

[Royston]

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# ROYSTON

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Aim of the Report

This report has been produced as one of a series of 25 archaeological surveys of historic urban areas in Hertfordshire as part of the English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey Programme. All the places surveyed were either urban districts by 1900, or had urban characteristics in the past. The project is being carried out by Hertfordshire County Council's Archaeology Section in conjunction with English Heritage, who are also funding the project. The aim of the report is to provide a framework from which decisions can be made about the management of the archaeological resource of Royston town. The report is divided into three parts:

1. A summary of what is known of the archaeological and historical development of the town using the evidence from archaeology, buildings, old maps and documents, and surviving physical elements of the historic townscape such as ancient property boundaries. The evidence is presented as a series of thematic and period maps generated by GIS, accompanied by a brief explanatory text.
2. An assessment of priorities for the management of the archaeological resource of the town, including academic research priorities.
3. A strategy which aims to take forward the research and management priorities.

### 1.2 The Sources Used

The evidence for the report has been compiled from the following primary sources:

- The Hertfordshire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) ·
- The Statutory List of Buildings of Historical and Architectural Interest ·
- Maps and documents held in the Hertfordshire County Record Office ·
- Archaeological excavation and survey reports held in the SMR

In addition, numerous articles, both published and unpublished have been used; a bibliography is included at the end of the report.

### 1.3 Geography

Royston is situated in North Hertfordshire on the border with Cambridgeshire, approximately 38 miles north of London and 13 miles south-west of Cambridge (Pigots Directory 1832: 752). It is based around the crossroads of two ancient routes Ermine

Street (heading north from London to York) and the Icknield Way (running on an east-west axis). The town is partially surrounded by hills, and stands on rising ground. The hills on Therfield Heath rise to 300 feet higher than the town above sea level. To the south of Royston stands a well-marked dividing line in the watershed of the Thames and the Ouse river. Leland in his Itinerary describes the town as 'standing in a mene valley, bytwixt to hills, and yet is the towne selfset as on a welling grounde' (Kingston 1906, 2).

#### **1.4 Geology**

Royston lies upon the northmost point of the chalk Chilterns (VCH III, 253). Deposits of clay with flint cap the higher reaches of the Chilterns, as well as areas of brick earth, partly periglacial in origin and partly the insoluble residue of long weathered chalk. The lower slopes are masked by glacial sands and gravels, while in some areas the deposits are the earlier Reading Beds, clay good for making pots (Branigan 1994, 7-8).

## **2.0 AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SETTLEMENT**

### **2.1 Prehistory: Mesolithic to the Bronze Age (c. 6000 BC - 700 BC) (Fig. 1)**

Activity in the Royston area starts as early as 6000 BC (the Mesolithic). Finds dating to this era include tranchet axes and a bone harpoon. These indicate that people were still hunting and gathering in small groups and moving through the landscape, as there is no early evidence of permanent settlement.

This evidence is continued into the Neolithic. A flaked flint axe, the butt end of a flint axe, and two flint scrapers have been discovered. Royston is situated on the Icknield Way (a prehistoric trade route) east of Therfield Heath, which is one of the best surviving prehistoric landscapes in the region. Amongst the prehistoric monuments on Therfield Heath are a long barrow dating to the Neolithic, and thirteen round barrows dating to the Bronze Age from about 2200 BC. A barrow was also known within the town of Royston, although it has been long destroyed. It was situated near the station north of the White Bear Public House.

### **2.2 The Iron Age and Roman Periods (700 BC- AD 410)**

There is little occupational evidence from the Iron Age in Royston, but there is evidence on Therfield Heath (Fig. 1 ). The Mile Ditches can be seen on a north-south axis across the north-western side of the heath, across the old Icknield Way (now Baldock Road) and also between the road and the railway. They are part of a much larger distribution of linear dykes that occur along much of the Icknield Way. This may indicate that the Icknield Way may not have been confined to the width of the modern road but was much wider and lay unconfined until modern times (Crawford 1935-6, 216-220). Today they can only be seen by differential grass growth and colour. A

section was excavated to the north of the Icknield Way in 1856 and again before the dual carriageway was built in 1978. The only datable find from these excavations was a horse jawbone which produced a date of 130 BC (Stevenson 1989). There is also evidence for Romano-British occupation in Royston (Fig. 2). The crossing of two major Roman roads, Ermine Street heading north from London to York and the Icknield Way from east to west make it a likely place for settlement. Good occupation evidence has been identified to the south west of the town, on the west side of Briary Lane. A number of Roman coins have been found from that area and other finds include Roman pins, water jars, food vessels, a glass bottle, and a bronze bust of a woman. Unfortunately, the precise findspot is uncertain and only a rough area can be defined. There is also evidence of metal working along Ermine Street (the A10) to the south of the town, but again the precise location is uncertain. On Therfield Heath, a monument was known to be located at the present cricket pitch. It was levelled in 1854 and a central burial was found consisting of a flagon and a large globular urn that would have held cremated bone (Stevenson 1989).

### **2.3 The Anglo-Saxon and Medieval Periods (AD 450 - AD 1700).**

There is evidence for Anglo-Saxon burials (rare in Hertfordshire) in and around Royston (Fig. 2). A round barrow north of the White Bear Public House contained six adult burials, in grave cuts 7 ft. long, and three child-size ones, all orientated east-west. Associated grave goods included spears, blades and coins. Another three burials were discovered in Briary Lane, but like the ones in Kneesworth Street, no specific date can be given to them (Sammelmann: 2-3). Anglo-Saxon burials have also been found in earlier prehistoric mounds located on Therfield Heath, as secondary internments. One such burial was found in the Neolithic long barrow and a later excavation led to the discovery of a spearhead missed first time round, dating to the 6th century. A female burial was discovered in the Five Hills round barrows and a bronze buckle was recovered that still had leather attached to it. The dating evidence gave a range from the 5th to the 9th century. Royston in the Anglo-Saxon period was most likely to be a small hamlet, or maybe two, containing a few wooden buildings. There may also have been a centre around the cross-roads (Fig. 3). But there is no mention of Royston in the Domesday book of 1086. The first documentary reference to the town was in 1184 concerning the foundation of the Augustinian priory (Sammelmann:15; Kingston 1906:12). The priory was granted considerable rights and powers, but it seems probable that there were difficulties because of Royston's situation on the county boundary. Many disputes with the Knights Templar of Baldock arose over market rights (Wallington et al :2). Serious fires have also been recorded. The records show that these happened in 1324 and in 1405, while another less serious fire occurred on 22 March 1734 (VCH III: 259). The importance of the market to the town can be seen associated with the first fire of 1324 and how quickly the town was restored (inf. Royston Museum). Medieval Royston was a linear settlement of properties lining the roads leading to the cross, the majority being on the High Street, Kings Street and Kneesworth Street.

The name is said to derive from a lady of great importance who planted a cross where these two roads meet called 'Cross of Rohesia'. The base of the cross was a huge stone which survives today at the cross, 'which was held in those days a pious work to put passengers in mind of Christ's Passion' (Chauncy, 180). There is some dispute over the identity of Dame Roise who is said to have erected the cross. Some have suggested that she was the daughter of Aubrey Vere, chief justice of England under Henry I, and wife of Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex (Norden, 22). Others have thought that she was the wife of Richard de Clare or the Countess of Norfolk (Chauncy, 180). The first reference to the *Crux Roaisie* was in 1184 and settlement began to develop soon after when it became known as Royes or Roeyes. The first reference to Roiston was in 1286, a very late use of the *-ton* formation (Gover et al 1938). Alternatively it is possible that at some point before 1286, the cross disappeared and people began referring to the base stone that remained. A survey of 1610 suggests that 'the crosse', by association with the Clock House and Prison House, stood in the open street in Melbourne Street. At a later date, 'probably when the Prison house was moved from the middle of the street', the stone was moved to the corner of the Crown Hotel where it remained until 1786 when 'The Roys-stone was removed from the cross to the market hill by order of G. Wortham, Surveyor'. It was placed near the back entrance to the Bull Hotel where it remained until 1856 when it was removed to the garden of the newly built Royston Institute. Stukeley described the stone as being of 'very great bulk, with a square hole, or mortaise, in the centre, wherein was let the foot or tenon of the upright stone of that which was properly the cross' (Kingston 1906, 203).

