



**CHELMSFORD
(COUNTY TOWN OF ESSEX)**



INTRODUCTION

When you think of Chelmsford you immediately think of it as the county town of Essex and of its splendid cathedral. For many years most people have thought of the place as being a city as almost all cathedral places are cities. Even the football team are called Chelmsford City. However it was not until 2012 that the city status was gained by them. As can be read later in the following history, there is a lot to tell about the place. Arriving on a train, you find yourself in the close proximity of the town centre.



The Eastern Counties Railway arrived in 1842, but due to the geography of the town, an 18-arch viaduct had to be built across what is now the town park. The station was built slightly to the north of the present station. The building on today's site was constructed in 1885 Chelmsford Rail by the Great Eastern Railways (into which the Eastern Counties Railway had been merged) with a three-storey frontage.

The present station building dates from a rebuild in 1985. There were three lines through the station, two platform lines and an avoiding line between them. An unusual signal box (being some 5 stories high at the rear) on the up platform controlled the station including, at the eastern end, a set of sidings that served the Hoffman ball bearing factory. The signal box ceased to be used in 1994. The avoiding line has been removed and the sidings were reduced to serve only a mail sorting office and building materials yard. As of 2009 these sidings were overgrown and little used but the unused signal box still exists. Avoiding lines to the north of the station are used by the three early morning trains that start from Chelmsford.



At present the Duke Street entrance has been sealed off as in February 2014, work was started on a station rebuild, which was expected to cost over 3 million pounds. Work is progressing to improve Chelmsford railway station, as part of an investment in customer facilities.

The project, funded under the National Station Improvement Programme and a contribution from Network Rail, will make significant improvements to the station which, aside from Liverpool Street, is Abellio Greater Anglia's busiest station with 5.5 million passenger journeys made annually. The works will include a new ticket hall with an open plan counter service, new toilets, improved customer information systems and additional retail units. There will also be significant improvements to access for the London bound platform.

An additional stair tower is being built opposite the bus station, linked to the existing stair tower, which will enable a better flow of people, especially at peak times. Access to the London bound platform in the main ticket hall is also being rebuilt in order to improve the space in the ticket hall and extend the gate line. From Sunday, 16 February 2014, the Duke Street entrance of the station was closed.

In order to help facilitate the work. Chelmsford station customers also benefited from the construction of a £600,000 Cycle Point in 2013, with parking for up to 1,000 bicycles and changing rooms and cycle maintenance facilities.



From Wikipedia, it gives an overall look at the place which is the principal settlement of the City of Chelmsford and the county town of Essex, in the East of England. It is located in the London commuter belt, approximately 32 miles (51 km) northeast of Charing Cross, London, and approximately the same distance from the once provincial Roman capital at Colchester. The urban area of the city currently has a population of approximately 110,000, whilst the district has a population of 168,310, however this is thought to be rapidly increasing on a year-by-year basis with many people from Essex and the London borders re-locating to the city.

The main conurbation incorporates all or part of the former parishes of Broomfield, Great Baddow, Galleywood, Writtle, Moulsham, Widford and Springfield, including Springfield Barnes, now known as Chelmer Village.

The communities of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, Chelmsford, Ontario, and Chelmsford, New Brunswick, are named after the city.

Chelmsford's population consists of a large number of City and Docklands commuters, attracted by the 30–35 minute journey from Central London via the Great Eastern Main Line. The same journey takes approximately 60 minutes by road via the A12.

On 14 March 2012, chairman of the Privy Council and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg announced that Chelmsford, along with Perth, Scotland and St Asaph, Wales, was to be granted city status. The Letters Patent officially granting city status to Chelmsford from The Queen was received on 6 June 2012.

The demonym for a Chelmsford resident is "Chelmsfordian".

The 18-arch Victorian Railway Viaduct that carries the Great Eastern Main Line through Central Park Chelmsford

Early history

In 1199, following the commissioning of a bridge over the River Can by Maurice, Bishop of London, William of Sainte-Mère-Eglise was granted a Royal Charter for Chelmsford to hold a market, marking the origin of the modern town. An under-cover market, operating Tuesday to Saturday, is still an important part of the city centre over 800 years later. The city's name is derived from *Ceolmaer's ford* which was close to the site of the present High Street stone bridge. In the Domesday Book of 1086 the town was called *Celmeresfort* and by 1189 it had changed to *Chelmsford*. Its position on the Londinium – Camulodonum Roman road (the modern A12) ensured the early prosperity of Chelmsford; in the first decade of the 12th century its population had grown to several hundred, which was large for its time.

