HERITAGE TRAIL

The Rose and Crown - This public house was built in the late 1850s. It survived the fire of 1901 when Cave's, a local shoe factory, was burnt to the ground. In 1910 the High Street was widened and the wall of the garden was rebuilt in line with the Post Office.

Natwest Bank – The Rushden branch was opened by Northamptonshire Union Bank in 1889. Initially it was open to the public every Friday and the manager was W. A. Rubbra, also manager of their Wellingborough branch.

The War memorial – The town's war memorial stands in the memorial garden on the green opposite St Marys Church. It was designed by J Gotch of Kettering and built by Morris of Rushden to commemorate the 380 sons of Rushden who died in the First World War (1914-18).

St Mary's Church is the parish church of Rushden and in its elevated position it stands as a fine example of architecture in a county noted for its churches. During the 14th century the South Transept was built; at the same time the tower was enlarged and strengthened and the spire, which is 172ft high, was built. The crockets on the side were used by the steeplejacks who used them to climb up and carry out repairs. The strainer arch was inserted in order to prevent the nave walls from falling together. This beautiful arch is a very rare feature and is one of only four examples of this type of architecture known in England.

Rushden opened its Carnegie Library in 1905 and the opening ceremony was performed by the Marquis of Northampton. The library was built at the expense of Mr. Andrew Carnegie at a cost of about £2,500 from plans prepared by Mr. W. B. Madin, the town surveyor.

Heritage Chapel and Halls - The origins of Methodism in Rushden can be traced back to a small Society of 15 members in 1781. The building on the left was erected in 1890 but the accommodation soon proved inadequate and the building on the right was opened some 15 years later.

Park Road Baptist Church was built in 1901 and is late Gothic, with a nave 73 feet long by 49 feet wide, and transepts 67 feet across. Inside the Church an Austin pipe organ can be found. The plaque on the console declares that it was built by John T. Austin of Detroit in 1897……but in fact the organ was built in Knuston by John Turnell.

The Full Gospel Centre The present church building is the former Old South End school building, built in 1870 as the first church based primary school in the then village of Rushden.

Rushden Hall appears to have been associated with officers of Higham Park or Castle and later with John of Gaunt, son of Edward III. The oldest domestic building contains elements of 14th century architecture styles both inside and out. The early 16th century arches within the Front Hall survive from the Great Hall of the Tudor house and the east front of the Hall has Dutch gables and semi-circular bay windows which are post –Jacobean and probably built by Sir Lewis Pemberton in around 1630.

Rushden Museum provides exhibitions of the town's social history through photographs and artefacts, including an IT kiosk which, at the touch of a button gives access to the town's archives.
The history of Rushden dates back many thousands of years with indications of there being Bronze and Iron Age settlements, as well as Roman sites found in the area. Rushden is referenced in the Domesday book as “Risdene” which means “Rushey Valley.” This heritage means many of the settlements key attributes stem from early historical periods; for example, the core medieval pattern and field systems of Rushden were established during the 8th Century.

By the 16th Century farming and agriculture had become the dominant occupation of the town. This changed rapidly in the late 18th and 19th centuries during the advent of the industrial revolution, wherein boot and shoe manufacturing became Rushden’s new employment base. During the rise of the shoemaking industry, workers often worked from their homes; however, as demand for footwear increased, the amount of factories built in the town also increased, which caused Rushden to change from a rural village to an urban town. The speed of growth meant factories became an embedded feature of the town.

The period between 1870 and 1920 represented the peak of growth for Northamptonshire’s boot and shoe making industry, and at this point Rushden had over 100 factories. Following the national decline in industry many of these factories were lost or converted to residential use. While there was a brief resurgence in demand for boots and shoes during World War II, the industry contracted again in the latter half of the 20th Century. The in demand for boots and shoes during World War II, the industry converted to residential use. While there was a brief resurgence

Rushden Historical Transport Museum and Railway Station – Built by the Midland Railway in 1894 the Station was the only intermediate station on the Wellingborough to Higham Ferrers branch line. It was closed to passengers on 13 June 1959 when regular passengers services were withdrawn by British Rail. The line finally closed to all traffic in 1969 and the building was then sold to the local authorities. In 1996 the Rushden Historical Transport Society purchased the building saving it from demolition. Today the building has been beautifully restored, acting as a Museum and club house for the society. The Goods shed opposite is said to have been one of the finest in the district.

The Railway Inn - The New Inn was renamed the Railway Inn when the railway passenger service began in 1894. The large building to the right is Stonehurst, built in 1896 by the brewery as a wine store. During WWI Belgian refugees were housed there and it was known afterwards as the ‘Belgian house’.

Independent Wesleyan Chapel - The first Wesleyan Chapel to be built in Rushden in 1828 was near the Village Green, which is where the War Memorial is now situated. The expanding population of Rushden from 2,500 in 1873 to 12,000 in 1898 necessitated the need for a bigger chapel. The Wesleyan Chapel relocated several times before it finally opened its doors on 22nd February 1900 in its existing location in the High street.

The Old Post Office (HSBC) - The Post Office was built in 1903. The wall beyond that was the boundary of the garden of ‘The Cottage’, residence of John Cave who owned a large shoe factory to the right of the Rose and Crown.

Alfred Street School - The blue plaque commemorates the 70th anniversary of the bomb that fell on Alfred Street School killing seven school children in 1940.

The Old Ritz Cinema (now a Bingo Hall) was built in 1936 and the first manager was Mr Wilfred Hewitt. The Hewitt family first brought moving pictures to Rushden, and opened the Palace Cinema in the High Street in 1910. The Palace closed in November 1956.
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