In 1607 the boundaries of Royston Parish were as follows: "from Roiston Townesende towards Walden to the place where the hallows did lately stande, from thence over the heath to the nether end of the Granges called the Priory Granges or Roiston Granges to London Waie, from thence over footpath to south end of the close late of Mychaell Chambers gent. deceased, and from thence along by the closes ends to the lymekiln and from thence to the utter parte of the Cardinall Hatt closes to London Highwaie going from thence untill they come to salter's mare going to the end of it and from thence retourne to the eight-acre close ende and soe to Walden Waie". At one stage, Royston was within five parishes, Bassingbourn, Kneesworth and Melbourn in Cambridgeshire, and Therfield and Barkway in Hertfordshire (Cussans: 99). In 1897 Royston was moved wholly into Hertfordshire (Gover et al 1938).

### **The Wealth of the Town**

In the 1323 Lay Subsidy returns for that part of Royston which was in Hertfordshire thirteen people were assessed at a total of 33s. 9d. In the Cambridgeshire section of Royston, twenty-one people were assessed at 30s. 1/4d. Assessment returns for the King's taxes of Roys Cross in Hertfordshire survive for 1291 (one of the earliest taxation rolls in existence) and 1327 for the Cambridgeshire portion. It is difficult to say whether these can indicate the size of the town. It is possible to conclude that on the number of people assessed, the larger part of Roys Cross was in Cambridgeshire while in later years the Hertfordshire side became the larger part of the town. Later still the Cambridgeshire side again covered more of the town until it was brought into one

county (Kingston 1906:26-9). However it is likely that Royston, in two counties and five parishes, will not be accurately reflected in the lay subsidy rolls which, despite purportedly spanning the two counties, only indicate a small settlement.

## **2.4 The Medieval and Post Medieval Town**

### *Royston Cave, Melbourn Street*

Royston Cave [SMR 30] is a man-made cave cut from chalk beneath the road. The cave is a Scheduled Monument and is unique in Europe (Fig. 3). It was rediscovered by accident in August 1742 when workmen were erecting a bench underneath the old butter market at the cross. A milestone was found, and upon lifting the stone a small vertical shaft was discovered about 0.6m (2 feet) in diameter and 4.8m (16 feet) deep. On sending a small boy down the hole it was discovered that the shaft led into a large domed shaped chamber full of soil and debris. It was dug out straight away. All that is said to have been found was a human skull and a few bones, fragments of a small drinking cup (brown with yellow spots) and a piece of brass without any figures or inscription on it (Cussans 1881: 103). On clearing the cave it measured some 9m high (30 feet) with a diameter across the floor of 5.5m (18 feet). There is a frieze separating the top and bottom into two chambers, which at one time probably held a wooden floor. Rectangular and oven shaped recesses are cut into the walls of the cave which are thought to have acted like cupboards (Beamon, 1998: 5). Numerous 13th or 14th century carvings were discovered on the walls, representing a crucifixion, St Christopher, St Catherine, a king and queen, figures on horse-back and other symbols, which were formerly painted but have now faded (Beamon: 6). The present entrance passage was constructed in the winter of 1790 by the owner when his workmen had nothing to do. They constructed a 22m (72 feet) long tunnel from the Town House to the only place on the wall where there were no carvings. The owner, Mr Thomas Watson, took over the cave and since then it and the house have been in common ownership. He charged sixpence for people to visit the cave (Royston and District Local History Society 1996). The other entrance has been covered up but there is a grille at the top to let air circulate (RCHM p175; VCH III, 254). There was much debate over the date and purpose of the cave (Cussans 103-4).

### **The Economy of the Town**

The location of the town on the cross-roads in the midst of barley growing country caused the markets and fairs to prosper. In 1291 they were valued at £9.13s.4d. (VCH III, 254).

### **Markets and Fairs (Fig. 3)**

Royston market developed around the same time as the priory, during the 12th century, mainly because of the crossing here of the Icknield Way and Ermine Street. In 1189 Richard I granted the priory the right to hold a market each Wednesday, and a fair throughout Whitsun week. Another fair was granted to the hospital of St Nicholas in 1213, to be held on May 8-9. It was probably held in the Cambridgeshire section of the town where the hospital was situated. This was converted to a three day fair in 1236,

but probably became extinct with the hospital which had ceased to exist before 1359. In 1242 Henry III granted the priory another fair to be held on 6-7 July (VCH III: 254).

The early market place was probably sited at the intersection of the two major communication routes (Fig. 3) and originally occupied a widened part of Ermine Street to the north and south of the cross-roads (VCH III, 254). This area became covered by permanent stalls and shops until these buildings formed two streets. The middle section covered by these buildings became known as Middle Row by the beginning of the 16th century. An indenture made in the time of Henry VII described a tenement situated in 'le Myddyl Rowe' at Royston (Cussans, 100). The old butter market [SMR 11297] stood in the middle of the Icknield Way at the west end of Melbourn Street; the cave was discovered beneath it (VCH III, 254). The church, marketplace and two thirds of the town were in the parishes of Therfield and Barkway in Hertfordshire while the other third was within the parishes of Melbourn, Kneesworth and Bassingbourn in Cambridgeshire (Chauncy 1700, 182-3).

In 1199-1200 there was a dispute between the priory and the Knights Templars, who claimed exemption from tolls in all English markets. The priory was forced to restore the Templars' privileges (Salmon 1728, 356).

Shortly after the dissolution of the priory in May 1537, the market, fairs and court of pie powder with the profits of the windmill from the late priory were leased to Richard Cromwell for 21 years. Much of the market place was occupied by about fifty shops held on lease by various owners and Cromwell leased his interest in the market to Edward Annesby. In 1540 a grant was made to Robert Chester (lord of the manor) of all the possessions of the priory including the two fairs and weekly market (VCH III, 254).

Royston was known as 'an exceedingly good market town' (Kingston 1893: 108) and it became one of the biggest corn markets in the area. At the time of Henry VI (1423-61) there had been 'such a plenty of corn in this Market that the best Wheat was sold here for 12d the quarter' (Chauncy, 181). In the 17th century the great corn market of Royston was frequently mentioned in travellers' writings, one of whom described the town as 'a dry town, good for the utterance of cattell, barley and malt' (VCH III, 254). Both the 1832 Pigots Directory and Kelly's Directory of 1882 mention Royston market, held every Wednesday (as it is today) with it being very good for corn, with five annual fairs for horses, cattle, sheep and cheese (Pigot 1832, 753). The market-place today is on Market Hill, east of the High Street and south of the church and priory (VCH III, 254). Its success was due to its situation, and to the maltings, many of which were situated in Royston. It was a scene of tremendous activity (Kingston 1906: 66-7). But after 1888 the Whitsun fair was no more and the July fair (sometimes known as Becket's fair) was in decline. The only fair of any importance was the October fair (VCH III, 255).

## **Industry (Fig. 6)**

### *Malting*

During the 17th and 18th centuries, malting became a major national industry. Royston's advantageous position on Ermine Street provided a collection centre and a route to Ware and then to London, the principal market for malted barley produced in Hertfordshire (Johnson 1970: 28). However, the paucity of information relating to the malting industry in Royston may indicate that relatively small scale processing for local consumption took place in the town and it is likely that barley was transported from Royston area to be malted at a major centre such as Ware, and then sent to London. The presence of so many maltings in Royston (Fig. 6) had an influence on the condition of roads. The Royston maltings were also sometimes impeded by the king during the 17th century (Kingston 1906:132-3) and the carrying of malt on horseback was restricted between All Saints and May day (Kingston 1906, 134).

There were a number of maltings in Royston. The main one was probably in Kneesworth Street, south of the station [SMR 5388], but there are records of others on Melbourn Street [SMR 11322], Back Street (now King Street) [SMR 11323], Baldock Street [SMR 11324], High Street [SMR 11343] and London Road [SMR 11294] (Pigots Directory: 1832:753). Some of these buildings still survive. The Kneesworth Street malting dates to c1860, but has been greatly altered and is now used for other types of industry. Others have been demolished or incorporated into shops and houses (Johnson 1970:173). Another maltings [SMR 11284] is known on Kneesworth Street, dating to 1750 (Herts & Cambs Reporter & Royston Crow 19/7/91 38). The building is now the coach house and stables of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Yew Tree House. 'At one end of the barn like structure the (Primitive) Methodists met for worship, at the other, later on, a school was conducted and it was here that the first free trade meeting was held in Royston' (Kingston 1906, 202).

