

Welcome to

# Royston

We are proud of our attractive town on the South Cambridgeshire/North Hertfordshire border.

Here, you will find a mix of heritage, gardens and green open spaces, contemporary living and a thriving business and industrial community.



Steeped in history dating back to the 12th century, Royston offers a rich heritage, which includes the Augustinian Priory, the medieval Royston Cave and the Roisia Stone, from whence the town gets its name.

Enjoy the green open spaces of the award winning Priory Memorial Gardens and the nearby Heath, with its woodland footpaths, the rare pasque flower and chalk tracks.

The notes and maps will help guide you around the town centre streets, and enable you to discover the rich history highlighted in the Town Trail. You will find numbered trail markers in the pavement as shown. For this shortened trail, they are not always in numerical order, but the map will also help you to follow the route.

Take as long or as little time as you want to explore the streets of Royston.

Why not stop and relax in one of the many cafes or restaurants offering a diverse mix of food and drink to suit all palates.

Time taken to complete the trail: **45 mins**  
Distance if walking the entire trail: **approx 2 km (1.2 miles)**

Explore. Discover. Experience.

## Find out more...

[www.roystontown.uk](http://www.roystontown.uk)

Our town website is full of information about Royston. Check out our videos showing you where to eat, shop, visit and stay. Find all the maps and information about travel that you may need during your visit to Royston.



### Royston Cinema

Royston "Picture Palace" cinema is a Community Cinema, based in the Town Hall, where the audience will experience state-of-the-art digital projection onto a 7m screen supported by a 17 speaker digital sound system.



### Places to stay

Pick up a copy of our handy accommodation guide from the Information Centre, to make it easy to plan your visit and arrange your stay here in Royston. You will find a variety of accommodation on offer, from hotels, pubs and B&Bs, all offering a good standard of facilities.

**DISCLAIMER:** All the information in this guide is published in good faith and for general information purpose only. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the details are correct, we do not make any warranties about the completeness, reliability and accuracy of this information. We cannot be held responsible for the service, standards and conditions of the establishments on offer.



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# Royston

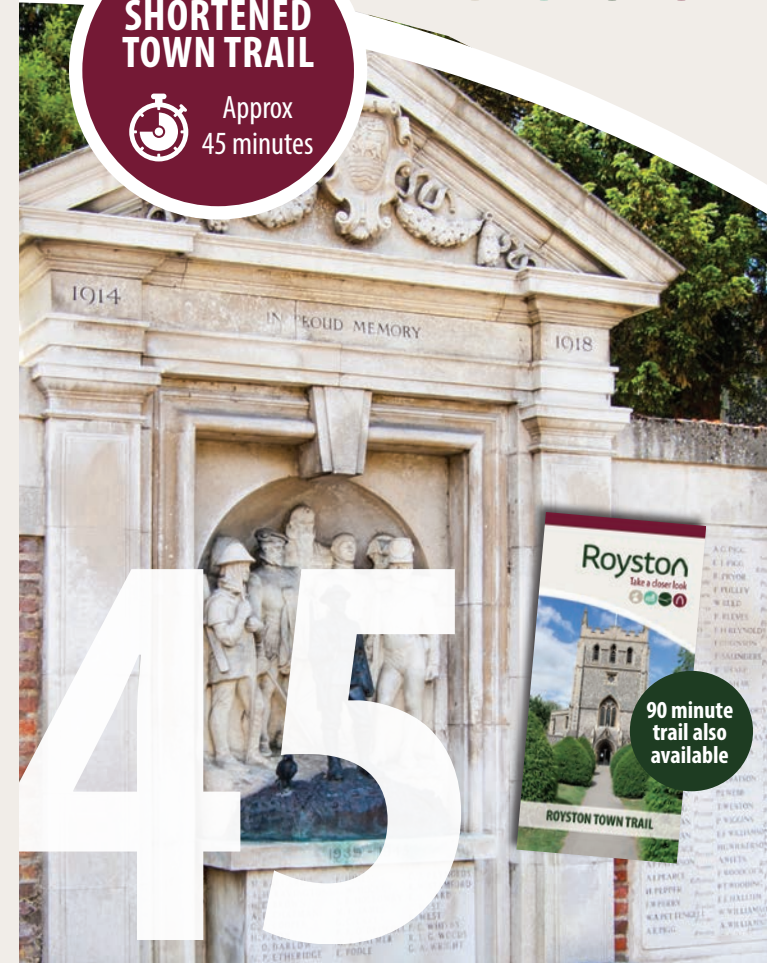
Take a closer look



SHORTENED  
TOWN TRAIL



Approx  
45 minutes



90 minute  
trail also  
available

## ROYSTON TOWN TRAIL



Starting at the Royston Information Centre in the library, follow the directions for an enjoyable walk around Royston using the plaque numbers for reference. These are not in numerical order.