Before 1199, there were settlements nearby from ancient times. A Neolithic and a late Bronze Age settlement have been found in the Springfield suburb, and the town was occupied by the Romans. A Roman fort was built in AD 60, and a civilian town grew up around it. The town was given the name of *Caesaromagus* (the market place of Caesar), although the reason for it being given the great honour of bearing the Imperial prefix is now unclear – possibly as a failed 'planned town' provincial capital to replace Londinium or Camulodunum. The remains of a *mansio*, a combination post office, civic centre and hotel, lie beneath the streets of modern Moulsham, and the ruins of an octagonal temple are located beneath the Odeon roundabout. The town disappeared for a while after the Romans left Britain.

The town became the seat of the local assize during the early 13th century (though assizes were also held at Brentwood) and by 1218 was recognised as the county town of Essex, a position it has retained to the present day. Chelmsford was significantly involved in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, and Richard II moved on to the town after quelling the rebellion in London. 'The Sleepers and The Shadows', written by Hilda Grieve in 1988 using original sources, states: "For nearly a week, from Monday 1st July to Saturday 6th July [1381], Chelmsford became the seat of government ... The king probably lodged at his nearby manor house at Writtle. He was attended by his council, headed by the temporary Chancellor ... the new chief justice ... the royal chancery ...

Their formidable task in Chelmsford was to draft, engross, date, seal and despatch by messengers riding to the farthest corners of the realm, the daily batches of commissions, mandates, letters, orders and proclamations issued by the government not only to speed the process of pacification of the kingdom, but to conduct much ordinary day to day business of the Crown and Government." Richard II famously revoked the charters which he had made in concession to the peasants on 2 July 1381, while in Chelmsford. It could be said that given this movement of government power, Chelmsford for a few days at least became the capital of England. Many of the ringleaders of the revolt were executed on the gallows at what is now Primrose Hill. An important Anglo-Saxon burial was discovered at Broomfield to the north of Chelmsford in the late 19th century and the finds are now in the British Museum. The road 'Saxon Way' now marks the site. In the 17th century many of the victims of

Matthew Hopkins (the self-styled "Witchfinder General") spent their last days imprisoned in Chelmsford, before being tried at the Assizes and hanged for witchcraft.

Henry VIII purchased the Boleyn estate in 1516, and built Beaulieu Palace on the current site of New Hall School. This later became the residence of his then mistress, and later wife Ann. Soon after it became the residence of Henry's daughter, by his first marriage, Mary I.

King Robert I of Scotland, better known as Robert the Bruce, had close ties with the nearby village of Writtle and there is some evidence to suggest he was born at Montpeliers Farm in the village, but the story is disputed and possibly conflated with his father, Robert de Brus, 6th Lord of Annandale.

World War II

During World War II Chelmsford, an important centre of light engineering war production, was attacked from the air on several occasions, both by aircraft of the Luftwaffe and by missile. The worst single loss of life took place on Tuesday 19 December 1944, when the 367th Vergeltungswaffe 2 or V2 rocket to hit England fell on a residential street (Henry Road) near the Hoffmans ball bearing factory and not far from the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company factory in New Street which may also have been the target. (Hoffmans ball bearing factory was key to the war effort, supplying bearings for countless applications. This obviously made it a key target) Thirty-nine people were killed and 138 injured, 47 seriously. Several dwellings in Henry Road were completely destroyed, and many in nearby streets were badly damaged. A recently restored monument to the dead is in the city cemetery in Writtle Road.

On 13 May 1943 Luftwaffe bombing raids hit Chelmsford leaving more than 50 people dead and making nearly 1,000 residents homeless. The bombs on this night were dropped mainly in the town centre, Springfield and Moulsham.

The GHQ Line part of the British hardened field defences of World War II runs directly through Chelmsford with many pillboxes still in existence to the north and south of the city.

Hylands Park, the site of the annual V festival, then hosted a Prisoner of war camp, and from 1944 was the headquarters of the Special Air Service (SAS).