### *Brewing*

Brewing was another productive industry during the 18th century and brewers seem to have been operating in every town and many of the villages in Hertfordshire (Johnson 1970: 42). The principal brewery [SMR 5447] in Royston (Fig. 6) was probably Phillips of Royston, a firm purchased in the 1720s. In the 1890s 'J & J. E Phillips Ltd.' had a large brewery complex on Baldock Street (2nd ed. 25" OS map, 1896). In August 1909 the brewery caught fire. After the blaze a bell was discovered after the blaze which had the date 1765 on it. Brewing resumed on the site in February 1910 and in 1949 the brewery was taken over by J. W. Green of Luton (Sillence 1993:19). Daintry in Melbourn Street is also recorded as brewing in 1832 (Pigot's Directory: 753).

### *Lime Kiln*

The main lime kiln [SMR 11304] was on Barkway road (Fig. 6) and is referred to in 1607 as part of a parish boundary. It was still operating in 1896 (2nd ed. 25" OS map, 1896), but closed in October 1914 after an employee, George Reed, was killed when 30-40 tons of chalk fell on him from the chalk face he was digging. This fatality and the decreasing demand for lime marked the end of the workings (Sillence: 28). A second

lime kiln [SMR 11305] was recorded in 1896 south west of the town on what is now Echo Hill (2nd ed. 25" OS map, 1896).

### *Brass and Iron Foundry*

A brass and iron foundry [SMR 11274] was in existence in 1896 (2nd ed. 25" OS map, 1896) and comprised a large L-shaped building (Fig. 6) with ancillary buildings, located off Mill Road (formerly Gas Works Road). Sale particulars of 1928 describe the buildings as 'consisting of well-built ranges of workshops, store shed, offices &c' It also included a brick and tiled machine shop which adjoined a 'similar constructed shop' fitted with a furnace. This led into a small store and a pattern room. A timber built store with a corrugated iron roof was situated in the centre of the yard. Other buildings included a cooling shed with iron doors and a brick and tiled range. The whole site covered an area of 15,246 'superficial feet' and adjoined a large 'well-built, desirable residence' (HCRO) which may have belonged to the owner of the foundry.

### *Steam Mill*

A large steam mill [SMR 5802] near the station dated to 1864 (Fig. 6). Sale particulars for the mill in 1883 describe a 'two storey, slated building, containing three pairs of French stones with Dressing Tackle and Hoist, Seed Mill with Dressing machines, driven by a fourteen horse power table engine with boiler. With capital storage, workshops, stable, cart shed with loft over, and also a large yard having a folding gate entrance from the street'. The site covered a total area of 1200 square yards, and was subject to a Tithe of 10s (HCRO: D/ERY B326). It is still in use today making soya products (Johnson 1970: 174).

### *Windmills*

A windmill [SMR 11275] is known to have existed on the north east side of Mill Road (hence the name) (Herts & Cambs Reporter & Royston Crow 1/9/72: 8). The windmill was first mentioned in 1363 and it appears on Seller's 1676 map. There are two other areas in Royston where windmills have been identified (Fig. 6). The first [SMR 11306], between the roads to Barkway and Reed, is on Seller's 1676 map. A second windmill [SMR 11344] has been identified to the east of the town on the south side of the Icknield Way, and possibly dates to 1728-1749 (Moore 1985: 8-9). The absence of water in the parish accounts for the lack of watermills in early records.

### **The Inn Trade (Fig. 8)**

The position of Royston on the Icknield Way and Ermine Street meant a great number of travellers passed though Royston. It has been referred to as a town of inns and well over fifty-five are known at various times, the earliest dating to the 16th century (Fig. 8). In 1863 thirty-one public houses are known. This number decreased to twenty-six in 1906 and then to sixteen in 1937. After 1962 only eight survived (Joliffe & Jones, 1995: 117).

## ***Present Day Inns and Public Houses***

### ***16th Century***

#### *The Old Bull Inn (formerly the Black Bull), 56 High Street.*

The first documentary reference to The Bull [SMR 11288] was in 1520, when it was known as the Black Bull. It was one of the principal inns in Royston, providing stabling for more than one hundred horses (Joliffe & Jones: 118; Jones 1990: 7). In 1772 it was one of the first to provide its own coach service, to Ware, extended to London in 1776. During the 19th century petty sessions were held at the Bull until 1850 when magistrates were instructed to meet in the newly constructed Court House on Market Hill. However, sessions continued to be held at the inn until being moved to the Police Station in 1883, because the Court House was considered 'less comfortable, and not at all convenient, than the room at the Bull' (Johnson, 1962: 85). The building itself is reputedly 16th century in date, although it has undergone substantial alteration (DoE List). The structure is of two stories in which timber-framing and varying floor levels indicate an early date, despite the late 17th century internal chimney stacks and fireplaces being the earliest datable features (Smith 1993, 149). In 1830 substantial alterations were undertaken, which included re-fronting the entire building in gault brick, with channelled rustication on the front elevation. The interior also underwent some general alteration and a ballroom, which had reputedly been removed from the Red Lion, was added to the rear to form assembly rooms (Smith 1993, 149). The stone of the ancient cross also spent some of its life beside the back entrance of the Bull Yard, between 1786 and 1856 (Jones: 8).

### ***17th Century***

#### *The Chequers, 58 High Street*

Little is known about the history of the Chequers [SMR 11289], as it is much overshadowed by the Bull which adjoins it; the first reference is in 1618. Like the Boars Head, the Chequers has links with the de Vere family who owned the pub in 1746 (Johnson 1962: 85). The name and symbol of the Chequers may also have possible links and derive from the arms of the royal house of Stuart which became closely associated with Royston in the 17th century. It may just indicate a chequerboard used for accounting purposes or the game of chequers (Joliffe & Jones: 118). The building is a roughcast timber framed and jettied structure of two storeys; the DoE List ascribes it to the 16th century. The building was altered in the late 17th century, including sash windows to the front and south and a cut bracketed doorhood in the south elevation. Internal features include fragments of a 15th century wall painting in the upper storey (DoE List).

### ***18th Century***

#### *The Coach and Horses, 14 Kneesworth Street*

The first reference to the Coach and Horses [SMR: 11290] was probably as the King's Head in 1760. In 1786, when it was bought by John Phillips of the Royston Brewery, it

was 'some time heretofore the King's Head and for some time past the Coach and Horses' (Johnson 1962: 85). In the early 19th century Lower King Street was just an open ditch and access to the back yard of the Coach and Horses was via a plank across this ditch (Jones: 10). In 1840 the licensee was threatened with the loss of his licence if he continued to allow Joseph Peat, a local charist, to continue to address passersby and in 1863 the licensee was a fishmonger who pushed licensing laws by having a connecting door between the pub and his fishmonger's shop. This door was later sealed as he was trying to run both businesses together (Joliffe & Jones: 118). The building itself dates to the 17th century and is a timber-framed and plastered structure of two and a half storeys. The south elevation features modern attempts at recreating 'half timbering' and there is some modern pargetting. An undated wing extends to the rear and is significantly lower than the main building (DoE List).

*The Green Man (formerly the Thoroughfare), 37 Market Hill*

The Royston Dissenting Book Club was founded here in 1761 which was the first reference to the pub itself. It continued to meet here until it transferred to the Red Lion in the High Street in 1789. The pillory and stocks also stood here until 1793 when they were moved to the lower end of Fish Hill (Jones: 10). The Green Man [SMR 11291] had a bowling green, large enough to accommodate a marquee when needed. The two storied white pebbledash building dates to the late 17th or early 18th century, although it has been greatly altered. The front elevation features four segmental arches, one of which incorporates a carriageway entrance to the rear yard. An undated one and a half storey rear wing extends along the western part of the site (DoE List).

## **19th Century**

*The Jockey (formerly Red Cow, Black Boy), Baldock Street*

The first known reference to this pub was as the Red Cow in 1870; it was changed to the Black Boy in the 1940's. The name was changed again to the Jockey as a dedication to Charlie Spares who rode the Derby winner Arctic Prince in 1951, trained by W. Stephenson on the heath (Jones: 12).

*The Boars Head (formerly the Blue Boars Head), 35 Market Hill*

The first known reference to this alehouse [SMR 11292] was in 1806 when the licensee was William Watson who held it until 1827. The symbol of the Blue Boar's Head could be linked with the crest of the de Vere family who held several properties in Hertfordshire and the Royston area, including Buntingford and Barkway (Jones: 6). The building itself is a timber-framed, two storied structure of 17th century date. The external elevations are of colour-washed pebbledash surmounting a stucco plinth and feature 19th century lattice fenestration (DoE List).

*The North Star, Kneesworth Street*

The North Star [SMR 11301] is a typical railway tavern with its first reference four years after the railway was built in 1850; it was probably constructed around the same time. It was however handicapped by being on the side of the railway away from the town (Joliffe & Jones: 118).

