until very recently, Romford was famous for its Brewery, which produced John Bull Bitter, the beer named after the archetypal seventeenth-century English country-dweller. The then Star Brewery was founded by Benjamin Wilson in 1708 as an attachment to the Star Inn on the High Street. In 1799, the brewery was bought by Edward Ind, who was later joined by the Coopes brothers. Although there were various small metalworking workshops in Romford during the nineteenth century, Ind Coope Brewery was Romford's main industry until its closure in 1993.

One of the key developments in Romford's history was the opening of the Eastern Counties Railway in 1839. Romford's station, dating from the 1830s, was key to the expansion of the Brewery. In 1908, the Brewery had its own railway sidings and employed around 450 workers; by 1970, it took up 20 acres of land and employed around 1000 workers. Although a shopping centre since 2001, the old brewery's legacy is still visible. One of its 160ft chimneys has been incorporated into the centre's design, whilst the Havering Museum is situated in buildings once belonging to the brewery.



Pub Culture

UK pubs boast long and interesting histories and Romford is home to a number of them. The Golden Lion is thought to be one of the oldest surviving pub sites in London. It is believed that there has been a pub trading on the site since the early 1400s. The beautiful pub building itself has undergone some changes over the years and its 17th century features allow it to remain a Grade II listed building. Due to its age and location (a first stop outside of London towards the east coast), the Golden Lion has bore-witness to many famous faces and even a few ghosts. One regularly witnessed ghostly resident is the White Lady, who was said to have been murdered in nearby Harold Hill by her husband.

It is also believed that famous philosopher Sir Francis Bacon once inherited the position of pub landlord, due to his ties to the local area through his grandfather Sir Anthony Cooke and his mother who owned Marks Manor House in Ilford. It is also rumoured that the Golden Lion has even played host to none other than William Shakespeare and notorious highwayman Dick Turpin. But the Golden Lion is not the only Romford pub with a long interesting history; during the English Civil War, the White Hart coaching inn, now The Bitter End, was the base for negotiations between Parliamentarians and the county's Deputy Lieutenant. Centuries later The Goose pub on South Street would host many of the musicians who came to play at the nearby Odeon Cinema - guests who included The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and David Bowie.



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HAVERING CHANGING

The
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