Recent history

Since the 1980s Chelmsford has suffered from a decline in its defence-related industries, most notably The Marconi Company with *all* of its factories either being closed or sold. The site on West Hanningfield Road was sold to BAE; the Waterhouse Lane site sold to E2V and the New Street site remains empty.

However, the city's location close to London and at the centre of Essex has helped it grow in importance as an administrative and distribution centre. The one-time largest employer in Chelmsford, RHP, the former Hoffman ball bearing manufacturing

company, closed its New Street/Rectory Lane site in 1989. Some of the factory remains and have been converted into luxury apartments and a health club although most of the site was demolished to make way for the Rivermead Campus of the Anglia Ruskin University.

Beaulieu Park, The Village and Chancellor Park are some of the most recent large-scale housing developments built in the city to complement earlier developments such as Chelmer Village which was built throughout the 1980s.

In 2007, the Channel 4 programme "Location, Location, Location" voted Chelmsford as the 8th best place to live in the UK.

Local government and politics

Chelmsford is at the geographic and political centre of Essex and has been the county town since 1215. It is the location of the headquarters of Essex County Council at County Hall on Market Road and the headquarters of Chelmsford City Council on Duke Street. The headquarters of Essex Police is located in the Springfield area of the city at Kingston Crescent.

Chelmsford formed part of the ancient Chelmsford hundred of Essex. It was incorporated as a municipal borough in 1888, under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act 1882. In 1934 the borough was enlarged by gaining 1,659 acres (6.71 km²) from Chelmsford Rural District, including parts of the parishes of Broomfield, Springfield, Widford and Writtle. The municipal borough was abolished in 1974 and its former area was combined with most of the remainder of the rural district to form the larger Borough of Chelmsford.

For the Chelmsford constituency in the House of Commons the member of Parliament is Simon Burns. In the 2010 general election, Burns gained 25,207 votes (46.2%), winning the seat with a majority over Stephen Robinson, the Liberal Democrat candidate, of 5,110 (9.4%).

Demographics

In the 2001 Census, The population for Chelmsford consisted of male: 49.2%, female: 50.8%, under 18: 22.5%, over 60: 19%, born outside UK: 5.9%, white: 96%, black: 0.7%, Asian: 1.4%, mixed: 1.1%, other: 0.7%, Christian: 73.3%, Muslim: 0.9%. Education census statistics for Chelmsford consisted of full-time students between 16- 74: 20.2%, No qualifications for ages between 16–74: 22.2%. Housing census statistics for Chelmsford consisted of owner occupied housing: 76.5%, social housing: 14.9% (Council: 11.3%, Housing Association 3.6%), privately rented: 6.3%, homes without central heating and/or private bathroom: 5.8%.

Originally an agricultural and market town, Chelmsford has been an important centre for industry since the 19th century. Following the opening of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation in 1797, cheaper transportation and raw materials made milling and malting the main industries until the 1850s, when increasing prosperity created a local market for agricultural machinery.

Foundries and engineering works followed including Fell Christy at his Factory (In later years known as Christy Norris Ltd) on the corner of Kings Road and Broomfield Road opened 1858, closed 1985, Coleman and Moreton, Thomas Clarkson (*Steam Omnibus* manufacturer and Founder of the Eastern National Bus Company) and Eddington and Stevenson (makers of traction engines). The Company Christy Norris still survives, trading as Christy Turner Ltd based in Ipswich. A residential street close to the old Factory was named "Fell Christy" in his honour.

As well as the headquarters of Essex County and Chelmsford City Councils, the modern city is home to a range of national and international companies including M&G Group, e2v Technologies and ebm-papst UK Ltd. The continuing importance of Chelmsford as an employment centre is demonstrated by the fact that the number of "in" commuters (mostly from other parts of Essex) almost exactly balances the number of workers commuting into London.

Chelmsford is largely a commercial city which employs around 80,000 people. There are two medium-sized shopping centres, High Chelmer and The Meadows. Chelmsford has three retail parks, Riverside, Chelmer Village and the smaller Homelands Retail Park housing a Flagship B&Q Store and Springfield Garden Centre (part of the Garden centre Group). The High Street is full of independent and chain stores. As well as the leading High Street names, there is also a wide variety of specialist retailers, especially in Baddow Road and Moulsham Street which are located at the end of the pedestrianised High Street. On 6 January 2005, Chelmsford was granted Fairtrade Town status.