*The White Bear, Kneesworth Street*

The White Bear [SMR 11302] probably dates to about 1800 as three licensees are known before James Smith who held it in 1826. It had a rural setting with a pond, bounded by a bank and trees that stood in front of the house. The gardens were later destroyed by road widening (Johnson 1962: 85).

***Former Inns and Public Houses –***

**16th Century**

*Bell & Anchor (formerly Bell), Market Hill*

First reference was to the Bell [SMR 11348] in 1537; the inn closed in 1894. It stood on the south side of Market Hill, in what was known as Butchery Row.

*Black Swan, Market Hill*

An inn of this name [SMR 11303] stood in Middle Row (between High Street and Back Street) in 1537; it was moved to Butchery Row at the end of the 18th century. One of the last known licensees was there in 1880.

*Cardinal's Hat (formerly The Mitre), Baldock Street*

A pre-Reformation inn situated on the north side of Baldock Street. The last known reference was in 1610, but it could have been the inn known as the Mitre in the 17th century (see the Mitre).

*Cart*

The only reference to this inn was in the parish records of 1537.

*?Cock, Kneesworth Street*

Situated on the east side of Kneesworth Street, north of the cross, the Cock (not certainly an inn) was purchased along with the Greyhound in 1604 by James I who converted it into part of his hunting lodge [SMR 2723].

*Crane*

The only known reference to this pre-Reformation inn was in 1537; its site is unknown.

*Crown or Old Crown, Melbourn Street*

The Crown or Old Crown [SMR 11307] was situated virtually on the cross, between Kneesworth Street and Lower King Street. The first reference to it was in 1537; it was possibly rebuilt in 1628. It was demolished in 1929 when it became a serious obstruction for traffic. Cock fighting was recorded here in 1767. By 1793 it provided its own coach service, six days a week to the Four Swans Inn, Bishopsgate Street, London.

*Crown and Dolphin, Kneesworth Street*

This inn [SMR 11308] stood near the corner of Kneesworth and Melbourn Street, just north of the cross. Its first reference was as the Dolphin in 1537 (a corruption of the

French 'Dauphin'). When James I owned the Old Palace in Kneesworth Street, his son Charles had a residence next door to the inn. This inn also had its own coach and wagon service to the Catherine Wheel inn, Bishopsgate Street, London, in 1750. The licence was not renewed after 1916. The post that held the sign can still be seen on the building of what was until recently Kirkham's sweet shop.

*Falcon, Melbourn Street*

This pre-Reformation inn [SMR 11309] was located on the corner of Church Lane, part of where Market One is now situated. It was sold in 1846 to a Mr Westhorpe. Royston's first post office was established in 1815; in 1851 the business was transferred to the Falcon, where Thomas Daintry combined the role of post master with licensee. In 1898, the Falcon was reported to the licensing meeting of magistrates as three private dwellings had their entrances in its yard. The last reference to it was c1937.

*Greyhound, Kneesworth Street*

This was also a pre-Reformation inn, purchased along with the Cock by James I in 1604 to convert it into part of his hunting lodge. The buildings were kept as part of the guard chamber and officers' lodgings [SMR 2723].

*Lamb*

The location of this pre-Reformation inn is uncertain.

*Ram's Head, Melbourn Street*

Possibly situated near the entrance of the cave on the north side of Melbourn Street, it may later have become the White Horse. It is also a pre-Reformation house and was owned in 1527 by William Lee of Radwell.

*Saracen's Head, Briary Lane Sun Hill*

The location of this inn is uncertain, although by 1537 it was the name given to the block of land, tenements, inns and shops held by the priory. It is believed to have been in the south west of the town, in what is now the residential area around Briary Lane and Sun Hill. A number of different inn names have been referred to the same site at various times: the Buffalo's Head before 1870, the Devil's Head c1870, the Cricketer's Arms between 1872-74 and the Blackmoor's Head c1879.

*Star*

The location of this inn is uncertain; its only known reference was in 1537.

*Swan, Melbourn Street*

The earliest reference to the Swan was in 1537, but it has been suggested that the White Horse occupied the same site in the 18th century. It was situated next to the former Ram's Head, above the cave entrance.

*Tabard or Talbot, High Street.*

This inn [SMR 11310] was the end house of Middle Row, south of the cross. It could accommodate twenty horses in the stables that were situated behind what was the old

post office, but is now the Old Post Office Public House. The earliest reference was in 1537 and it was probably closed in 1806 and later demolished so the area could be pedestrianised. Cock fighting was recorded here in 1767.

*White Hart, Market Hill*

This inn [SMR 11345] was situated at the foot of Market Hill on the corner of John Street, with its earliest reference in 1537. It probably closed c1907.

## **17th Century**

*Angel, High Street*

An Angel Inn may have existed on the west side of Lower King Street, north of the Old Crown, although little information has been found to support this. The Angel [SMR 11311] in the High Street, was situated on the east side running through to Market Hill giving its name to Angel Pavement in 1965. It was last licensed in 1938.

*Half Moon, Baldock Street*

The only references to the Half Moon were in 1610 and 1635. It was situated on the north side of Baldock Street, between the Cardinal's Hat and Lower King Street.

*Mitre, Baldock Street*

This was another pre-Reformation inn and was referred to in 1635. It was possibly an alternative name for the Cardinal's Hat (above).

*Red Lion, Market Hill*

This was a famous posting inn [SMR 11312] during the 17th century and although situated on Market Hill, it had a frontage onto the High Street, just south of the Angel. It was a centre for popular entertainment ranging from cock fighting to the Amateur Theatrical Society. Royston was a popular venue for illegal fights because of its position on the county boundary. In January 1827, it was the headquarters of Jem Ward, the bare-knuckle boxing champion of that time, who was unable to defend his title and lost to Peter Crawley when they fought on the Heath. In 1832 a dinner was held to celebrate the passing of the Reform Act and the construction of the Royston Club room. This room was originally built for them at the rear of the inn which was later used as a ballroom. Eventually the room was removed and re-erected as assembly rooms at the back of the nearby Bull Hotel. In 1898 the Red Lion was reported to the licensing meeting because four cottages had their access through its yard. Consideration was referred to the next meeting 'if there was still legal objection'. The rampant lion sign was transferred to a public house of the same name at the top of Reed Hill on London Road. It also provided a twice weekly coach in 1763 to London and St Ives and in 1786-96 it was the stop for the first mail coach.

*White Horse, 6 & 8 Melbourn Street*

This could have been the site of both the Swan and the Ram's Head close to the cave entrance. The inn [SMR 11313] provided many coaching services on Thursdays to the Catherine Wheel in Bishopsgate Street, London, on Wednesdays to Shepreth and

Cambridge and also daily to Melbourn and Meldreth. The number of coaches known to have operated here during the 18th century and 19th century suggest a long posting tradition and an inn of considerable size. There is no record of a licensee after 1938. The building is thought to be of the late 16th or early 17th century in origin and features a projecting central gable above a carriageway entrance leading to the rear yard. A plastered shop front was inserted into no. 8 in the 19th century and the building was refronted in gault brick in 1926. No. 6 has a modern shop front and the brick frontage has been painted (DoE List).

## **18th Century**

### *?Dial and Crown, High Street*

In 1767 it was situated in the High Street, near to the Red Lion. There is a good chance that this was not an inn at all and that it was a watchmakers sign as there are no records of licences for the Dial and Crown or other similar names.

### *George, High Street*

The George was situated on the corner of George Lane and the High Street. There is no other information apart from the following entry on the parish register of burials, dated 5 September 1733: 'James Blood of the parish of Ravenstone in Buckinghamshire, who was killed by the sign of the George in the High Street which fell upon him as he was driving his wagon through the street'.

### *22 (formerly The Tarry House) 24 High Street*

The building [SMR 11314] is described as an 18th century front to a 16th or 17th century building. Pebbledash walls with an old tiled roof and gabled dormer. It consists of two storeys and attics. The first floor has flush sash windows on the right and canted bay sash windows on the left, both with glazing bars. It now has a modern shop front.

## **19th Century**

### *Black Horse, Barkway Street*

This was on the south side of Barkway Street opposite the Boars Head. The first recorded licensee was in 1806 and the licence was not renewed after 1916. The building was later destroyed for road widening.

### *Catherine Wheel, Melbourn Street*

This was opposite the cave on the south side of Melbourn Street. The name was probably prompted by the figure of St Catherine carved on the wall of the cave. It was known to have had a licence in 1806 but was closed in 1892.

