



# EASTLEIGH

## MAYORAL HERITAGE

— WALKING TRAIL —



**EASTLEIGH**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



planned to a man who played a major role in forging links between Eastleigh and its French and German twin towns. That day, a memorial stone marking the work of Citizen of Honour Gordon Cox was unveiled close to the signpost that indicates the direction and distances to Eastleigh's twin towns of Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, near Paris, and Kornwestheim, near Stuttgart.

## Introduction

2014-15 is the 40th anniversary of the Borough of Eastleigh, and also the year that saw the civic offices re-locate into the town centre. To celebrate this anniversary, and in collaboration with the Eastleigh Mayor's Group, a number of commemoration projects have been established. These include the new Eastleigh Mayor's Heritage website [www.eastleighcivicheritage.org](http://www.eastleighcivicheritage.org) the commissioning of a new mace and mayoral chain and, in collaboration with the Hamble Valley and Eastleigh Heritage Guides, this walking trail around Eastleigh town.

### Start outside The Point.

## 1. The Twinning signpost



**Twinning connections,  
Gordon Cox memorial stone**

The Southern Daily Echo for Saturday 8th November 2008 reported that a permanent salute had been



## 2. The Old Town Hall & the Point

In February 1898 a decision was made to build a town hall for Eastleigh, 36 designs were submitted and Mitchell, Son and Gutteridge of Southampton won the competition. They were to build a substantial and handsome structure of red brick with stone dressing on Leigh Road for an estimated £4,500. The builder was J. Treherne and the foundation stone was laid in 1898 and bears the name of the mayor, H T Willmer. The building work was completed in 1899 and that date was etched over the entry. In 1928 the building was enlarged to include a concert hall. The town hall remained the centre of local government until 1974 when new civic offices were built. The council made a successful lottery bid to develop the building into The Point theatre in 1997.



**Proceed past The Point entrance  
and turn left into the park.**



### 3. The Dancing Garden

In 1999, as part of the council's celebrations for the Millennium, the new garden stage was constructed outside of The Point, a project that involved local community groups, local businesses and artists. The garden was further extended in 2010 when The Point was enlarged to incorporate the old library buildings which provided much needed studio space and rehearsal rooms. The Point continues to be a major civic building hosting annual events on behalf of the mayor's charities.



**Cross to the centre of the park.**

### 4. Eastleigh Bandstand

*“held in trust by the Council for the use of the whole of the inhabitants of Eastleigh...so that it might be a memorial for ever that the inhabitants might enjoy”*



As the town of Eastleigh developed in the 1890s, the idea of a place for music to be played in The Park was considered by the fledgling Eastleigh and Bishopstoke Urban District Council. A resolution was passed by the council on 1st June 1899 about the desirability of a bandstand being provided, if funding could be raised. Council leader Mr William Panter, who was also Superintendent of the Carriage Works, persuaded the London and South Western Railway company directors to support the scheme. The bandstand was completed in August 1900 and the railway works band performed for the public. In 1909 a new bandstand was erected but the roof was not added till 1923 at a cost of £322, lighting was added in 1925 and the bandstand became focus for the official ceremony of presenting the Charter of Incorporation to Eastleigh's Mayor C J Bradshaw, when it attained Borough status on 3rd October 1936.

### 5. Eastleigh War Memorial

After the end of the Great War, as in other parts of the country, the people of Eastleigh town considered that some form of memorial to those who had died in the conflict should be provided. The matter was discussed from 1919, but there was no agreement as to what form a memorial should take and various memorials were placed in churches and at the railway works. The lack of civic memorial led the Women's Branch of The British Legion to campaign to raise the necessary funds. In 1929 the column of stone was provided within the town park, surmounted by a figure of the Angel of Mons. The war memorial became the focus of subsequent Armistice Day commemorative events each November. Unfortunately, the original angel surmounting the column was stolen and never recovered. Subsequently a replica sculpture of the Angel of Mons was commissioned by sculptor Jill Tweed and set in place.



**Exit Park at Romsey Road, turn right. The Church can be seen opposite.**

### 6. The Church of the Resurrection

The Parish of Eastleigh was created in 1868 for the town that was fast growing up to the west of the railway station. Charlotte Yonge, the novelist who lived at Otterbourne, was invited to name the parish and chose a revised spelling of Eastley, a name that appears in the Domesday Book. At that time the nearest churches were St Mary's at Bishopstoke, or St Nicolas at North Stoneham, The new church called 'The Church of the Resurrection', designed by George Edmund Street, was built at the junction of Romsey Road and Winchester Road and was consecrated in August 1868 by the Bishop of Mauritius. The Rev W. A. Longlands of Eling was appointed the incumbent.



