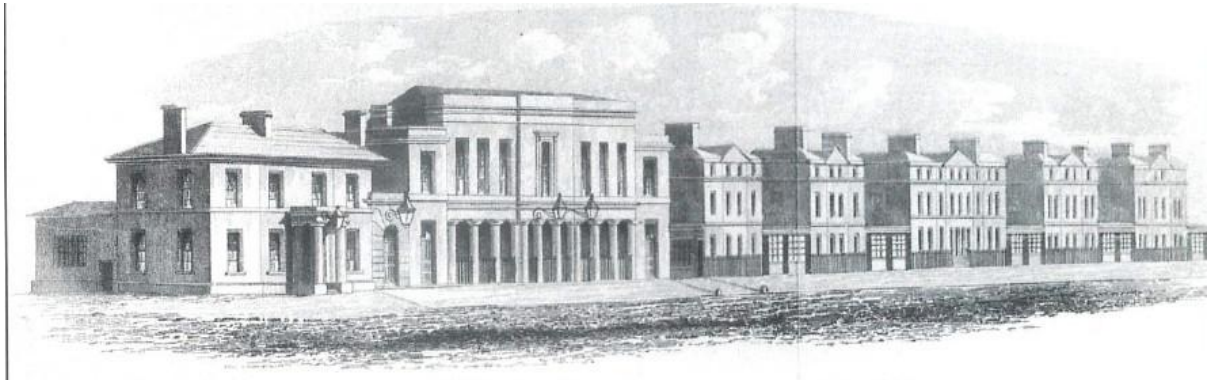


Calverley Road Market and Town Hall

Designed by renowned architect, Decimus Burton (the architect of The Palm House at Kew and The Wellington Arch) as part of his 1820s/30s Calverley New Town Development, which largely defined the future of this part of town, this site was occupied initially by a Market and then by the Town Hall. It was central to Tunbridge Wells' celebrations of Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee on 22nd June 1897, and in 1909, it was where Tunbridge Wells celebrated its new "Royal" appendix. In the late 1930s, the Council moved the Town Hall to its present site.

Behind the old Town Hall was the Police Station, where in April of 1909, Sidney Dunn, who had been charged with stealing old lead and brass, escaped from his cell by squeezing through bars that were only 5 ½ inches (138mm) apart. Sidney was re-arrested in October for stealing clothes while hop-picking, and sent to Borstal for two years.

Joan Burslem recollected in an interview with local historian, Chris Jones, that the market was held from 1pm until late, with "cheap sweets, mussels, eels, grocery and clothes for sale". She also remembers not being allowed to go there on Saturdays as there were "too many drunks about". A parlourmaid from Speldhurst Rectory had a more enthusiastic memory of the market, considering a trip to the market "a great treat".



Above: From left to right, The Camden Inn, Market Place and Calverley Place (now 57-79 Calverley Rd, and all that remains of Decimus Burton's design on this road).



Decimus Burton's Market Place, later the Town Hall, shown shored-up prior to its demolition in 1959. When the Council moved to its new offices in the 1930s, the building was used as an Art

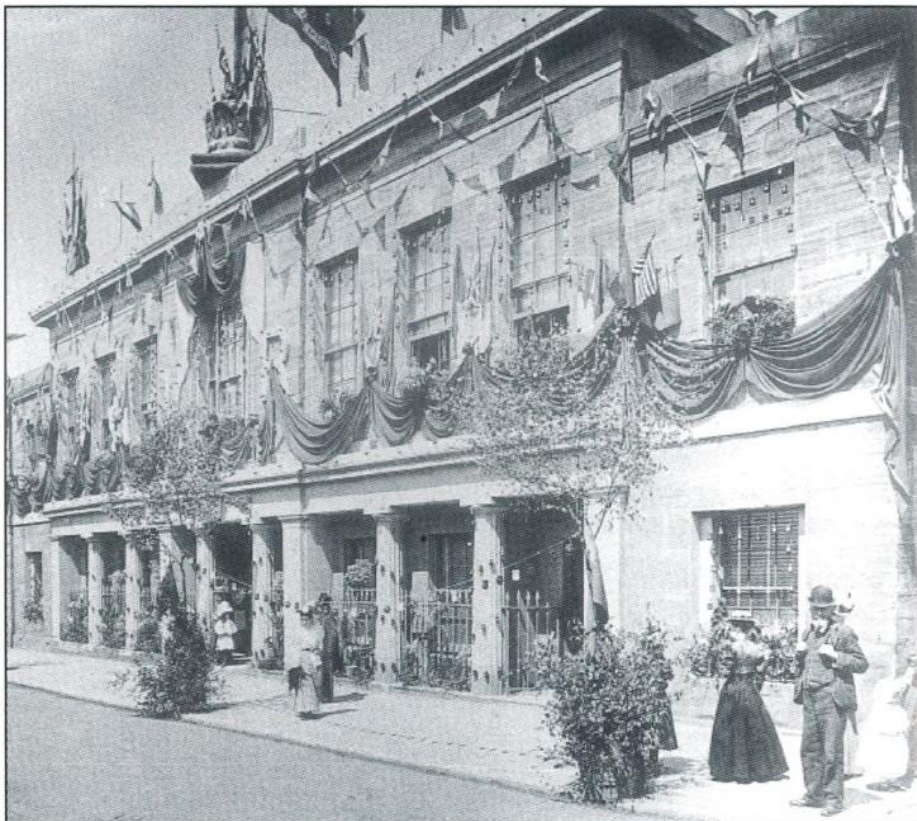
School. The Camden Inn can be seen on the left at the junction of Calverley and Camden Roads



Above: The Town Clerk, William Charles Cripps, announcing the incorporation of Tunbridge Wells as a borough outside the Old Town Hall on 27th February 1889



Right: Raising money outside the Old Town Hall during WWI.



Above: The Old Town Hall dressed up for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The building

was host to a large and fashionable lunch, while the local pubs were open all day.



Above: Policemen emerging from behind the Old Town Hall



Right: General Booth, founder of the Salvation Army
(standing with long white beard centre stage) visiting
Tunbridge Wells in 1910 – photo taken outside the
Old Town Hall.

No longer standing, but at one time located on the junction of Calverley and Camden Roads, was Decimus Burton's Market Place, part of his Calverley New Town development, which, when it was developed in the 1820s and 30s, transformed the town centre. The Market Place was described by Colbran, the author of guides to Tunbridge Wells, as one of the most elegant buildings in the town. It did not last long as a market, and by 1846 became the first home to the Council.

Next to the Market Place was the Camden Hotel; while behind it was the Police Station. Between the Market Place and Lansdown Road, Burton designed a series of shops with attached accommodation, most of which remain intact, albeit altered, today. Mathieson's directory of 1867 identifies particular premises. Starting at the Landsdowne Road end were a chemist's shop in the detached house then a tailors; a writer, grainer and house decorator; a pianoforte warehouse, the post office; another tailor; an artist; a builder; a solicitor; a corn merchant; conveniently next door to a baker, and finally a wine manufacturer. More than a hundred years ago, the business on the corner of Garden Street, next to the detached house, was the town's first Board of Trade Labour Exchange (these began in 1910 and were the forerunners of Job Centres).

To access details of other Tunbridge Wells shops, click [here](#):