### *Fox and Duck, Market Hill*

Its first referenced licensee was in 1806 and the last could have been around 1893. It was just a small alehouse on the west side of Market Hill.

*Griffin, Fish Hill*

As with the Fox and Duck the first referenced licensee was in 1806, but it closed in about 1886.

*Hoops, High Street*

The Hoops was on the west side of the High Street. Its first recorded licensee was in 1806, although it was probably open before that, and was demolished in 1961.

*Old Plough, Market Hill*

This was a small alehouse situated on the west side of Market Hill and the corner of George Lane. A.J.L. Ward ran a common lodging house here charging 1s a night or 6d if they helped with the chores. Its first licence was in 1806 and the last in 1927. The site was cleared in 1939 for a static water. Today it is part of the delivery yard behind Woolworth's as well as the footpath on Market Hill.

*Queen's Head, High Street*

First recorded in 1806, it was destroyed in a fire in 1841. It was situated on the east side of the High Street, now the site of John Street (after John Phillips, the brewer of Royston, who was given the land to provide access through to Market Hill).

*Sun, Sun Hill*

An 18th century building, now Sun Hill House at the foot of Sun Hill and King Street. It was known to have a licence in 1806 but was not renewed after 1916.

*Three Horse Shoes, London Road*

This house [SMR 11315] is one of the few thatched houses remaining in Royston. It stands on the west side of London Road opposite the Warren. Its first recorded licensee was in 1823 and the licence was not renewed after 1931.

*Three Jolly Butchers, Market Hill*

This was first recorded in 1806 and ceased trading c1892. It was on the east side of Market Hill opposite George Lane. The site later became the school playground.

*White Lion, High Street*

This was another popular coaching inn [SMR 11347] during the 19th century. It was situated on one of the busiest parts of the High Street, between the Red Lion and The Bull. The first record of a licence was in 1806.

*Windmill, Barkway Street*

First referred to in 1806 but is probably much older. Situated in Barkway Street but in 1832 it was referred to as being in Market Hill.

*Banyers Hotel, 16 Melbourn Street*

An early 19th century refronting in neo-classical style of a much earlier building [SMR 11316]. The timber framed structure is refaced in gault brick; two storeys with a Welsh slated roof behind parapet and tall Greek Ionic pilasters to pediment right of centre. It

has seven sash windows with glazing bars under flat arches. The doric porch has cast iron balcony railings and the road side elevation has a pediment first floor cast iron balconette. The ground floor has bay windows. The north projecting wing has three ground floor light pedimented windows.

## 2.5 The Townscape

### Religious Buildings and Institutions

#### *Church of St John The Baptist, Melbourn Street (Fig. 3)*

Until the dissolution of the monasteries, Royston was included within five parishes. In 1540, upon the dissolution of the priory, the inhabitants of the town purchased the priory church [SMR 569], and it was made the parish church of the new parish of Royston (Chauncy, 183; Wallington et al, 2-3). It consists of nave and aisles which are the 13<sup>th</sup> century chancel and quire of the priory church, a 16<sup>th</sup> century west tower and a 19<sup>th</sup> century chancel. The nave was re-roofed early in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it also has 15<sup>th</sup> century carved stone figures of St Thomas Becket, Madonna and Child with a richly carved 15<sup>th</sup> century wood pulpit and lectern. There is also a medieval octagonal font in the north aisle. The walls are of clunch and rubble, with flint facings and stone dressings which date to the 1870s. In 1600 the justices of the peace certified that the church was 'utterly ruined and fallen downe to the ground' and the privy council gave license for collections to be made for its rebuilding. The history of the church is difficult to trace owing to the alterations and re-use of old materials. The chancel was lighted by triple lancets, parts of which remain in the north and south walls of the chancel. The churchyard is one of the smallest in the county and did not exist prior to the creation of the parish in 1540. It was bounded by buildings on the Melbourn Street side. The last of these were removed in the late 1950's, and the monuments cleared in 1959. Two additional burial grounds [SMR 11300] were acquired on Melbourn Road in 1877, one for the Church of England and one for nonconformists (Wallington et al,13).

#### *The Priory (Fig. 3)*

The priory [SMR 4200], south of Melbourn Street adjoining the cross, was founded within the manor of Newsells in Barkway parish (VCH III : 260). The lord of Newsells, Eustace de Mere, built a chapel between 1164 and 1179 for three canons. This became a priory for Black Canons (Wallington et al, 1). He gave the monastery 100 acres of wood and 30 acres of land with common pasture. 'When therefore he and several others had endowed it with a competent revenue for the maintenance of these canons, houses and inns were erected there, which in the process of time did multiply to a town' (Chauncy, 180). A house of Augustinian (known as Austin or black) canons was established on the same site, by his nephew Ralph of Rochester. The dedication was originally to St John the Baptist but it was changed to include St Thomas of Canterbury who had been assassinated in 1170 (Wallington et al, 1). The priory grounds were surrounded by a flint wall, parts of which can still be seen. There was also a small pond which survived until the Second World War, and provided the canons with fresh fish. In 1189 Richard II granted the prior and canons the right to hold a fair in the week of Pentecost as well as a weekly market. Royston priory was dissolved by the Act of

Suppression in 1536 and work almost immediately began to tear down the buildings apart from the church. At the dissolution the monastery was valued at £89 16s per annum (Chauncy, 181).

The manor house, still known as the Priory, is an old building erected on the site south of the church (Cussans, 100; Smith 1993, 150). The manor comprised lands which were granted to the Augustinian priory when it was founded in 1163. After the dissolution the manor was acquired by Robert Chester (d.1574). In 1565 Chester was constituted Sheriff of the Counties of Hertford and Essex. He converted part of the priory into his principal residence and entertained Mary of Guise here on her journey from Scotland to France in 1551. In 1578 the house was considered a stopping place on a royal progress and was dismissed as being 'A very unnecessary hows for receipt of her Ma.'ty yt stands adioynninge to the church over the Sowthe syde thereof not haveing any pleasant prospects any way'. Plans prepared in 1578 show three sides of a courtyard with associated buildings, with the principal rooms above the cellars. These are difficult to relate to the church but were evidently part of the claustral buildings. The present house incorporates three unequal timber-framed bays of two stories, perhaps dating to 1600; the truss to the south is weathered. The only exposed framing is a large post to the south which is morticed as if for a window. Part of a timber-framed house survives that is thought to have been built on the site between 1628 and 1640. It is possibly contemporary with the demolition of much of the converted priory. After the Second World War most of the grounds became the Priory Memorial Gardens.

#### *Meeting House and Congregational Chapels*

There was a considerable Quaker community in Royston from 1655 onwards. Their meeting house [SMR 11276] was built on the east side of Kneesworth Street just north of the cross; tombstones still mark this site today (Kingston 1893 noted p259 VCH III). Congregationalists also met in Royston and their original chapel was located on Middle Row just north of the cross. This chapel is thought to have dated to c1706. In 1792 the Congregationalists built a new chapel, the 'New Meeting' [SMR 11277], on the west side of Kneesworth Street opposite the remains of James I hunting lodge. The old chapel continued to be used as the 'Old Meeting' until it was destroyed by the 1841 fire. Following the fire, John Street was opened in 1842 into the High Street from Fish Hill (VCH III, 255). The present chapel [SMR 11299] was built in 1842 on the north east corner of John Street, to replace the old meeting house which had existed in Middle Row since 1706. The Congregationalists had met in the house of John Wheeler in 1672, and their meetings may have originated in the lectures given on market days by the ejected minister of Barley, Nathaniel Wheeler (1660-2) (VCH III, 255).

