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London Borough of Enfield Local History Sheets.

Enfield Market a history



Enfield Market celebrated 700 years of trading in 2004. The market as we know it today was established in 1618 by a Royal Charter granted by James I for the benefit of the poor in the Ancient Parish of Enfield. The charter rights relate to the Saturday market but the history of Enfield Market dates back even further than this.

In 1303 the right to hold a market on Mondays was granted by King Edward I to Humphrey de Bohun, Lord of the Manor of Enfield and his wife the Countess of Holland. The market's history at this stage was somewhat chequered, sometimes the market ran regularly and thrived but at other times, especially during periods of war, it fell away and the Market Place became renowned for having crowds of children there annoying local residents.

In January 2002 history came full circle with the re-introduction of a Monday market which is now a firm favourite with Monday shoppers. On 15th October 2003 the Queen accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh unveiled a commemorative plaque to celebrate the 700th anniversary of trading in Enfield Market. Visitors to the market can now see the plaque set in the floor of the Market House at the centre of the Market Place.

The Saturday Market, now nearly 400 years old and those on Thursdays and Fridays are a major attraction in the heart of Enfield Town Shopping Centre. At Christmas the market operates all week. The Market and Market Place continue to be run by the charity and it is believed to be the only Charter Market run by a charity in the whole of the country. The Market caters for both long term and casual traders with up to 96 stalls each day. A wide variety of goods is sold, including fruit, vegetables, meat, clothing, household goods, linen, plants and flowers, watches and clocks, jewellery, bric-a-brac, haberdashery, soap, bags and luggage, books, tapes, CDs, sportswear etc.

The rents from the stalls are used to fund grants for needy residents of the Ancient Parish of Enfield