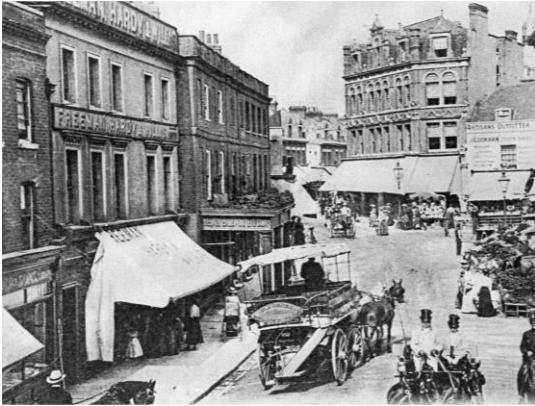


## Bromley Town Centre Conservation Area

# Heritage Walks

## No 1 - MARKET SQUARE AND UPPER HIGH STREET



### MARKET SQUARE

Market Square is the centre of the Old Town which until the coming of the railway in 1858 comprised a single street. The Market Charter was granted to Bishop Gandalf by King John in 1205. The limits of the town are still marked by existing buildings – Bromley College in the Upper High Street and Tweed Cottage, now Barclays bank in the Lower High Street.

**Primark annex** next to Mothercare occupies Victoria Chambers, a fine building from the 1890s in the Arts & Crafts style with its characteristic Dutch influence. It is built on the site the birthplace of the writer HG Wells, commemorated by the blue plaque.

**Primark** occupies **Fred Meadhurst's Department store**, the name being visible high above the central entrance. It replaced a row of early 19<sup>th</sup> century shops which Fred had acquired from 1879. As his business grew he replaced them with this fine Art Deco /classical style building in 1930.

**HSBC Bank** occupies the Grade II Listed '**Town Hall Buildings**' built in 1887 by local butcher, David Harris, who occupied the corner section with three other units rented out. It is in the Arts & Crafts style with its characteristic Dutch influence. Having grown rich during the boom years after the coming of the railway in 1858 and not content with this magnificent display of civic pride, the following year, Mr Harris brought professional theatre to Bromley by building the Grand Hall later known as the New Theatre where BHS now stands.

**MacDonalds** occupies an 18<sup>th</sup> century shop which for generations until around 1971 was the Bakery of the Maunders family. Next door, Jessops also occupies a Georgian terrace of similar age and importance.

**The TSB and Bon Marche** occupy the former 'Caters' store built in 1957, one of the first supermarkets in the country. The architecture has a 'Festival of Britain' feel. It occupies the site of the Old Bull Inn which was, in the 19<sup>th</sup> c was divided in two as Skilton's the Butcher and Issards Stores. Some beautiful early 19<sup>th</sup> century paintings on wood panels from the old Bull Inn can be seen by appointment at Bromley Museum in Orpington.

**Cafe Rouge** occupies the first building displaying the transition from a small market town into a Victorian shopping centre. It was built in 1883 by local draper, **Herbert Collings**, well known for banishing the old system of credit in favour of the modern concept of cash only sales and introducing the idea of window shopping displays made possible in the design of his new premises.

**Zucchi, Santander, Past times etc.** all occupy the oldest buildings in Market Square originally private houses from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**Argos, Lakeland, Wallis and Starbucks** all occupy the award winning post war premises of furnishers George Dunn & Co replacing a fine Arts & Crafts building destroyed in WWII. The architect was Bertram Carter and the building is locally listed.

**The Town Pump and Darwin Mural** The Pump stands 25 yards from its original site beside the old Town Hall Chambers. The Mural is by artist Bruce Williams and replaced one celebrating the life of HG Wells in 2008.

**White Hart Slip** leading to the Glades is one of the town's ancient footpaths across the Bishop's Palace lands (Civic

Centre) . The Gates to Queens Garden were located in what is now the centre of the Glades now relocated to the middle of the Garden. They are Grade II Listed.

**Ernest Jones** occupies the former premises of grocers **David Grieg**. The name and date, 1912, are proudly displayed above Market Square. An early example of chain store shopping David Grieg and Sainsburys had a pact of non competition in the same town so DG had Bromley and Sainsburys had nearby Beckenham. The building is locally listed and notable for its neo- baroque architecture and the fine quality of the facade all made from moulded ceramic facing tiles.

The half timbered **Central block** dates from 1930 replacing the old Town Hall. It is at the tail end of the Arts & Crafts movement in architecture in the, so called, Old English Style. Note the wooden pegs fixing for the timbers, the traditional steeply sloping clay tiled roof and tall chimneys typical of the Arts & Crafts style. Original shop fronts are at Barclays, Northern Rock (formerly the Dukes Dead Pub), Paynes and Brodies (formerly Kennedy's).



### UPPER HIGH STREET

**The Bell Hotel** group dates from 1898, is by Arts & Crafts architect Ernest Newton and is Grade II listed. It replaced the old Bell Inn (picture above) made famous in Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice' when Lady Catherine de Burgh says to Elizabeth Bennet "*Where shall you change horses? - Oh! Bromley, of course. - If you mention my name at the Bell, you will be attended to.*" Jane Austen frequently travelled to Kent to visit her brother and would certainly have changed horses at the Bell.

**Hunters the Jewellers** has the finest surviving Victorian Shopfront in Bromley. A similar design for the tailors, Walter Tarry in the Upper High Street, was saved from

destruction in the 1970s and is now on permanent display at the Museum of London at the Barbican.