#### *Palace of King James I, Kneesworth Street (Fig. 5)*

The whole of the Middle Row, Kneesworth Street and Back Street area is associated with the house and lodgings [SMR 2723] occupied by James I and Charles I and their courts. A building in Kneesworth Street is all that remains of the eastern part of the King's Lodgings, the rest having been demolished early in the 18th century. The building is rectangular and measures approx. 53' by 19'. The front is on the east side, facing the garden, with the back facing the street. It consists of two stories with attics

and a cellar under the southern part. At either end on each storey is an apartment, and between them is a square staircase with a newel stair. The south room on the ground story has an old fireplace with a wooden lintel, partly built up, above which are the remains of 17th century painted ornament. The south room on the upper storey has an old brick fireplace with a four centred arch; surrounded by 18th century wooden jambs and lintel. In the north room are the remains of a coloured stencil pattern about 6" wide, under the small plaster cornice and vertical bands dividing the wall into panels, 17th century in date. The street front has two large plain projecting chimneys, mostly rebuilt, only the lower parts being of old thin bricks. The entrance doorway and windows are modern; the garden front was entirely rebuilt during the 18th century, with a moulded brick cornice and plain flanking pilasters. The whole building was repaired in 1910 and a wing added to the north (VCH III, 256). Originally it extended into the middle of Kneesworth Street but it was partially demolished in the late 1600s or early 1700s. Recent excavations suggest there was a fire and the front of the building reduced to its present state (inf. Royston Museum). In 1610 a survey stated 'the Kynges majestie holdeth freely one fayre howse, sometime two tenements namely ye greyhound and ye cock' (Cussans, 101). In the 1652 Parliamentary Survey of Cambs. the whole of the lodgings were described as 'all of brick, well tiled. double-built, in length 78ft, breadth 43ft, height from eaves to ground 24ft, thickness of the walls 24 inches'. Below stairs were six lodging chambers well-floored and well-matted, while upstairs there were six rooms, including the presence and privy chambers, with wainscot shutting to all windows (VCH III, 257).

James I passed through Royston in 1603 shortly after his accession and stayed at the Priory with Robert Chester, attracted by Royston and opportunities to engage in his favourite sport of hunting (Ritchie 1957-8: 106). James hired Chester's house for a year and during 1604 began to convert the Cock and the Greyhound inns into a house for himself (VCH III, 257). Entries in the Privy Purse Book indicate that James I spent about £500 p.a. in repairing roads, building bridges, and preserving game in the neighbourhood. Charles I spent much of his early youth in Hunsdon and Royston; he last visited Royston in 1647. It was said at the death of Charles I, the buildings, except only the King's and prince's lodgings were much out of repair, but the commissioners who surveyed them recommended that they should be turned into tenements rather than demolished (VCH III: 258). A survey in 1649 was ordered by Parliament for all the palaces and lands belonging to the late King, which found that the ground on which the royal residence stood was enclosed and was three acres and a quarter in extent. It was bounded on the north by the common fields of Royston, on the south by the township of Royston, on the east by pasture land and on the west by the high road to Stilton. The value of the house and materials with the land was worth £660, or £50 p.a., the land alone being worth only £4 10s.p.a. (Cussans, 103). James had spent nearly £4000 on his house between 1603 and 1611 and in 1610 the Hertfordshire magistrates complained of the inconvenience of carting 500 loads of building material to Royston in the harvest season (VCH III: 257). Following the Restoration the greater part of the estate fell to the Crown and was leased until 1812. Initially it was leased as a high status dwelling, but eventually it was sold by the Commissioners of Land Revenue to John Stamford, carpenter of Royston, for £300 (Cussans, 103).

Royston may well have been a key administrative centre during James' reign because of the amount of time he spent here. He added buildings for visitors, partly in the gardens, partly in the close; a garden was enclosed for them in the latter (VCH III: 257). Royston was reputedly a centre of court intrigue. It was here that James was nearly assassinated by Thomas Francheschi, a Spanish agent (Ritchie: 107). It was also in Royston that James signed the death warrant for Sir Walter Raleigh in 1618 (Kingston 1906: 113). On the death of James I in 1625, his residence was left to his son, Charles I. Charles did not stay in Royston as frequently as his father, perhaps once or twice while passing through on his way elsewhere. (VCH III: 258).

### *Palace Outbuildings*

In Kneesworth Street just south of the old Palace is a 16<sup>th</sup> century timber jettied house [SMR 11317] which evidently formed part of the Palace outbuildings. It still retains the old wooden door frame and an open roof with moulded trusses, but the interior has been considerably altered. To the north of the Palace are some remains of the brick walls of the old stables (VCH III, 256).

## **Other Buildings in Royston**

### **15th Century (Fig. 4)**

#### *59 & 61 High Street.*

This two storied, timber-framed and plastered building may represent the earliest infilling of the south market place. No. 59 [SMR 11337] apparently dates to the late 16th century. Its first floor is jettied to the east and west and it is made level with that of no. 61, which accounts for the unusually high ground floor. This is because the ground on which it stands falls away to the north. The south chimney stack is probably a later insertion (Smith 1993, 149). The building of no. 61 [SMR 11338] has been identified as the earliest part of the two buildings, apparently dating to the late 15th or early 16th century. This earliest phase features a four-centred 'Tudor' arched doorway on both the ground and first floor levels on the south elevation. This may suggest that the building originally extended further to the south, or may have been constructed to adjoin an earlier structure. Internal evidence can be seen in the form of a dragon beam and a carved corner post, suggesting that the building was originally jettied to both the north and east elevations. However, the construction of no. 59 to the north concealed the northern jetty.

#### *63 & 65 High Street.*

These two adjoining buildings [SMR 11339] are timber-framed and plastered, apparently dating to the late 15th or early 16th century. The ground floor is colour washed brick, while the upper floor is plaster faced and oversails onto exposed corbels. They are a single storey structure with attics, under an old tiled roof with gabled dormers. Alterations to the building include the refacing of the ground floor with brick and the insertion of sash windows. It may have originated as a late medieval open hall house.

*9 Kneesworth Street.*

This building [SMR 11318] is a late 15th century hall house with an altered front. The red brick plinth is colour washed and plastered, with an old tiled roof and cornice. Its two storeys comprise timber framework with close studding and a pair of archbraces with diagonal struts. There is evidence of a 15th century triple light window with wooden mullion mouldings. The building was part of James I's hunting lodge and consists of the crosswing of an open hall to the south, with jetties to the west and east. 'The rear jetty is remarkable for the projection of four joists for a distance of 4ft, apparently to form a bridge to a two storey range to the east, which is jettied to the south and has been truncated. The existence of the bridge suggests that there was a way through to the buildings to north (no 11), i.e. the buildings were linked long before the hunting lodge was established' (Smith 1993, 149). In the 19th century a shop front was inserted.

*11 Kneesworth Street*

A 15th century timber framed building [SMR 11319] with an old tiled roof with corbelled cornice. Its two storeys have a panelled plaster front. There is a central door to the building and the two ground floor windows are boarded. The building was once the guardhouse of James I's Palace and its timber framework still retains the 15th century window with chamfered wooden reveals. The jettied building has four bay windows to the north which indicates the former presence of a timber chimney. There are other examples of similar windows on first and ground floors. The first floor is divided into a large room of two bays to the north and a smaller bay to the south. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the building was refaced with lathe and plaster, casement windows inserted and the chimney rebuilt in brick (Smith 1993, 149).

*17 to 21 (odd) Kneesworth Street.*

Possibly dating to the 15th or 16th century, this timber framed building [SMR 11321] is faced with panelled plaster. Its two storeys are covered by an old tiled roof. It has been identified as part of the buttery of the Palace, from 1603 to 1640. The two storeys and attics are constructed from brick and the clasped purlin roof exposed at the north gabled end suggest a timber framed building, but there are no internal features to confirm this. The front elevation to the east is rendered and later additions obscure the rear of the building. The oldest datable feature is the staircase in a turret which originally projected to the west and is probably dated to 1700. All the fireplaces and nearly all the traces of the chimney stacks have been removed. The first floor plan may have consisted of a large room to the south with lateral stack and a drawing room opposite the staircase. In 1712 the house was described as 'a messuage now used as two tenements in middle row'. Only one messuage was mentioned in the sale of 1742 (Smith 1993, 149).

## **16th Century**

### *6 High Street*

Possibly dating to the 16th or 17th century, the building [SMR 11325] has been altered and now has a modern shop frontage. Its two storeys have a painted slate front, with an old tiled roof. The front probably conceals evidence of an older timber framework.

### *21 High Street*

Comprising two storeys, the building's [SMR 11326] ground floor has a stucco face; the first floor is channelled plaster. Originally 16th century, it has a 19th century shop front with sash windows. The back elevation is plastered.

### *2 & 3 Kneesworth Street*

This is a late 16th or early 17th century house [SMR 11327] with an altered front, that has been identified as the pantry of its neighbouring house in Melbourn Street and occupied during reign of James I by Prince Charles. Inside the building the timber framing is exposed. The structure is now a shop.

### *16 Kneesworth Street*

The timber framed and plastered building of 16 Kneesworth Street [SMR 11328] is 16th or 17th century. The building has been altered but still retains colour washed brick on the ground floor. Consisting of two storeys, its first floor has flush casement windows with glazing bars.