**1 For this shortened trail, turn right into a passageway from the Royston Information Centre**

Walking through the passage note the sculpture "Unity" representing town twinning.



**2 Proceed to the gates opposite**

A plaque explains that the gates are now in their third location having originally been an impressive entrance to the vanished Pickering Mansion in the parish of Whaddon, and subsequently at a house in Baldock Street.

Priory Memorial Gardens are dedicated in memory of Roystonians who fell in World War II. Apart from the Fish Hill entrance, other gates were presented by the Royal British Legion, the R.A.F.A. / R.N.A., the Home Guard and the Offord family.



**3 Walk straight across the park to the far corner**

The red marble pillar is dedicated to the dead of the 91st Bombardment Group (Heavy) of the U.S. Army Air Force, who flew B17 Flying Fortresses from the Bassingbourn and Nuthampstead air bases between 1942 and 1945. This Group was the home of the famous Memphis Belle - it also, unfortunately, suffered the heaviest casualties of any bomber group in WWII.

**4 Follow the path with the church on the left, bending round to the right through the park**

Arrive at plaque 25 and look to your left across the road to the Town Hall.



**BUILDING OF INTEREST**

The Town Hall was built in 1855 on the site of the turnpike tollgate cottage. The newly formed Royston Urban District Council bought it in 1900 for £600 to be the Town Hall. Extended and improved, it remains the seat of local government in Royston and contains two public halls.



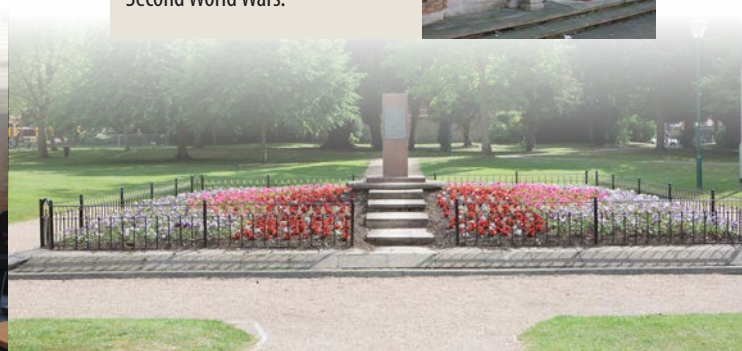
The upper hall is named after the Earl of Hardwicke, then owner of Wimpole Hall, under whose patronage the Institute was built. There is a small bust of him on the façade, as well as the Royston Coat of Arms. After an extensive internal refurbishment, the halls now combine to form the Royston Picture Palace - the town's state-of-the-art digital community cinema.

**5 Turn left along Melbourn Street towards the town centre**

**6 Cross over the pedestrian crossing and see the Police Station, opened in 1991 by HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother**

**BUILDING OF INTEREST**

On your left is a War Memorial, that is now a listed monument, and was erected in 1922 to the memory of the servicemen of the town who were killed in the First World War. On either side of the memorial are the names of those servicemen from the town who were killed during the First and Second World Wars.



**BUILDINGS OF INTEREST**

- Thurnall's: a Grade 1 Listed building. Look very closely and you will see above the black door the intertwined initials JAB refer to J A Beldam, who was prominent in the 19th century battle against the slave trade.
- Carry on walking and you will see the Banyers House Hotel, 18th century home of the Revd. Edward Banyer DD, Vicar of Royston 1739-1752.



**7 Continue along Melbourn Street until you stand opposite Church Lane**



**BUILDINGS OF INTEREST**

- The Lanterns, a modern office block at the front but through the arch you can see the restored stables that once served the Banyers next door. They were used in the early 20th century for a string of racehorses which were trained on the Heath.
- The Manor House, now a bar/restaurant, was formerly the home of one branch of the Phillips brewing family. Behind it, through the car park on the former lawn, is private access to Dog Kennel lane, which may have been the northern extension of Church Lane. Dog Kennel Lane was where the hunting dogs of King James I were kept.



**8 Keep progressing along Melbourn Street**



Beneath the archway leading to Katherine's Yard is the doorway to the Royston Cave, a man-made bell shaped chamber decorated with unique medieval style carvings. Normal opening hours are Sat / Sun afternoons from Easter to the end of September and on Wednesday afternoons in August. It is open at other times by arrangement. Email [info@roystoncave.co.uk](mailto:info@roystoncave.co.uk) for details or call 01763 245484. The Royston Cave is understood to be one of only two subterranean Grade 1 Listed buildings in England!

# Royston Town Trail

## 9 Proceed to the junction with Kneesworth Street

The bank on the corner is on the site of the house occupied by Charles Prince of Wales, later to be the ill-fated Charles I, when his father's court was at Royston. Across the street the island site was where the Crown pub stood until removed for road widening in 1929.