Several years ago, Chelmsford was labelled a mere clone town; however, new developments are proving the statement wrong, with new business opportunities around the city. Sizeable businesses are now based in the Chelmsford Business Park at Boreham housing companies such as the Anderson Group and Global Marine Systems. The city also has a low unemployment rate (1.6% in 2002) and a well-educated workforce, with 9% holding a degree or above (in 2002; British average: 7.1%).

Chelmsford has a vibrant nightlife scene with many nightclubs, pubs, wine bars and restaurants in the city centre area, particularly in Duke Street, Moulsham Street, the city centre end of Baddow Road and the bottom section of Springfield Road. Its central Essex location and good public transport links make the city ideal for revellers, commuters and tourists to visit from surrounding areas.

In May 2011, work began improvements to Moulsham Street. The original street had extremely narrow pavements which were dangerous for pedestrians to walk more than one abreast on the Parkway-George Street section. The improvements delivered wider pavements, better lighting and better access to shops. This work was completed in late October 2011.

If you have time for a longer look and arrive by train, and on turning left out of the station door and walking a little way down Duke Street and it does not take long before the cathedral grounds are reached.



Chelmsford Cathedral in the city of Chelmsford, Essex, England, is dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, St Peter and St Cedd. It became a cathedral when the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford was created in 1914 and is the seat of the Bishop of Chelmsford.

The church of St Mary the Virgin in Chelmsford was probably first built along with the town eight hundred years ago. It was rebuilt in the 15th and early 16th centuries, with walls of flint rubble, stone and brick. There is also a tower with a spire and a ring of thirteen bells, twelve of which were cast by John Warner & Sons at Cripplegate.

The nave partially collapsed in 1800, and was rebuilt by the County architect John Johnson, retaining the Perpendicular design, but using Coade stone piers and tracery, and a plaster ceiling. The upper part of the chancel was rebuilt in 1878.



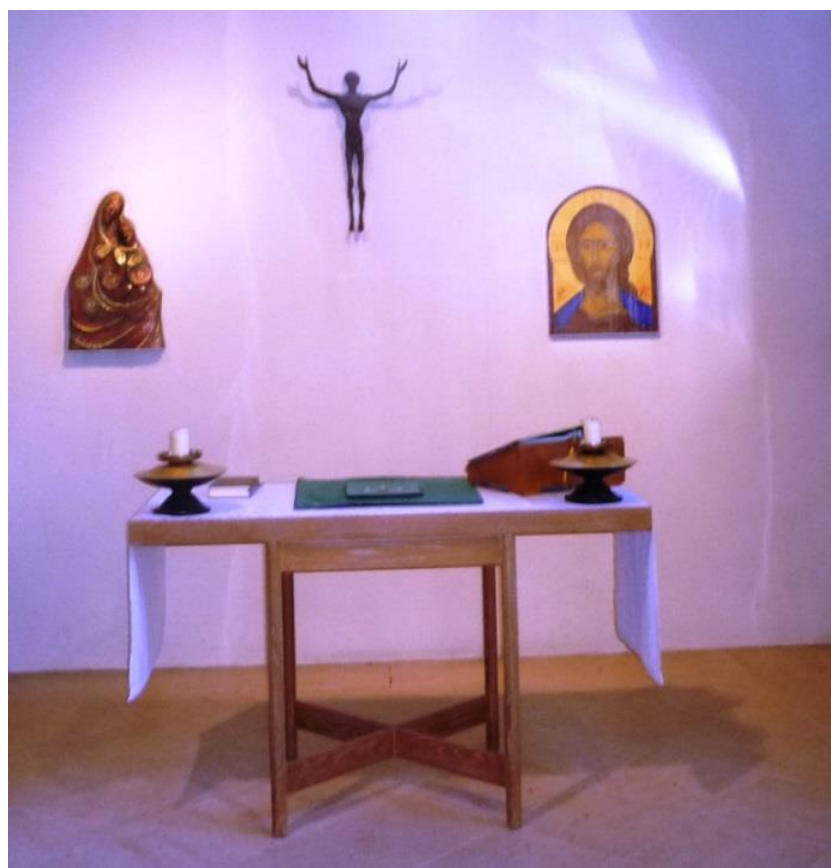
In 1914 the church became the cathedral for the newly created diocese of Chelmsford. The south porch was extended in 1953 to mark Anglo-American friendship after the World War II and the many US airmen stationed in Essex. In 1954, the cathedral was additionally dedicated to Saints Peter and Cedd. In 1983, the interior of the cathedral was extensively refurbished, with a new floor, seating, altar, Bishop's throne, font and artwork.