### *18 & 20 Kneesworth Street*

Dating to the 16th or early 17th century, this two storied building [SMR 11329] has colour washed rough plaster, with a tiled roof. At the centre of the building is a massive red brick chimestack that has been partly rebuilt. The lower 19th century north wing has a low pitched roof with two sash windows under cambered arches.

### *4 High Street*

Another 16th or early- 17th century building [SMR 11330] with a colour washed, pebbledash front that probably conceals a timber framework. The building has now a modern shop front.

## **17th Century**

### *31 Kneesworth Street*

The building [SMR 11332] is dated to the 17th century, with whitewashed cement rendering and a tiled roof. It is also part of the former coach house, stables and granary of King James I hunting lodge. The front has been replaced by a 19th century shop window.

### *Barn behind No. 31 Kneesworth Street*

This early 17th century building [SMR 11298] was formerly the stables of King James' hunting lodge. Its timber framed structure has red brick nogging with six bay roof trusses.

*Barn behind No.28 & 30 Kneesworth Street*

This 17th century timber framed building [SMR 11333] has a weatherboard with four bays, braced with tie beams. The roof trusses have been repaired with new timbers and it was also part of the coach house of the Palace.

*28 Kneesworth Street*

The building [SMR 11334] lies on the site of the Palace coach house and is dated to the 17th century. It has a plaster faced front and an old tiled roof, with box dormer.

*30 Kneesworth Street*

A continuation of no. 28 Kneesworth Street, this building [SMR 11335] dates to the 17th century, but was altered in the late 18th century. It has a plaster covered front that probably conceals a timber frame. The old tiled roof has two box dormers, with quoins to the southern end of the front. Its six doors are set in the surrounding reed doric pilasters. It also lies on the site of the coach house of King James I.

## **18th Century**

*Formerly listed as The Old Palace, No. 23 Kneesworth Street*

The house was remodelled in 1700 from a much earlier house, with red brick and a gabled old tiled roof. The garden front has moulded brick cornices, with five sash windows. The side fronting onto the street has two projecting chimney breasts, but includes a modern doorway with a shell hood. It also has modern 'Queen Anne' fenestration and north wing. The interior of the ground floor has early 18th century ovolo panelling with a semi-circular shell headed niche. It contains the original marble chimney piece and staircase, with some chamfered ceiling beams. It is part of the Old Palace inhabited by James I and Charles I.

*Royston Manor House, No. 14 Melbourn Street*

This is an early 18th century building of two storeys with an old tiled roof and contains basements and attics. It includes five sash windows in flush frames with moulded sills and cutter flat arches. The back elevation is built from plum coloured brick with red brick dressings. The ground floor has a combined central window and half glazed door and the lower recessed wing has two sash windows.

*18 Melbourn Street*

The building has an 18th century front of channelled plaster, with a red tiled roof. Consisting of three storeys, it has a fine central doorway and an oblong fanlight with ornamental monogram glazing. The interior contains remarkable early 17th century decoration of three carved and painted chimney pieces with elaborate overmantels, a painted ceilings with arabesques, oak panelling in two rooms and early 18th century deal panelling in another room.

## 19th Century

### *Banyers Lodge, No. 7 Dog Kennel Lane*

The mid. 19th century building is the former lodge to the Banyers. It is a gothic style building with knapped flints, gault brick dressings and chimney stacks. The central first floor has a raised shield with a lion rampart.

## 2.6 The later 18th and 19th Century Town

### *Population Growth of Royston*

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the town spread northwards in the direction of the station on Kneesworth Street (Fig. 7). Around the area of the station, a number of different businesses developed. These included the plant nurseries, a corn mill and a large maltings (VCH III, 259). The town extended westwards to the Union Workhouse along Baldock Street, and eastwards past the parish church along Melbourn Street. The population growth of Royston in the last two centuries has been very slow, except in the last fifty years or so .

In 1832, the population of the Hertfordshire part of Royston was 1272 and the number of people living in the Cambridgeshire section was 485, giving a total of 1757, an increase of 426 over 31 years. In 1871 there was a much more accurate calculation of where these people actually lived within the town. The total of 2891 was split in the following ways: 1349 in Hertfordshire, 453 in Cambridgeshire, 365 inhabitants in the parish of Bassingbourn, 333 in the parish of Kneesworth, 60 in the parish of Melbourn, 169 in the parish of Therfield and 162 people in the Union House. During 1878 the population within Hertfordshire was 1348 and still 453 in Cambridgeshire, giving a total of 1801. In 1881 there was a population of just 1331 inhabitants and in 1901 we see more of a rise to 3517, but in 1931 that figure is about the same with a total of 3869. In 1951 an increase of 794 inhabitants giving a total of 4663, increasing dramatically to 10,339 in 1978 and again by 3,000 to 13,339 in 1988 (Sillence 1993: 1; Herts. and Cambs. Reporter and Royston Crow 28/10/88:6; Cussans:l 15).

## Communications Roads and Turnpikes

The Icknield Way, today the A505, was turnpiked in 1769 from Dunstable to Cambridge through Luton, Hitchin, Baldock and Royston (Johnson 1970: 105). A turnpike house [SMR 11286] stood on the boundary of two parishes, at the corner of Melbourn Road and Newmarket Road. Both of these roads were barred with a turnpike gate, on the Cambridgeshire side. The turnpike house disappeared in 1855 when the Royston Institute (now known as the town hall) was built on the site. The turnpikes on both the Icknield Way and Ermine Street disappeared c1866. At around the same time the Highway Boards took the place of the old Turnpike Trusts, which in turn were superseded by the County Councils (Kingston 1906: 201-2). In 1926 to 1929, a road widening scheme began at the cross to cope with the increase of traffic. One of the

main buildings that was destroyed was the Old Crown Inn on Kneesworth Street, as well as the buildings surrounding it (Jones: 17). Connected with the old maltings was the condition of the roads between Royston and Ware. It was at a time when the roads were still being used a lot, but they were being neglected. The King and his Court would also use them on his journeys back and forth from London. It was therefore ordered that a restriction should be obeyed on carrying malt on horseback on that road and it would be put in place between All Saints and May Days (Kingston 1906:135). During the early and mid 19th century, the Parish of Royston contracted with the Baldock and Bournbridge Turnpike Trust to commence the cutting through of the hills to give better passage for coaching traffic: Burloes Hill on Newmarket Road, and then the London Road Hill (Kingston 1906:179).

### **Toll Booths**

A tollbooth [SMR 11278] is said to have existed in 1341, which stood around the cross-roads and contained the stocks until they were removed to Market Hill. It was probably demolished when the Old Crown Inn was built on the corner of Kneesworth Street.

### **Railway**

The Old North Road from London to Cambridge steadily increased in popularity until the arrival of the Cambridge Branch of the Great Northern Railway (Kingston 1906: 179). The line was from Hitchin to Royston and opened in 1850 (VCH III, 259). It was originally projected as part of an Oxford to Cambridge route, but did not extend to Cambridge until the following year (Johnson 1970: 124). The railway station [SMR 5532] itself was made of grey brick and comprised two floors. It had two platforms with wooden canopies on iron pillars, two tracks and a brick based water tower. The old station also included cattle pens to the west and a goods siding, with a brick goods shed. The old station has since been demolished and replaced by a modern building.

### **Public Buildings (Fig. 7)**

#### *United Reformed Church, Kneesworth Street*

Located in Kneesworth Street, the reformed church is an early to mid. 19th century, neo-classical style yellow bricked building. Its gabled front has four tall Doric pilasters, with a central round arched panel. The central doorway has a two fold panel door, with sash windows above and a round arch with glazing bars.

#### *The Corn Exchange, Market Hill*

The Corn Exchange [SMR 11282] was built in 1829 by the Lord of the Manor in moulded yellow bricks patented by Caleb Hitch. A single storey, hollow rectangle plan building with a hipped Welsh slate roof. The west front, central doorway leads through to a courtyard that is a covered walkway under wide roof eaves. The small shops opening onto the walkway have double doors flanked by sash windows. The market house associated with the corn exchange was built a year later in 1836.

#### *Former County Court, Market Hill*

The County Court [SMR 11285] was erected in 1849, apparently on the site of a 'tinkers shop which had a farm homestead behind it' (Kingston 1906, 202). The

building itself is a single storied structure of colour washed gault brick with stucco dressings. The elevations are of neo-classical style and feature a symmetrical frontage with a central arched and pilastered doorway. A date stone has been placed on the centre frieze, on the north face of the building.