### 7. Railway Station

Eastleigh's Victorian railway station was designed by the famous railway architect, Sir William Tite. It was the coming of the railway that was to lead to Eastleigh's important development as a railway town with carriage and engine works both being located here. The railway town developed with the need for housing and other facilities for the workers. The railway predates the creation of the Parish of Eastleigh and was originally known as Bishopstoke. The company was originally the London and Southampton railway but soon the name was changed to London and South Western. The line from Nine Elms in London was extended to Basingstoke on 10 June 1839 and the line from Winchester to Southampton was opened the same day. The missing section from Basingstoke to Winchester was not opened until 11 May 1840 and Pegasus, the engine that came from Southampton on 10 June 1839, had to bring with it a coach for the intermediate road journey. The railways have ever since been the lifeblood of Eastleigh and in 2009-10 the mayor Pamela Holden-Brown named a railway engine, *Borough of Eastleigh*.



**Opposite the station turn right into Leigh Road and then turn left onto Market Street, proceed to the end of Market Street and turn right.**



### 8. The Swan Shopping Centre

Eastleigh's own 'shopping mall' was opened in 1989, a year later than originally planned after a number of significant delays, including a fire only days before its final opening date, which luckily caused no damage. Despite misgivings, more than 18,000 shoppers visited the centre during the first two days it was open and now houses the town's library and Registrar's Office.



Over the years the Swan Centre has had many famous visitors including Katy Price, the Teenage Ninja Turtles, the England goalkeeper Peter Shilton, and the Daleks.



**Continue to the junction of Wells Place and Hanns Way, a plaque can be found on the side of the Swan Centre building.**

### 9. Benny Hill Plaque

On 19th July 1999, and watched by an army of Benny Hill fans, Eastleigh mayor Jane Welsh unveiled a plaque close to the former site of Hann's Dorset Dairies, which inspired the comedian to write a number one comic hit song in 1971. The tribute read: *"Benny Hill 1924-1992. Comedian of international acclaim. Ernie, the fastest milkman in the West, began his career in Eastleigh and worked here at Hann's Dairy."*

Benny Hill started his working life in Eastleigh, firstly at Woolworths and then as a milkman at Hanns Dairy



**Continue right, proceed to junction and turn right, the station is on the left.**



Factory Road [now Wells Place] and it was here that he also joined a local dance and light entertainment group led by Ivy Lillywhite. Soon after he changed his name from Alfred to Benny, got a job as an assistant stage manager and began to make his mark in show business.



Retrace steps to junction with High Street and turn left onto the High Street, the museum is on the left.

## 10. Eastleigh Museum

Formerly the Salvation Army Citadel [see a carving of the Salvation Army's founder William Booth, above the entrance], the Eastleigh Museum tells the story of the town's early foundation as a railway town. It also houses a range of archives and oral history recordings from past residents.



Continue along the High Street to the pedestrian precinct.

## 11. The Railwayman statue

Unveiled on 8 April 1995 by the mayor, Cllr Bobbie Jones, this statue celebrates the town's industrial railway roots and forms the centerpiece of the Leigh Road pedestrian precinct. It is in bronze, by sculptor Jill Tweed, and depicts



a skilled railway worker of the 1930s who represents a figure of optimism for the future. The statue, involved some 16 months work and was chosen by the people of Eastleigh from three different models, by different artists.



Turn right and walk across the pedestrian area turning left onto Upper Market Street the council offices are on the right.

## 12. Council offices and regalia

In Eastleigh House, the latest civic offices, the Borough Coat of Arms can be seen displayed above the entrance to the Customer Services Area.

The Coat of Arms was designed by the College of Heralds and granted in 1974 when the borough was created. The design combines items from the coats of arms of both the former Borough of Eastleigh and the former Winchester Rural District Council which were brought together in the new council. The borough motto is *"The Welfare of the People is the most important Law"*



A cabinet containing the ceremonial mace and other gifts dating from the 1936 Charter Celebrations can be seen below the coat of arms. The mace which is silver gilt weights 4kg and was presented by the Pirelli General Cable Works.

Find out more:

[www.eastleighcivicheritage.org](http://www.eastleighcivicheritage.org)

# Further Information

Hamble Valley and Eastleigh Heritage Guides offer a range of guided walks in Eastleigh and at other locations in the Hamble Valley (the Borough of Eastleigh). If you would like to take a guided walk the Guides' public walks programme can be found on their website or, if you email, they will post a copy to you. They will be very happy to organise walks for groups and also offer a wide range of interesting talks that can be booked by groups looking for speakers.

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**WEBSITE:** [www.hamblevalleyheritage.co.uk](http://www.hamblevalleyheritage.co.uk)  
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**E-MAIL:** [info@hamblevalleyheritage.co.uk](mailto:info@hamblevalleyheritage.co.uk)  
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**We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the 'Mayor's project'**

Hamble Valley and Eastleigh Heritage Guides

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Eastleigh Museum

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