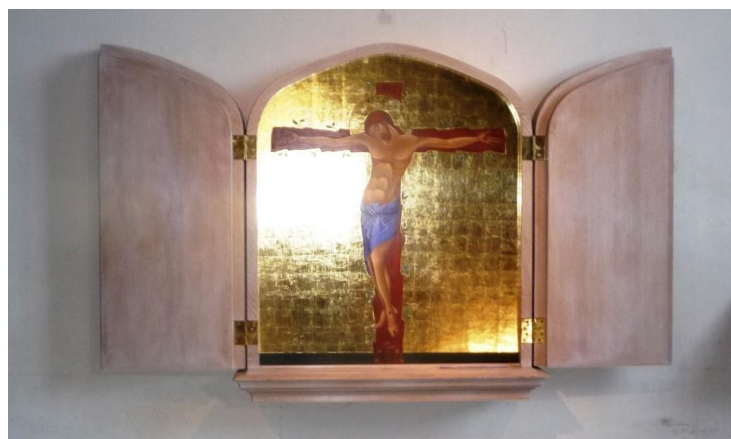
In 1994 and 1995 two pipe organs were installed, the first in the nave and the second in the chancel. The stained-glass windows were all installed in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In 2000 a sculpture of "Christ in Glory", by Peter Eugene Ball, was placed above the chancel arch. In 2004 two further major works of art were commissioned, and are now in place: Mark Cazelet's "Tree of Life" painting in the North Transept, and Philip Sanderson's altar frontal in the Mildmay Chapel.

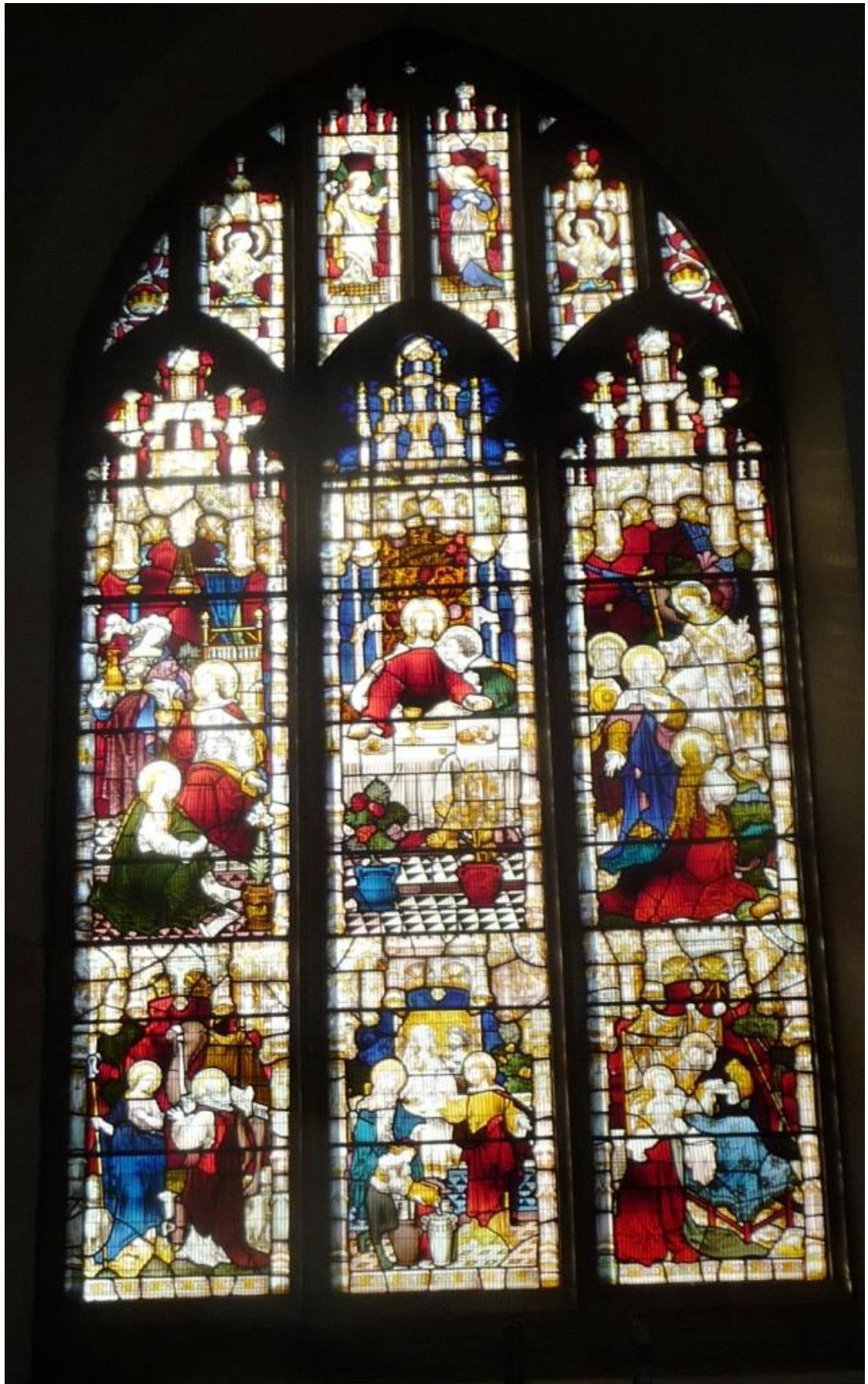
The cathedral celebrates its links with Thomas Hooker, who was Chelmsford Town Lecturer between 1626 and 1629. He fled to the New World because of his Puritan views and founded the town of Hartford, Connecticut and was one of the founders of American democracy.