#### *Town Hall, Melbourn Street*

The town hall [SMR 11283] was originally built as the Royston Mechanics Institute in 1855 (VCH III, 259), on the corner of Melbourn Street and Melbourn road. It was built in white brick at a cost of £1,600 and was opened by the Right Honourable Earl of Hardwicke in 1856 (Kelly Directory : 647).

#### **Schools**

A school house [SMR 11287] was said to have been built by ‘contributions of the gentlemen of the town, about the year 1716’ (Salmon, 1728). Part of the building was used at one time as a place for detaining people awaiting trial and later it was taken over by the parish as a meeting hall. The demolition of parts of the building for construction of the Jubilee Fire Station in 1897 revealed a date stone of 1718 (Kingston 1906, 200). There was another school [SMR 11336] erected on Market Hill in 1827. This was primarily used for infants and it was demolished in the early 1990’s to make way for the public library.

The British and National schools were established- in 1840 (Kingston 1906, 181 ).

#### *Parish Workhouse*

Following an Act of 1722, the vestry was given the power to erect and lease a Parish Poor House. Until 1836 the workhouse served Royston Parish and was situated on the Warren close to the London Road (Kingston 1906:201). Although the precise site is not known, it is possible that the building was replaced by the poorhouse.

#### *Royston Union Workhouse, 4 Baldock Street*

A steep rise in the poor rate resulted in the reformation of the Poor Law and the grouping of parishes into Unions with a single workhouse for each Union. The Royston Union was formed in June 1835 and comprised twenty nine parishes, seventeen of which were in Cambridgeshire, three in Essex and nine situated in Hertfordshire (Corfield 1985). Work began on the Union Workhouse [SMR 11280] in 1835, despite large demonstrations against its construction (Kingston 1906: 178-9). The new building, which was referred to locally as Heath Lodge, was situated on the outskirts of the town on Baldock Road opposite Therfield Heath. The workhouse was designed by Cockett and Nash and was originally built to accommodate approximately three hundred inmates. It was constructed in a white Cambridgeshire brick with a slate roof (Corfield 1985). and completed in 1836 at a cost of £6,744 (Corfield 1985). It is now a listed building, with a central recess to the upper floors and two segmental arches in the hall. The east elevation has two ground floor canted bay windows with entablatures.

### *Poorhouse*

The former Poorhouse [SMR 11281] for Royston was situated on the Warren (now Godfreys Terrace), south of the market place (VCH III, 259). It was located next to the London road and possibly replaced the parish workhouse (Kingston 1906 201).

### *Baptist Chapel*

The Baptist chapel [SMR 11296] was situated near Barkway Street and was built in 1896 (VCH III, 255). It is unclear as to whether it was demolished to make way for the police station at the end of the 19th century.

### *Wesleyan chapel*

The Wesleyan chapel [SMR 11295] was erected in 1887 along Queen's Road, close to the railway (VCH III, 259). It may also have had a Sunday school associated with it that was built to the north of the Wesleyan chapel.

## **Hospitals**

Both the hospitals of St. John & St. James and the hospital of St. Nicholas were in existence a short time after the priory was founded. The hospital of St John & St James was located on the Hertfordshire side, while the hospital of St Nicholas was located on the Cambridgeshire side of Royston. In the middle ages it was very common to find leper hospitals like these along major routeways (Kingston 1906: 47) especially when leprosy was at its height during the 12th and 13th centuries.

### *The Hospital of St. John & St. James*

The Hospital of St. John & St. James [SMR 2726] was situated at the south west corner of the cross where Lower King Street (formerly Back Street and Dead Street) met the eastern end of Baldock Street. The hospital could have been founded as early as 1227, although the date is unknown (Cussans:102). It was founded by Richard Argentine 'to find a priest for eu' and for the relief of pore people comyng and goyng through the same towne by lycens of King Edward III' (Kingston 1906:48). It was originally a place for lepers and was most probably in existence at the same time as the hospital dedicated to St Nicholas, estimated to be at the time of King John (1199-1216) (Kingston 1906: 47-8). At the dissolution the hospital of St. John & St. James was valued at £5 6s 10d p.a. Following its suppression in 1547 the site was left in succession to a number of different people, starting with Edward Chester in January 1565-6 (VCH III: 255). However, the site probably remained vested in the Crown until 1607 when James I granted it with lands appurtenant to Roger Aston. By the time of the survey in 1610 it had been converted into a dwelling house and was described as 'ye chapel of St John and St James new made [lately converted into] a fair dwelling house being a corner house and two other tenements with yards, gardens and grounds there to adjoining containing about four acres' (Cussans, 101).

### *The Hospital of St. Nicholas*

Just north of the site of the King's Dog House is Chapel Field, recently proven to be the site of an ancient burial ground (Kingston History, 46-7 in VCH III, 259). Here apparently stood the hospital and chapel of St Nicholas [SMR 2725], which was

founded for lepers in the early 13th century. The land on which the hospital was built was owned by Wendy manor in Cambridgeshire. A document of 1354-60 records that it consisted of a chapel and lodgings for the lepers (VCH III, 257). The hospital was founded by Ralph, son of Ralph of Fulk who gave the hospital to Giles Argentine, lord of Melbourn Manor, who owned the parish that the hospital was built in. It was recorded in 1359 that 'the lepers for a great while have refused to come or dwell at St Nicholas'; it appears to have already joined with St John & St James (Robinson 1978:23, 38; Doggett 1995:3,4).

#### *The Cottage Hospital*

The Cottage Hospital [SMR 11279] was erected in 1869 at the bottom of Barkway Road, at a cost of £1000 raised by subscription. It was a two storey building containing four wards to hold six patients, eight in an emergency. It was supported by donations and annual subscriptions from the public, aided by weekly payments from patients who could afford them (Kelly's Directory 1882: 647). By the 1920s it was becoming inadequate and was in need of repair, and was replaced by the Royston and District in 1924.

#### *The Royston and District Hospital*

The new hospital [SMR 10783], for 20 patients, was built on the west side of the London Road in 1923, on land owned by Thomas Goodman. A children's ward went under construction in 1927 (Sillence 1993:43-4).

### **Public Services (Fig. 7)**

#### *Stocks, Pillory and the Gallows*

The pillory [SMR 11340] was near the prison house and cave, just a little eastward on Melbourn Street (Fig. 7). The stocks also stood there and like the prison house they served all the parishes in both counties. Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the pillory disappeared and stocks had to be set up in each parish (Kingston 1893: 83). For the Hertfordshire side the stocks stood near to the Green Man Public House on the top of Market Hill, until they were moved lower down into Fish Hill in 1793 (Jones: 10). For the people of Cambridgeshire, they stood on Kneesworth Street in the open space just beyond King James' Palace (Kingston 1906:201). The gallows were situated in the outer bounds of Eldfield, a little way out on the south side of Newmarket Road (Kingston 1906:25).

#### *Gas*

The Royston Gas Company was established in the 1850s and was originally set up to light the streets. As Hertfordshire's population steadily increased, there was more demand for the wider use of gas, which included heating and power as well. This caused many of the smaller companies to go out of business, because of the larger companies that merged to cover wider areas. The second edition 1896 OS map indicates a gasworks [SMR 5846] to the south side of Gas House Road, now Mill Road (Fig. 7). Today, the rest of the gas works has been demolished apart from the gas

holder. Two engineering houses, one dating to 1878 and the other probably dating to 1890, still stand (Johnson 1970: 174).

#### *Water*

The Royston Water Company was established in 1859 (Kingston 1906: 182) and the 2nd edition 1896 OS map indicates the existence of buildings associated with the waterworks on the north side of Queens Road (Fig. 7). One of these buildings is thought to be a pump house [SMR 11293] built in 1849. A reservoir [SMR 11341] has also been sited to the rear of the old malthouse on London Road.

#### *Other*

##### *John Street*

Located on the north east side of the High Street, John Street runs through to the bottom of Market Hill. The Queen's Head Public House stood here until it was destroyed by the fire in 1841 and the land was given to the brewer John Phillips to provide access through to Market Hill, which he did and is thus named after him (Jones: 22).

##### *The Warren*

The Warren is an open space between London Road and Barkway road. It is said not to have been built upon until the 18th century. The old rabbit warren is referred to in old documents together with a warren in the valley by Barkway road as 'the Great Congre and the Little congre' (Kingston 1906, 201 ). Its name comes from the old rabbit warren which was cleared for the present car park in 1965. Clearance revealed a dome of square cut chalk blocks, the date of which is uncertain. When excavated, it showed a circular hole about nine feet deep and eighteen feet in diameter with a centre pillar supporting the domed roof (Reid 1968, 21).

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