## 10 Turn right down Kneesworth Street

Most of the buildings in the narrow part of Kneesworth Street date back to the reign of King James I, 1603 – 1627, whose Court spent much time here hunting, the King's favourite sport. Most of the houses down this road were domestic quarters of the King's hunting lodge.

### BUILDINGS OF INTEREST

- The Conservative Club across the street was then the headquarters of the King's equerries.
- The fish and chip shop was the King's buttery for his kitchens.
- King James' Palace - The two large half-chimneys projecting into the footpath mark the centre of the Old Palace, hunting lodge of the King. It has an elegant garden not visible from the street. It is a Grade I Listed building containing the writing desk at which the King is reputed to have signed the death warrant of Sir Walter Raleigh. The western half of the building was demolished in the 18th century.

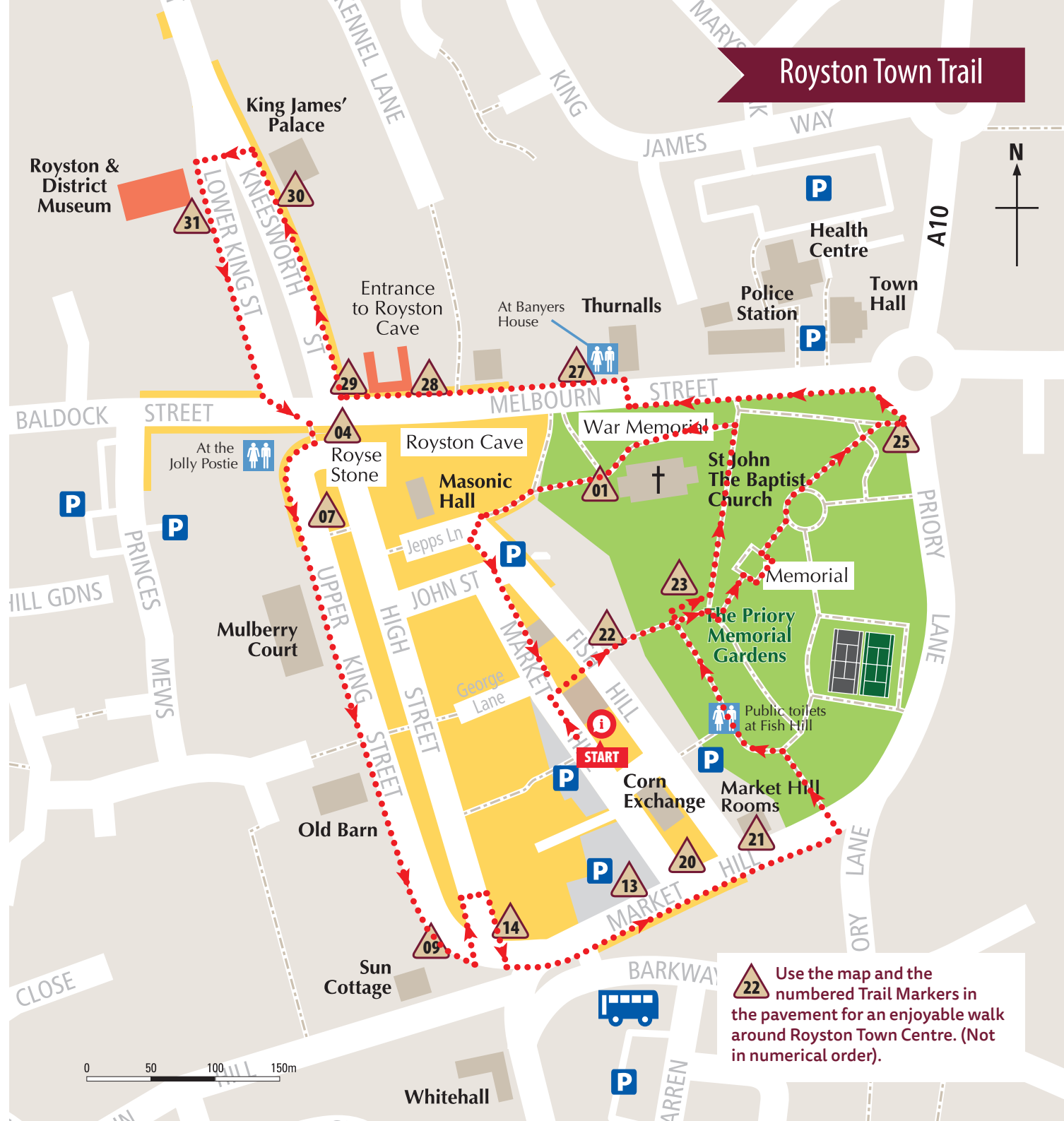


## 11 Cross the road to stand in front of the iron railings and gateway to the Royston museum

The building that houses the Royston and District Museum was erected a century ago as the Sunday School for the Congregational Church that stood 100 metres further along the street. The Museum contains over 40,000 artefacts ranging from some of the contents from the Neolithic barrows on the nearby Heath, to the Royston Tapestry which is a work in progress.

