

Changing Times: 100 Years of the Broadway, Bexleyheath, 1912-2012

One hundred years after the Clock Tower was built to commemorate the coronation of King George V, Bexleyheath celebrates the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The Clock Tower remains an iconic landmark in a busy shopping street.

The Bexley Historical Society marked the centenary with a local history project, 'Changing Times: 100 Years of the Broadway, Bexleyheath, 1912-2012', funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and in partnership with Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre and Bexley Civic Society.

This guided walk was created to show 12 points of historical interest in the Broadway. Imagine the wild heathland which once covered this area, traversed by the London to Dover road.

After enclosure of the heath in 1814 a new town sprang up. By 1912, when the Clock Tower was unveiled, Bexleyheath was already a thriving community. Since then, the Broadway has seen many changes including the opening of the Broadway Shopping Centre in 1984, pedestrianisation in 1993, and the building of Broadway Square in 2001.

Partners

Bexley Historical Society

Established in 1951 to encourage an interest in local history and archaeology, it meets monthly for talks on a range of historical subjects relating to the Borough of Bexley and beyond.

www.bexleyhistoricalsociety.co.uk

Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre

Collections include the records of the London Borough of Bexley and its predecessors, schools, churches, estates, people, businesses and societies.

www.bexley.gov.uk/archives

Bexley Civic Society

Concerned with protecting the local environment and making Bexley a better place in which to live. A collection of short walks around a variety of interesting locations in Bexley are available.

www.bexleycivicsociety.org.uk



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Broadway, Bexleyheath

Heritage Trail

**Changing Times:
100 Years of the Broadway, Bexleyheath
1912-2012**



1 Market Place

This was the name given both to a one-storey merchants' premises built for John Smith of Blendon Hall in 1830 and to the area immediately surrounding it. The building was destroyed by fire in 1989 but the busy shopping and transport hub of Bexleyheath remains centred on Market Place.



2 Congregational, later United Reformed Church

The original Congregational Chapel, which stood on Market Place, opened in 1854 and the Rev. James Geddes was minister from 1868 to 1920. The church was demolished in 1988 and a new United Reformed Church was built in Geddes Place.



3 Coronation Memorial Clock Tower

Erected by public subscription to commemorate the coronation in 1911 of King George V, it was designed by Walter Maxted Epps and unveiled on Bexleyheath Gala Day, 17 July 1912. The bust of George V was joined by one of artist William Morris in 1997, both sculpted by John Ravera.



4 Hides Department Store

H. & G. Hide acquired the drapery business Collier's Emporium in 1861. While it remained a family business, Hides steadily grew until in 1936 a modern store was built, selling a wide variety of goods. It was closed in 1979 to make way for the Broadway Shopping Centre.



5 ASDA: site of The Chestnuts and Regal cinema

Mount Pleasant, later called The Chestnuts, one of the earliest and largest houses in the Broadway, was demolished for the Regal 'super cinema' which opened in 1934 and seated over 2000 people. The cinema organ was played by Robinson Cleaver and featured in radio broadcasts. It was renamed the ABC in 1962 and closed in 1987.



6 Christ Church

The English Gothic design by William Knight originally included a steeple but this was never built. The foundation stone was laid on 16 September 1872 and the new church was consecrated in 1877.



7 Pincott Memorial

A memorial to the first vicar of Christ Church, the Rev. W. H. Pincott, was erected in Market Place in 1879. Originally consisting of a drinking fountain in the form of an obelisk and a cattle trough, the Pincott Memorial was moved to its position outside Christ Church not long after the Clock Tower was built.



8 Former Broadway Cinema

The first purpose-built cinema in Bexleyheath opened in 1913. It was enlarged and altered in the 1920s and 1930s. It closed in 1956 and has since been used as a supermarket, public house and restaurant, but its distinctive facade remains.



9 Trinity Baptist Church

Built in 1868 in a striking Grecian architectural style, a school was later erected at the back of the chapel. The first Baptist Chapel had been built in 1823 on the south side of the Broadway (this remained standing until 1956).



10 Golden Lion

First opened in 1731, the Golden Lion became an important coaching and posting inn on the London to Dover road. Opposite was the main route to Bexley village and nearby was a pond for cattle and horses. The present building dates from 1901.



11 Site of Chapel-of-Ease

Built in 1835 to serve the new residents on the Heath, a steeple was added in 1851. It was soon inadequate for the parish's needs, and the chapel was demolished in 1878 after the new Christ Church was built. The Steeple remained until 1926 (not 1928 as stated on memorial stone). Some of the gravestones from the burial ground can still be seen today.



12 Garden of Remembrance and War Memorial

The Borough of Bexley suffered a great deal of damage in the Second World War, and these gardens were laid out in memory of the civilians who lost their lives. The War Memorial (moved from its original position) remembers Bexleyheath's servicemen who lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars.





1 Market Place
1830-1989



**2 Congregational, later
United Reformed Church**
1854-present (rebuilt 1988)



**3 Coronation Memorial
Clock Tower**
1912-present



4 Hides Department Store
1861-1979



**5 Mount Pleasant/The Chestnuts
Regal Cinema**
1817-1934
1934-1987



6 Christ Church
1872-present



7 Pincott Memorial
1879-present



8 Former Broadway Cinema
1913-1956



9 Trinity Baptist Church
1868-present



10 Golden Lion
1731-present (rebuilt 1901)



11 Site of Chapel-of-Ease
1835-1878



**12 Garden of Remembrance
and War Memorial**
1921-present