**The Partridge pub** was built in 1928 as the National Provincial Bank. It is Grade II Listed and one of the finest examples of Arts & Crafts architecture in the town displaying the superb craftsmanship in design and use of materials. Note the fine door case reminiscent of that on Bromley College, the use of small, varicoloured bricks and sash windows. The circular vestibule with its curved doors and bevelled glass is of special note.

**TPs** occupies **George Pamphilon's** 1871 wine shop. The name is displayed above the right hand entrance which was formally an opening to an ancient rear courtyard of stables incorporated into the main building in a few years ago. G Pamphilon was also an importer of Champagne from Epernay in France and this is celebrated in the carved bunches of grapes above the external columns (pilasters).

**The British Heart Foundation** occupies the premises of another successful local Victorian institution- Howards' Stores.

**The Tom Foolery** occupies the Victorian ironmonger shop of **George Weeks**, local historian and philanthropist.

**The Diner Inn** occupies **George Weeks'** 1890s extension to his original shop next door. Its grand Arts & Crafts, Dutch influenced architecture, displays both his personal success and civic pride. Note the name above the front gable and advertisement on the side wall all in enduring ceramic tiles. The shop replaced an old house important as having been the premises of the famous Bromley based surgeon, Dr James Scott. So respected was he that special stage coaches, known as the Scott Coaches, regularly plied for London the Bell Inn opposite for the convenience of his affluent patients.

**Unique** occupies one of a pair of early 18<sup>th</sup> century lodges at the entrance to the driveway to the **Grete House**, a Tudor mansion and its lands occupying all of what is now Sainsburys store and car park. In the nineteenth century the lodge was the premises of Daniel Grinstead, one of a long line of seedsmen connected with the Mill at Southend, Downham. DG was a considerable entrepreneur and land owner. As director of the Bromley Electric Light Company he built, in 1898, a huge electricity generating station behind here with a tall

chimney which belched black smoke over Market Square for 40 odd years.

**Funeral Directors , News Agents and Tailors Shop** occupy two 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages, part of a terrace originally of five. These are typical Kentish vernacular style with the characteristic double pitched roofs clad with Kentish clay peg tiles.

**Tunnel Shoes** occupy the original 1902 premises of **Boots the Chemists**. The Art Nouveau wrought iron work in front of the first floor windows is typical of boots in this period and similar work can also be seen in Boots old shop in the Pantiles in Tunbridge Wells. Behind the modern false ceiling the gallery of Boots famous 'Penny Library' still survives. The building replaced that of **Rawes School**, one of Bromley's most important educational establishments in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Shoe Box** occupies the site of **Morleys Academy** demolished in 1902. This was where the writer HG Wells was a pupil having progressed from Mrs Knott's Dame School at no 8 South Street (still there).

**The Barbers shop** and next door shop occupy two early 18<sup>th</sup> century houses with Georgian brick frontages to what are timber frame buildings with typical Kentish weatherboarding at the rear.

**Jigsaw hairdressers** and next door shop occupy an 18<sup>th</sup> c house notable as the premises of two Bromley notable historians and printers each producing from this shop an invaluable History of Bromley - **Thomas Wilson** in 1797 and **John Dunkin** in 1815.

**The Ink Shop** occupies what was an alley leading to **Hooker's Place** an area described by ELS Horsburgh as 'a picturesque group of small houses, some half timbered, surrounding a small square' dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Demolished in 1922.

**The Empire Cinema** was built in 1936 as the **Odeon** in typical house style designed by George Coles. The exterior of the foyer is fairly intact and the interior contains much original Art Deco detailing despite being divided up into four auditoria.

**The Star & Garter** replaced an ancient Inn of the same name in 1898. The architects were Berney & Son and the style is Arts & Crafts 'Old English' and it is Grade II Listed. Note the projecting upper storeys, turret, finely carved

wooden signboard and surviving etched glass and mirror work.

**Wells Florists , Metropolis etc** - a late Georgian terrace punctuated by an ancient 'slip' now known as Naval Walk. Part of the terrace was faced in rusticated stucco in the 1920s.

**Bromley Zoo Mural** was designed and painted by artist Bruce Williams in 2001 to lead shoppers from the Hill Car park via **Naval Walk** to the High Street. A panda and leopard lurk among the shrubbery and a variety of animals are presented in cunning trompe l'oeil (trick the eye) scenes.

**The Swan & Mitre Pub** is of uncertain date but at least early 18<sup>th</sup> c, timber built with a Georgian brick frontage and portico. It is Grade II listed and of immense historical importance being one of the three coaching Inns upon which the town's prosperity largely depended. The interior contains decorative mirrors which once adorned the dressing room of the Music Hall artiste, Marie Lloyd. Until relatively recently a hanging sign depicted a swan and a bishop on a stage, a witty variant of the Actress and the Bishop joke in reference to the Bishop of Rochester's endowment of Bromley College immediately opposite.

**Bromley College** is the Grade I listed, Jewel in the Crown of Bromley, regarded by English Heritage as one of the most important seventeenth century almshouses of its kind in the country. It was endowed by Bishop Warner, residing at Bromley Place (Civic Centre) in 1664 as sheltered housing for the widows of Clergy and still has similar function now open retired Clergy of both sexes. Designed by Richard Ryder.

To the rear is the Grade II Listed **Sheppards College** built in 1840 for the daughters who would previously had been sent to the workhouse after the death of their mothers. The main gates fronting London Road are original bearing the date 1666 and Bishops Mitres (hats) in stone on the gate piers. The grounds are very fine containing four great cedar trees planted in 1820. 100 years earlier two black mulberry trees were planted in the grounds and one on what is now adjacent **College Green** (See Walk 3) . All three Mulberrys still survive and bear fruit in summer.

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[www.bromleycivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.bromleycivicsociety.org.uk)  
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