## 12 Walk back up Lower King Street and cross over the pedestrian crossing. Arrive at the Stone

The Roys Stone at the cross-roads weighs two tonnes and dates back to the Ice Age. It is thought to have formed the base of a wayside cross set up here by Lady Roisia soon after 1066.



22 Use the map and the numbered Trail Markers in the pavement for an enjoyable walk around Royston Town Centre. (Not in numerical order).

The settlement, which grew up around the nearby Priory, became known as Crux Roheyes (Roisia's Cross), later Roisia's Town, from which the name Royston is derived. Looking to your left and right notice the pairs of narrow streets in parallel, separated by a 'middle row' of buildings. This is typical of English mediaeval market towns and marks the original site of the market stalls set up and down the centre of the original street.

#### BUILDING OF INTEREST

Looking to your right, the pub on the corner of this area marks the site of the mediaeval monastic leper hospital. The current building was the main Post Office from 1936 to 1995.



#### 15 Turn right into Upper King Street and commence walking up the hill

Half way up on the left are some buildings with jettied upper storeys dating to Tudor times or earlier (King James I banned projecting upper storeys for fear of aiding the transit of fire across streets).

To your left you will see George Lane, where cobbles were laid to help horses get a grip, while stone slabs were laid for the cart wheels.



#### BUILDINGS OF INTEREST

- Further up on the right hand side is Mulberry Court, winner of a North Herts. Civic Award for conservation work. The courtyard contains mulberry trees, planted when the native silk trade was receiving royal encouragement in the 17th Century (although generally the wrong kind of mulberry was planted!).
- The well-converted Old Barn used as a Day Centre was formerly owned by the racing stables and used for storage at another time. It was also the former Bushel & Strike pub.

#### 14 The end of the road curves round to meet the High Street and London Road

Sun Hill House, to your right, was originally another public house named, you guessed it, The Sun!



#### 15 Turn down the High Street and proceed 30 metres to the entrance of the Old Bull

#### BUILDINGS OF INTEREST

- The Bull Inn claims to be the oldest inn in the town, dating back to the 15th century. From its brickwork it is possible to detect the shape of the archway into the inn yard where stage coaches changed horses (at one point there was stabling for over 100 horses) before resuming their journeys.
- In one of the cottages opposite, above eye level, there is a small square cupboard set in the wall. This is the place where the keys to the main gates were kept at night so that the guard on an incoming coach could reach over to retrieve them.



#### 16 Re-trace your your steps up the High Street. Follow the path that bends to the left



#### BUILDING OF INTEREST

The Chequers, an ancient inn, possibly named for the Royal House of Stuart black and white check on the Priory Coat of Arms.

Look to your left to see the market place (nowadays a car park). It hosts a weekly market that dates back to the monastic era. Auction yards and pens for sheep, pigs and cattle used to occupy much of the area in and around the market. During the Civil War there was a confrontation between the Parliament troops and townspeople supporting the King. The troops taunted Roystonians and called them 'crows' (a symbol adopted by the town and still used in the present day).



#### BUILDINGS OF INTEREST

- The Corn Exchange to your right, was constructed using Hitch's patent interlocking bricks. Former corn merchants' offices have been converted into boutiques, earning a Civic Award.



#### 17 Carry on walking. At the top of Fish Hill look at the white building - the Market Hill Rooms



#### BUILDING OF INTEREST

At the junction stands the Market Hill marked by a blue plaque. The Rooms recently restored internally by the Town Council, were formerly the British School for the children of Nonconformist families.

#### 18 Carry on walking along the road and enter the park through the white gates

Head towards the Splash Park, which is open during the summer months, turning left alongside the playground (to your left).



#### 19 Follow the path to the back of St John the Baptist Church. Turn left up the side of the Church, arriving at the front

A church guide is available inside. The present nave was the chancel of the medieval church that became ruinous after King Henry VIII's Dissolution of the monasteries. The high stone wall to the left of the path to the west gate of the churchyard contains a fragment of the original nave.

#### 20 Take the narrow path between the sculptured bushes and straight ahead across Church Lane to Fish Hill Square



Looking to your left we once again have a pair of narrow streets, Fish Hill and Market Hill, with a block of buildings between where market stalls originally stood. This was the new market place after it moved from its earlier site further to the west.

#### BUILDINGS OF INTEREST

- The old County Court building surmounted by the Royal Arms dated 1849.
- No. 4 on the left is the former National School for children from Church of England families.



#### 21 Return to the Royston Information Centre in the Library