The cathedral enjoys close links with The Cathedral School, St Cedd's School, King Edward VI Grammar School and Chelmsford County High School for Girls. Many of the cathedral's boy and girl choristers attend these schools. Leaving the cathedral and heading towards the High Street and straight ahead is the imposing HSBC building.



Also before reaching High Street, to the left are the County Courts.



For a more detailed look around the place, it can be said there are a lot of other things to see as there are regular trains and buses and both these stations are less than five minutes walk from the shops. These are mainly housed in two shopping centre, the Chelmer Precinct and the Meadows. There are many others to see in a pedestrianised High Street with the top brand stores and many smaller ones too.



Chelmsford Precinct as it was known then circa 1971. In the time since this has evolved into the High Chelmer Shopping Centre and extensive refurbishments, even though this particular thoroughfare was always known as 'High Chelmer'.

The date on the card is 1980 but I suspect the actual shot was taken prior to this, probably nearer 1970/1 maybe as a publicity still when it opened. For a more modern view.

The Meadows opened in 1992 and before that housed various shops and a small market. Chelmsford is a first class shopping centre. With over 1.2 million square feet of shops, two quality under-cover shopping centres, a fully pedestrianised High Street, all set with a quality river and parkland setting, it's no wonder John Lewis chose Chelmsford as the home of its first store in Essex. If you're looking for high fashion, whether it's designer labels or quality high street offers, Chelmsford's town centre has loads of choice. The main names are all here – Debenhams, Marks and Spencer, BHS and Primark.

The two main shopping centres – High Chelmer and The Meadows – offer brands such as Republic, Base, Pilot, River Island, New Look, Miss Selfridge, Topshop, Fat Face and JD Sports. The city centre has a range of coffee shops and eateries including Starbucks, Costa Coffee, Pret a Manger, Café Nero and others. Moulsham Street also houses many high quality independent retailers. Further specialist shopping is also available in Baddow Road and in the West End. A regular market is held in Chelmsford most days of the week and continental markets in the High Street are a very colourful addition throughout the year. There is an excellent parking provision, with over 5,000 spaces available for shoppers and two park and ride facilities (Sandon and Chelmer Valley), which enable convenient access to the city centre. Outside of the city centre, Chelmsford has three retail parks and ten supermarkets, which serve the residential neighbourhoods of Chelmsford, with a new Waitrose planned for the city centre in the very near future.



