



ROYAL EXCHANGE



A TOWN STEEPED
IN HISTORY

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

A PART OF HISTORY



ITS ORIGINS AS A RIVER CROSSING PREDATING THE ROMANS, THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES HAS A HISTORY THAT SPANS MILLENNIA.



Kingston – literally, the King's Town – is Britain's oldest Royal Borough. Ennobled by Royal Charter in 838, Anglo-Saxon kings were crowned here; including Athelstan who united the regions to create the kingdom of England. In the intervening centuries, Kings and Queens have come and gone, but the town of Kingston has retained its unique character.

KINGSTON'S LOCATION, WHERE THE THAMES COULD BE FORDED AND LATER BRIDGED HELPED IT BECOME A FOCUS FOR TRAVELLERS – AND AN IMPORTANT MARKET TOWN.

Kingston upon Thames has been the home of bustling markets for centuries. The oldest surviving records date back to the early 1200's, and Kingston's historic markets are still thriving today.



Kingston's Ancient Market in the market square still trades 7 days a week, as it has for centuries. Watched over by the golden statue of Queen Anne, it boasts a range of market stalls laden with foodstuffs. There is also the Monday market, held every week in the old cattle market, always with something new to discover.



KINGSTON'S LONG HISTORY HAS LEFT A RICH HERITAGE AND CHARACTER TO ENJOY TODAY.

For centuries, Kingston has attracted artists, thinkers and innovators. All have left their mark with over 300 listed buildings. Their industries may no longer exist, but many of the fine houses built with the wealth they created do. Boat-building dating from the 18th century continues, with boathouses by the river and a paddle steamer running between Kingston and Hampton Court. You can find evidence of aviation pioneer Sir Thomas Sopwith from the 20th century alongside London's oldest surviving river bridge, dating back to the 12th century. Older still is the Coronation Stone outside the Guildhall, a coin from each Anglo-Saxon king set into the base.

A ROYAL CANVAS



A BREATHTAKING LANDSCAPE
SHAPED BY KINGS AND QUEENS.



The landscape around Kingston upon Thames reflects its rich royal heritage. Bushy Park, the second largest of all London's royal parks has its origins as a royal hunting ground. Roaming herds of red and fallow deer are still to be found, along with a rich variety of bird life including woodpeckers, kingfishers and kestrels. The wild woodland enjoyed by Kings such as Henry VIII has been tamed, now the park offers a rich mix of waterways, gardens and grassland. Look out for the bronze Diana fountain at the end of the mile-long Chestnut Avenue, designed by Sir Christopher Wren.



THE FAVOURITE HOME OF KING HENRY VIII,
HAMPTON COURT PALACE HAS BEEN DELIGHTING
VISITORS FOR GENERATIONS.



With its picturesque location on the banks of the Thames, Hampton Court was built to be 'the finest palace in all England' in the 1520s. It soon became the showpiece of Henry VIII, and while many successive monarchs were keen to remodel the palace in the latest fashion, it retains much of its Tudor magnificence. Henry's presence can still be felt in the bustling Base Court and in the breathtaking grandeur of his State Rooms, while hidden away is the Baroque Palace, full of intrigue and gossip from the Stuart and Georgian eras.

Discover too the many treasures of the royal art collections and stroll through over 60 acres of enchanting gardens. Lose yourself in the famous maze - and appreciate the beauty of one of the greatest palaces on earth.



AN ABUNDANCE OF HISTORY

1875



Kingston's abundance of listed buildings, including the beautiful grade II Old Post Office. Once a centre of modern communications for a bustling Victorian town, it retains the elegance of times gone by.

1938



As technology moved on, the Telephone Exchange was no longer needed - but its role as a landmark was recognised, and it was preserved, providing staff and sorting facilities for the Post Office.



1995

1908



The Edwardian era brought new technology as well as peace and plenty, Kingston was enriched with many fine buildings. The Telephone Exchange was built by John Rutherford in the Arts and Crafts style.



The Coronation Stone being removed from the Market Square and being placed in its temporary home in the Garden of Rest.

1935



1961

Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Kingston for the celebration of the 400th anniversary of Kingston Grammar School.



1984

Telecommunications moved on swiftly, and manual telephone exchanges were replaced by automated systems, leaving the exchange standing silent after almost 75 years.



TODAY



The Old Post Office and the Telephone Exchange remain cherished local landmarks at Kingston's very heart. Both have been fully restored to their former glory. Given a new lease of life The Telephone Exchange will become a hub for businesses and exciting new ventures that will add an invigorating creative energy and new opportunities to the area. Whereas the impressive Old Post Office will become a social focus, with restaurants, shops and meeting places.



Computer generated image depicts Royal Exchange and is indicative only.

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