Towards the bottom end of the High Street, there is the town crest and in 2013 when the Colchester zoo was celebrating it's 50th birthday, one of the famous giraffes was to appear outside the Marks and Spencer store.

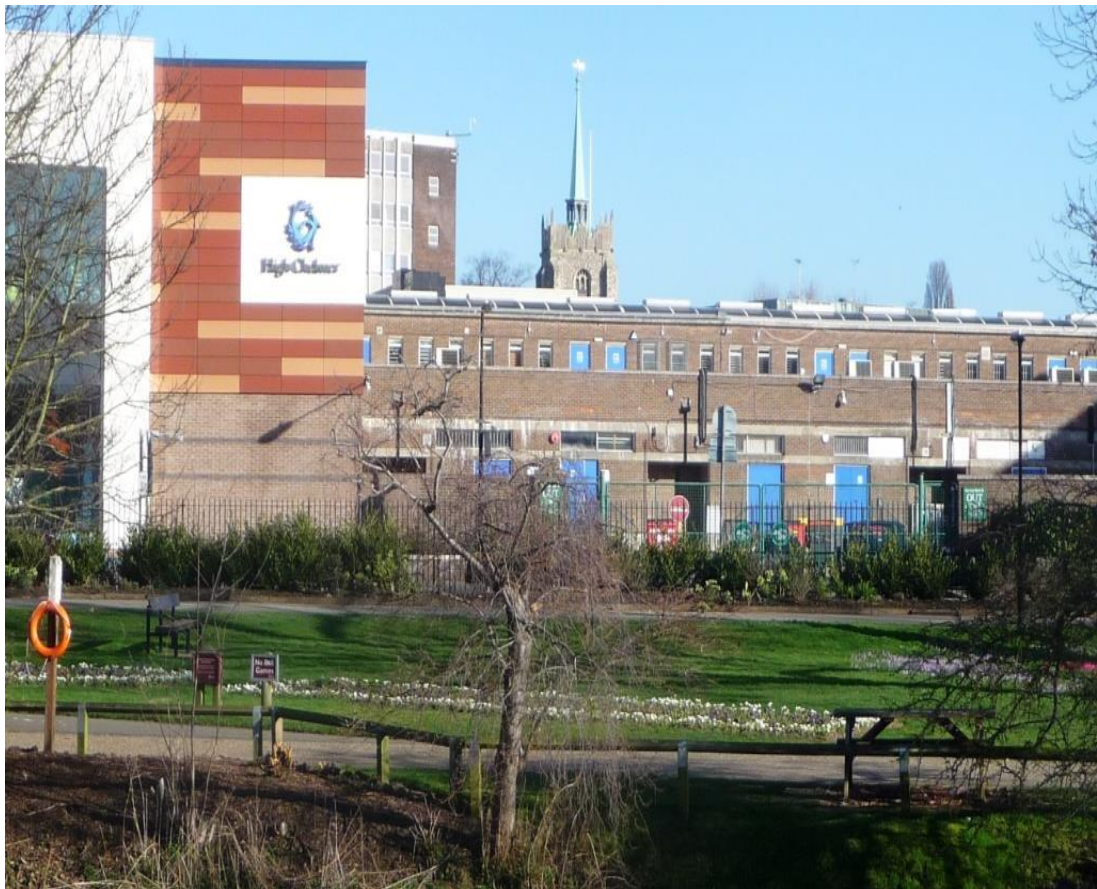
Running through the town at the bottom end of the High Street, the river runs. This is the Can, although it is often mistakenly referred as to the Chelmer, but that is in another part of the City.



A feature of the river, is that you can sit and relax on seats by the riverbank, to read or to view the wonderful flowers in bloom or the various groups of canoeists who frequent the river.











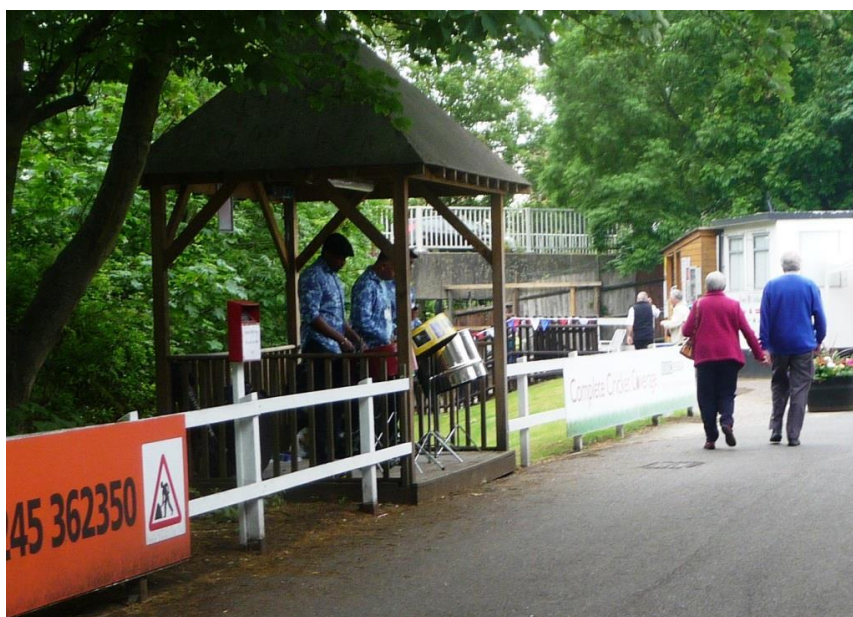




Close to and just off the Parkway is the County Cricket ground where Essex play most of their matches.













Towards the end of the park, the river and the cricket is the popular feature of the area which is the covered market. Running through the town at the bottom end of the High Street, the river runs. This is the Can, There is a lot of development going on in the City at present. In 2013 new flats were opened at the back end of the cricket just off New Writtle Street and more work is ongoing in Victoria Road South. Another good thing about the place is that it has a big and decent undercover market which is beneath the multi storey car park and is adjacent to the Chelmer Shopping Precinct. Chelmsford Market is over 800 years old and has over 50 stalls and kiosks, all under cover. It has handy bus links and has a convenient parking, and features a regular antique and second-hand market on Thursdays. The market is opening times are - Tuesday to Friday - 8.30am to 4pm. Saturdays - 8.30am to 5pm. The market is located underneath the High Chelmer Short Stay Multi Storey Car Park, next to High Chelmer Shopping Centre. The north end is opposite the library, and the south end is opposite Bell Meadow.





A walk back down Victoria Road, a left turn and the rail station is in view, but if you forget that and go under the railway bridge, soon on the left, there is the bus station which in recent years has undergone major redevelopment work too.





The old bus station look from around the war time

A new bus terminal in Duke Street opened in March 2007 which replaced an ageing 1930s Bus station. It incorporates shops and apartments and has a covered roof for passengers. This is mainly used by the First Essex Bus Company which has many routes around the city and beyond including the X30 Southend to Stansted Airport Flyer.

Other bus companies serving the area include Regal Busways, Stephensons of Essex, Heddingham Omnibus and Network Colchester. There are also a variety of school bus serving the city and surrounding areas. Outside of peak times many of these services are run under contract to Essex County Council.

TGM also operate a single service, the 59 route, to Harlow from Chelmsford, via Roxwell, The Rodings, Hatfield Heath and Old Harlow. The route is on the Hertfordshire Intalink network, allowing single-operator access to destinations within Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire, as well as select Greater London destinations such as Stanmore and Barnet. The route was previously operated by Arriva.

Essex County Council Highways & Transportation Department have considered the construction of a Bus Rapid Transit System to be built serving the Beaulieu Park/Springfield Area because of the increasing demand for Rapid Transit Plans in Ipswich, Colchester and Southend.

Chelmsford has a Park & Ride service that is based at nearby Sandon, just off the A12 at Junction 18. It runs from 7 am to 7 pm, Monday to Saturday, with five bus stops around the city (one near High Chelmer for shopping), and charges £2.50 per adult and is free for old-age pensioners or people under the age of 16. An adult weekly ticket is £12.50 and Adult monthly £47.00. It currently has a capacity of 1,200 cars. Opened in March 2006, it has proved highly successful and is widely used.

A second Park and Ride service known as the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride was opened on the A130/131 to the north of the city near the village of Little Waltham in April 2011.



